

Delaying and Ignoring Trends in Marriages A Critical Study in Hadīth Context

Dr. Aftab Aalam*

ABSTRACT

Marriage is a preamble of human life. The human society builds its façade on the characteristics of this unit. Humanity has been granted with divine rules for a successful life. The latest version of divine rules are conveyed through Islam and presented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Early history of Islam declared the grand and everlasting benefits of these rules in all nooks and corners of life; as Qur'ān and Ḥadīth prominences the trend of in-time marriages to ensure the tangible merits of life. Qur'ān declares marriage as 'God given relationship', 'order from God', 'A lawful manner', 'Firm covenant', 'Love and compassion', 'Chastity of life', 'Right of women and Sign of safety' and along with it, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) emphasizes marriage as depicting it a 'Half of religion', 'Protection of eyes', 'Prevention of character from corruption', 'source of Devil's desperation' etc. Owing to this stress of in-time marriages, a Muslim society is not supposed to delay or ignore in time marriages. But in present era, the trend of delaying in making marriages or ignoring the importance of in-time marriages is observing everywhere. This delay in making in-time marriages of young generation shows the weaknesses of faith and confidence in life. It is also the cause of many physical diseases and mental disorders. It destroys the best capabilities and abilities of young force.

This paper highlights the importance of timely marriages, strength of married-couple life and damages of late marriage so that the requisite of Islam to form the society on the desired shape may be fulfilled. Lastly, this article emphasizes the need to review/change the social behavior regarding late marriages it also emphasizes the need to review/change the social behavior regarding late marriages and a herald to initiate some sorts of laws for making in-time marriages in society so that prevailing damages due to late marriages can be curtailed.

Keywords: *Marriage in Islam, Timely Marriage, Half of Religion, Love, Marriage and Sex, Delayed Marriage*

* Assistant Professor, University of Sargodha, Sargodha

Introduction

The role of family in the national reconstruction can be easily understood by the clause (3) of Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UNO) on 10th December 1948, which reads as under:

“The family is the natural and fundamental group of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state.”⁽¹⁾

Family is constituted by the act of marriage. Marriage is constituted by legal intercourse of male and female for a child-birth.⁽²⁾ All three Semitic religions i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, give fundamental importance to marriage for the construction of a flourishing society. In the teachings of Semitic religions, it is obviously taught that those parents who are negligent of in time preparation of their children have no part in their family benefits. In the Old Testaments, parents are enjoined with the responsibility of upbringing of their young ones in these words:

Rear your son, he will give you peace and make yourself happy.⁽³⁾

According to Judaism, but mother is also responsible for the upbringing of children, and religion allocates her big responsibility, in the words of Michael J. Broyde; “Women as conceived by Rabbinic Judaism, above all, are to attend to their children consequently they are exempt from time bond ritual obligations.”⁽⁴⁾

According to Islamic teachings, the Qur’ān displays an obvious message regarding right upbringing of daughters and sons. Allah says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا﴾⁽⁵⁾

O ye who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families, the Fire.

In this and many other verses, the Qur’ān clearly notifies to flourish daughters and sons in a righteous manner and fulfill their needs in time to save families from the Fire.

In any society, marriage is taken as an essential part of life but actually it is usually put to delay, which creates such damages in society that are hard to mend.

-
- (1) Aalam Aftab, Dr., “*Parental Involvement in Educational Spheres*”, (Chiniot: Bismillāh Advertisers Intl. 2002), p.3
 - (2) Grossi Renata, “*Looking for a Love in the Legal Discourse of Marriage*”, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014), p.39
 - (3) Bible, Proverbs 29:17
 - (4) Broyde J. Michael, *Marriage, Sex and Family in Judaism*, (UK: Rowmand and Little Field, 2005), p.245.
 - (5) Sūrah At-Taḥrīm: 06

Youth of Pakistan

The Holy Qur'an has answered the question as to the 'age' when a child would be taken as mature by saying: as

﴿وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ﴾⁽¹⁾

And when the children among you come to puberty

Here, it has been indicated that real maturity is not tied up with any particular count of years. Rather, it depends on particular indicators and signs experienced by adults entering the threshold of adulthood.⁽²⁾ Islamic revealed knowledge does not convey exact age of marriage but it displays such indications pertaining geographical, social and race effects of any community.

