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## Boat Afloat but Couple in Crisis!

"Beep!" went my phone, rousing me from my sleep. I searched for it on the bedside table with one hand while rubbing my bleary, half open eyes with the other. I struggled to sit up as my fumbling fingers finally found the phone and got a shock when I saw the time. 2AM! I groaned in frustration and wondered which inconsiderate person had texted me at this insane hour. I opened the message, from my best friend, and honestly, as I read the words glaring at me from the screen, I almost had a heart attack: "Its over. We divorced. Im cmng hme. Dnt knw wt 2 do!"

I blinked in confusion at first, unable to believe what I saw. This was surely her idea of a sick joke, right? *I mean, there's no way she could already be divorced when she got married just three weeks ago! I suddenly felt weary and sad and tears began to well in my eyes as I wondered how her dream wedding had turned into a nightmare marriage...*

To call her wedding 'an event' would be an understatement. It was 'THE event'. Even the local newspapers covered the occasion by plastering her photo on page three with a description of the festivities following on page four. I can still picture the title "Beach Wedding Makes Waves" emblazoned above the article.

Planning her wedding and the events that lead up to it (the engagement, meethu mauru, Arabian night, seafood night, bridal shower, bachelorette party, mehndi, etc.) took her the better part of eight months. We (her friends)

stood by her side throughout it all and it was only with our combined support, mostly showed through moments of sympathetic head shaking and fuelled by countless litres of skinny Frappuccino, that Bridezilla made it through to the end.

*Being 'daddy's little girl' definitely had its perks – he didn't even set the sky as the limit to how much she was allowed to spend to make her dream wedding become a reality.* Between shopping for her trousseau and the accessories she 'needed' for the myriad of functions she had planned, she breezed through every mall in a 100km radius leaving a string of burned out, smoking credit card machines in her wake. There were naturally certain things which couldn't be bought locally (or so she claimed) and so a flying trip was taken to Dubai and India where she spent a week each, desperately darting between designer stores and jewellery boutiques until she was finally convinced that she had prepared for a wedding which would not be eclipsed for at least the next century.

*It was always her dream to have an 'Emirates' themed wedding and although we would never have dared say it to her, we did feel she went overboard.* I mean, it was already an Emirates themed wedding, ON THE SAND. So was it really necessary for her to 'import' an actual Sheikh from Dubai to perform her nikaah? "What about your

ustaaaz? Won't he feel hurt? In fact, is he even invited?" we asked. "Nobody will take the Emirates theme seriously without an actual authentic Sheikh." she explained. "And as for my ustaaz," she continued, "I'm actually doing him a favour by not inviting him. You know he won't come anyway, with the music, photography and it being a mixed function." Having justified her elaborate import instead of putting the function in order, she concluded the conversation and refused to hear more on the subject.

The mehndi was absolutely INSANE. There was a stage decked with huge speakers and microphones erected behind the house. We climbed on and went wild, literally letting our hair down (a bit more than that actually – after all, it was a girls-only event) and dancing while singing Hindi songs. *As the festivities were about coming to an end, we got a shock to see the fiancé and his friends running at us (they apparently gained entrance by bribing the guard at the gate), armed with water balloons filled with tomato sauce!* As if plastering us in that mess wasn't enough (it takes AGES to wash out of your hair), they manhandled us and threw us into the pool before escaping into the street, whooping like hooligans all the while.

The kuncha exchanging function was one of a kind and a real trend setter. Still adhering to the Emirates theme, she arranged for a mini luggage carousel to be erected. She then

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had all the kunchas placed on the carousel and slowly paraded through the house amidst the 'Oohs!' and 'Aahs!' of the envious guests.

She even demanded that we, the bridesmaids (and myself specifically, the maid of honour), live up to her inflated expectations. Remember the flying trip to Dubai? *She returned with a pair of Jimmy Choo's and Louboutin's EACH for ALL of us! As we opened the gift bags and screeched in excitement, she triumphantly declared, "We'll show them how it's done! We'll glide down the aisle in style!"*

Our makeup (for every function) was applied by a world renowned makeup artist. From MAC to Lancome, his toolboxes modified to carry cosmetics contained secret substances which, in his talented hands, could transform even the ugliest hag into a bewitching beauty. Had he been there, the story of "Beauty and the Beast" would have definitely turned out differently.

