Marriage Issues

Today we shall discuss about the reasons for people opting for polygamy. This discussion is neither on jurisprudence nor on the cultural aspect of human life. It pertains only to the morality of polygamy.

Need for Having More than One Wife

The first category of people who opt for having more than one wife are those whose first wife is ill and is unable to satisfy their sexual desires and is also physically incapable of performing the household chores. In such a situation the husband is forced to marry a second wife. The institution of marriage is considered to be very important and necessary in Islam. Christianity strictly enforces monogamy, hence its followers are facing a lot of problems.

The second category is that of people whose wives are physiologically incapable of bearing children. In such cases both husband and wife desire a child. But it is very rare that such wives agree to the husband bringing home another wife to mother a child. I appeal to such women to arrange a second marriage for their husbands. They can look for a suitable girl to adjust with the family and live amicably.

Marriage for Carnal Satisfaction

Some men opt for polygamy to satisfy their lust. They think that more than one wife will provide a variety to them. Despite having a wife at home, they marry a second wife, and then a third. If possible they make a harem for themselves. This attitude arises from a very serious moral problem. The pursuit of these desires pushes a person into a dangerous valley because such desires can never be fulfilled; the person always wants more and more. There is no end to it. If you try to fulfil your desire, you will never be fully satisfied.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq says that even if a person has a quantity of gold and silver equal to that of a river, he will not be satisfied. Similar is the case of the sexual instinct, the more you try to satisfy it, the more you will crave for it.

Thus we find that the caliphs of the Ummayad and Abbasid clans had made special dens of vice, with hundreds of women, but they always wanted to add more. The more they tried to satisfy their carnal lust, the more they craved for it. But, what is the source of this craving? Psychologists say that when men stare at women, chase them, when women move around without hijab, boldly look at and talk with namahram men, then the sexual lust is aroused.

Once this happens, a man who has a beautiful and young wife, marries a second and a third; and even then continues to stare at young girls, and is still not satisfied! He dreams of setting up a harem like that of Haroun al Rashid. Similarly, those inappropriately dressed women who talk and laugh with and pay attention to namahram men are, according to the psychologists, in a very dangerous situation.

Once a woman lands in this condition, she is not shy of exposing even her sensitive body parts like the hair, bosom and the arms to namahram men. For example, we often find young women going to shops wearing sleeveless shirts, so that the shopkeeper can see their bare arms..

Similarly some women sit out in the streets without covering themselves with a chadar. Psychologists say that the cause of all these conditions is the craving of the sex instinct in the human race. We also come across some old men, who are sexually weak, but stare at young girls with lustful eyes. If such a person is a shop keeper, he stares at more than a hundred young girls a day and glances at women with lustful eyes. Islam considers this to be a very dangerous situation. For a man and especially for a woman to be lounging in the street is a wrong act, especially when she is without proper hijab. Such a woman has no character. A respectable woman would not be out in the streets without proper hijab. She would be in her house, caring for her children, and her home. If she has some free time, she would read a good book, or listen to a religious cassette. Another problem is that when two or three women get together they must backbite, and accuse others falsely. Such women should know that Hadhrat Fatema Zahra (s.a) is not pleased with them. If such women claim to be the slaves of Hadhrat Zahra (s.a), they are lying because Hadhrat Zahra (s.a) has nothing to do with such women. Going back to our topic, the basis of the second type of polygamy is a craving for sex. When a person practices polygamy only for sexual lust, he is not only cheating others but is also cheating himself. He says that he is remarrying for reward. In fact he only exposes himself to retribution because he wants to attain a reward by lying. He is really marrying only to satisfy his lust.

The moralists condemn such marriages. Beware and don't make yourselves the slaves of your desires. Don't become engrossed in satisfying your hearts desires. Don't fill your stomachs to the full, do not sleep too much, do not be lazy, and do not become talkative. Keep to the path of moderation; know that marrying for lust is wrong; the educators of ethics condemn such marriages. We quote here a remark made by an eminent scholar of ethics. Only the people who have developed themselves can utter such valuable words. When we ponder over their utterances, we can't help but wonder. One of the senior jurists of Najaf al-Ashraf used to live in Karbala.

