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Comparative Study of the Place of Sexual Instinct in the Quran and the Bible

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Abstract

Sexual desire is a powerful force that, if expressed incorrectly, can cause indescribable harm to individuals. Conversely, responding to this desire and, more importantly, achieving balance in responses can lead to significant individual and social effects. Since the heavenly scriptures of Abrahamic religions have never disregarded sexual pleasure, ensuring that sexual satisfaction does not become a means of societal deviation, the present study aims to explore what teachings these scriptures offer to preserve the sexual instinct. By comparing the three texts—the Quran, the Old Testament, and the New Testament—through a descriptive and analytical approach using library resources, we have concluded that all three texts recognize the family as the proper context for the correct fulfillment of this instinct and provide programs for this purpose. In this regard, the Quran establishes specific laws within the confines of marriage that prevent marriage from posing a threat to the sexual instinct. This is contrary to what is observed in the two Testaments, particularly in the New Testament. Both the Quran and the Bible discuss the preservation and purity of the sexual instinct, but the purity emphasized in Islam differs from that in the Testaments (especially the New

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Testament). The Quran guides towards proper fulfillment, while another view seeks to suppress this instinct.

Keywords: Sexual Instinct, Quran, Bible.

Introduction

The present age can be termed the era of the dangerous dissolution of the family unit, a dissolution that will lead to perilous and irreparable repercussions, including the deviation of the sexual instinct. Therefore, we begin the discussion with the family.

The family, a long-standing center of human societies, is the smallest unit and central core of human society. The family is a natural, instinctive, and divine institution. It is natural because it aligns with the nature of humans as creatures, like other beings. It is instinctive because it corresponds to the innate needs of humans, and the attraction between genders promotes human dignity and the preservation of the species. It is divine because God has provided thoughtful plans through Sharia for its establishment and sustainability.

Islam and its holy book, the Quran, consider the family a permanent, influential, and functional institution, granting it a distinct intellectual significance. If we were to express all the functions of the family from the perspective of Islamic knowledge systems, particularly the holy book of the Quran, it would become a comprehensive encyclopedia of family. Numerous books and articles have emerged in this field, detailing many important functions of the family, including:

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A) Properly addressing and fulfilling sexual desire. Marriage and family formation center on intimacy, and narrations such as "Whoever marries has safeguarded half of his religion" point to the unique impact of marriage and family formation in preventing sexual deviations that contradict human nature (Ṭabrisī, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 196);

B) Meeting emotional needs;

C) Meeting economic needs;

D) Growth and development of personality and self-esteem;

E) Procreation;

F) Raising children;

G) Spiritual perfection. Motahhari offers an interesting expression in this regard: "Experience shows that individuals who have lived their entire lives for spiritual goals and have not desired to have a spouse and children to avoid hindering their pursuit of spirituality exhibit a kind of defect, akin to rawness. It seems that a kind of spiritual perfection exists that can only be attained in the school of the family, and not in any other institution." (Motahhari, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 166);

H) Teaching responsibility, socialization, and social control, among other functions.

Some family functions might be attainable without forming a family, and replacements could be found for them. However, one function occurs solely through the establishment of a family: the satisfaction of sexual needs can only be fully realized within the home and marital relationship. Religious believers consider marriage and family formation as the only means to meet human sexual needs, as highlighted in a saying from Imam Bāqir (AS) addressing this importance:

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From al-Bāqir (AS), from his father Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (AS), he said: Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) said: "If any of you has pains in his body and is overwhelmed by heat, he should go to bed." When this was said to al-Bāqir, they asked, "O! Son of the Messenger of Allah, what does 'going to bed' mean?" He replied, "It means the companionship of women, for it soothes and calms him." (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 3, 203) Perhaps the term "Calming" is more encompassing than "Fulfilling" the sexual instinct, as the narration also uses the word "Calming."

1. Concepts**1.1. Sexual Instinct**

This instinct relies on the animalistic dimension of humans, as Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) stated in this regard:

"Indeed, Allah, the Exalted, has created reason in the angels without desire, and He has created desire in the animals without reason. He has created both in the children of Adam. Therefore, whoever's reason overcomes his desire is better than the angels, and whoever's desire overcomes his reason is worse than the animals." (Ṣadūq: 1965 AD/1385 AH: 4)

The sexual instinct is one of the fundamental needs rooted in human nature, and it is this need that draws men and women towards each other and paves the way for the establishment of families. Healthy sexual inclinations elevate the levels of testosterone in the blood, which helps strengthen bones and muscles and regulates the body's cholesterol levels. Furthermore, it leads to the release of endorphins, which are considered the body's natural painkillers (Piz, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 278).

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This instinct fiercely demands satisfaction, which is indeed its natural right. Religion, and consequently its believers throughout history, have acknowledged the natural right of this instinct and have aimed for its correct fulfillment. Proper fulfillment means preserving the dignity and stature of human humanity, which is rationality. The path that religion provides for fulfilling the sexual instinct can be interpreted as "Thoughtful Satisfaction," that is, placing the fulfillment of sexual needs alongside rational desires. The narration "Control your desires" (Āmidī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: H. 2366) from Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) refers to this point, indicating that carnal desires—including sensual pleasures—should align with human rationality.

Religion places the sexual instinct in the service of the elevation and growth of the family and then society. One of the best examples of this thoughtful approach is the method that Prophet Shu'ayb adopted in his encounter with Musa:

"He said: I want to marry you to one of these two daughters of mine on the condition that you will work for me for eight years. If you complete ten, it will be from you; and I do not wish to make it difficult for you..." (al-Qaṣaṣ/27)

The trustworthiness, ability, and interest in the work of young Musa were confirmed for Prophet Shu'ayb (al-Qaṣaṣ/23-26). On the other hand, Prophet Shu'ayb had a serious need for a young man like Musa, but the sexual instinct is taken seriously, even in the house of Prophethood. Therefore, for the health of the home and work environment, the matter of marriage is first addressed, and then attention is paid to employment (Qara'ati, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 7, 43).

1.2. Sacred Texts

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The references for this research are the sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions and documented interpretations based on these texts, which include: The Old Testament is the holy book of the Jews. The Torah is the first book of the Old Testament, which includes the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The next portion of the Old Testament, known as the books of the Prophets, is divided into two parts: the earlier and later prophets. The earlier prophets include Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; the later prophets begin with Isaiah, then progress to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets. The third section of the Old Testament is the Writings, which, as the name suggests, is a diverse collection of various literary forms. This collection begins with Psalms, which are poetic prayers intended for use in the temple.