"But... He's a man!" one of us objected. "So what? My dress designer's a man too. You only get married once, you know. *Sometimes you have to just overlook these 'small things' to ensure you get the best,*" retorted the bride. "*Besides, the way he's dressed, I doubt he'll have feelings for any of us!*" she whispered, attempting to allay her friend's fears with the disturbing observation that he seemed to be inclined to men.

For the wedding itself, all the guests were shuttled from the parking lot to the beach in carts pulled by *camels* (genuine Emirates camels of course!). The bride had to make her entrance in grand style and what could be grander than landing on the beach in a hot air balloon draped in bridal satin?

Although the invitations (printed to look like Emirate's Airline boarding passes) stated that lunch would be served at 2pm, the caterers couldn't begin serving for another two hours because the bride arrived late (or is late actually considered as 'on time' for the bride?). *Once she finally arrived and took her seat on the stage next to her husband, the guests had to wait for her brother and sister*

*to give their respective speeches. They took the mike and gushed on about how sad they were to bid her farewell (although she's actually moving only two streets away).*

Using a projector and the curtain behind the stage, they even showed photos and videos of her at different stages in her life, pointing out how well she'd outgrown the 'ugly duckling phase'.

The last 'hold up' before the nikaah itself (and the only interval during which the music was switched off) was the qiraat recitation. *A few women looked down guiltily (their hair and a lot more than that was uncovered) while the rest of the guests grumbled about how delayed the food was or alternatively, used the time to catch up with old friends.*

Towards the end of the afternoon, all the guests gathered to witness the 'cutting of the cake'. The cake itself was an OUTSTANDING affair – a giant structure measuring 2m in height from its base and shaped to resemble the world famous 'Burj Khalifa'. Due to its tremendous size, it had to be driven in on the back of a flatbed delivery van.

The highlight, the climax and crescendo to which the entire wedding had been building, was the moment when the bride and groom were rowed off into the sunset (dreamy sigh!) to an exclusively hired cruise ship aboard which they spent their first night.

Two days later, we were all ferried to the cruise ship to celebrate the waleemah. When the bride had forced us to take dancing classes, we took it as a joke. We didn't realize that we'd be dancing on an actual dance floor to the tune of an actual band!

Once everything was well and over, we all headed back to shore to undress, remove our layers of makeup and crash for the night. We were all too tired to perform the salaahs we missed that day and were asleep as soon as our heads hit the pillow. While we were staggering home in exhaustion, the bride and groom set off on their honeymoon cruise.

*Well, we all know how THAT cruise ended – wrecked on the rocks. THE BOAT'S STILL AFLOAT BUT THE COUPLE'S IN CRISIS.*

All that's left of their marriage are the wedding DVDS, no longer a source of pride but another skeleton to add to their closet.

Now that I think over my friend and her 'dream wedding', the hours and hours of preparation that she put into it, the millions that she spent on making it materialize I realize that one problem lay in the fact that it was all about the WEDDING and never about the MARRIAGE. In fact, I even remember her once saying wistfully, "If only there was a way to have a dream wedding without having to go home with a husband afterwards!" Reflecting over her mindset, it's obvious that she had never even thought beyond the wedding and honeymoon, let alone actually being prepared to shoulder the responsibilities and demands that come with married life.

A *wedding* is just a single function, lasting a few hours, and is forgotten shortly thereafter. A marriage, however, is meant to endure and prosper for a lifetime. How is it that we then prepare for the wedding as if it's going to last forever and completely neglect preparing for marriage?

Most girls dream about or they at least want their 'big day' to be something special, an occasion to be fondly remembered. Sadly, what they don't realize is that the only giver of true happiness is Allah Ta'ala and He grants this happiness to those who follow the sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). *How can our wedding and marriage ever become a means of perpetual happiness and prosperity when we have removed the Giver of happiness and prosperity and the sunnah from the equation and filled our functions with haraam?* Is the wastage, ostentation and other sins we indulge in for the sake of pleasing people and ensuring that our function makes an impression in society really worth the price we pay in sacrificed barakah and blessing which we need to last us a lifetime?

Remember, you will never find prosperity and happiness in haraam. Invest in the happiness of Allah Ta'ala and you will reap returns in both this world and the next.