He was Aga Sayed Ibrahim Qazwini. He was very erudite and because of his exemplary manners he was very popular among the students. The daughter of Fath Ali Shah, Zia al Saltana, took a divorce from her husband. She was a very pretty and young damsel. After taking the divorce she settled down in a place near Karbala. Since she was all alone now, she sent word to Aga Qazwini through someone that she wished to marry him The Aga replied that his marrying Zia al Saltana was not appropriate. They were incompatible because while he himself was an old man, she was very young; she was a princess and he was a poor student of jurisprudence struggling to make ends meet.

The following day a message came to the Aga from the princess that she would be proud to marry him and that she wished her name to be joined to his! She said that she didn't expect any monetary support from him and, to the contrary, she offered to meet all his household expenses. When the late Aga Ibrahim saw that the girl was very determined, he sent word to her that his wife was a middle aged woman of forty and had adjusted very well with his penury. For many years she had put up with his penury, and had tolerated enough troubles. Now by remarrying, he did not want to create further troubles for her; hence he was not at all inclined towards marrying the princess. She was happily spending her life with him. He wished not to create any problems for her bringing home another wife. In these circumstances he forcefully turned down the proposal of the princess!"

Aga Ibrahim's words may surprise some people. But in my opinion, these words teach us a lot. I appeal to those who want to remarry for the sake of reward should instead bear the expenses of the woman they wanted to marry (and her children). This will bring a better reward to him. Imam Musa bin Jafar (a.s) has said that if he was able to foot the expenses of a needy family for a week, it would be better than performing hajj a seventy times!

Marriage of Compulsion

The third type of marriage is the marriage of compulsion. Human beings have certain desires that get satisfied sometimes, and remain unsatisfied at other times. The unsatisfied desires slowly move from the conscious to the subconscious mind. According to the psychologists, when this happens a kind of a knot is formed in the heart which is very dangerous. If this person has the knowledge and the means, he will set the entire world on fire.

Sometimes women don't discharge their responsibilities. As I mentioned in my previous talk, they are not mindful about the small but very important things and unable to fulfil their small responsibilities that assume bigger proportions later on. For example: when the husband returns home from work, the wife receives him with a glum face instead of giving him a smiling

reception. When such an attitude becomes a habit, the husband starts thinking that perhaps he will be more comfortable if he marries a second wife. Thus, he is hurt by his wife and re-marries, assuming that he will be free of such troubles in his second marriage. If, unfortunately, he faces the same type of treatment from the second wife, he might opt for a third marriage.

He searches for peace and comfort by re-marrying. These are the marriages of compulsion. I want to ask the ladies if a husband marries again and again, who is really at fault? The wives must admit that they are at fault because they did not keep their husbands happy. They did not discharge the responsibility that Islam had given them. They did not heed the advice of the psychologists. The most important function of a wife is to provide comfort to her husband. She must be careful about the small things in the daily life, the neglect of which might bring about serious consequences for her. What are the things that create trouble and turmoil for the wife?

It is her neglect, her laziness and her lack of understanding that create such troubles for her. Here I recount a historical event. There was a woman, Umm Sulaym, at the time of the Prophet (s). She was the wife of one of the Ansaar. She was a native of Madina. Her husband was a craftsman and an intelligent man. Both husband and wife had embraced Islam. Both used to fulfil their duties. They had a son about two to three years of age. Once, the child fell ill. One day after the man had left for work, the child died. The woman sat near the dead child and kept crying. After a while she thought that the child was dead and cannot come back to life. She decided that she should not make her husband sad and restless. So she kept the body of the son in such a place where her husband would not see it, because she thought that if he received this sad news as soon as he entered the house, he will also become very miserable. Then she changed clothes and adorned herself for her husband. Upon his arrival, she herself opened the door, and greeted him. After exchanging pleasantries the husband inquired about the condition of the child. The wife said, “Alhamdu Lillah! He is well!” They sat down, talked, and relaxed.