The New Testament, together with the Old Testament, forms the Christian Bible. The first four books are the Gospels (meaning "Good News"), which recount the story of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of the Savior Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel, from the conception of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit to His appearance after His resurrection from the dead. The Gospel of Mark discusses the story from Jesus' baptism to His resurrection. Luke recognizes Jesus as the Savior of the nations. The Gospel of John presents Jesus as the eternal and divine Son of God who came to earth to manifest God's glory through His life, death, and resurrection. Following the Gospels is the Acts of the Apostles, which is the only book of the New Testament dedicated to the historical account of the early church. The remainder of the New Testament primarily consists of instructional and corrective epistles written by church leaders to various churches (Van Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 45-50).

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Regarding the Quran, we draw upon the words of the noble Prophet of Islam (PBUH) as the trustee of revelation, and the narrations of the impeccable Imams (AS) as the individuals engaged with revelation.

1.3. Comparison

"Comparison" in terminology refers to finding commonalities and overlaps, while "Contrast" involves considering both commonalities and differences; thus, the term comparative study is more accurate than comparative investigation, although the latter has become common. Comparative religion (or comparative studies) is neither a new nor academic term, having only about 150 years of history. In this method, the researcher must carefully examine the various historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and belief contexts that have shaped the formation of beliefs and rites to investigate the points of similarity and difference between religions (Nemati Pir Ali, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 8).

2. Research Background

Regarding the sexual instinct, points have been made in books related to family matters. For instance, books like "The Family in Islam" by Professor Hossein Mazaheri, "The Family System in Islam" by the thinker martyr Morteza Motahhari, or his other book "The System of Women's Rights in Islam," as well as "The Family in Islam," written by Ayatollah martyr Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr, or the famous book by Professor Hossein Ansarian "The Family System in Islam," reference the sexual instinct in one or two sections. Additionally, the monograph "Islam and the Satisfaction of the Sexual Instinct" by Mohammad Reza Aminzadeh discusses this topic, albeit only within the limits of Islam. In the book "Christianity through the Texts,"

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written by Robert Van Voorst, there is a brief mention of the subject, but only in the sphere of Christianity. The book "Marriage in the Abrahamic Religions - Judaism and Islam," written by Ms. Neda Chalingar, makes mentions of its topic in one section, which, as the name implies, only pertains to Judaism and Islam. Articles like "Ethics in Judaism" by Ismail Alikhani; "Mysticism and Monasticism in Christianity" by Farhad Adarisi; "Christianity and the Sociology of Family" by Javad Baghbani; "Tracing the Crisis of Women in the West Based on the Teachings of the Holy Scriptures" by Mojgan Sekhayi each provide references to the sexual instinct within their own religious contexts. From a comparative perspective, the articles "Family Rights in Islam, Divorce Issue, and the Christian World" by Hossein Haqani Zanjani; "A Comparative Study of Marriage from the Perspective of Islam and Christianity" by Mohammad Ali Elahi; "A Comparative Study of the Role and Importance of Marriage and Family Formation in Islam and Judaism" by Soheila Boujari; "Marriage and Its Position in Islam and Judaism," not only provide comparisons between the two religions, but also give limited attention to the sexual instinct.

The present study is noteworthy from several perspectives: The sexual instinct as an independent comparative topic between three sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions has not been previously explored; the abundance of references to primary sources in this research is also significant (although due to the lack of Persian translation of the Talmud, reference was made to surrounding books). Additionally, supplementary materials are cited in footnotes to allow readers to engage with the core article in less time.

3. Islam and the Sexual Instinct

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The true religion of Islam, like all divine religions, is in accordance with human nature and instinct. Its teachings pay attention to both the spirit and the body. It may be said that the first official reaction of Islam in interacting with the sexual instinct related to every individual is the simultaneous establishment of spiritual maturation with sexual maturity. Just as sexual maturity defines one's gender, spiritual maturation defines a person's sense of duty, igniting within them a center for worship, and for both maturities, and Islam has established rules and obligations to regulate them (Pak Nejad, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 1, 17).

Furthermore, Islam has never abandoned the sexual instinct and pleasure, explicitly directing it through the clear command "And marry those among you who are single" (Quran, 24:32) toward a proper and lawful fulfillment of this instinct. With this verse, the "Sexual instinct" is transformed into "Sexual capital," serving the lofty goals of human existence. This means the Quran engineers this instinctual attraction toward the formation of family and the establishment of human society. Since the fear of economic hardships is the largest factor leading individuals to shy away from marriage, the Lord addresses this inevitable concern in the Quran, further following this verse with "And if they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty" (Quran, 24:32). This promises the bounty of livelihood that comes with marriage. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also remarked regarding this matter: "Seek sustenance through marriage." (Ṭabrisī, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 196)

In addition to these sincere economic promises, Islam has laid out further economic guidelines; for example, it denounces luxury, which is the aspiration of some youths. It also expresses discontent with unemployment and elevates the merchant to the level of being a beloved of God, as it is

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reported from Prophet David that "God loves the one who works and earns their livelihood through their labor." (Warām ibn Abī Farās, 1990 AD/1410 AH: 42)

While Islam condemns any form of sexual deviation, it sanctifies the sexual conduct between husband and wife within the family, considering it an act of worship with a spiritual approach. For intimate relations, it grants a spiritual reward. With this Islamic perspective, the sexual instinct is regarded as one of the greatest blessings from God, and its lawful fulfillment contributes to the growth of both the individual and society. Furthermore, even the correct satisfaction of this need elevates the quality of worship.

3.1. The Position of the Sexual Instinct in the Quran

The recognition of the rights and needs of the sexual instinct is an "Essential" principle in the Quran. After the sexual instinct is transformed into "Sexual capital" through marriage, the Quran takes numerous teachings to protect and preserve this capital.

