

CLASS 3

INTIMACY IN ISLAM

Consummating the Marriage

Kindness to the Bride

The husband should be extremely kind to his bride on their first night together, especially if she is a virgin. He should understand that this night marks the beginning of a totally new life for her. This may make her nervous and slow in cooperating with him. So, he should not brutally force himself on to her. If she does not appear to be fully ready on the first night, he should work on easing her emotions while waiting for the ultimate union between them one or more days later as might be necessary.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was very kind and gentle with 'A'ishah (R.A.) on her first night with him. He ﷺ gave her some milk to drink, allowed her young girlfriends to remain with her for a while, and talked to them jokingly - so as to make her feel at ease.

Asma' Bint Yazid Bin as-Sakan reported that she adorned 'A'ishah for the Prophet ﷺ and then invited him in. He came and sat next to her. He was given a large cup of milk. He drank some of it and then gave it to 'A'ishah who shyly lowered her head. Asma' scolded her saying, "Do not reject Allah's Messenger's offer." So she took the cup and drank some, and he then told her, "Give your friend." Asma said, "O Allah's Messenger! First take it back and drink from it, then give it to me with your hand." He took it, drank from it, and gave it to Asma' who sat down and drank, making sure that her lips were on the spot where the Prophet drank. Then he pointed to some other women who were with her and said, "Give your friends." They said, "We have no desire for it." He said: "Do not combine hunger with lying." (Ahmad, classed as Hasan)

Praying Two Rakahs Together

It is recommended (from the Sahaba) for the newlywed couple to pray two rak'at in jama'ah, with the groom leading the prayer. This would be a great indication that, from their first night, they meet together on an act of obedience to Allah.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed, the freed slave of Abu Usayd, said: I got married when I was a slave, and I invited some of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, among whom were Ibn Mas'ood, Abu Dharr and Hudhayfah. ... And they taught me and said: "When your wife enters upon you, pray two rak'ahs, then ask Allah, may He be exalted, for the good of what has entered upon you and seek refuge with Him from its evil, then go ahead and approach your wife." Narrated by Ibn

Abi Shaybah in al-Musannaf (3/401) and 'Abd al-Razzaaq in al-Musannaf (6/191). Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Its isnaad to Abu Sa'eed is saheeh.

Also it was narrated that Shaqeeq said: A man came to 'Abd-Allah -i.e., ibn Mas'ood] who was called Abu Jareer, and said: I have got married to a young girl and I am afraid that she will dislike me.

'Abd-Allah said: Love is from Allah and dislike is from the Shaytaan, who wants to make hateful to you that which Allah has permitted to you. So when she comes to you, tell her to pray two rak'ahs behind you. Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah in al-Musannaf (3/402); 'Abd al-Razzaaq in al-Musannaf (6/191); al-Tabaraani in al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer, 9/204.

Invoking Allah's Blessing

It is recommended for the husband to make supplications and invoke Allah's blessings on himself and his bride.

The husband should put his hand on the front of her head and say:

Allaahumma inni as'aluka khayraha wa khayra ma jabaltaha 'alayhi wa a'oodhi bika min sharriha wa min sharri ma jabaltaha 'alayhi

(O Allah, verily I ask You for her good and the good of what You have created in her, and I ask seek refuge with You from her evil and the evil of what You have created in her).

Narrated by Abu Dawood (2160); classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Sunan Abi Dawood.

There is no report in the Sunnah – as far as we know – to specify the time for this du'aa', so if one wishes, it may be recited before praying the two rak'ahs or after.

Supplication before Intercourse

Even at the peak of his passion, a believer does not forget his Lord. He remembers that his intercourse with his wife is a means of fulfilling many noble purposes - not only his lust. One of these noble purposes is producing a good progeny. Thus, it is important to supplicate to Allah to keep Satan away from him and his progeny.

The Messenger ﷺ said: "When one of you wants to approach his wife, if he says (the below Dua) If it is then decreed that they have a child (from that intercourse), Satan will never harm it."

بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ، اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ، وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا

"Bismillah, Allaahumma jannib nash-Shaytan, wa jannib ish-Shaytana ma razaqtana

– With the Name of Allah, O Allah, keep Satan away from us, and keep him away from what You grant us," (Bukhari)

THE HADITH OF JABIR

Jabir b. Abdillah was the son of a famous warrior, Abdullah b. Haram. Jabir was from the Ansar, and accepted Islam as a young boy. He was blessed to participate in the Treaty of Aqaba, and lived an extremely long life. Jabir married young – he was probably seventeen when he got married. His marriage occurred shortly after his father died a martyr in the Battle of Uhud. His story is mentioned in most books of hadith, including the two Sahih:

Jabir b. Abdillah reported that once he was on an expedition with the Prophet ﷺ, and when they were close to the city of Madinah, he sped on his mount. The Prophet ﷺ asked him why he was in such a hurry to return home. Jabir replied, "I am recently married!" The Prophet ﷺ asked, "To an older lady or a younger one?" [the Arabic could also read: "To a widow or a virgin?"], to which he replied, "A widow." The Prophet ﷺ said, "But why didn't you marry a younger girl, so that you could play with her, and she could play with you, and you could make her laugh, and she could make you laugh?" He said, "O Messenger of Allah! My father died a martyr at Uhud, leaving behind daughters, so I did not wish to marry a young girl like them, but rather an older one who could take care of them and look after them." The Prophet ﷺ replied, "You have made the correct choice..."

[hadith to be continued in the following section]

This is part of a much larger hadith, known as the 'hadith of Jabir'. It is a hadith full of benefits, and in fact separate treatises have been written by our scholars just on this one hadith. Some of the benefits we can derive from the portion cited above include:

- The frankness of the Prophet's ﷺ question. He is encouraging Jabir to find a playful wife, and wants the both of them to enjoy each other. This clearly shows that it is one of the primary goals of a marriage that each party find satisfaction in the other.
- The connotation of being sexually playful is clearly implied, without any direct reference. From this, and many other references, we see that the Qur'aan and Sunnah are frank about sexuality, but never vulgar. This should be our attitude and tone as well.

PART 2

We have above mentioned the famous hadith of Jabir b. Abdillah, in which the Prophet ﷺ asked Jabir if he had married a young girl,

“...so that you can play with her and she can play with you, and you could make her laugh, and she could make you laugh.”

The famous commentator of Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Hafidh Ibn Hajr, mentioned that this hadith also occurs with other wordings as well. In one authentic version, the hadith states, after Jabir mentioned that he had married an older lady, *“Why did you turn away from a young girl and her saliva?”*

Benefits:

- Once again, we are struck with the frankness of the prophetic words. Clearly, the words ‘playfulness’ and ‘laughter’ indicate that what is being encouraged is the couple’s romance, foreplay, and generally ‘having fun’ with one other. It would do us well to contrast this straightforwardness of our Prophet ﷺ with the ultra-reserved Muslim culture that we find around us, where ‘love’ and ‘romance’ are considered filthy words that should never be uttered in public!
- This understanding is further reinforced by examining the life of our Prophet ﷺ. In every sense of the term, he was a loving, caring, gentle, and compassionate husband to his wives. It is even correct and proper to say that he was romantic with his wives in the most ideal and noble of ways.
- The variant wording that occurs (which mentions the saliva of a young girl) is explained by Ibn Hajr and al-Qurtubi as a reference to kissing the lips and licking the tongue. In other words, what is being referenced is passionate kissing – the perfect foreplay!

PART 3

The final phrase of the hadith of Jabir that is relevant to us is:

Jabir said, “So when we were about to enter the city, the Prophet ﷺ said to me,

‘Slow down, and enter at night, so that she who has not combed may comb her hair, and she who has not shaved may shave her private area.’