When it was time for salah (prayer) they performed the ghusl (bath). The husband wished to attend the congregational prayer with the Prophet (s). Before he left home she asked him, “If someone keeps something valuable with you for safe-keeping and returns to claim it after sometime, and you refuse to give it back! What will be the consequence of the act?” The husband said, “That would be very bad, not to return what has been entrusted for safe-keeping is a big sin!

” The wife said “Two years back Allah had given us something for safe-keeping. Now that the time has come for us to return it, Allah has taken it back from us. Our dear child is no more! Therefore go and offer your prayers with the Prophet (s) and then inform your friends so that

they can attend his burial." The husband said, "Alhamdu Lillah!" I don't know why the man thanked Allah at that moment. Whatever he praised Allah for was appropriate, but he must have praised Allah the most for giving him a good wife.

As for those who strive for Us, we surely guide them to Our paths, and lo! Allah is with the good. Sura Ankabut: 69 The man entered the mosque. It appeared as if the Prophet (s) was waiting for him. The Prophet (s) congratulated him. The same night the woman became pregnant. The couple was blessed with a son again. He grew into a wise, intelligent and learned person.

Scholars have written a lot about him. Allah had blessed the couple with a son better than the one that was taken away from them! I ask the ladies, that if they try to emulate Umm Sulaym, will their husbands continue to shout or hit them? No. It is your own fault that your husband doesn't appear happy at home, shouts or becomes violent. This is because you don't look after your husband and children properly; you don't take care of the house properly. Come morning and the woman is out in the street, and that too without hijab, talking and laughing.

In the afternoon the husband returns home only to find a dirty house, a dirty wife and dirty children. There is no trace of any lunch. When faced with this situation, he is forced to consider re-marriage. He thinks that, perhaps, the second wife will keep his home; the children and herself clean, and prepare meals on time. When he re- marries, the first wife starts crying.

Ladies! Don't become the cause of your own misfortune! If you make yourself a good housewife, take care of your husband, children and home properly, there will be no reason for your husband to re-marry. Times are such that the husband can barely afford one wife, how will he support the second wife. Inspite of this if he re-marries, it is your own fault – you neglected to look after him, forcing him to re-marry. This is termed as marriage of compulsion.

On Divorce

Today's topic of discussion is divorce. In Islam divorce is the most detested of the legitimate acts. It is well known that the Prophet of Islam (s) has said:

In my view the most undesirable thing is divorce Christianity forbids divorce under all circumstances save one, but this meeting is not the correct place to discuss it. There is so much adultery prevalent in the Western societies, because the couples have to continue with incompatible marriages. When we study the statistics regarding divorce in Iran, we find that the numbers are increasing year after year. This is happening despite the undesirability of divorce. Divorce is becoming like a trend in our society!

In Post-Revolution Iran, divorce has emerged as a major problem for the society. There has

been a lot of debate on this issue, still the numbers keep increasing. Why is it so? We shall try to find an answer to this question in our discussion today. We know that for our beloved Prophet (s), divorce was most undesirable thing. Today we shall analyse why this undesirable practice has assumed such formidable proportions! Just as marriage was divided into three parts divorce too will be discussed in three parts.

Types of Divorce

Divorce of Necessity

One category of divorce is the divorce of necessity that Islam permits under strictly defined conditions. Islam says that although divorce is undesirable, it is permissible under the law of Shariah. If a person's hand develops gangrene, it must be amputated. If the hand is not amputated, the gangrene will spread to the whole body. The affected person will not be happy, but he is resigned to his fate and even thanks and pays the doctor for cutting his hand and saving the rest of his body from gangrene.