The most important teachings of the Quran aimed at preserving, safeguarding, and directing the sexual instinct include:

A) Strictness regarding the enactment of divorce : The Quran establishes four stages for the realization of divorce, and it is quite possible that at any of these stages, divorce may be avoided, allowing life to flow once again. In the first stage, there is a recommendation for forgiveness and overlooking mistakes: "And if you pardon, overlook, and forgive, surely Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Quran, 64:14) Nowhere in the Quran do the words forgiveness, have overlooking, and pardon come together except for the preservation of family life. During the dispute between Zayd ibn Hārithah and his wife, when divorce was contemplated, there was again a recommendation

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for patience and tolerance to safeguard the shared life: "Hold onto your wife and be mindful of God." (Quran, 33:37)

The second stage refers to the "Family reconciliation court": "And if you fear a breach between them, send an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will make them one." (Quran, 4:35) In the third stage, the presence of "Two just witnesses" during divorce is noted: "And have two just witnesses from among you and establish the testimony for Allah." (Quran, 65:2)

The fourth stage allows for two instances of reversible divorce: "Divorce twice." (Quran, 2:229) In these two instances, the rights of accommodation and maintenance during the waiting period ('Iddah) are preserved for the wife: "And provide for them from where you dwell, according to your means, and do not harm them in order to impose hardship upon them," (Quran, 65:6) and the right of return is maintained for the husband: "Then adhere to them in a good manner." (Quran, 2:229) All these stages are in place so that, as the Quran itself states, an occurrence may arise: "You do not know; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a matter." (Quran, 65:1) It is quite possible that Almighty God may bring about something that changes the situation of this couple, and the husband's decision regarding divorce might change, leading him to reconcile with her, since the control of hearts is in God's hands. Love for his wife may arise in his heart, and they might return to their previous life together (Mousavi Hamadani, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 19, 537).

B) Acceptance of divorce under necessary circumstances: "And when you divorce women, divorce them for their waiting periods," (Quran, 2:231) "And when you divorce them, divorce them with good conduct," (Quran, 2:229) "And when you divorce them, do so with kindness." (Quran, 65:2) The

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permissibility of divorce is for couples who no longer feel satisfied in their marital life (most of which relates to their private matters), and continuing the relationship creates greater problems for them and society (Key Nia, 2021 AD/1400 AH: 2, 784). Even in cases where the wife is not inclined towards her husband, the "khul' Divorce" provides a way for the woman to be freed: "If you fear that you will not be able to uphold the limits of Allah, then there is no sin upon them regarding what she pays." (Quran, 2:229)

C) Firm measures accompanied by heavy penalties and setting a deadline for the pre-Islamic practices of *Zihār* and *Īlā'*: "Those who pronounce *Zihār* among you [to separate] from their wives - they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood. But indeed, Allāh is Pardoning and Forgiving." (Quran, 58:2) Those who practice *Zihār* [i.e., based on pre-Islamic culture, say to their wives: "You are to me as my mother," thus rendering relations with them permanently forbidden], their wives are not their mothers; only those women who bore them are their mothers. They are surely speaking an objectionable and false statement, and if they repent and turn back from what they said, then Allah is indeed Very Forgiving and Very Merciful. In cases of *Zihār*, a man would place his wife in a sexual and emotional deadlock, rather than allowing her to choose another husband or seeking her himself. The Quran initially condemns this harshly with the term "Reprehensible and false." It then abrogates and prohibits this pre-Islamic practice with phrases such as "These are the limits of Allah" and "For the disbelievers is a painful punishment." A heavy atonement was established for committing this: "And those who declare *Zihār* from their wives, then return to what they said, must free a believing slave before they

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touch one another. This is what you are being admonished with; and Allah is All-Aware of what you do. And whoever does not find one, and then the expiation is to fast for two consecutive months before they touch one another; and whoever is unable to, then feeding sixty needy people. This is for you to believe in Allah and His Messenger. And those are the limits of Allah, and for the disbelievers is a painful punishment." (Quran, 58: 3-4) As can be observed, the atonement for *Zihār* is hierarchical, while the atonement for fasting during Ramadan is discretionary.

Regarding *Īlā'*, it is mentioned: "For those who take an oath not to approach their wives, they have a waiting period of four months. But if they return, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Quran, 2:226) For those who (with the intent to inflict emotional and sexual distress on their spouses) take an oath [to abstain from relations] with their wives, a four-month grace period is given. If they return to what is appropriate for marriage within this period, there is no sin upon them, for Allah is so kind and merciful (Interpretation is based on Tafsir Noor).

Īlā' in language refers to an oath that signifies negligence and a commitment regarding the matter to which the oath was taken (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 84). In legal terminology, it refers to a husband's oath to abstain from physical relations with his permanent wife indefinitely or for more than four months, with the intention of harming her (Najafī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 33, 297).

D) Reprimand of men to prevent them from discouraging their ex-wives from remarrying: "And when you divorce women and they have reached their term, do not prevent them from marrying their former husbands if they agree between themselves in a reasonable manner. This is an admonition for

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whoever among you believes in Allah and the Last Day. That is purer for you and cleaner. And Allah knows, while you do not know." (Quran, 2:232) The concluding part of this verse: "And Allah knows, and you do not know," indicates that the blessings of this renewed marriage (which likely include aspects related to intimacy and the prevention of moral corruption) are beyond human comprehension (Gharaiti, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 364).

E) Reduction of the waiting period for widowhood from "One year" to "Four months and ten days": The verse 240 of Surah al-Baqarah states: "And those who die among you and leave wives behind, a bequest for their wives is a provision for a year without removing them, but if they leave, there is no sin upon you for what they do in themselves in a reasonable manner. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." It is reported from some scholars that: "A woman during the pre-Islamic period, upon the death of her husband, would enter a state of isolation and not apply any perfume or adorn herself for a year." (Mālik ibn Anas, 1981 AD/1402 AH: 2, 434) The waiting period for women during the Jahiliyyah was a full year, alongside very harsh conditions. Some commentators also believe that the waiting period in the time of Jahiliyyah was one year, with superstitious and burdensome customs placed upon women during this time. Islam initially abolished these superstitious customs but affirmed the waiting period of one year, before later reducing it to four months and ten days, as announced in verse 234 of Surah al-Baqarah: "And those who die among you and leave wives, let them wait four months and ten days..." (Fakhr Rāzī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 6, 158). Even if there is no contradiction between these two verses and they can be reconciled, meaning that the waiting period of four months and ten days is a divine ruling, the retention of the waiting period for a year and remaining in

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the deceased husband's home, along with benefiting from his support, is a right for the woman. In this context, it is granted to the woman the right to remain in her deceased husband's home for a year if she desires, and if she does not wish to do so, she can proceed to marry after four months and ten days. Even according to verse 235: "And there is no blame upon you for what you propose of marriage to women or conceal within yourselves. Allah knows that you will remember them, but do not promise them secretly except for saying a known statement. And do not make a binding contract until the term is fulfilled. And know that Allah knows what is in you, so be wary of Him. And know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing," expressing a desire for marriage during the waiting period is not forbidden, provided it is not clear-cut and is expressed indirectly (Gharaiti, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 1, 368).