Then he ﷺ said to me, *‘When you enter upon her, then be wise and gentle.’*”

[Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Benefits:

- The Prophet ﷺ did not want Jabir to surprise his wife. At a time when there were no cell phones or other means of informing the family when a traveler would return, the Prophet ﷺ would send a crier into the city, announcing that the caravan was returning. Hence, he told Jabir to wait for this crier before proceeding into the city.
- We learn that spouses should physically beautify themselves for one another. Combing the hair is but one way to beautify; anything that increases the beauty and handsomeness of one spouse in front of the other is something to be encouraged. The Prophet ﷺ told the impatient Jabir that it was better for him to delay his arrival in order that his wife prepares herself for him.
- The explicit command to shave the pubes is an amazing phrase! We all know that a part of our Islamic tradition is that one must shave one's pubes; in this hadith, this command is put in the context of the sexual act. In other words, the husband is told to be patient so that his wife may beautify her private area in order to increase the aesthetic pleasure and gratification of sex. A husband and wife should make sure that even around their private areas, they look attractive to each other!
- Again and again, we see the frankness of the prophetic traditions, and the encouragement to enjoy intimacy in marriage. Contrast this to the ultra-conservative attitudes predominant in many Muslim cultures. It is as if some Muslims wish to be 'more strict' than the Prophet ﷺ himself!

PART 4

The concluding part of the hadith of Jabir raises many other benefits, which we continue discussing below.

Benefits:

- The last phrase of the hadith is translated as '...then be wise and gentle'. The Arabic is 'fa-l-kayyis al-kayyis', which is an emphasis on this word. The word 'kayyis' primarily means wisdom, but it also has the connotation of gentleness. Scholars have understood this phrase to mean that Jabir should approach his wife in a gentle and wise manner.

- The fact that the Prophet ﷺ is instructing Jabir what to do at this time shows that he instructed his Ummah even about such personal matters. In one hadith, which deals with the etiquette of the restroom, the Prophet ﷺ said, *“I am to you like a father, and I teach you like a father does...”* [Reported by Abu Dawud]. Since Jabir did not have any older brothers, and since his father had passed away, the Prophet ﷺ took on this responsibility, and even advised him about sexual conduct. From this, we may extrapolate that people of knowledge should likewise not be shy when it comes to teaching Muslims conjugal etiquette when the need arises.
- What is meant by ‘al-kayyis’ is that Jabir should act in a wise manner; he has been gone for some time, and is newly married. Therefore, both parties are missing each other, and it is a sign of wisdom that they gratify themselves and do not delay this unnecessarily. Also, there is a connotation of gentleness as well; Jabir should realize that he is a young man, and therefore he should not act in a manner that might be painful to his wife.

Marital Bliss is a Goal of the Shariah

Besides the hadith of Jabir which we discussed, there are many other traditions that state the importance of finding conjugal happiness within the folds of marriage. The Prophet ﷺ himself said, *“From this world, women and perfume have been made beloved to me, but the coolness of my eyes comes from prayer”* [al-Bukhari].

In one hadith we learn, *“This whole world is an enjoyment, and its best enjoyment is a righteous wife”* [Muslim]. Another hadith states *“I advise you to marry young women, for they have sweeter lips...and are more passionate in their embrace”* [Reported by Ibn Majah, al-Tabarani, and others, and it is hasan].

And finally, we are advised in the traditions, *“If one of you approaches his wife, and then wishes to repeat, let him do wudhu, for it will make the recurrence more energetic”* [Abu Dawud].

Benefits:

- In all of these hadiths, we see once again the clear encouragement to engage in a passionate and fulfilling intimate relations with one’s spouse.
- Even the blessed Prophet ﷺ found comfort in his wives, but the comfort that prayer and turning to Allah gave him was obviously the most sweet and pure.

