



## DUTIES AND REWARDS IN A MARRIAGE

Nikah is a great Sunnah of our Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), about which he has said, “He who marries secures one half of his religion, so let him beware of Allah where the other half is concerned.” However, with marriage comes responsibilities and duties which need to be fulfilled by both spouses in order for the marriage to be successful. Insha Allah below we will discuss a few points regarding the duties of the husband and wife as well as the rewards they attain, as told to us by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Allah Ta’ala states in the Glorious Qur’an, “They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them.” [Surah 2, Verse 187] The purpose of a garment is to protect, beautify and hide the faults and blemishes of the person wearing the garment. In the same way the husband and wife should protect, beautify and hide the faults of each other. Instead, we find today that husbands instead of protecting their wives, abuse them and both husband and wife expose each other’s faults to everyone. This type of behaviour goes against what Allah Ta’ala has told us in the Holy Qur’an and we should correct our behaviour if we are to have success in our marriages.

Regarding the rights of the wife, Allah Ta’ala states in the Holy Qur’an, “...And treat them with kindness.” [Surah 4, Verse 19] From this we learn that Allah Ta’ala has commanded us to treat our wives with kindness. In another Verse Allah Ta’ala states regarding Talaaq, “...Retain them with honour and release them with kindness. And do not retain them intending harm that you may transgress the limit.” [Surah 2, Verse 231] Here again we are commanded to treat them with kindness even though we might be giving them Talaaq.

Regarding the above verse, Mufti Ahmad Yaar Khan Naemi (Rahmatullah Alaih) states that to increase the period of Iddat merely to gain something from the wife or to ill-treat her is regarded as cruel and sinful. The laws of Allah must not be treated lightly by using marriage or divorce as a means of tormenting the wife. If you do this you will be in great harm, as you will become the criminal of Allah. [Tafseer Noorul Irfaan]

Regarding the duties of the husband, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated, “The best of you is the best to his family. If you spend a dinar in Allah’s cause, a dinar to free a slave, a dinar in alms for the poor, and a dinar for your family, the most meritorious is the one you spend on your family.” [Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2] We should take heed of this because many of us are miserly when it comes to spending on the family, yet the entire community knows us to be very generous people due to the amount of charity we give to others. From this Hadith we learn that spending on the family reaps the most reward; and why not, when we know that to look after the family is incumbent on the husband, whereas to give charity is a Nafil Ibaadat.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, “The most perfect of believers in faith is he who has the best character, and is most gentle towards his family.” [Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2]

In another Hadith Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) reiterated, “The perfect believer is one who is the best in courtesy and good manners, and the best among you people is one who is most kind and courteous to his wives.” [Tirmidhi Shareef]

In yet another Hadith regarding the duty of the husband, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "It is sin enough for a man to neglect those in his care. [*Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2*]

He further said, "The best of you is the best toward his wife, and I am the best of you toward my wives." [*Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2*] We can therefore see that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stressed in numerous Ahadith how to treat our wives and hence we should try to follow the example of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and be gentle and kind to our wives.

Hazrat Imam Hassan (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), the beloved grandson of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), states that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) once said, "You must treat the womenfolk with kind consideration, for they are captives at your disposal. They have nothing they can call their own. You hold them only by virtue of the trust of Allah, and it is only because of the word of Allah that you can claim lawful access to their genital organs." [*Ghunyaat Taalibi Tareeqal Haq, vol. 1*]

Regarding the duties of the wife Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "The best of your women is she who is pleased when her husband looks at her, who obeys him when he commands her, and who guards for him in his absence both herself and his property." [*Ibn Majah*]

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, "The woman who leaves the house without the permission of her husband is cursed by the angels until she returns." [*Tibraani*]

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) further stated, "A woman who dies, leaving her husband content with her, will enter Paradise." [*Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2*]

The greatest right of the husband is that the wife should obey him in every respect, as long as he does not command anything against the Shariah. Once, a man who was going on a journey made his wife promise that she would not come downstairs from the upper quarters of the house. Now, her father lived downstairs and he fell sick. The woman therefore sent for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to ask permission to go down to her father. The Blessed Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Obey your husband!" Then her father passed away, so she asked again, but again he said, "Obey your husband!" Then her father was buried. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then sent word to her that Allah Ta'ala had forgiven her father on account of her obedience to her husband." [*Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2*] From this incident we learn how much Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stressed for the wives to obey the husband and we also learn that the wife's obedience to the husband has merits that we ourselves cannot sometimes understand.

Let us now look at some of the rewards that are attained in a marriage. Hazrat Anas (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) reported that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Whenever a woman takes something away from her husband's house and disposes of it, wishing to effect an improvement by doing so, Allah Ta'ala records a good deed to her credit, erases a bad deed from her balance sheet and promotes her to a higher spiritual level. Whenever a woman becomes pregnant by her husband and bears his child, her spiritual reward is equal to that of the man who stays awake all night in prayer, of the man who fasts all day long, and of the warrior in the cause of Allah. Whenever a woman experiences labour pains, for every pain she is credited with the emancipation of a living soul, for every act of suckling she is credited with the manumission of a slave, and then, when she weans her child, an angelic voice calls out to her from the heavens, "O

woman, you have satisfactorily completed the task in the time that has gone by, so set about the task anew in the time that still remains.””