By Hazrat Moulana Yunus Patel Sahab (rahimahullah)

# Bridal and Baby Showers

There are many customs and trends which have their affiliation with the non-Muslim culture and lifestyle. Many Muslims, due to being afflicted with what appears to be a truly insecure and inferior complex, look towards and choose the customs and trends of the non-Muslims over that of the beautiful sunnah. It seems as if the need is to secure a kind of acceptance in a non-Muslim society and just blend in with them – so that we are not recognized as Muslims.

Bridal Showers and Baby Showers have unfortunately become ingrained in the Muslim lifestyle, just as much of the rest of the non-Muslim lifestyle have become ingrained. *Many may ask: What's wrong with giving gifts, congratulating the bride-to-be or the new mother, or having a get together with friends?*

There is nothing wrong with giving the bride or the new mother a gift, or congratulating the person. To give a gift and congratulate are from the teachings of Islam – and would draw rewards... but there are conditions to be met in even these noble deeds. *What is extremely wrong and objectionable is the background to these good deeds. They are not within the parameters of sharee'ah.*

The picture of a typical bridal shower and baby shower is not typical with the sunnah. It is typical of the non-Muslim way of life. By following suit, we fall into the sin of "Tashabbuh bil Kuffaar" (emulating the disbelievers). It is aligning oneself with those who have rejected Allah Ta'ala, who live their lives in immorality and disobedience.

Nikaah is a great 'ibaadah. Pregnancy and the birth of a child also have their requisites in Islam. However, the West has commercialized all of these noble occasions, and made them into money-making events. The sacredness of these occasions is forgotten.

*Today, nikaahs have taken on a distinct mould*

*of a Hollywood or Bollywood style wedding – where the bride is dressed to look like a Christian bride or a Bollywood actress – with no sign of Islam on her; and the groom is dressed in a suit and tie, looking like a typical Christian groom.*

Adding insult to injury is the extravagance and open sin at the time of the wedding and waleemah. One's mind moves in the direction of the millions and millions who are suffering famine and starvation, who have no home, no water, no food, no clothing – but the Muslim ignores all that suffering just for some fleeting attention and praise.

*All those hundreds of thousands of Rands wasted on draping a hall, on dressing the chairs, on wine glasses, on musicians, photography, on wedding cards that are thrown away, etc., is money which could have been the means of alleviating the plight of so many suffering people.*

One brother handed me an elaborate invitation card for his daughter's wedding. I enquired as to the cost of the wedding card, and was told that each card cost R50. Advising him, I told him that almost all people throw away wedding cards. People generally dispose of them. So he should regard that as people throwing away hundreds of his R50 notes. Would he throw R50 notes into a bin? No. However, the throwing away of those cards is equal to throwing away R50 notes. That same money could have been used in making the Aakhirah.

*(NB: This was the cost in Hazrat Moulana (rahimahullah)'s lifetime. Presently the same card may cost perhaps R100.)*

Even those who are known to be religious will waste thousands on halls, on décor, etc., thereby sacrificing the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). *Those who were meant to set the noble example of the sunnah, who we expect are living the sunnah – knowingly choose to forsake the sunnah.*

*Simplicity, which is part of imaan, is a rare sight in these times.* Hazrat 'Aaishah (radhiyallahu 'anha) related that Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "Verily, the most blessed nikaah is that which involves the least difficulty (expenditure)."

We have a perfect sunnah – a perfect way of life in the life of our Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and in the lives of his companions, men and women. We have what is superior to all other cultures, yet we consider what everyone else has. It shows great weakness if we give preference to the culture of the Christians, Jews and idolators over the noble sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). *We are exchanging diamonds for stones... and what an unprofitable exchange this is! What a great loss!*

Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "Whoever emulates a nation is from amongst them." In another hadeeth it is stated: "A person is with whom he loves." Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) also said that we will be raised on the Day of Judgment with those whom we imitate in this worldly life. (May Allah Ta'ala save us from such disgrace and humiliation.) Emulating the non-Muslim culture is one downfall but there are many more that are found in the Bridal and Baby Showers.