Necessary divorce can be treated like amputation of the hand when the unfortunate person is afflicted with cancer. Sometimes the husband and wife are totally incompatible, and despite of forgiving and overlooking shortcomings, notwithstanding the sacrifices, things just don't work out. Sometimes a pious and upright man is married to an amoral woman. Or a chaste woman is married to a lecherous and impious man. This impious man is incompatible with the virtuous lady, he feels as if he has been imprisoned. There is no solution to this problem except divorce. It is impossible to reconcile the two, they should be separated.

In such situations, the divorce law is a very useful one, from the point of view of Islam as well as the society. Even Christianity accepts that the Islamic provision of divorce, with all its conditions, is appropriate. Without the divorce law, Islam would be incomplete. This law is applied when there is no other solution except separation. When a woman is not able to adjust with her husband, she becomes wayward and the husband is not able to reform her, then separation is the only solution.

If a husband becomes amoral, and is beyond reform, then it becomes necessary for the wife to separate from him. Here divorce is necessary. But such cases are very rare. If these were the reasons for divorce, there would not be more than a hundred divorces throughout the country. The sheer number of divorces tells us that these are not the divorces of necessity.

Ladies who do not observe the hijab should know that they are oppressors, and on the Day of Judgement they will be grouped with the oppressors. What can be more oppressive than flaming the passions of unmarried men by not wearing the hijab, by displaying ones face and

body to unmarried men which then leads them to sin? The fire of passion is not an ordinary one. If this youth falls into sin, it is because of this woman who refuses to cover herself. Some women go shopping and display all their feminine charms to the shopkeeper, just to strike a bargain. Some women exceed the limits of decent behaviour. They sell their respect in order to buy some cloth or a pair of socks. When I say that they sell their respect, I do not mean that they indulge fornication. I mean that they laugh and joke with namahram men and display all their charms to them. This is, in a way, selling oneself. Selling oneself does not only mean indulging in fornication; that is the final step on this ladder.

Divorce for Carnal Satisfaction

The second type of divorce is one given for vile reasons; this divorce is given for the satisfaction of the carnal desires. For example, a careless man is attracted to a woman and in order to marry her, he divorces his wife. Worse than this is when a woman gets attracted to a man, becomes rebellious and wants her husband to grant her a divorce so that she can marry her lover. These are divorces sought for vile reasons. These are divorces sought for satisfying passions.

This type of divorce is found to be more amongst careless people. I consider it necessary to point out the reasons for such divorces, and I request the ladies to please pay special attention. This is the result of mingling of the sexes, because men and women look at each other, because men and women talk to each other unnecessarily, and more than all this it is because of a lack of hijab or wearing clothes deemed inappropriate by Islam. One type of 'selling oneself' is when the woman wears a dress that exposes some of her body, goes out of her house and shows her body to namahram men. A type of 'selling oneself' is when a woman attracts the attention of the shopkeeper by displaying her charms and joking with him. He in turn laughs and jokes and talks seductively. This type of woman, who sells herself, should know that she is a big oppressor, because the Satan comes to this shopkeeper or namahram man, and then presents this woman to him. When this happens all the love the man has for his wife disappears and things reach such a stage that he divorces his wife and the children are left without any support. All this happens because the woman displayed her feminine charms to the shopkeeper or to the namahram man. This is a great oppression and attracts an equally great retribution.

A thing which brings about great turmoil is infatuation. This is an ailment which is worse than the cancer. All types of infatuations, whether between persons of the same sex, that is between two girls or two boys, or between a man and a woman, are like cancerous diseases. If, God

forbid, someone becomes inflicted with this disease he can never get along with his wife. Even if she does everything for him, he wants to leave her. He does not even care about his own self-respect. When we read the poetry of lovers, we find that the first thing a person loses in the path of infatuation is his self-respect and dignity. What is the source of this infatuation? This is born out of lust for sex. Beware! Don't let Satan mislead you. When two boys or two girls "love" each other, this "love" arises out of lust for sex, even if they call it love. Love, in the name of Allah, love for the sake of Allah only, is rare. The truth is what Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s) has said: When the love of the Lord departs from a person's heart, then the love of someone else occupies its place.