F) Conditional permissibility of polygamy: There are verses in the Quran that refer to polygamy; see al-Mā'idah/1; al-Aḥzāb/50; the most significant of which is verse 3 of Surah al-Nisā': "... Then marry those that please you of women, two, three, or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then only one..." It indicates, according to prominent commentators, the permissibility of polygamy up to four wives, with the stipulation of adherence to conditions (Shaykh Mufīd, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 517). Although, as stated by Martyr Mottahari, "Monogamy is the most natural state of marriage." (Mottahari, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 19, 299). Polygamy in Islam is a natural precaution; the shorter average lifespan of men, military, social, and political engagements of men, along with the adversities they face, lead to an increase in the number of women without husbands (Pak Nejad, 1975 AD/1374 SH: 44).

G) The establishment of the law of compliance (Tamkīn): Compliance, in linguistic terms, means giving authority and control to another (Fayyūmī,

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1977 AD/1397 AH, under the word "Makn"), establishing and confirming (Ṭurayḥī, 1983 AD/1362 SH, under the word "Makn"), and in the context of marital relations, it refers specifically to a woman's sexual relationship with her husband and responding to his legitimate desires (Ṭūsī, 1967 AD/1387 AH: 6, 11). The Quranic expression "Qānitāt" (Quran 66:5 and 4:34) describes women who adhere to the law of compliance. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The best women are those who, when they are alone with their husbands, remove the armor of modesty for him, and when they dress, they dress with the armor of modesty, obedient to their husbands..." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 5, 324) It should be noted that a woman's compliance with her husband is not merely about satisfying his sexual needs; rather, its essence is to exhibit humility before the commands of the Almighty, preserving the sanctity and stability of the family, and valuing one's and one's spouse's dignity. The desire for compliance transcends a mere animalistic or lustful perspective and is interpreted within the limits of obedience to divine commands. "So the righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard." (Makarem Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 3, 371) Another important aspect from verse 34 of Surah al-Nisā' pertinent to our discussion is the issue of a wife's "Nushūz" (rebellion): "And those, from whom you fear arrogance (Nushūz), admonish them; and abandon them in the sleeping places; and strike them. But if they obey you, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted and Great." (Quran 4:34) This verse introduces women who rebel against the law of compliance as "Nāshiz," and mentions "Admonition," "Abandonment," and "Striking" as means of reprimand. Imam Ṣādiq (AS) provides a delicate interpretation of this: A woman's rebellion is when she does not obey her husband in bed, and the term "Strike them" refers

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to using a Miswak or something similar, a strike that is gentle and based on affection (Şadūq, *ibid*: 3, 521).

3.2. The Status of Sexual Instinct in the Narrations

The Prophet (PBUH), as the custodian of "Revelation," and after him, the Imams of Guidance, as those who dealt with "Revelation," sought to align sexual instinct as a support for human life in its rightful course.

The core teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in guiding and directing sexual instinct can be classified under the following headings:

A) Condemning and strictly prohibiting celibacy: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The majority of the inhabitants of Hell are the celibates" (Şadūq, *ibid*: 3, 384) or "The worst among you are your celibates, and the celibates are the brothers of the devils." (Sha'īrī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 1, 102) These narrations imply a full-scale struggle against celibacy. Perhaps regarding the struggle of the celibate with their intellect, as they often choose delirious thoughts over rational thought, the connection of someone who has cast aside reason (Intellect) with fire is inevitable (which both burns themselves and their community). A celibate may turn to fornication, amuse themselves through masturbation, or repress their sexual instinct in their imagination; in the first two cases, the instinct is employed incorrectly, resulting in various filth and sexually transmitted diseases, while in the third, they fall into romantic delusions and baseless emotions, leading to nothing but false security and empty reliance (Pak Nejad, *ibid*: 2, 14).

B) Marriage at the Right Time: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "O! people, Gabriel came to me from the All-Knowing and said: The virgins are like the fruits on a tree. If they reach maturity and are not picked, the sun corrupts them and the wind scatters them. Likewise, when young girls reach

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puberty and feel sexual desire, they have no remedy but marriage, and if they do not get married, they will not be safe from corruption, for they are human beings." (Kulaynī, *ibid*: 5, 337)

At a stage of life when the sexual instinct fully manifests itself, to be safe from sexual complexes and the harmful mental and physical effects that may arise from delayed marriage, Islam has special commandments. "The rights of the child... And if it is a female... And let her be hastened to the house of her husband." (Kulaynī, *ibid*: 49)

C) Intercession for Marriage: Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) said: "The best intercession is that you intercede between two people for marriage until Allah unites them." (Kulaynī, *ibid*: 331).

D) Facilitating Marriage for Young People (especially financial assistance): Mūsā ibn Ja'far (AS) said: "Three will be sheltered under the shade of Allah's Throne on the Day when there will be no shade except His shade: a man who marries his Muslim brother." (Ṣadūq, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 1, 141)

E) Marriage Based on Desire and Not Compulsion: It is reported from Ibn 'Abbās that a young girl came to the Prophet and said: "My father has married me to his brother's son for materialistic reasons while I am not willing." The Prophet said: "Accept your father's opinion and let the marriage take place." The girl replied: "I have no inclination towards him and cannot accept my father's action." The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Then go and marry whoever you wish." The girl said: "Indeed, I have accepted what my father has done, but I wanted you to know that women should understand that fathers have no authority over them in marriage matters." (Bayhaqī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 118)

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F) Prohibition of Leaving the Marital Relationship for More than Four Months (Usuli, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 2, Family Law, Issue 2418).

