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Extraneous Customs in Marriage and Divorce

All praise is due to Allah, Who has honored us above the nations through the Glorious Qur'an, through which He has refined our souls with its promises and warnings as well. It is a Book that falsehood cannot approach from before it or from behind it—a revelation from One Who is All-Wise, Praiseworthy.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, with no partner. It is a testimony whose reward remains as a lasting provision. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, and his Companions, people of virtue and sound judgment, and may He grant him abundant peace until the Day of Increase.

"O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims (in submission to Him)." (Aal `Imran 3:102)

O Muslims!

Among the universal principles upon which Islamic law is founded is making matters easy for those who are obligated to follow it and removing hardship from them. Therefore, the Qur'an and Sunnah contain numerous texts affirming this great principle. Allah, the Exalted, says: **"Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship."** (Al-Baqarah 2:185)

And He, Glorified is He, says: **"And has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty."** (AL-Hajj 22:78)

The guidance of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was based on this principle. Whenever he was given a choice between two matters, he would choose the easier of them, so long as it did not involve sin.

If this principle applies to all acts of worship and dealings, then it is even more applicable and appropriate to family affairs. The family is the foundation of society. Whenever the ease prescribed by Islamic law becomes part of family life, homes become more stable, marriage becomes easier, its financial burden becomes lighter, and rights are preserved in the event of divorce.

But when people replace the guidance of Islamic law with burdensome customs and foreign practices, ease turns into hardship, and what Allah has made a means of tranquility and affection becomes a source of difficulty and conflict.

O Believers!

It is painful that some people are no longer governed by the rulings of Islamic law as much as they are governed by the customs of society. Some customs, despite their corruption and deviation, have come to take precedence over the texts of Islamic law, on the pretext that this is what people commonly practice.

How astonishing! Is the behavior of people the standard by which truth is measured?

Allah, the Exalted, says: **“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying.”** (Al-An`am 6:116)

Some people have become more afraid of what others will say than of going against the Sunnah. Thus, one of them says, “I know this is unnecessary and burdensome, but what will people say?”

In this way, people’s opinions become the authority governing families.

‘Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “None of you should be an imma`ah.” They asked, “O Abu `Abdul-Rahman, what is an imma`ah?” He replied: “It is someone who says, ‘I simply follow the people: if they are rightly guided, I am rightly guided, and if they go astray, I go astray.’ Rather, each of you should resolve within himself that even if the people were to disbelieve, he would not disbelieve.”

O believers!

Allah has made the dowry an obligation upon the husband and a right belonging exclusively to the wife. Allah, the Most High, says: **“And give the women (upon marriage) their (bridal) gifts graciously. But if they give up willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease.”** (An-Nisaa' 4:4)

Alongside the dowry, a few modest gifts—such as clothing, jewelry, or perfume—may traditionally be given to the bride as a gesture of affection and to bring her happiness. In our societies, this may be known as the dazdah.

However, today it has deviated from its intended purpose and taken an undesirable course in our societies. It has moved beyond its simple and spontaneous nature and become a means of boasting and outdoing others, a field for showing off and taking pride, and a source of widespread competition among families over appearances and unnecessary extravagance.

Such practices contradict the teachings of Islamic law, which encourage making matters easy, discourage extravagance and arrogance, and seek to close the doors to boasting and competition among people.

Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Among the signs of a woman’s good fortune are making her engagement easy, making her dowry easy, and making her kinship easy.” (Ahmad; graded authentic by al-Albani)

O Believers:

Among the matters that have placed a heavy burden on people in our time is the multiplication of celebrations before and after marriage. No sooner is the marriage contract concluded than one occasion follows another, banquets are repeated, and celebrations multiply, until marriage has become a series of successive expenses.

The issue is not with joy and expressing happiness, for that is permissible. Rather, the problem lies in unnecessary extravagance and excess, and in turning these occasions into customs that people feel pressured to maintain.

Thus, the joy that Islam intended to be simple and manageable becomes a financial burden that exhausts families, delays the marriage of young people, and draws them into an unnecessary cycle of debt.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, saw traces of saffron on Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him). He said: “What is this?” He replied, “I have married a woman for a dowry of gold equal in weight to a date stone.” He said: “May Allah bless you. Hold a wedding feast, even if only with one sheep.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

I say these words of mine and seek Allah’s forgiveness for myself and for you. So seek His forgiveness; indeed, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

The Second Khutbah

All praise is due to Allah for His grace and kindness, and all thanks are due to Him for His guidance and blessings. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah alone, without partner, in recognition of His greatness. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, who called mankind to that which pleases his Lord. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, his Companions, and his brothers in faith.