*The non-Muslims have coined a novel concept of begging – especially amongst the upper-class. It seems as if some, from amongst the wealthy, have developed an art of begging. They even have a name for it. In the name of Bridal Showers, Baby Showers, Registries, etc., people gracefully and politely extend their begging hands, and they ask and take from others.*

The bride-to-be chooses her gifts from exclusive stores that offer a "registry" or she unashamedly hands out a list of those items she wants gifted to her. In the process, she places pressure and financial difficulty and

sometimes a great burden on others – to purchase those gifts that she has chosen. At the get-together, these gifts and other gifts are presented to the bride-to-be, who opens them and shows them to all present – and each person can assess the kind of money that was spent on the gift given. Let us now consider the various wrongs in this act:

A person is forced to purchase gifts that the bride has chosen – which may be beyond her budget in spending. A person who gives something simple or inexpensive will feel ashamed and embarrassed, considering the manner in which gifts are being received and shown to others.

The hadeeth encourages giving gifts because giving gifts creates mahabbah (love). If mahabbah is not created, then this proves that either the giver or receiver is insincere. Sometimes, people give with intentions other than expressing their mahabbah. However, there are many who request or are desirous of receiving and there is a kind of greed from the receiving side. This request or expectation (ishraaf) reveals insincerity from the one who is receiving.

A gift must be given happily and willingly – and should be received graciously and thankfully. This is the sunnah. **However, when we ask of people, as in the case of registries,**

**etc. – people will give, but they give unhappily and unwillingly.** And if some gift is given, which is not to our liking, then we receive it without any appreciation and thanks. This is our lamentable condition.

**Another aspect that has also been brought to our attention is the immorality and shamelessness at such gatherings – with indecent talk, shameless dressing by Muslim women, inappropriate games, music, dancing and such filthy entertainment, that we would not want to bring on to our tongues.** It is not permissible for a person to attend such gatherings. The sharee’ah instructs us: “It is not permissible to be present in a gathering where Allah Ta’ala is being disobeyed.”

Moreover, a person’s presence at such a gathering is actually aiding in promoting and glorifying the impermissible function. We are told not to assist each other in sin; rather to assist in what is righteous: “Help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression.” (Surah Maaidah v2)

A bride-to-be is known for her modesty and shyness – but all of this is lost in adopting the culture of the non-Muslims. Their dressing and their fashion nurtures immodesty. *Added to this, these sins are publicized and photographs are taken and uploaded on social media – for all*

*and sundry to view the level of our degeneration.*

**The heart bleeds at this miscarriage of the sunnah... Nay, this abortion of the sunnah. How will we meet our Beloved Nabi (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) on the Day of Judgment? How will we show our faces to the one whose entire life was sacrificed so that today we be the reciters of the kalimah?**

May Allah Ta’ala have mercy upon us, since we stand to lose a great deal by adopting this culture. If we continue in this line and direction, we will lose the pleasure of Allah Ta’ala and we will lose the great rewards for enlivening and practising the sunnah. We also stand to lose the companionship of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) at the fountain of Kauthar on the Day of Judgment and even stand to lose the success of our marriages due to having sacrificed the beautiful, noble sunnah by means of our emulation of the Hollywood and Bollywood culture.

If our allegiance is to Allah Ta’ala and His Rasul (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), then there should be no delay in repenting and mending our ways and coming back to what is pure and beautiful – Islam and the sunnah. In this is the success of both worlds.

*May Allah Ta’ala grant us the understanding, the concern and the taufeeq (ability) of ‘amal (practice).*

**ROYAL WEDDING**

*Faatimah (radhiyallahu ‘anha), the respected, beloved daughter of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), is the Queen of the women of Jannah. Hence whatever she did was royal. Let’s take a glimpse at her “royal” wedding:*

- The Royal Mahr (Dowry) was 480 Dirhams (approximately R13 000).** (Tabaqaat Ibn Sa’d, vol. 10, pg. 20)
- The Royal Waleemah meal consisted of a ram and some maize, barley, dates and raisins.** (Majma’uz Zawaaaid #15214, #15215 and Ithaaful Khiiyaratil Maharah, #3273)
- The Royal Trousseau with which Faatimah (radhiyallahu ‘anha) entered her husband’s home comprised of a shawl, a water skin and a pillow.** (Musnad Ahmad #643)
- The Royal Bedding on which they slept for the first night of their marriage was a sheep skin.** (Majma’uz Zawaaaid #15215)
- The Royal Furniture in her husband’s home consisted of nothing more than a mat spread on the floor, a pillow stuffed with fibers of the date palm, a jug and a tumbler.** (Majma’uz Zawaaaid #15216)

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