G) Precise and Technical Teachings to Enhance Marital Skills: Ali ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (AS) said: "Do not have intercourse with a woman until you play with her and engage in extensive play and fondle her breasts, for if you do this, her desire will overcome her and her fluids will accumulate because her fluids come from her breasts, and desire shows from her face and eyes, and she will desire from you what you desire from her." (Majlisī, 1984 AD/1403 AH: 59, 327)

In many books and collections of narrations regarding marriage, there are valuable teachings from the impeccable Imams (AS) regarding the times and conditions of intercourse, paying attention to physical and spiritual states, etc. Some of these dimensions of the teachings remain unclear even to modern individuals claiming knowledge and experience. The goal of these narrations is mutual sexual satisfaction and reaching the peak of pleasure (orgasm); because women and men who do not achieve orgasm often experience muscular and emotional stress, become angry, and may suffer from back pain or even pain in their sexual organs. They experience a lack of mental focus, making it difficult to perform routine tasks; whereas reaching climax fulfills the sexual instinct, alleviates stress, increases personal productivity, brings spiritual satisfaction, and helps alleviate some psychological disorders (Pak Nejad, *ibid*: 2, 193).

H) The Law of Division: Division refers to the rights of division, the right of intimacy, and the right of cohabitation. A husband is obliged to spend at least one night with his wife out of every four nights (Muḥaqqiq Ḥillī, 1997 AD/1416 AH: Chapter on Marriage).

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I) Correcting the Behavior of Sexually Deviant Individuals through Marriage: Indeed, Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) was brought a man who had engaged in inappropriate behavior with his member, so he struck his hand until it turned red, and then married him from the public treasury (Kulaynī, *ibid*: 7, 265).

J) In some sources, even the recommendation against "Non-Consanguineous Marriage" is related to sexual desire: There are narrations that prohibit marriages with close relatives: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "Marry outsiders and do not introduce weakness." (Sharīf Raḍī, 2003 AD/1422 AH: 91) Marry strangers (non-relatives) and do not produce thin and weak offspring. The term *Ḍaw* according to Lisān al-‘Arab means: "*Ḍaw* refers to thinness of bones and a lack of flesh in creation... And the meaning of do not *Ḍaw* is doing not produce weak children." *Ḍaw* in language refers to the natural thinness of the body, and the meaning of "do not *Ḍaw* "is that do not produce weak offspring (Ibn Manẓūr, 1995 AD/1414 AH: entry on *Ḍaw*). Another narration from the revered Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarding the prohibition of marrying close relatives states: "Do not marry close relatives, for the child will be born weak." (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1998 AD/1417 AH: 3, 94)

Some justify abstaining from marrying relatives based on sexual desire, stating that close kinship and relations weaken sexual desire because feelings of lust are stirred by gazes and touches, and the intense excitement is directed toward strangers and new individuals; whereas with those whom one has seen many times, their previous mental impressions do not strongly influence emotional responses nor greatly arouse sexual desire (Falsafi, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 2, 280). Of course, it should be noted that if intense or mild sexual

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excitement affects the natural constitution of the child in terms of strength and weakness, this perception is acceptable. However, if it has no effect, this statement cannot adequately justify the narration of the Messenger of Allah regarding "For the child will be born weak."

Additionally, there are narrations from the impeccable Imams (AS) aimed at safeguarding and preserving sexual desire, and concerning the fulfillment of it, from which jurists have derived the law of "Annulment of marriage." (Due to considerations, this will be addressed as a separate discussion)

3.2.1. Annulment of Marriage

Annulment means to invalidate, nullify, separate, and break apart (Dekhoda, 1998 AD/ 1377 SH: Entry on annulment). In the terminology of marriage, either spouse can immediately annul the contract upon discovering defects in the other party. It is important to know that this can only be done in specific defects and shortcomings. It should be noted that the option for annulment is immediate for both men and women (Musavi (Imam Khomeini), 2006 AD/1385 SH: Book of Marriage, Chapter on Defects Justifying the Option to Annul, Issue 4). Annulment is not divorce, and its rulings are not the same (The formalities of divorce, such as witnesses, occurrence during a clean period, verbal declaration with a specific formula, and such, are not required in annulment) (Musavi (Imam Khomeini), *ibid*: Issue 7).

For many individuals encountering the term "Annulment of marriage" for the first time, an important question may arise: In a religion that always views marriage and family formation positively, how can we witness a "Negative" law regarding marriage? This is the first and most significant consideration of the annulment law, namely its "Negative" nature. The second consideration of this law is that it is "Unconditional," which raises a big question. How can

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an action that has been emphasized and encouraged so much, with unique rewards associated with it and based on empathy and affection, be seemingly dismissed and annulled in such a strong and explicit manner?

The answers to the questions raised by these considerations will indicate our desired outcome from this research, which we will address further:

When looking at the various defects that permit the annulment of marriage, they can be divided into "Sexual" defects and "Non-sexual" defects. Given the subject of the research, we will only examine the "Sexual" defects and the related narrations.

The sexual defects specific to men include:

Khiṣā' (the removal of the testicles; a man with this condition is referred to as "Akhtih." This defect, based on the principle of "No harm" and narrations, allows the wife to annul the marriage) (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 21, 226);

Jab (complete removal of the genital organ or a portion of it that is not sufficient to serve as sexual penetration; this defect allows the wife to annul the marriage) (Shahīd Thānī, 1979 AD/1410 AH: 5, 386);

'Anan (a condition in which a person, despite having sexual desire for a woman, is unable to engage in sexual intercourse due to lack of erection) (Shahīd Thānī, *ibid*: 387).

The sexual defects specific to women include:

Qaran (also known as "Afal," a bony or fleshy barrier that prevents penetration and gives the husband the right to annul the marriage) (Shahīd Thānī, *ibid*: 390-391);

Ifḍā' (conjoined urethra and menstrual outlet) (Najafī, 1980 AD/1401 AH: 30, 335).

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Next, we will refer to some of the narrations cited by the jurists:

"I asked Abā 'Abdillah (AS) about a man who married a woman and found that she had a hymen. I then asked, if he had consummated the marriage: He said if he knew about this before marrying her, and then had sexual intercourse with her, he has accepted it... If he did not know about the defect until after the consummation, then he may keep his wife or part from her." (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, *ibid*: 21, 215) This relates to a man who married a woman and found that she had a hymen. The Imam stated that if he knew before marriage and then had sexual relations, he has accepted the condition. If he did not know and later found out after consummation, he can either keep the woman or separate from her.