To proceed,

Fear Allah, servants of Allah. For in fearing Him lies the happiness of His servants, and it is the finest provision with which one can prepare for the Day of Return.

Allah, the Exalted, says: **“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow—and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.”** (Al-Hash 59:18)

O Muslims!

Just as extraneous customs have found their way into marriage and placed heavy burdens upon people, divorce has likewise not been spared from newly introduced practices that distort its proper purpose in Islam.

Although divorce is permissible when there is a genuine need for it, it marks the end of a relationship that was once founded upon affection and mercy. For this reason, the Shari'ah has surrounded divorce with guidelines that preserve dignity, safeguard rights, prevent vindictiveness and revenge, and ensure that separation is handled with justice and decency.

Among the most objectionable practices to have emerged in this regard is what has come to be known as a “divorce party.”

A moment marked by pain, the dissolution of a family, and the emotional impact upon children is transformed into an occasion for celebration and public displays of joy—as though the breakdown of a Muslim household were something to rejoice over!

This is contrary to the objectives of the Shari'ah, which commands kindness even at the point of separation. Allah, the Most High, says:

“Either retain (her) according to acceptable terms or release (her) with good treatment.” (Al-Baqarah 2:229)

True kindness does not consist in greeting divorce with loud and ostentatious displays, nor in using it as an opportunity to inflame resentment or hurt the other party.

Rather, this chapter of life should be brought to a close with dignity, discretion, respect for one another's rights, and mercy toward the children.

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Iblis places his throne upon water; he then sends detachments [to cause dissension]. The nearer to him in rank are those who are most notorious in creating dissension. One of them comes and says, ‘I did so and so,’ and he says, ‘You have done nothing.’ Then one amongst them comes and says, ‘I did not spare him until I separated him from his wife.’ The Satan goes near him and says, ‘You have done well.’” Al-A'mash said: “I think he said: ‘Then he embraces him.’” (Muslim)

A deed that Iblis takes such pleasure in—how, then, can a believer celebrate it?

This practice, although thankfully not known in our society, has appeared in some Muslim communities and has been promoted through social media.

O Blessed Believers!

Marriage and divorce are among the most consequential affairs of human life. Islam therefore does not leave them to personal whims or ever-changing social customs. Rather, it has surrounded both with rulings that safeguard faith, protect the family, and serve the welfare of those involved.

Whatever customs people observe that are consistent with the Shari`ah may be regarded as sound and acceptable. But any custom that conflicts with the commands of Allah and the guidance of His Messenger ﷺ has no legitimacy in Islam, even if people have practiced it for generation after generation.

So, make marriage easier for young people. Facilitate for them the means to remain chaste. Do not burden them with expenses that Allah has not required of them.

And when divorce does take place, let it be a separation conducted with dignity and kindness—not spite or revenge.

Let the guiding principle of husbands and wives be the words of Allah, the Exalted: **“And do not forget graciousness between you.”** (Al-Baqarah 2:237)

We ask Allah to set right the homes of the Muslims and to bring harmony and affection between spouses.

O Allah, help us fulfill the trust You have placed upon us, and protect us from betrayal and treachery.

O Allah, suffice us with what You have made lawful instead of what You have forbidden, and enrich us by Your grace so that we need no one besides You.

O Allah, make faith beloved to us and beautify it in our hearts, and make disbelief, wickedness, and disobedience hateful to us. Make us among those who are rightly guided.

O Allah, grant strength and honor to Islam and the Muslims, humble disbelief and those who associate partners with You, and frustrate hypocrisy and the hypocrites. Grant victory to Your religion, Your Book, the Sunnah of Your Prophet ﷺ, and Your believing servants.

O Allah, forgive the Muslim men and women and the believing men and women, those who are living and those who have passed away.

O Allah, guide our Amir and his Crown Prince to that which pleases You, and make their deeds devoted to Your obedience and Your pleasure.

O Allah, make this country safe and secure, prosperous and peaceful—a land of security and faith—and grant the same to all Muslim lands.

(Committee for preparing the model sermon for Friday Prayer.)