The Muslim classical jurists agree that the 'age of marriage' mentioned here is the age of puberty, the age of maturity, this, in the Hanafi School of Islamic law, is 18 years for boys and 17 years for girls.⁽³⁾ Shāfi'ī alone declare that age of 15 years for both genders should be taken as age of marriage/puberty.⁽⁴⁾

According to the atmosphere of Pakistan, the 'Marriageability' or Balūghat time can be estimated round about 13 to 18 year of age for male and 12 to 17 year of age for female. The Statistical Bureau Pakistan announced that population of Pakistan in 1998 census was 196,174,380 in which about 21.5 % were young from 15 to 24 year age. Numbers of male young were 12,724,290 and female young were 12,263,091. So the total number of youth between 15 to 24 year ages was about 24,987,381.⁽⁵⁾ The Census department calculated that average age of marriage in Pakistan was found about 30 years in case of males and 25 years age in case of females.

So it can be easily calculated that about 43 to 45 million youth of Pakistani society has attained the age of marriage but they are going unmarried. They are living without fulfilling a major need of their body and soul, so an unsatisfied life they are living, which causes many mental and physical disturbances and anomalies. These emotional disturbances further disturb the society. This is the one of the fundamental source of frustration, intolerance, quarrelsome behavior, idleness, hyperactivities and other social evils like indulgence in crimes, lawlessness, and also aversion from religion.

(1) Sūrah Al-Nūr: 59

(2) Shaykh al-Ḥur al-Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shiyah*, Vol. 20 (Lebanon; 1677) p. 61-63,

(3) Daryābādī Sheykh 'Abdul-Mājid, *Tafsīr-e-Mājidī*, Introduction by S. 'Abu al-Hassan 'Alī Nadwī, Vol. 1 (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 2007) p. 303

(4) Ibid. p. 304

(5) Pakistani Bureau of Statistics, *Pakistani Statistical Book 2014*, Chapter "Population (15 year and above) by age, sex and marital status in 1998 Census Pakistan", p. 335

Marriage in Quranic References

There is sufficient versus regarding the order to make marriage in Quranic injunctions.

‘To marry’ is a Command from Allah, The Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur’ān.

﴿وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾⁽¹⁾

And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing .

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا﴾⁽²⁾

And it is He who has created from water a human being and made him [a relative by] lineage and marriage. And ever is your Lord competent [concerning creation].

﴿وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا﴾⁽³⁾

And they (your wives) have taken a strong pledge (firm covenant) from you

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا﴾⁽⁴⁾

He it is Who created you from a single being, and of the same kind did He make his mate that he might incline to her

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً﴾⁽⁵⁾

And of His signs is this; He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that ye might find rest in them and He ordained between you Love and Mercy.

﴿فَأَنْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ﴾⁽⁶⁾

Marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four

It is easily concluded that Islam emphasizes that people should get married as soon as they attain marriageability. Along with this, there are a number of Aḥādīth that a father should ensure to marry her daughter in time as early as possible. The Holy Prophet insisted for marriage many times and said:

-
- (1) Sūrah Al-Nūr: 32
 (2) Sūrah Al-Furqān:54
 (3) Sūrah An-Nisā’:21
 (4) Sūrah Al-A‘rāf:189
 (5) Sūrah Al-Rūm:21
 (6) Sūrah Al-Nisā’:03

«الْبَيْكَاخُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي، فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي، وَتَزَوَّجُوا»⁽¹⁾

Marriage is part of my Sunnah and whoever does not follow my Sunnah has nothing to do with me. Get married.

The father, being the guardian of her daughter, is dutiful that she does not fall into sin due to the natural demand of her physical needs after the age of marriage-ability and if she fornicates, the sin will be on the shoulders of guardian. Unfortunately, in present environment of free mixing of genders, especially in urban areas, the only solution is timely marriage of youth to save boys and girls from sin and hence their parents and guardians.

Now these problems, which are being faced by the world, can be discussed in the light of the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Loss of Half Religion / Islam

Traditions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

«مَنْ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ امْرَأَةً صَالِحَةً فَقَدْ أَعَانَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى شَطْرِ دِينِهِ فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِي الشَّطْرِ الثَّانِي»⁽²⁾

Whoever Allah provides with a righteous wife, then he has fulfilled half of his religion. Let him fear Allah regarding the second half.