- In another hadith, the Companion is told that a woman of his age would be better because her passion would be more. Better kissing is explicitly mentioned, and more passionate sex is hinted at.
- A righteous wife (and, by analogy, a good husband) is the best enjoyment of this world. Pure, halal, encouraged enjoyment.
- The frank advice given in the last tradition makes it crystal clear that we should aim to have passionate sex lives. No less a figure than our beloved Prophet ﷺ informed us of ways to increase that passion. Washing oneself after a first act invigorates the body and rejuvenates the soul, and thus helps in repeating the act again.

FOREPLAY

Foreplay between the spouses before actually engaging into sexual intercourse is immensely important (especially for the wife) and a vital ingredient for a happy and prosperous marriage, that which should never be neglected.

The husband should sexually arouse his wife before having sex. It is indeed selfish on the husband's part that he fulfils his sexual needs and desires, whilst his wife remains unsatisfied and discontented. Failure in satisfying the wife can have terrible consequences on one's marriage. That is why the Prophet ﷺ discouraged sexual intercourse without foreplay, to guarantee and to protect the sexual pleasures and rights of the wife in bed.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (Allah have mercy on him) said *"He should fondle his wife first before having sex by kissing her and sucking her tongue. The Prophet ﷺ used to fondle and kiss his wives."* [Zaad al Maad 4/253]

Imam Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: *It is mustahabb to engage in foreplay with one's wife before having intercourse and to arouse her desire, so that she will get the same enjoyment from intercourse as he does.* [Al-Mughni, 8/136]

An Nawawi said it is Mustahab to fondle and caress i.e. foreplay before having sex.

Islam recognizes a woman's need of love, affection and foreplay. Women tend to be more romantic than men. They like to hear tender words, to be praised, to feel that they are being cared for, to be the main concern of their husbands and the one to whom he directs his ardent love (*that's why the prophet ﷺ discouraged engaging in sexual intercourse before foreplay*). In Islam it is a women's right to be satisfied by her husband in bed. Islam stresses the importance of mutual sexual satisfaction between marriage partners in the following quranic verse:

“It is lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the night preceding the (day's) fast: they are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them. God is aware that you would have deprived yourselves of this right, and so He has turned unto you in His mercy and removed this hardship from you. Now, then, you may lie with them skin to skin, and avail yourselves to that which God has ordained for you.”

(Qur'an 2:187)

A garment brings satisfaction, comfort, protection and warmth! These are the things a husband **must** strive to give his wife during intercourse!

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also stated:

“Every game a person plays is futile except for archery, training one's horse and playing with one's wife (foreplay and kissing)”.

(Sunan Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Sunan Ibn Majah).

In a weak hadith narrated in Musnad Abu Y'ala, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, ‘If any of you has intercourse with his wife let him be true to her. If he attains his pleasure before her then he shouldn't hurry her away until she also attains her pleasure.’ Though the hadith is weak, the meaning is sound as mentioned scholars.

Therefore, a man who intentionally neglects his wife's physical needs is not only abandoning his obligation, but also manifests a lack of understanding of the true nature of what Islam entails in practice.

Kissing

Kissing one's spouse is also of utmost importance in general. It is a Sunnah of our blessed Messenger of Allah ﷺ

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) narrates *that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would kiss one of his wives and then leave for prayer (salat) without performing ablution (wudu). Urwa says that I asked A'isha: “It must have been you?” (Upon hearing this) A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) smiled.* (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, no. 86, Sunan Abu Dawud, no. 181 & Sunan al-Nasa'i, no. 170)

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) says: *“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would kiss me before leaving for prayers, and he would not perform an ablution.”* (Sunan al-Darqutni, 1/49 and others)

The above two narrations indicate the recommendation of kissing one's spouse. They also show the importance of greeting the wife when entering the house with a kiss and departing with a kiss. This was the Sunnah of the beloved of Allah ﷺ. Thus, it is inappropriate for husbands to leave the home in a hurry without even greeting the wife in a proper manner with hugs and kisses, and then entering the house with the first question on whether the food is cooked or not, or whether had someone called, etc...