Exchanging Glances and Meeting Each Other

Some experts are of opinion that there are certain rays in the human body, which emanate from the eyes in the form of love. Therefore, Islam forbids people from looking at each other with the feelings of lust. The safest attitude is to refrain from looking at a namahram. Men should not talk with women except when necessary. They should not look at women except when necessary.

In the Holy Quran there are several verses on this subject. At one place it tells the women not to adorn themselves and beautify themselves for namahrams. At another place, it tells the women that they should talk with namahram only to the extent absolutely necessary. At yet another place it tells the men and women not to look at each other. In the chapter of Ahzaab the Quran addresses the Prophet (s) thus:

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their cover garments; that they may be known, so that they will not be troubled, God is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. Sura Ahzaab: 59 Therefore, according to the Holy Quran the respectability, the dignity, the status and the value of a woman lies in covering herself. Muslim women must be recognized because of their veil. If a woman does not cover her face, and a man falls in love with her, then there is nothing for her except shame. God forbid that a married woman herself falls in love with someone. This will be the most shameful thing, and believe me, the following verse of the Holy Quran is most suitable for this man and woman: He loseth both the world and the Hereafter. That is the sheer loss. Sura al Hajj: 11

The divorces taking place in such circumstances are due to the behaviour of women who display their charms to namahram men; those veiled and unveiled women who are not careful about the way in which they speak and talk. Women are beautiful and so attractive that the Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams (a.s.) have said that if a woman is walking ahead of a

man, he should not look at the back of that woman! He should not walk behind her, but should allow a gap between them. This discretion is advised because women are attractive for men; if this attraction turns into adoration, and even if the woman does not respond to the man, both the man and the woman will suffer.

Islam has advised men not to immediately sit in a place vacated by a woman. The man may occupy the seat after it has become cold, so that the warmth of the seat does not give rise to satanic thoughts in him. Many divorces take place because women don't observe proper hijab, or because women talk to men or because they display their feminine charms. I appeal to the ladies to take special care in covering their bodies. If a namahram man looks at you with lust, you will be unsuccessful in this world as well as in the hereafter.

I would like to see separate public transport for men and women. If this is not possible, then at least there should be separate areas in the buses for men and women. God forbid, that a woman should share a seat with a man, or that the bodies of namahram men and women should touch each other, while travelling or standing in a bus, even if only their clothes come in contact. This is extremely dangerous. The woman is like a priceless jewel. Priceless jewels should be secured safely in a box. The more one guards priceless articles, the more these can be protected from thieves. Ladies and gentlemen, you should be wise in the way you behave and speak. I ask the men that if your wife does not dress appropriately and steps out of the house and others become besotted with her, then what will happen?

Divorce of Compulsion

The third category of divorce, like the marriage of compulsion, is the divorce of compulsion. Nearly 80% of divorces fall into this category. There can be several reasons for such divorces. The first reason is that the wife doesn't perform her duties properly. She becomes a problem for the man. She neglects to perform the small, but important, tasks. All these small things add up to make the husband lose interest in his spouse. He becomes impatient with her. In extreme cases the distraught husband starts beating and being violent with his wife and children. He couldn't care less, even if he is advised that his wife and children will be left without support. The same husband who used to confront all hardships to support his wife and children turns into a thoughtless and uncaring person.

In certain cases, it is the husband who neglects the small, but really important things. His behaviour at home is undesirable. He is very stingy and rude. The wife becomes so fed-up with him that she starts nitpicking the smallest things. Don't be under the impression that because she is good now, she will continue to be good even after she gets fed-up. No, when the woman

has had enough she will neither bother about the children, nor the relatives, but will be ready to forsake all of them if necessary.

Men should organise their time. People who have achieved something in life always have a timetable to do things. Some people are so particular that even their toilet timings are fixed. They have fixed timings for eating, sleeping and work. Those who organise their time are the successful ones. Thus I request all the men and women to organise their time properly. The men must earmark some time to spend with their children. The wife should not feel lonely. We find some men with their heads in a book all the time.

