

Marriages are made on earth, not in heaven

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Marriages are made on earth, not in heaven. And the sooner we realize this, the happier we will be.

وَمِنْ آتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Rum 30: 21. And among His Signs is this, that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, that you may find tranquility in them, and He has put between you, love and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.

Allah ﷺ called the marriage one of His signs, created for three things:

1. Sukoon: harmony, tranquility, stability
2. Mawaddah: love
3. Rahma: mercy, compassion, forgiveness

And said that for those who can reflect, there are signs in this to recognize His Magnificence and Grace. I sometimes wonder if this means us today. Can we really call ourselves, ‘people who reflect’?

The first word is Sukoon. What is Sukoon?

Sukoon is from Sakina – which among other meanings, refers to the ‘maatra’ (pronunciation sign) which when placed above a letter shows that it is a letter that remains where it is and doesn’t move in the pronunciation. In the context of the Ayah Sukoon means that in the marriage, the person, his/her heart (desires), mind (intentions), hands and feet (actions), tongue (words) and focus don’t move from the spouse. It means that in the marriage, the spouses are each other’s companions, best friends, supporters, confidants, advisors and backers.

It means creating a home like a harbor into which the ship, battered by storms, can sail into assured of shelter and repair. Not a harbor with a storm of its own

lying in wait to assault the ship when its defences are down. Sukoon is the result of trust. Trust is the result of responsibility that comes as a result of the knowledge of accountability to the One from Whom nothing is hidden and to Whom is our return. When the spouses understand that they are accountable to Allah ﷺ, live their lives responsibly and build trust between themselves, they bless their marriage with Sukoon. Sukoon is the result of lifelong fidelity in every way, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, understanding that a single lie will make all your truths questionable. Sukoon is the result of obedience to Allah ﷺ. Not disobedience. The result of disobedience is ...well, I don't think I need to describe that here. The choice is ours.

The next word is Mawaddah. What is Mawaddah?

Mawaddah is love. How can I explain love? Many, much more eloquent than I, have tried and failed. Love must be experienced and I wish that for this couple and for all those present here. But let me mention some of its signs. Love is to see who gives you the food, not how it tastes. Love is to see whose gift it is, not how much it cost. Love is to feel happier giving than receiving. Love is to remember that Allah ﷺ made both spouses equal in every respect and to honor this equality when dealing with each other. Love is to remember that Allah ﷺ did not make the woman the property of the man; He ﷺ didn't make the marriage a way of acquiring a slave. He ﷺ gave her the right to own and dispose of property, earn a living and spend it as she wishes, without her husband's permission or even knowledge. Allah ﷺ gave the woman the right to inherit from her husband, parents and children while none of them has any right in that inheritance. Her responsibility in exchange for all these rights is the care of the children and the welfare of her spouse. It is his primary responsibility to provide for them materially. It is her primary responsibility to provide for them spiritually, intellectually, morally, ethically and emotionally. That is why Islam made the child's Jannah beneath the feet of his/her mother.

Love it to stand before Allah ﷺ in the night and make dua in Sujood for the one you love. Love is to feel their pain and joy, their fears and apprehensions, their

hopes and aspirations. Love is to give up your today for their tomorrow. Love is what creates memories, which one day are all that will remain. Love is the result of investment of time, effort, energy, interest and prayers in the other. Love takes time to germinate and grow but bears fruit all lifelong. In Islam, we don't fall in love. We grow in it. When you fall, there's nothing thereafter. When you grow, you grow lifelong. Then you have the opportunity and joy of falling in love every morning as you make your own breakfast because she needs her beauty sleep. Every afternoon as she gives you lunch and then prevents you from eating as much as you would wish. And every night as you sit together in the same room, reading or doing things that interest you but not the other; content in the knowledge that giving each other space is essential to growth – for trees and spouses.

Love for the spouse is founded in the love of Allah ﷺ. When a person loves Allah ﷺ, he loves all that Allah ﷺ gives him and sees them all as His ﷺ blessings. So, what of love of a relationship and the person in it, who Allah ﷺ called His Sign? When the spouses love each other because they love Allah ﷺ, they will always remember to be obedient to Him and to follow the blessed Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ and so their lives will be permeated with the blessings of Islam. Love is to remember that Allah ﷺ will hold you accountable for your duties, not your rights and that if you fulfill your duties, your rights will automatically be fulfilled. Mawaddah (love) is the result of obedience to Allah ﷺ. Not disobedience. The choice is ours.

We come to the last word in the Ayah: Ar-Rahma. What is Rahma?

Allah ﷺ used his own quality when he said that He ﷺ put Rahma (mercy, compassion) between the spouses. Rahma is the basis of forgiveness. We all need forgiveness because we all make mistakes. We need forgiveness of Allah ﷺ because we disobey Him ﷺ though we recognize and worship Him ﷺ. It makes no sense but we still do it. Allah ﷺ created us and knows what we are likely to do in a marriage and so He ﷺ put Rahma in this relationship. The quest of the spouses is to search for it. Where does it lie? Rahma lies in the heart from where

you access it to forgive your spouse for doing what you do with Allah ﷺ all day long. It blossoms when you forgive your spouse and make Allah ﷺ your witness and say (silently), "O! My Rabb, forgive me as I have forgiven him today." You may wonder why I said, 'As I have forgiven him' and not 'him/her'. Those among you who are married, know. Those who are still to be married will find out soon enough. To understand this is also a sign of Rahma. Rahma is to forgive, not from a state of superiority but understanding clearly that you also need that forgiveness, perhaps even more.

Rahma is to honor the spouse for what you received, when for reasons of humanity or mortality, your spouse is no longer able to fulfill his or her role in your life. Rahma is the greatest of the blessings of Allah ﷺ and the greatest honor that He ﷺ granted this relationship, the marriage.

As I mentioned, all this is dependent on one basic fact; obedience to Allah ﷺ from whom we draw the authority that makes this relationship legal and an act of worship. It is essential therefore not to contaminate and adulterate the relationship with any custom, practice, ceremony or action that amounts to the disobedience of Allah ﷺ. I don't need to list all that is done today in Muslim weddings, all of which is gross disobedience of Allah ﷺ and so draws with it, His ﷺ anger. Little wonder therefore that divorce rates are soaring and weddings are falling apart. Who is more foolish that the one who fools himself imagining that anything good can come out of disobeying Allah ﷺ? Who is a greater hypocrite than the one who disobeys Allah ﷺ in every possible way in the conducting of the marriage and in living it but runs to the Qazi asking for his or her rights in Islam when things fall apart. I think it is time to stop fooling yourself. Understand that you, the bride and groom are adults. It is your life that we are talking about. This is your marriage and so make sure that you don't allow any disobedience of Allah ﷺ to take place in it, no matter who puts pressure on you.

I ask Allah ﷺ to bless this marriage and to fill the lives of this couple and all those who are here, with His Noor and Baraka and to be pleased with them and enable

them to live lives that are always pleasing to Him.