Passionate kissing (or French kissing) is also the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) narrates *that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would kiss her whilst he was fasting and he would suck her tongue.*" (Sunan Abu Dawud, no. 2378)

WHY IS FOREPLAY SO IMPORTANT?

The most common complaint amongst men is that their wives are not as interested in sexual intimacy as the men are. And likewise, the most common complaint amongst women is that their husbands are just interested in sex and only come close to them for one purpose. One of the primary reasons for this disparity is the issue of sexual arousal.

A man's arousal is like a microwave: it can be turned on instantly. A woman's arousal, on the other hand, is like an oven: it slowly and gradually heats up over time. This is why when a husband approaches his wife, he is already turned on and aroused. He seeks instant gratification. He mistakenly assumes that his wife will get aroused as instantaneously as he does, and gets frustrated when she doesn't respond to him the way that he wants.

Conversely, a woman feels frustrated that her husband wishes her to 'perform' on demand, without her emotional or physical needs being addressed first.

Men must be more sensitive to a woman's needs, and understand that for a woman to start her arousal oven, she needs to feel loved, cherished, and beautiful. She needs to feel emotionally satisfied, otherwise she will feel like the man is just taking advantage of the fact that she is his wife and must obey. The most intimate act of marriage, will become a chore for her that she dreads instead of enjoys. It is a husband's responsibility to make sure that he has addressed the emotional needs of his wife before he approaches her. The best way a man can do this is through romance, non-sexual touching and helping her deal with the stresses of daily life.

Men need sex to feel loved and appreciated. When a man approaches his wife, he is showing that he loves her. This is why when a wife does the act unwillingly, with little excitement, and treats it like a chore, the man feels rejected.

In turn, women need to understand that romance is something that does not come naturally to men, as men don't need romance to be aroused or feel loved. Women need to be patient and continually try to explain this to their partners.

In conclusion, both men and women need to understand the differences in the mechanisms of arousal, and be sensitive towards each other's needs. A man needs to try and be more attentive beforehand as this is vital for a woman's enjoyment. The woman needs to understand that a man's arousal is instant and for him intimacy equals love, so intimacy needs to be a priority on her list.

How often?

It is the wife's right that her husband should spend his nights with her.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: "It is obligatory for the husband to have intercourse with his wife as much as is needed to satisfy her, so long as this does not exhaust him physically or keep him away from earning a living... If they dispute over this matter, the judge should prescribe more in the way of intercourse just as he may prescribe more in the way of spending." (Al-Ikhtiyaaraat al-Fiqhiyyah min Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, p. 246)

Ibn Qudaamah al-Hanbali said: "If he has a wife, he should spend one night in four with her, so long as he has no excuse." (Al-Mughni, 7/28; Kashf al-Qinaa', 3/144).

Sharee'ah also requires that a wife be protected from immorality by means of her husband having intercourse with her, as much as is needed to satisfy her and to provide this protection. But there is no way that this can be stated in terms of a specific period of time, such as four months, or more, or less. It should be defined according to the wife's needs and her husband's ability to fulfil her rights.

If the husband is absent from his wife because he is travelling for a legitimate purpose or other legitimate excuse, in this case the husband should try not to be absent from his wife for too long.

WHAT IF THE HUSBAND LIVES AWAY FOR WORK?

It is permissible for a man to find pleasure in speaking to his wife and looking at her or at her picture in a chat program, so long as he takes precautions so that no one else can see or spy on him.

[Click here](#) for the detailed Fatwa.

MISCELLANEOUS ADAB FOR INTERCOURSE

The following is a list of additional important adab that should be observed when being intimate or having intercourse with one's spouse.

1. The man may only have intercourse with his wife in her front entry (vagina). Approaching her from the back entry is a major sin. The Prophet ﷺ said,

- *"Cursed are those who come to their wives in their anuses."* [Aboo Dawood, Ahmad and others with hasan isnaad and is supported].
- *"The one who has intercourse with a menstruating woman, or with a woman in her rectum, or who goes to a fortune-teller, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad."* (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 1/243; see also Saheeh al-Jaami', 5918).