They are always reading. Gaining knowledge is a good thing, but it should not be at the expense of the wife who feels lonely and sad. It is very dangerous if a person is so busy that he has no time to be with his family. A businessman wakes up in the morning and leaves for work. After dealing with all kinds of people when he returns home in the evening, all he wants is dinner and his bed. This is when he has not brought the accounts register home. Otherwise he falls asleep on the register itself. Such men should be aware that this is very harmful. A time will come when his good wife becomes bad. She loses interest in running the house.

The man remains glued to the mosque while his children attend singing parties. When it is said: 'Work for eight hours and worship for 8 hours,' it does not mean that you should be glued to the mosque for eight hours. It means that your wife and children also have a share in these eight hours. When a man returns home from work in the evening he should ask after the wife before asking after the children, because he is closer to his wife. If a child comes forward, pick him in your arms, but your sight should be on your wife.

Some time ago a woman killed three of her children. She had inflicted seventeen injuries on one of the children. When interrogated, the woman said that whenever her husband came home he gave all his attention to the children and ignored her. She became jealous and decided to kill her children. I am stressing on this topic because sometimes we are faced with such situations. Sometimes a woman telephones us and cries and complains bitterly. When the matter is investigated, we find that her husband is financially well-off, and sexually not lacking. There is one problem: he cannot reach out to his wife. He has no time to sit and talk with her.

The Prophet of Islam (s) says that when a husband reaches home he should talk to his wife before discussing any other matters. Give her the opportunity to relate whatever she wants to. Give her the opportunity to unburden her heart. And listen to her. Don’t interrupt her. Then encourage her and with great kindness help her to solve her problems. Thank her for all the trouble she takes to run the household. Then spend about half an hour talking and playing with

the children.

The children, in one family, became wayward when they grew up. The mother pinned the blame entirely on their father who, she said, was always glued to books or to the Quran. He never had time for them; he never played with them or talked to them. He never asked the children where they were going or where they were coming from. The scholar, the student, the man who, on arriving home, does not pay attention to his wife or children, has usurped their right, and knowledge acquired by usurping someone's right can never be fruitful or useful. This man, this student, should first meet his wife and children and then study. Then, when he has studied for a couple of hours, it is the responsibility of the wife to adorn herself, and attend to him with a cup of tea or at least a glass of water. Greet him with a smile, offer him the tea or coffee and sit next to him. All the tiredness and tedium of the husband would disappear if the wife were to behave in this way.

A person, whose wife had expired, used to cry very much. We asked him why he was so disconsolate. We told him to resign to the Will of Allah. He replied, "I am resigned to the Will of Allah! But I am sad that my well-wisher is in the grave. When I would get tired after a few hours of studying, she would bring me a cup of refreshing tea, and refresh my tired mind. All the books that I have written are thanks to her loving care and attention!"

A scientist says that if I have invented something new or if I have been able to serve the world, it was because of my wife. She always dispelled my tiredness.

If a husband neglects his wife and busies himself all the time in his studies or business, he is faced with a very dangerous situation. This is a reason spouses hate each other, and where there is hate, divorce raises its ugly head. The woman, although she is chaste, good, and respectable, reaches the court and obtains divorce, because her patience is over. She says that she wants peace of mind. She is not even concerned about her children. Such divorces are because of the thoughtlessness of the spouses, and not giving time and attention to each other.

Men don't shoulder their responsibilities; they don't make the woman a part of their lives. Almost 70% of divorces are caused by such attitude of the couples. The husband and wife are suspicious about each other. If the husband is ten minutes late, the wife insults him: "Where were you? Were you with your second wife?" Then the husband retaliates by marrying a second wife, and sometimes a third. These suspicions and baseless thoughts are found in women, and also in some men. But if men are suspicious, they will have to bear a greater retribution.