

In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Merciful

THE NEED FOR TOLERANCE IN THE MATRIMONIAL HOME

By

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Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Tolerance is an integral part of Islam for the reason that Islam means peace and without tolerance there cannot be peace in any sphere of our lives. Indeed, the concept of tolerance is very broad and has different angles to it, consequently I have been limited to shed more light on ***“The need for tolerance in the Matrimonial Home”***. This is very crucial as the home is where it all starts and this has a rippling effect on the society. Intolerance in homes leads to an intolerant society and a tolerant society leads to a peaceful society. That is why tolerance is much needed in our matrimonial homes.

Before I delve into the subject matter of my topic it is important to understand what tolerance means and what it means in Islamic terms. The dictionary meaning are:

- 1. a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward opinions, beliefs, and practices that differ from one's own.**
- 2. willingness to accept feelings, habits, or beliefs that are different from your own;**

These definitions are clear enough, however, the concept of tolerance in Islam is more encompassing because it involves among others; patience, endurance, respect, acceptance, and the appreciation of the fact that Allah created the world in diversity yet we must live in peace and harmony.

We live in a world of several cultures with different individual characters yet it is necessary to live together in harmony. Tolerance leads to a peaceful society whilst intolerance leads to chaos, disorder, war, violence, pain, hardship and in this particular case divorce.

This ingredient of tolerance is even more crucial in our matrimonial homes where people from different backgrounds come together in holy matrimony. These two individuals must learn to live together and with their respective families in peace, love and harmony. They can only achieve this, only if they are ready to bear with their differences and each other's weaknesses and excesses, they must learn to compromise and adjust to the union, that is what is called tolerance in the matrimonial home.

As we are all aware, the family is the central and starting point of social life and social development, therefore, if the family which is a strong unit imbibes all the moral and spiritual excellences that Allah commands and Islam teaches, then the rest of the society will uphold all these moral and spiritual excellences. One such moral and spiritual necessity is **tolerance**, without tolerance the family cannot hold and as such the society cannot hold either. For me, Quran 49:14 lays the foundation for tolerance and it clearly states that Allah has created us with different identities and I quote:

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O mankind, we have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware.)

To be able to appreciate the need for tolerance and the importance of working hard to be tolerant is to first of all understand that Marriage is a commandment of Allah and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Pbuh, and although divorce is acceptable in Islam, Allah **frowns** upon it. This means that, every good Muslim must strive to get married and must again strive to stay in that marriage. The only way for a marriage to be successful is for each person to be tolerant of his or her spouse and continue praying. Indeed, a good marriage starts with the fear of Allah and you see this in the Quranic verses that are recited at the time of the Nikkah.

The first verse, Quran4:2, cautions the couple to respect ties of relationship, the second verse, Quran,33:71-72, cautions the couple to say the right word and the third verse, Quran 59:19 talks about the fear of Allah. This is a recipe for tolerance.

On the basis of these verses, it is crystal clear that the fear of Allah is what propels a couple to be tolerant of one another. Now, having established what tolerance in Islam stands for, let us take a model of our Holy Master, The Holy Prophet, pbuh and Promised Messia(as)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, we all know that Islam is a religion whose foundation is the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran has already told us that our Beloved Prophet has excellent morals and an excellent model for our character. In a related hadith Hadhrat Aisha(ra) confirmed that his character was the Quran. In the light of these two verses we can all take a look at the life of our Holy Master, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustapha, The Holy Prophet pbuh, the epitome of patience and tolerance. Through all his life he exhibited tolerance in all spheres of life and his matrimonial home, therefore I will take a few examples as time will permit me to share with you so that as Ahmadi Muslims we can try to emulate these high moral standards.

The Holy Prophet has stated that, the best of you is the best of you to their family and I am the best of you to my family. It can be learnt from the good character of the Holy Prophet (SAW) that little misunderstandings and short comings must be tolerated and not broadcasted and I will give some examples as we go on.

Hadhrat Khadija (RA) also had something to say about our beloved Prophet (SAW):

God would never humiliate you. You maintain family ties, help to carry people's burdens when they are tired, you give to the poor, you are generous to your guests, and help people in times of hardship

Hadhrat Sufia (RA), one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) narrates that:

In the battle of Khebar, my father and husband were killed and I had a lot of hatred for the Holy Prophet (SAW), but due to his kind heartened nature and great personality, the hatred disappeared from my heart and was replaced by love and admiration.

