

An Analysis of the Pre-Marriage Process in Razavi Teachings

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Abstract

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The present research aims to analyze the pre-marriage process based on the teachings of Imam Ali ibn Musa Reza (A.S.). The primary objective is to extract and elucidate the foundational components and essential stages of this process from the perspective of His Holiness, pursued through an interpretive-analytical approach and by referencing primary hadith and historical sources. In this study, central themes such as pre-marital counseling, seeking help and goodness from God Almighty, spousal selection criteria, determination of the dowry (mahr), and attention to the various spiritual, ethical, rational, and social dimensions related to marriage have been examined and explored. The findings of this research indicate that Razavi teachings place particular emphasis on elements such as deliberation and foresight, reasoning and wisdom, informed consultation, deep and comprehensive understanding, and prioritizing inner qualities and compatibility (kufu') in the realms of faith, ethics, and culture. The contribution of this research, in addition to enriching and deepening the literature of Islamic studies in the field of family, can serve as a comprehensive and practical guide for young people, families, and counselors to facilitate and realize conscious, wise, and successful marriages. Furthermore, the present study delineates and presents a systematic and structured framework for the pre-marriage process within the intellectual system and teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.).

Keywords: Razavi Teachings, Prayer (Du'a), Spousal Selection, Marriage, Determination of Dowry (Mahr).



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1. Introduction

Marriage, as a fundamental institution in the social and religious system of Islam, has always been emphasized in Islamic texts. However, in the contemporary era, rapid cultural, economic, and social changes have confronted this institution with numerous challenges, including the rising age of marriage, the emergence of new mate selection patterns, and the intensification of risks associated with family formation. These conditions necessitate a systematic re-reading and inference from religious teachings, particularly the tradition of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), in the realm of marriage. Among these sources, the teachings attributed to Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rzaa (A.S.) possess special conceptual and practical richness regarding the family. Despite this, no comprehensive and structured research has specifically focused on explaining the “pre-marriage process” centered on his conduct and sayings. The present research aims to fill this gap and provide a practical and systematic model of the pre-marriage process based on Razavi foundations.

2. Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to extract, explain, and systematize the components, stages, and principles governing the pre-marriage process based on narrative evidence and the practical conduct (sirah) of Imam Reza (A.S.). The subsidiary objectives are as follows:

1. Analyzing the anthropological, social, and ethical foundations of marriage from the perspective of Imam Reza (A.S.).
2. Identifying and categorizing spouse selection criteria in Razavi teachings, with emphasis on value priorities.
3. Investigating the role and position of counseling, rational deliberation, and spiritual recourse in the decision-making process for marriage.
4. Examining the viewpoint of Imam Reza (A.S.) regarding the dowry (mahr) and determining its related legal and ethical boundaries.
5. Presenting a theoretical-practical framework to facilitate conscious, stable, and Islamic-values-aligned marriages in contemporary society.

3. Methodology

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach and a descriptive-analytical method. Data collection was based on library study and direct reference to primary hadith sources (such as ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Reza (A.S.), Al-Kafi, Man La Yah-

duruhu al-Faqih), exegetical, historical works, as well as contemporary research in the fields of Razavi studies and family. The content analysis method, relying on the inference of core themes and their organization into a coherent conceptual model, was employed. Furthermore, to ensure data validity, reliable Shi'a sources and cross-referencing narrations with the Holy Qur'an were utilized.

4. Findings

The research findings indicate that the pre-marriage process in the intellectual framework of Imam Reza (A.S.) is based on a comprehensive, multidimensional, and balanced framework that weaves together the three main pillars of "rationality," "ethics," and "spirituality." This process elevates from a hasty, purely emotional act to a "conscious, planned path." The most important identified components and stages are as follows:

1. Foundations and Necessity of Marriage: From the perspective of Imam Reza (A.S.), marriage is a divine solution for the proper and lawful fulfillment of sexual instinct, the existential completion of men and women, the consolidation of social bonds, and most importantly, the prevention of moral corruption (fahsha and munkar). Citing narrations, he introduces marriage as a remedy for preserving chastity and societal health.