Anas ibn Malik reported this ḥadīth which is declared Ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) according to al-Sayūṭī in Ḥukm al-Muḥaddis Ṣaḥīḥ. In view of the above ḥadīth, and data provided by the Census department about unmarried youth of Pakistan, at present, about 45 million Pakistanis have no protection of their half religion. They have lost the protection of their religion Islam from the date they got maturity.

The Best People are married

Traditions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)

«أَفْضَلُ النَّاسِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي هُمُ أَوْلِيَاكَ الَّذِينَ يَتَزَوَّجُونَ وَاحْتَارُوا زَوْجَاتِهِمْ»⁽³⁾

The best people of my Ummah are those who get married and have chosen their wives.

According to the saying of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), the best people of Muslim Ummah are those who are married. There are plenty of merits and chances of being the best people of any nation after making marriage in time. The researchers in the medical field, especially, related to cardiology say:

- (1) Al-Qazwinī, Ibn Maja, Imām Muḥammad Bin Yazīd, , *Sunan Ibn-e-Maja*, 'Chapters of Marriage', Vol. 3, Ḥadīth No. 1846, p. 58
- (2) Ṭabrānī, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, 'Chapter Alif, ḥadīth No. 992
- (3) Nūrī Ḥassan Taqī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 2, & English translation by Syed Akhtar Hussain, (Tehran: Ḥadīth Trust, 1900), p. 531

“Married patients who undergo heart surgery make better recoveries than divorced or single persons.”⁽¹⁾

Another researcher, Helliwell and Grover conducted a poll through Gallup World Pool about who is more satisfied, married or unmarried. They found that the married people were more satisfied than the people living a single life.⁽²⁾

This finding leads the researchers towards more effective benefits of married life. According to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), if someone does not make marriage and live a single life without any valid reason, he or she will be the worse person of Muslim society. On the other hand, if parents are restricting their children to be married then ultimately those are also worse members of Islamic Nation.

Every second father of society is complaining against his young sons and their improper behavior. One of the major reasons of such behavior is delayed marriage and delayed marriages worsen the person as said by the prophet. So if a father wants to correct his son, he needs to arrange his marriage as soon as possible.

Marriage is Protection of Eyes

As the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) states:

«إِنَّهُ أَعْضُ اللَّبْصَرِ، وَأَحْصَنُ الْفَرْجِ»⁽³⁾

Marriage protects your eyes (from indulging in sin by looking lustfully at others in privacy) and from lust.

All affairs have one thing in common, and that is eye contact. Eyes have unmatched capability to communicate one's desires and feelings in just only one glance.

Protection of gaze protects chastity and afterward marriage helps to safeguard it further. “Avoidance of eye contact may signify bashfulness”⁽⁴⁾ which is the easiest and the best way to save oneself from lustful activities.

The Qur'ān provides this code through “Ghaḍḍ al-Baṣar” in Sūrah al-Nūr, “Low down your gaze”. And the proper solution for unmarried individuals to lower down their gaze is timely marriage. The marriage is the best way to divert the attention from unlawful attraction to lawful means.

-
- (1) Neuoman Prof. Mark, *JAMA Surgery-Health and Retirement Study*, (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2012), p. 9
 - (2) Helliwell John F. and Grover Shawn, *How is Life At Home? New Evidence on Marriage and the Set Point for Happies*, Working Paper No. 20794 (Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, December 2014), p. 12
 - (3) Al-Qazwinī, Ibn Maja, Imām Muḥammad Bin Yazīd, *Sunnah Ibn-e-Maja*, ‘Chapters of Marriage’, Vol. 3, Ḥadīth No. 1845, p. 58
 - (4) Mynhrdt J.C., Baron R. A. and Byrne D., *Social Psychology*, (South Africa: Pearson Education) p. 8

Make Marriage in Young Age

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ»⁽¹⁾

O young people! Whoever among you is able to marry, should marry.

The Holy Prophet further contended the Muslims towards a better life in these words also.