There are also narrations emphasizing the woman's right to annul the marriage if the husband suffers from impotence and cannot engage in marital relations:

"I asked Abā 'Abdillāh about a woman whose husband cannot have sexual relations. Should she separate from him? He said yes, if she wishes. Ibn Miskān adds, in another narration: He should have a year's grace; if he can approach her within that time, fine, otherwise they should separate. And if she wants to continue with her husband, she can do so." (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, *ibid*: 611) I asked Imam Ṣādiq (AS) about a woman whose husband is ill and unable to have relations with his wife. The Imam stated that she can separate from him if she wishes. Ibn Miskān in another narration mentions that the Imam said the man is given a year; if he cannot engage with his wife in that time, she can separate from him, but if she desires to remain with her husband, she can continue living with him.

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A noteworthy point in the narration is the one-year period before separation. This condition may be to ensure that there is no return of the ability to engage in relations (Musavi (Imam Khomeini), *ibid*: 293).

"From Abā 'Abdillāh (AS): A eunuch can no longer be with a woman; they will be separated..." (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, *ibid*: 229) This relates to a eunuch who married a woman while concealing his defect and it is narrated that they will separate.

From the implications of these narrations and similar ones, whether explicitly, as a cause, or through conceptual interpretation, the stipulation of "Barrier to intercourse" can be inferred. As stated by the author of "Jawahir," based on the narrations regarding this issue, if the existing defect does not prevent sexual intercourse and there is a possibility of enjoyment, the right to annul does not exist (Najafī, *ibid*: 30, 333). Shahīd Thānī also quotes the majority of jurists stating that if there is no barrier to intercourse, it is not a reason for annulment, since there is no cause for annulment (Shahīd Thānī, *ibid*: 5, 404). Legal scholars share this view, arguing that the philosophy behind establishing the right to annul is sexual harm, and whenever the defect is addressed, there remains no justification for the annulment of marriage (Katouziyan, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 165).

The narrations clearly indicate that without the sexual instinct, the realization of marriage is not possible; benefiting from sexual enjoyment holds its own significance. A narration from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) explicitly addresses this matter: "...And the wife refrains from her engagements..." (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, *ibid*: 215) (...They must separate because) the spouse is repelled by engaging with him.

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Thus, considering the extreme importance and sensitivity that Islam places on the correct fulfillment of the sexual instinct, this right to annul should not be surprising; although this separation inevitably has consequences for both parties, when the biological, social, cognitive, and emotional functions of a family are successively impaired, it is unwise to maintain a weak and unstable foundation at any cost. A statement from Motahhari appears to provide a fitting conclusion to this discussion:

"If the life of a couple at home does not pass in peace, harmony, and tranquility, and the center of affection and love in the family turns into a center of hatred and emotional coldness, and married life becomes difficult, such a bond should be severed. In fact, if the relationship between the couple within the family is not solid and appropriate, the sustainability of such a family will not be beneficial and may even lead to more serious problems." (Motahhari, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 283)

4. The Role of Sexual Instinct in the Bible

4.1. The Old Testament

Before addressing the role of sexual instinct, we will first start with the family (as the clear manifestation of marriage and family formation is the right to sexual enjoyment):

The formation of a family is one of the first divine commandments given to Adam, the father of mankind, in the Torah, laying the groundwork for human growth and perfection:

"And God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:

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and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth“ (Genesis 1:28).

In the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments of Judaism, the family is sanctified. According to the Torah, marriage is an act through which man and woman are sanctified for each other, pursuing the most sacred goals of life together, transforming from an imperfect existence to a complete one:

“And God created man and woman, and He blessed them” (Genesis 5:2).

According to the Torah, each marriage forms a new small community:

“Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

The Torah even provides guidance for joy and happiness in the home:

“When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out to war, nor shall any business be required of him; he shall be free at home for one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken”(Deuteronomy 5:24). based on these teachings of the Torah, marrying and forming a family are among the commandments of the religion and the first duty among the 613 commandments of Jewish law (Dourant, 1964 AD/1343 SH: 12, 26).

Teachings from the Torah that serve to protect the sexual instinct and prevent its deviation include:

The principle of accepting divorce and the legitimacy of remarriage for a divorced woman:

“A woman (who is divorced) may leave her house and go to become another man's wife” (Deuteronomy 2:24).

The permissibility of polygamy without limits on the number of wives is found in the Torah, with accounts that indicate the legality of having multiple

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spouses, including narratives about some prophets and figures that recount polygamy:

“Solomon had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines...” (Kings, 1:11).

Nevertheless, the Torah contains few guidelines regarding the customs and manners of marriage and family formation, and topics such as finding a spouse, especially the subject of sexual instinct and marital relations, are elaborated in the Talmud. Issues such as mutual consent, the promptness of marriage, combating celibacy, dissolution of marriage, and defining the duties of each party relate to guiding the sexual instinct in the correct direction.

Therefore, it can be said that the Torah and documented interpretations attribute a direction to this instinct, elevating it from mere instinctual and common behavior, sanctifying it so that through this means, a person can satisfy their desires and instincts while also being deserving of reward for obeying God's command (Antarman, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 220).

However, the perception of the Torah regarding the sexual instinct does not end here. There are teachings and accounts in the Torah that dangerously lead to the deviation of the sexual instinct, including:

A) Permissiveness (if we do not say outright permissiveness, at least tolerance and normalization) concerning incest : In the Book of Genesis, Chapter 19, the story of Lot and his daughters states: "One night the older daughter said to the younger, ‘Our father is old, and there is no man around here to give us children, as is the custom all over the earth. Let’s get our father to drink wine and then lie with him and preserve our family line through our father.’ That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter

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went in and lay with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up. The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Last night I lay with my father. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and lie with him so we can preserve our family line through our father." So they got their father to drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went in and lay with him. Again, he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up; so, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites today. The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites today."