2. Spouse Selection Criteria: Analysis of Razavi narrations shows that spouse selection criteria can be categorized into five key domains:

- Religious and Ethical: Decisive priority is given to "religiosity" and "good character." Practical faith and good manners are the primary criteria and take precedence over material criteria such as wealth and physical beauty.

- Psychological and Emotional: Qualities such as "kindness (wadud)," "bringing tranquility," and "cooperation" are emphasized.

- Social and Functional: "Fertility" and "assisting in life's affairs" are considered positive criteria.

- Economic: "Contentment" and avoiding exaggerating poverty as a barrier to marriage are notable points in these teachings.

- Familial and Lineage: Attention to a person's "family and sound upbringing" and avoiding marriage with those raised in an unhealthy environment ("khidra' al-diman" - plants growing on dunghills).

3. Counseling and Rational Deliberation: Imam Reza (A.S.) emphasized the principle of "al-tadbir qabl al-'amal" (deliberation before action) and considered consultation (mushawarah) an essential pillar of decision-making. He specifically forbade

consulting with “cowardly,” “miserly,” and “greedy” individuals and, in contrast, recommended consulting with “courageous,” “generous,” and “content” people. This indirectly strengthens the necessity of referring to expert and well-wishing counselors in marriage matters.

4. Spiritual Recourse and Seeking Goodness (Spiritual Dimension): Alongside emphasizing rationality, Imam Reza (A.S.) insisted on the necessity of “istikharah” (seeking divine guidance), “prayer,” and “supplication” on the verge of marriage. A supplication transmitted from him for seeking the best spouse demonstrates the deep integration of spirituality with practical rationality. This approach frees the individual from sole reliance on personal capacities and places the selection process within the circle of trust in God and divine guidance.

5. Determining the Dowry (Mahr) with an Approach of Moderation and Justice: From the viewpoint of Imam Reza (A.S.), the dowry is a legitimate financial right of the woman. However, its determination should be based on “moderation” and “mahr al-sunnah” (approximately five hundred dirhams). He forbids setting heavy dowries that could hinder marriage or cause future disputes. He also emphasizes the legitimacy of the dowry being paid to the woman herself and the invalidity of any additional condition for payment to third parties (such as the bride’s father). The possibility of deferred payment with the wife’s consent is another important point in this regard.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that Razavi teachings depict the pre-marriage process as an “intelligent educational-decision-making system” in which the elements of intellect, emotion, ethics, and faith are placed in dynamic interaction with each other. The model extracted from these teachings, on one hand, prevents haste and superficiality by emphasizing deliberation, consultation, and deep understanding, and on the other hand, liberates this process from the confines of mere material calculations by centering on intrinsic criteria such as religion and character, and through trust in God.

This framework can not only serve as a practical guide for young people and families in spouse selection but also has the potential to become a basis for cultural policymaking, designing pre-marriage educational programs, and providing counseling services based on Islamic-Iranian culture.

Suggestions

1. Evaluating the Model's Efficacy with Mixed Methods: Conducting quantitative-qualitative field research to assess the effectiveness and acceptance of the Razavi model among young people and counselors.
2. Interdisciplinary Comparative Studies: Comparing the Razavi model with psychological and sociological theories of marriage to enrich indigenous and interdisciplinary literature.
3. Designing and Testing Educational Packages: Designing pre-marriage educational courses based on this model and examining their effectiveness through quasi-experimental studies.
4. Demographic Research: Investigating the relationship between adherence to the model's components (such as ethical criteria and moderation in dowry) and family health indicators at the societal level.

These research directions can, while producing applicable knowledge, contribute to strengthening the family institution and reducing related social harms.

Keywords: Razavi Teachings, Pre-Marriage Process, Spouse Selection, Mate Selection Criteria, Spiritual Recourse and Istikharah, Dowry and Justice, Family in Islam, Conduct (Sirah) of Imam Reza (A.S.).