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When we were returning from Khebar, I sat behind him on the camel and in my slumber, I happened to hit my head on the saddle and he immediately stretched his hand onto my head, showing much concern and politely told me to be careful. In our conversation later that night, he explained to me how he didn't initiate the war of Khebar. My father and husband had left him with no choice when they attacked him. He did not want any bloodshed but had no other choice than to fight back in defense and in the course of the war they got killed. At the end of the conversation, I was filled with so much love and admiration for him that he became the most beloved person in my life.

Continuing with the topic assigned to me, I would like to give an example of tolerance showed by our beloved Holy Prophet (SAW), but not before reflecting on what we usually do in our daily lives. Whenever we get into a fight or an argument with our spouses we tend to try to make the odds in our favour with the least opportunity we get by complaining to friends and family and a lot more. Which does not show tolerance.

Hadhrat Aisha (RA) narrates that:

Once, she was speaking heatedly to the Holy Prophet (SAW) when her father, Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) arrived. He could not control himself when he saw this and moved forward to hit Hadhrat Aisha (RA) for talking to the Prophet of God in this manner. Promptly, the Holy Prophet (SAW) stood in between the father and the daughter and saved his wife, Hadhrat Aisha (RA) from the possible punishment of her father. After Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) left, the Holy Prophet (SAW) jokingly said to Hadhrat Aisha (RA), 'See, how I saved you from your father!'

Let us learn from the excellent model displayed by our beloved Prophet (SAW) here. Not only did he try to end the disagreement by staying quiet. He also asked Hadhrat Aisha's father not to say anything to her, despite her behavior towards him. He also relieved the momentary tension by joking with Hadhrat Aisha (RA) about saving her. It is further relayed that when Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) next visited, he saw Hadhrat Aisha speaking cheerfully to the Holy Prophet (SAW). Hadhrat Abu Bakr (RA) said, 'Look, you shared your conflict with me, now also share your happiness with me.' **(Abu Daud, Kitab ul Adaab)**

We need to learn from the beautiful life of the beloved Prophet (SAW), that quarrels and arguments are bound to happen in any house, but it is at this time that our tolerant behavior is needed to promote the peace and harmony in our various homes. One needs to have patience and be jovial in some circumstances to reduce the tension and try to stay calm in all situations. Words are powerful as they have the ability to make and unmake a relationship. We need to be gentle in our speech and not to use harsh words. It is very important to control our anger and use whatever means to control the anger and our tongues.

The Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) further says:

If one does not like a habit of their spouse or if they see a flaw in the other. There would also be many other characteristics of theirs that you may like and admire. These good aspects of the individual should be kept in view and focused on, instead of harboring dislike and hatred towards the other. Sometimes trivial matters are blown out of proportion so much that painful situations are resulted. Meanwhile some amount of tolerance shown and observed could have resolved the issue quite easily.

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To keep the peace of the house you should be soft spoken to your kids as well and respect them as you do your spouse.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Promised Messiah (AS) has always been a practical example of the beautiful life of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Out of the many I would like to narrate an instance in which this is apparent.

One time, when Mia Mahmood was 4 and just like children his age he was playful and a naughty kid. Promised Messiah (AS) was at his desk writing as he routinely did while Mia Mahmood played outside with his mates, making noise and being mischievous came inside with a candle in his hand. The Promised Messiah(as) who was still busy continued writing ignoring the noise the kids were making and while playing Mia Mahmood started burning papers in which some were the papers he was working on. They got happy as they saw the fire and clapped their hands. He then left with his mates to continue the play and other mischief elsewhere. Later on when the Promised Messiah(as) wanted to refer to his old papers they were nowhere to be found. So he asked around and after a while of inquiring, one of the little kids spilled the beans that Mia Mahmood burnt the papers to which everyone got scared anticipating The Promised Messiah's reaction. To everyone's surprise Promised Messiah(as) just smiled and said no problem, surely Allah knows best and probably wants me to write something better, thereby maintaining the peace of the house with his tolerance just like his beloved Prophet (SAW). **(Seerat Hadhrat Masih e Maud, Page 106 by Hadhrat Yacoob Ali Irfani Sahib).**

We must have power over our reactions and be very tolerant if we are to maintain harmony in our homes and this is a lesson that can be learnt from this.