Again, in the Book of Genesis, Chapter 38, we read: "Judah married the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. She bore him a son named Er, and he grew up and married a woman named Tamar, but Er was wicked in the Lord's sight; so the Lord put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Lie with your brother's widow and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to rise up offspring for your brother." But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he lay with his brother's widow, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from providing offspring for his brother. What he did was wicked in the Lord's sight; so he put him to death also."

The genealogy of Jesus mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew traces back to the lineage of Perez, the son of Judah and Tamar.

The Book of Samuel, Second Book, Chapters 11 and 12, narrates the story of Prophet David and his relationship with Uriah's wife this way: David committed adultery with the wife of Uriah the warrior and believer, and as a result, Uriah's wife became pregnant. In fear of the disgrace and scandal, David sought to cover up the incident and instructed Uriah to go home to be

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with his wife so that the pregnancy would be attributed to him. However, Uriah refused, saying: "How can I go home to eat and drink and lie with my wife while my lord Joab and the servants are camping in the open field? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" When David despaired of covering up the matter, he wrote to his army commander Joab, instructing him to place Uriah at the forefront of the fiercest battle and then leave him alone so that he would be killed. Following David's orders, Joab did just that. Thus, Uriah was killed in battle, and Joab informed David of his death. David then took Uriah's widow into his house, and after her period of mourning for her husband was over, he formally married her.

B) Command to commit adultery: In the Book of Hosea, Chapter 1, to demonstrate that the prophet Hosea embodies kindness and that God persistently loves everyone and is willing to forgive the sinful yet repentant person (Hyoum, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 284), it is stated: "The first word of God to Hosea was to go and take for yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry..."

C) Love for the harlot: Again, in the Book of Hosea, Chapter 3, God commands His prophet Hosea: "Love the woman who is a harlot and has a lover, just as the Lord loves the children of Israel."

D) Offering a wife for safety and wealth acquisition: In the Book of Genesis, Chapter 12, the story of Abraham and Pharaoh is recounted as follows: In Egypt, before Pharaoh, Abraham introduced his wife Sarah as his sister and concealed their marital status. However, Sarah was a beautiful woman, and Pharaoh took her from Abraham, in turn showing great favor to Abraham and granting him substantial wealth. From that day Abraham acquired cattle, sheep, many servants, and great wealth. When Pharaoh

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realized that Sarah was Abraham's wife and not his sister, he confronted Abraham, saying: "Why did you say she is my sister, causing me to take her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and go." Then Pharaoh commanded his people about Abraham, and they sent him and his wife away with all his possessions.

E) Relative ease of divorce and separation: "If a man marries a woman and he finds something displeasing about her, he may write her a certificate of divorce and send her away" (Deuteronomy 1:24). According to Talmudic teachings, a man can divorce his wife for the slightest reasons: "A man can divorce his wife for the slightest reason, even for burning the food." (Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, 1959 AD/1379 AH: 498) All these matters have made divorce one of the most controversial issues prevalent in the directives of the Jewish community.

F) The sinfulness of remarrying a divorced wife: "The first husband who has sent her away may not take her back to be his wife... for that would be an abomination before the Lord."

G) Marriage of a man who cannot provide for his wife and her comfort is deemed reprehensible.

4.2. New Testament

The preservation and purity of the sexual instinct hold a high place in the New Testament, to the extent that it is mentioned in the "Sermon on the Mount" : "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:27).

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As can be seen, the type of language used in this directive is also noteworthy. Furthermore, there is a clear statement in this book that sexual immoral individuals do not have an inheritance in the kingdom:

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints... For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Galatians 5:5).

The teachings and approaches related to the sexual instinct in the New Testament can be categorized into two opposing perspectives: the "family-centered approach" and the "asceticism and solitude approach."

4.2.1. Family-Centered Approach

Christianity, by introducing marriage as one of the "Sacred Rites," assigns a special and unique place to marriage and family formation. It should be noted that the concept of "Sacred marriage" as a religious rite goes back to the Scriptures, where "Marriage" is referred to as the "Great mystery" ; thus, the legitimacy of the family structure, with all its components (including the fulfillment of sexual needs), is assumed in Christianity and its book.

“A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery” (Galatians 5:31).

The "Great mystery" refers to the relationship between husband and wife. Marriage is seen as an earthly example of a heavenly truth (Molland, *ibid*: 80).

The statements in the New Testament, like those in the Quran (al-Nahl/72) and the Old Testament (Genesis 2:24), conceptually indicate that with marriage, a small community is formed:

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“A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife” (Galatians, *ibid*).

The Scriptures view marriage as the unification of the soul and spirit of the man and woman: “And the two shall become one flesh, so that they are no longer two, but one body” (*ibid*).

In addition to marriage, there are also exhortations regarding childbearing in the Scriptures, as a woman will be saved through childbearing (Vorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 79):

“So, my recommendation is that young women marry, bear children, and manage their households” (1 Timothy 5:14).

In the New Testament, managing the household is a sign of faith: “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (*ibid* 5:8).

Statements from this book refer to the physical enjoyment between husband and wife, as well as mutual satisfaction:

“For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (Romans 7:1-5).

One of the most frequently used words in the family-centered approach of the Scriptures is "Love." Sometimes, love for one's spouse is seen as akin to Christ's love for the Church:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Galatians 5:25).

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In various passages of the Scriptures, love for the wife is considered love for one's own soul: "In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself" (ibid 5:28).

"Let each one of you love his wife as himself" (ibid 5:33).

Additionally, respect for the wife is mentioned as a criterion for the acceptance of prayers: "Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman... so that your prayers may not be hindered" (Peter 3:7).

The concept of a wife's "Obedience" to her husband, reminiscent of the "law of obedience" mentioned in the Quran, is prominent in the Scriptures:

"Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands" (Galatians 5:22-24).

"Wives, submit to your husbands" (Peter 3:1).

In some cases, there is a nearly direct reference to obedience in marital relationships:

"Women of old... used to adorn themselves by submitting to their own husbands" (ibid 3:5).

"Train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled" (Titus 2:5).

Reflecting on the teachings of the New Testament, two elements define the nature of marriage: the first element is "Heavenly and divine sanctity," which has been referred to in previous discussions. The second element is "Indissolubility," which may, in some cases, pose challenges to the sexual

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instinct. The Scriptures portray marriage as a permanent covenant and a steadfast heavenly commitment, a sign of God's love that is never to be broken or violated; a sacred union that is inseparable:

“What therefore God has joined together let not man separate” (Mark 9:10).