On hearing this, Hazrat Aisha Siddiqa (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anha) said, “The women seem to have been given a lot, so what about all you menfolk?” The Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) smiled at this and then went on to say, “Whenever a man takes his wife seductively by the hand, Allah Ta’ala records a good deed to his credit. When he hugs her he is credited with ten good deeds. When he has sexual intercourse with her, it is worth more than this world and all that it contains. Then, when he gets up to perform Ghusl, the water does not reach a hair on his body without a good deed being recorded in his favour, a bad deed being erased from his balance sheet, and a promotion to a higher spiritual level being awarded to him. What he receives for his Ghusl is worth more than this world and all that it contains. Allah Ta’ala will commend him to the angels in glowing terms, saying, “Just look at My servant! He got up in the middle of a chilly night to remove his ritual impurity by taking a bath. He must be surely convinced that I am his Lord. Bear witness, all of you, to the fact that I have forgiven him!”” [ *Ghunyaal Taalibi Tareeqal Haq, vol. 1* ]

On another occasion Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “Whoever endures his wife’s bad character, Allah will give him a reward like that He gave to Hazrat Ayub (Alaihis Salaam) for his tribulation, while to one who endures the bad character of her husband, Allah will give a recompense like that of Hazrat Asiya (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anha), the wife of Firoun.” [ *Ihya-ul-Uloom, Vol. 2* ]

Hazrat Anas (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) reports that once the women sent him as their representative to Allah’s Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and asked him to say on their behalf, “Ya Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the menfolk have carried off all the merit, especially for doing battle in the cause of Allah, so what worthy task is there for us to perform, by which we could match the worthy task of those warriors in the cause of Allah?” Our Beloved Aaqa (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, “The housework done by any one of you women, in her own home, is equal to the worthy task of those warriors in the cause of Allah.” [ *Ghunyaal Taalibi Tareeqal Haq, vol. 1* ]

In another Hadith, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated, “The best of the men in my Ummah are those who are the best to their wives, and the best of the women in my Ummah are those who are the best to their husbands. In the credit account of every woman among them, every day and night, there is filed the reward of a thousand martyrs, slain while fighting patiently and self-sacrificingly in the cause of Allah. The superiority of any such woman over the maidens of Paradise is comparable to the superiority of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) over the most inferior man amongst you. The best woman of all in my Ummah is she who seeks to delight her husband in everything that gives him pleasure, as long as it involves no disobedience to Almighty Allah. The best man of all in my Ummah is he who treats his wife as tenderly as a mother would treat her child. To the credit of every such man, every day and night, there is recorded the reward of a hundred martyrs, slain while fighting patiently and self-sacrificingly in the cause of Allah.”

When Hazrat Umar ibn Khattaab (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) heard this he exclaimed, “Ya Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), how can it be that the woman is credited with the reward of a thousand martyrs while the man gets only that of a hundred martyrs?”

The Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, "Surely you must have realized by now that the woman is entitled to a vastly greater recompense, and to a far superior spiritual reward, since Allah Ta'ala promotes the man to higher spiritual levels in the Garden of Paradise, above and beyond his personal level of attainment, because of his wife's approval of him and in response to her prayer of supplication (Dua) on his behalf? Surely you must have realized by now that the most serious sinful offense after the attribution of partners to Allah Ta'ala is that committed by a wife when she disobeys her husband? You must be very conscious of your duty to Almighty Allah, especially where the two weaklings are concerned, because Allah will hold you responsible for them both, namely the orphan and the woman. If someone treats them well, he will attain to Allah and earn His good pleasure, but if anyone treats them badly, he can be sure of nothing but Allah's wrath. The right of the wife over the husband is like my right over you. If someone fails to respect my right, he has failed to respect the right of Allah. If anyone fails to respect the right of Allah, he has brought the wrath of Allah upon himself; the place he is bound for is Hell, and that is a terrible destination!" [*Ghunyaalit Taalibi Tareeqal Haq, vol. 1*]

It is therefore important for both spouses to be firmly convinced of the reality of the spiritual reward referred to in the above Ahadith, at the time of the marriage contract as well as throughout their subsequent conjugal relationship. Each must faithfully discharge the duty owed to the other, in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah, "And the women have rights similar to those over them according to law, and men have superiority over them and Allah is Dominant, Wise." [*Surah 2, Verse 228*] This is required of them so that they may both be obedient to Almighty Allah and may both be in compliance with His commandment.

From these Qur'anic Verses and Ahadith we should remember that in the same way that it is incumbent on the husband to treat the wife gently and with kindness, similarly it is incumbent on the wife to be strictly obedient to the husband. The problem in this day and age is that couples get married without knowing their respective rights and duties and insignificant matters lead to huge arguments and divorces. Both spouses usually fail to some extent in fulfilling their obligations.

Insha Allah we should all make an effort to gain the knowledge about marriage and the responsibilities therein so that we may realise our duties and identify our shortcomings. We should also, before criticizing the other or being harsh with the other due to some shortcoming, look at ourselves first and realize our own shortcomings so that we may strive to correct ourselves. And most importantly we must try to attain the knowledge of how Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) treated his beloved wives and how they respected and obeyed him so that we may follow their most beautiful example and live in harmony Insha Allah.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to gain the knowledge pertaining to the rights of the husband and wife and may He in His Infinite Mercy grant us the Taufeeq to follow the beautiful example of His Beloved Habeeb (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Ameen.