«لَمْ يُرَ لِلْمُتَحَابِّينِ مِثْلُ النِّكَاحِ»⁽²⁾

There is nothing like marriage for two who love one another.

«مَا اسْتَفَادَ الْمُؤْمِنُ بَعْدَ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ خَيْرًا لَهُ مِنْ زَوْجَةٍ صَالِحَةٍ»⁽³⁾.

Nothing is the more benefit to the believer after Taqwa of Allah than a righteous wife.

The most beneficial for a human being is belief on Allah and second most important is a good better half in life. This is the unwanted parameter for devil. The Devil is the worst enemy of humankind. He makes each and every wrongful action to destroy and derail man. According to this tradition of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), when a person makes marriage, devil becomes desperate from him/her. In-time marriage saves the young peoples from the wiles of the Devil.

Marriage, a Lawful Means

The Qur'ān says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ اللَّاتِي آتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ

يَمِينُكَ﴾⁽⁴⁾

O Prophet (ﷺ)! Verily, We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have paid their due (i.e. their dower/Mahr), and those whom your hand possesses.

Marriage provides lawful means for conjugation. In the United States, there are four states i.e. Mississippi, Michigan, Florida and Virginia, where cohabitation, living together without marriage relation, is illegal. Since 1990, more than half of the married couples in the USA are living together without marriage. However, this ratio dropped from 86 percent in 1977 to 27 percent in 2007.⁽⁵⁾

- (1) Tirmadhī Muhammad Isa, 'Chapters on Marriage', *Jami' al-Tirmadhī*, Vol. 2, Hadīth No. 1081, p. 452
- (2) Al-Qazwinī, Ibn Maja, Imām Muḥammad Bin Yazīd, *Sunnah Ibn-e-Maja*, 'Chapters of Marriage', Vol. 3, Hadīth No. 1847, p. 59
- (3) Ibid, Hadīth No. 1857, p. 65
- (4) Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb:50
- (5) Copen C.E., Daniels K. Verspa, 'First Marriage in the United States-National Survey of Family Growth 2006-2010', National Health Statistic Report, (2010), p. 22

It can be concluded that Europe, too, is considering unmarried life is dangerous for their future life. Muslim nations should arrange for lawful means to make in-time marriages easy to conduct to avoid such situation in the future.

Consent for Marriage

Referring to the following verse of Qur'an:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا﴾⁽¹⁾

O, you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will.

For two people to marry, it is essential that both should agree to that relation. Generally, a man sends marriage proposal to woman; so, it is understood that he is agreeing to marry the proposed girl. But the girl should be consulted for her consent before finalizing the marriage; if the girl says 'No', the marriage cannot take place. If someone marries a woman forcibly, such a marriage is not valid.

Spending Money on one's Own Family is better than Charity

The Prophet (ﷺ) says,

«دِينَارًا أَعْطَيْتَهُ مَسْكِينًا، وَدِينَارًا أَعْطَيْتَهُ فِي رَقَبَةٍ، وَدِينَارًا أَنْفَقْتَهُ فِي سَبِيلِ

اللَّهِ، وَدِينَارًا أَنْفَقْتَهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ، أَفْضَلُهَا الَّذِي أَنْفَقْتَهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ»⁽²⁾

If you spend a Dinār (Rupee) in the way of Allah to get free a slave or do charity to a needy person and spend one Dinār (Rupee) on you own family then on account of reward, that Dinar (Rupee) is better which you spend on your family.

Our youth waste their money by spending lavishly on their friends. In spite of it, if they spend it for charity, it is good, but if they spend it on their own family, it is the best. So there is need to take measure to provide family to the young ones so that their money may be spent for the good of family, rather be wasted. It can produce an overall good impact on the national economy.

Insistence for Marriage:

A tradition of the Holy Prophet goes:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ نَهَى عَنِ النَّبْتُلِ⁽³⁾

Prophet Peace be upon him forbid (Muslims) from remain unmarried.