Based on this premise, the Scriptures prohibit divorce, never accepting remarriage or polygamy, and refer to it with very severe expressions:

“But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32).

“Whoever divorces his wife and marries commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Luke 16:18).

It is necessary to mention that the audience of Jesus in these passages includes the Pharisees, who were worldly and sought wealth (Luke 16:14), and who questioned Him in a mocking manner:

"And the Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate” (Matthew 19: 3-6).

Jesus initially tells them:

“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

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But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void" (Luke 16: 15-17).

And according to the instruction of Jesus, the Pharisees are informed:

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

Furthermore, Jesus points out the indulgence and deviations of the Pharisees and their severe punishment:

"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, which devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation" (Mark 12: 38-40).

Considering the context of these passages (the questioners, the nature of the question, the tone of the question, the response, and warnings, etc.), it seems that a sexual deviation disguised as divorce and remarriage had taken shape, which Jesus (peace be upon him) intended to cut off; this certainly requires independent and separate research.

However, irrespective of the explanations above, the element of "Indissolubility" of marriage in the New Testament poses a challenge for some couples (despite being few) in maintaining their sexual urges. When the continuation of life is not possible in a desirable and peaceful manner, what should be done? Does this teaching of the Scriptures not lead to sexual frustrations for some Christian couples who, for whatever reason, do not enjoy their marital life and have no means of separation? Does this not cause confusion and increasing challenges for religiously committed Christians, potentially leading to emotional distress and larger societal problems for them?

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(Dourant, n.d.: 184) The Daily Express newspaper, in an article titled "Marriage in Italy Means Subjugation of Women," points out: Due to the absence of divorce in Italy, many people engage in extramarital sexual relationships (cited from Ghavahi, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 190).

Do these teachings of the Scriptures not provide an opportunity for hedonistic movements to propose new approaches to sexual relationships resulting in many couples living together without marriage? And to what extent do these teachings play a role in transforming traditional families into unconventional families, such as single-parent families, etc.? (Collective Authors, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 32)

4.2.2. The Approach of Celibacy and Asceticism

Although the New Testament considers marriage a sacred phenomenon and refers to it as "Great Secret," it places a higher value on celibacy. The primary option in the Scriptures is celibacy:

"But if you marry, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will face worldly troubles, and I want to spare you this... This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not... An unmarried person is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how they can please the Lord. But a married person is concerned about the affairs of this world—how they can please their spouse" (Romans 7: 28-33).

"There is a difference between a married woman and a virgin. The unmarried woman is concerned about the Lord's affairs; her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband" (ibid 7: 34).

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In this approach, sexual urges are regarded as mere worldly desires with no higher goals associated with them; thus, celibacy is seen as the choice of the elite, and forming a family is evaluated solely from a sexual perspective:

“But I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion” (ibid 7: 8-9).

The teachings of this section only recommend marriage in cases of inability to maintain celibacy:

“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman” (ibid).

From some propositions, the preference for celibacy over marriage is inferred:

“To the married, I give this command—not I, but the Lord: A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband, and a husband must not divorce his wife” (ibid 7:10-11).

Celibacy is likened to Jesus and the Virgin Mary:

“A single person serves the Lord with undivided attention, eliminating worldly distractions and making their life resemble that of Jesus and the Virgin Mary” (Petrus, 1882: 345).

The teachings of the New Testament indicate the absence of sexual urges in the afterlife:

“When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven” (Matthew 12:25).

Ultimately, the New Testament prescribes an unusual directive advocating eunuchhood and sterilization:

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“And I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.” Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it” (ibid 19: 9-12).

4.2.2.1. Asceticism, Monasticism, and Seclusion

The initial intent behind celibacy—the pursuit of divine pleasure and piety—was to establish and reinforce spiritual values and move away from worldly appearances. However, the outcome of these teachings led to asceticism, monasticism, seclusion, ascetic practices, and suffering from worldly ties (Corner, n.d.: 123-125). Sexual urges were at the forefront of these ascetic practices. Monks such as Origen (circa 253 AD) believed that the Holy Spirit descends upon those who renounce the world and abstain from pleasures, undertaking numerous degrees of asceticism until he, in the prime of his life and youth, rendered himself infertile according to the teachings of the Scriptures (Fanning, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 65).

Ascetic groups, such as the hermits, considered celibacy the holiest and best way to achieve piety. In the fourth century AD, a book titled "On Virginity" was written, which was regarded as one of the most important Christian texts; this book referred to marriage as a "Tragic sorrow." (Fanning, ibid: 160) Accordingly, many women sought refuge in the deserts to avoid corruption and chose seclusion in the wilderness. The deserts of Egypt,

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Palestine, and Syria became filled, in the fourth and fifth centuries, with women known as "Desert Mothers." Some of them were former prostitutes who, after repentance, chose the path of the desert (Vorst, *ibid*: 243-245).

The monastic movement eventually deviated, and many monks became inclined toward worldly desires, engaging in forbidden acts and other vile behaviors (al-Tawbah/34):

"...The situation became such that a group of monks did not believe in life after death and preferred bodily desires over spiritual needs, being far from chastity and purity... their duplicity and debauchery have engulfed everything." (Will Durant, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 6, 24)

Conclusion

The Quran and its interpretations, from beginning to end, without excess or deficiency, and through a logical and wise approach, pay attention to sexual instincts, introducing and promoting the correct path to meet sexual needs. It offers the highest sexual pleasures to humanity while also guiding human beings toward perfection and transcendence, following sexual instincts. The teachings of the Quran regulate this instinct, prohibiting unregulated sexual behavior. The Old and New Testaments, and the related scriptures, also direct this instinct, transforming it from a mere instinctual and ordinary state into a sanctified one, so that people can satisfy their desires and instincts while also deserving divine rewards due to their obedience to God's commandments. However, there are also instances of excess and deficiency in the Testaments, which disrupt the balance of sexual instinct, such as the unlimited plurality of spouses and the laxity of divorce in the Old Testament, and the prohibition of

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divorce and the particular belief in celibacy in the New Testament. This stands in stark contrast to the teachings of the Quran, which regards celibacy as undesirable and a precursor to deviation, while considering marriage as the strongest foundation for its reform.

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