Moving on, despite Hadhrat Aisha (RA) been the beloved and favorite wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW), he never showed favoritism and did not encourage any unacceptable behavior or behaviors from any of his wives. Each had days when they cooked for the Prophet (SAW). Hadhrat Sufia (RA) was a very good cook. One of the days when it was Hadhrat Aisha's turn to cook, Hadhrat Sufia (RA) sent some food through a servant girl to the chambers, this act annoyed Hadhrat Aisha (RA) and in the fit of anger she hit the hand of the servant girl in which the bowl containing the food was and it fell down on the floor and broke. Regardless of the love for Hadhrat Aisha (RA), the Holy Prophet (SAW) expressed unhappiness to this act and he himself picked up the shattered pieces and joined them and gave them to Hadhrat Aisha (RA). He asked her if she had another bowl like that and to bring it, to which she complied. He sent that bowl through the servant girl to Hadhrat Sufia (RA), while the broken bowl was given to Hadhrat Aisha (RA).

Bukhari, Kitabun Nikkah, Hadith number 4824.

As it was established earlier about the life of the Promised Messiah (AS) being the exact replica of the beautiful life of the Holy Prophet (SAW), I present to you yet another good example out of the lots.

One time, Hadhrat Amma Jaan, the wife of the Promised Messiah (AS) decided to make Gur wale chawwal (sweet rice), his favorite cuisine for him. In the process of making it, the content of the gur exceeded that of the rice 4 times and it turned out to be gum-like and glue-like, quite starchy. She got very disheartened as it was time to serve and it seemed like nothing could have been done and this made her very anxious. Just then, Promised Messiah(as) entered and found Hadhrat Amma Jaan worried in that state of confusion and asked her what's wrong. He then chanced upon the rice and laughed and

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asked is it because of the rice? Do not worry I like it like that, it is according to my taste and ate it lovingly. He spoke with me very nicely throughout the meal as he enjoyed the rice. **(Seerat Hadhrat Amma Jaan, Sahibzadi Amtul Shakoor Sahiba, Page 6 & 7.)**

Meanwhile what do we see in our lives? When something like this happens and there is an imbalance in the preparation of the food be it because of the spices or something else. We tend to make a fuss about it. Instead of understanding and showing some love and patience. We must learn from the nice examples of our leaders and follow their path.

It can also be seen in our homes, that when little matters or issues arise, we tend to argue and fight over them instead of trying to understand the other party involved and compromising to keep the peace of our homes. Compromising with one another is a key factor in marital life.

In **Seerat Sayeeda Nusrat Jahan Begum, Page 7 & 8**, there is an example of compromise displayed by our beloved Mahdi (AS). Hadhrat Amma Jaan narrates her own story, when she newly came to Qadian after marriage: I couldn't sleep without lights whereas The Promised Messiah(as) was the opposite. So he would wait for me to fall asleep and then put the lights out, but whenever I woke up in the middle of the night and found the place to be dark I would get scared. He would quickly wake up and switch them back on. As time went by we began to switch the lights on everywhere in the house be it in the kitchen or washroom. Such that, Huzoor even got us a Khadim in charge of keeping the place lit. I used to joke with the Promised Messiah(as) and reminded him of the time when he couldn't sleep with the lights on and now how he himself cannot sleep without the lights. He will always smile to this and thus we had an environment which was quite jovial. This was the tolerance level of our beloved Promised Messiah (AS).

Let me conclude with the advice of Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih (ATBA) in his address at Jalsa Salana UK on 23rd of July, 2011. I was fortunate enough to also be present in this blessed gathering. He said:

There were a husband and wife quarrelling while a little girl watched this without them realizing. After a while, when they noticed the presence of the little girl, they tried to cover their guilt and asked her if she never saw her parents fight to which she replied yes they do. But when my dad gets angry my mom keeps quiet and when my mom gets angry my dad keeps quiet. Hence the fight does not get prolonged.

To end with, I would say if we are claiming to be truly the believers of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and followers of the Promised Messiah (AS), then we must equally show the same level of tolerance, patience and love in order to bring peace and harmony in our homes and marital lives. May the Almighty Allah with his sheer grace enable us to do so.

Ameen.