(1) Sūrah Al-Nisā':19

(2) Muslim, Imām, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 'Kitāb al-Zakāt, 'Chapter al-Nafqah 'alā al-'Ayāl, Ḥadīth No. (2311) 39 (955), p.43

(3) Nasā'ī, Imām, Ṣaḥīḥ Nisā'i, 'Kitāb al-Nikāh, Ḥadīth No. 1125, p. 87

Abū Ḥātim al-Muzanī narrates that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

«إِذَا أَتَاكُمْ مَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ خُلُقَهُ وَدِينَهُ فَرَوْجُوهُ، إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوا تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَفَسَادًا عَرِيضًا»⁽¹⁾

When someone whose religion and character you are pleased with comes to you (with a proposal for marriage), then marry (your girls to) him. If you do not do so, then there will be turmoil in the land and Fasād.

However, it is the requirement of decadency that one should not propose to some woman, or family, who already receive a marriage proposal. It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar (R.A) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لَا يَخْطُبُ أَحَدُكُمْ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ بَعْضٍ»⁽²⁾

None of you should propose marriage to a woman when someone else has already proposed to her.

Benefits after Marriage

Our society avoid timely marriage due to their understanding that there are many financial restrains which create hardships in married life, but according to us, the situation is different. There are many social benefits of marriage, and some of them are here:

Filing of joint income tax returns, creating a "family partnership", inheriting a share of spouse's estate, creating life estate trusts, obtaining priority to make financial and/or medical decisions on spouse's behalf, receiving social security benefits, Medicare, and disability benefits for spouses, receiving veterans' and military benefits for spouses, such as for education, medical care, or special loans, obtaining insurance benefits from spouse's employer, family leave to care for spouse and maternity leave also, receiving of wages, workers' compensation, and retirement plan benefits for a deceased spouse, visiting spouse in a hospital intensive care unit or during restricted visiting hours in other parts of a medical facility, consenting to after-death examinations and procedures, filing for stepparent or joint adoption, receiving spousal or child support, child custody, living in neighborhoods zones for 'families only', receiving family rates for health, homeowners', auto, and other types of insurance, receiving tuition discounts and permission to admission in school, other consumer discounts and incentives offered only to married couples or families, receiving crime victims' recovery benefits if spouse is the victim of a crime, obtaining immigration and residency benefits abroad etc.⁽³⁾

(1) Tirmadhī Muḥammad Isa, 'Chapters on Marriage', Jami' al-Tirmadhī, Vol. 2, Ḥadīth No. 1085, p. 456

(2) Nasā'ī, Imām, "Book of Marriage", *Sunan al-Nisā'ī*, Vol. 2, Ḥadīth No. 1150, p. 127

(3) Charles M. Sprock, *Marriage is a Fundamental Right: an Option*, (Syracuse NY: Baldwin & Sutphen, 2014), p. 15

Conclusion

Dr. Hamayon and Mrs. Talat writes in an article that experts of sociology insist on the parameters that a society would be wealthiest if it has courageous sanctity, rational deliberation, freedom of thoughts, feeling of responsibility, love and affection, and the power of in-time decision, hence, it has its foundations and energy in a strong family system. And now it is concluded that in-time marriage is one of the core aspects to set up a strong family system.⁽¹⁾

It is discussed and found that the prevailing social system creates many hurdles in the way to arrange timely marriages of youth. Social demands of high financial status and ideal matching criteria create unnecessary delays in marriages. This delay in making in-time marriages is enhancing frustration, desperation and corruption in youth. It is time to rethink present behavior of arranging in-time marriages and choosing of matches. Muslims need to consider the Islamic injunctions in these regards. Also there are so many benefits of married life, which are usually not highlighted. The author tried to highlight them in this paper.

The world is wandering in search of righteous codes of life for a peaceful and happy environment. It is time to learn from the bitter experiences of the West regarding free sex life. They are reverting from this idea, but now East is heading toward the same. Their codes were man-made, so those were not fulfilling the complete requirements of human life. The best and perfect codes for a successful life are found in Islam.

Late marriage or relations without marriage are the dark part of life and evidences are here that the world is also realizing this fact that marriage at the right age is the best solution of many of the social problems.

If the government of Pakistan has banned the child marriages and fixed the minimum age of marriage through Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961 and other related Acts, it should also fix the maximum age of the first marriage in the best of Pakistani public interest.



(1) Abbas Dr. Hamayon, Talat Safdar, “Adyān-e-Samāwiyah” Al-Qalam, 19:2 (Lahore: Department of Islamic Studies, University of the Punjab), p. 186