

Two Wedding Ceremonies

Farah looked out of the car window. The entire front of the house was illuminated with colourful lights and tube lights were erected all along the pathway. Rows of cars on both sides of the road, extending a furlong away from the main gate, made it much easier to find the house, and Farah's father did not lose his way at all.

After getting down from the car, they walked down the road and reached the gate. The male hosts were standing ready to receive their guests. The Barat had not yet arrived and young men with garlands and flowers had lined the pathway on both the sides. Near the house itself, rows of young girls wearing gold and silver, dressed in bright eye-catching colours and holding flower petals in baskets, were waiting for the Barat.

Soon the Barat arrived. Every woman was loaded with jewellery around her neck, on her head, in her ears, on forearms and fingers.

Farah started feeling uncomfortable. She looked around to find a quiet corner but all the seats, except the one next to her, had been taken. There were over five hundred men, women and children gathered for that wedding. She saw a young woman coming to sit next to her. The woman was dressed simply. She instantly began talking to Farah and asked her where she had come from.

Farah told her that she was born and brought up abroad and had come to Pakistan for the first time in her life. Her mother died when she was three and her father sent her to a private residential school. He had, however, taken the responsibility of her religious education himself. On completing high school, she decided to visit Pakistan, the birth place of her father. The young lady inquired whether she had seen the display of the dowry. Farah said that she hadn't. "Tell me what is given as dowry, and why?" Farah asked the lady.

"Well", said the woman, "silk dresses, sets of jewellery, pairs of shoes, sets of bed linen and a fully furnished house with a car". The lady explained some of the items that were being displayed.

"Has the groom so much money that he can afford all this?" Farah asked. "No! no! You've got it all wrong", the lady clarified. "The bride's parents have given their daughter all this so that she may live comfortably and have no financial problem after marriage", she continued. Farah was surprised. It took her sometime to compose herself. Then she asked quietly, "Is this what all parents of brides have to give to their daughters"? Then the young woman told her that only rich people could give all these things to their daughters.

Farah shut her eyes and rested her head on the back of the chair. "Alas! If the

people only remembered how simply the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) married his daughter, Hazrat Fatima (رضي الله عنها), to Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه). "How simple, sacred and holy, the ceremony must have looked!" she thought to herself.

The gathering must have consisted of only close relatives and dear friends. She had read in her Islamic history that the groom had sold his armour to purchase some essentials for the daily use, like a prayer mat, a grinding stone, a sleeping mat, a pitcher for water, some cooking utensils and a pair of clothes for the bride. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) entertained his guests with dates and milk. After the Nikah ceremony, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his daughter thus: "Fatima! remember, never leave your house without your husband's consent". And to Hazrat Ali (رضي الله عنه) he said, "Treat your wife with love and care and be not harsh, for harshness destroys matrimonial bliss". Saying this, he allowed them to go home.

Farah was not at all happy with the grand show she was witnessing. She wished that instead of wasting it on pomp and show, the Muslims should spend their money for the benefit of the poor and the needy. They should take steps to spread knowledge and wipe out ignorance and do something to relieve the pain of the ailing and the disabled. She felt that they should support the orphans, widows and prisoners of war with the wealth that Allah made them the guardians of.

Farah was convinced that if all the Muslims followed the model presented by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and spent their wealth in doing good to the cause of humanity and Islam, this land could progress and prosper well.

Words	Meanings
illuminate	throw light on
inquire	ask to be told
compose	to control
convince	persuade
display	show
dowry	property / money brought by a bride to a marriage
bliss	great joy
consent	give agreement
ailing	troubling

EXERCISES

1. Use these words in your own sentences.

illuminated, extending, inquired, compose, convinced, display, dowry, consent, bliss, ailing

2. Pronunciation and Spelling:

In some words 'c' is pronounced as 'k' before a/o/ u.

can	come	congregation	consent
cot	country	consistency	camp
cut	community	complex	confide
cultivate	contact	car	compose
consult	curtain	candle	commodities

In other words 'c' is pronounced 's' before e/i/y

city	cycle	century	cereal	celebrate
cell	cylinder	cyclone	cynic	

3. Answer the following questions.

- i. Where was Farah born and bred?
- ii. Who took the responsibility of her religious education?
- iii. Why was she surprised and displeased at the ceremony?
- iv. Compare and contrast the two wedding ceremonies.

4. (a) Give the contracted forms of the following words: e.g. I am—I'm

i.	I am	I was not	I did not
ii.	You are	You could not	You must not
iii.	We are	We will not	We have not
iv.	They are	They should not	They ought not

- (b) Construct sentences with the following expressions:

- i. hard and fast

- ii. by and large
- iii. ups and downs
- iv. heaven and earth
- v. black and white

5. Choose one word from the list and fill in the blanks.
 heir, graduate, catastrophe, cleaner, guest, acquaintance, play, draper,
 astrologer, geologist

- i. A scene or event performed on a stage is a _____.
- ii. A person who succeeds another in the possession of title or property is an _____.
- iii. A great and sudden misfortune is a _____.
- iv. A person who is entertained at one's home is a _____.
- v. A person whom one knows casually is an _____.
- vi. A person who holds a university degree is a _____.
- vii. A person who studies the influence of stars on human beings is an _____.
- viii. A woman employed to clean out offices or houses is a _____.
- ix. A person who deals in clothes and other fashions is a _____.
- x. A person who studies rocks is a _____.

6. (a) Re-write each sentence inserting an adverb in the appropriate position.

Example: He could (hardly) keep himself awake.

- i. He could complete his work. (hardly)
- ii. They are a snobbish couple. (very)
- iii. His father lost his temper. (almost)
- iv. The test must have been very easy; the weakest students passed. (even)
- v. I think he is frightened, not hurt. (only)

(b) Supply the correct tense (Present, Past, or Past Perfect):

Example: She (go) away every week-end.
 She goes away every week-end.

- i. He (go) abroad last week.
- ii. No, he isn't here. He just (go) out.
- iii. He (go) downstairs when I (meet) him.
- iv. The boy never (see) the sea.

- v. He has already (write) a lot of letters, but his sister has not (write) any.
- vi. I (hope) he (get) better now; I (hear) he (have) a bad cold all week.
- vii. He (live) in England since 1938.
- viii. When I last (see) him, he (live) in London.
- ix. He (sit) in the garden when the storm (break).
- x. I (listen) to the news last night, but I (not listen) it today.
- xi. "You (read) that book yet? "No, I only just (begin) it".
- xii. I (see) that you (buy) a new hat. How much did you (pay) for it?
- xiii. My elder brother (join) the army when he (be) seventeen.
- xiv. He (continue) his training there for a time, and soon (become) an officer.

(c) Make sentences with the following idiomatic phrases.

bombarded with
a quiet corner
born and bred
knitted his brows
take to task

7. Answer the following question.

Should a lot of money be spent on pomp and show at a wedding ceremony or should it be solemnized in a simple way? Write your views.