The wife should reject this even if the husband demands for it, as obeying Allah comes before obeying the Husband.

2. During his wife's menses, a man may not have intercourse with her, but may otherwise enjoy other parts of her body. Performing intercourse with a menstruating woman is a major sin.

3. A person becomes junub (unclean) in one of two ways:

- a. By climaxing and ejaculation, which results from intercourse, wet dreams, foreplay, etc.
- b. By performing intercourse - regardless of whether it results in ejaculation or not. Ghusl is obligatory when the private parts touch each other even if there is no intercourse.

4. A junub person must take a ghusl (bath) before being able to pray. It is further recommended for a junub to take the ghusl before going to sleep or mentioning Allah. If that is not possible, one should at least wash his (or her) private parts and perform wudu.

5. When a Muslim man has had sexual intercourse with his wife and then wishes to do it again, he should first perform wudhuu', based on the statement of the Prophet ﷺ

"When one of you comes to his wife and then wishes to return another time, let him perform wudhuu' between the 2 times (In another version, the same wudhuu' which he performs for prayer) for verily, it will invigorate his return." [Muslim, Ibn Abi Shaibah and others].

6. It is permissible for the husband and wife to bath together in the same place even though he sees her private parts, and she sees his.

On the authority of 'Aa'ishah (radiallahu anha) who said: *"I used to bathe with the Prophet from a single container of water which was placed between us such that our hands collided inside it. He used to race me such that I would say: 'Leave some for me, leave some for me!' She added: 'We were in a state of Janaba (i.e. the state of having slept together).'"* [Al-Bukharee and Muslim].

7. It is strongly prohibited for the two spouses to disclose to others the secrets of what takes place during their intimacy sessions.

KEY TO AN OUTSTANDING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

The act of intimacy is the single most private and personal moment that a husband and wife share together. A good sexual life helps couples come closer together in love, and allows each spouse to overlook the more trivial problems in a marriage. Conversely, when bedroom intimacy suffers, other problems in a marriage are compounded and more tensions develop.

Couples should be aware of the **'Three Basic C's'** that lead to healthy and happy intimacy. These C's are:

1) Confidence. In order to enjoy healthy intimacy, both partners need to be confident in themselves, and not distracted by insecurities. Most times, such insecurities are self-induced (for example, a woman might be too conscious of her body and feel that her husband will not find her attractive). Sometimes, however, they might be induced by a comment made by a spouse (for example, a husband might be worried about not being able to give his partner what she wants). Each partner must work to resolve any personal issues so that one's full attention can be given to the act itself. Until such issues are resolved, the spouse will simply be too self-conscious and insecure to achieve ultimate happiness in intimacy.

2) Communication. It is inevitable that issues will arise regarding the act of intimacy. Perhaps the husband is not gentle in some aspect; perhaps the wife wishes a longer foreplay. Whatever the issue is, the other spouse will not be able to read the mind of the first spouse! Rather, there must be frank communication if it is desired that the act of intimacy reach its full potential. Such communication must be based on positive reinforcement rather than negative criticism. It is very easy to bruise a spouse's ego and hurt his or her feelings if one is critical. One should phrase all such suggestions in a positive manner. Instead of saying, "It's really frustrating when you spend so little time kissing me," one can say, "I would really enjoy it more if you spent more time being romantic beforehand." Such positive reinforcement will far more likely bring out the best in one's spouse.

3) Creativity. No matter how passionate a couple is, after years of marriage, it is likely that even this intimate act becomes routine. The couple eventually evolve into well-defined habits, and know exactly what to do and when to do it. Such a 'routine' has the negative aspect of making intimacy monotonous. And when intimacy becomes monotonous, it ceases to serve the function that it should. This is where creativity comes into play. Couples should learn to change routines, vary positions, or alter environments. This is one of the main reasons why taking a vacation with your spouse is a key factor in spicing up the relationship.