

WHY SOME MARRIAGES FAIL?

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I am sure that most people have heard about marriages, which have ended up in divorce or failed in other ways. Still are there people who inquire why a certain marriage ended in divorce or what are the reasons for the failure of some marriages? Only very few people inquire into the reasons behind the divorce or the failure of marriages.

Marriage counsellors say that most marriages fail for certain similar reasons. If the concerned people are aware of the reason for the failure of many marriages then they can take appropriate steps to prevent their own marriage going in the wrong way. The course of marriage, which heads for failure and divorce can be rerouted on the right path and such marriage can be saved with appropriate steps taken at the right time.

Recently in my neighbourhood two marriages ended up in divorce within a short time of their marriages. On enquiry I found out that for one reason or other both the marriages were conducted in a great hurry. Both the marriages were arranged marriages by their parents and other close relatives. The families of both the couple had not inquired into the background and culture of the families concerned. In both the marriages the boy and the girl concerned had no opportunity to meet each other at leisure and talk at length about their ideas and dreams of married life and get to know each other well.

There are many such reasons for the marriages which have ended up in failure and divorce. In many such failed marriages the parents and other elders in the family played a major role contributing to the failure of the marriage of the young couple. And yet often the parents and elders wash their hands when the marriages arranged by them are on the rock!

In arranging a marriage the parents often take into consideration only their prestige and the financial benefits. They also want often in a great hurry to get rid of their responsibility and worry about getting over with the marriage. In the process the parents often force their sons/daughters to accept the life-partner chosen by the parents even when the son/daughter has objection. They put inordinate pressure on their son/daughter to marry the candidate of their choice by inducement and using unfair means. The parents and elders hardly change such behaviour and we should not expect them to change as age-old traditions are behind them. But there are also parents and elders who read the signs of the time and allow their children to make their own choice of their life-partners with appropriate guidance and advice but without any moral or psychological force.

Sometimes parents have come to me asking me to help them to find suitable partners for their son or daughter. I tell them that I am not a traditional middleman or a marriage broker and I am not interested in the least in the job of a marriage broker. But keeping in mind the boys and girls who come to me for advice in choosing their life-partners, I have a few things to say here.

Some times back two girls known to me came to meet me. "Father Varghese, please find a suitable match for my friend here", one girl said to me.

“I am not a marriage broker. It is not my job to look for and arrange a life-partner for her marriage. All I can do is to give you some guidelines concerning how to go about in looking for your life-partner,” I told both the girls.

First, before looking for your life-partner, you think and become very clear in your mind about what do you seek to gain or achieve through marriage. What do you want in marriage? What are your dreams and expectations from marriage? What kind of life-partner you are looking for? What are your ideas of a life-partner? You cannot neglect these basic things. If you are not sure about these things, then you will be choosing your life-partner merely on the basis of his/her appearance. It would not be a proper thing to do for a mature person.

Second, take the responsibility on yourself for selecting your life-partner. Some young men and ladies leave such responsibility to their parents or elders in their family! Not so rarely a girl and a boy go to the marriage hall saying that, “Their choice is my choice”! It is for the girl who has to live her whole life with her spouse and not her parents or any other elders. You certainly take the guidance and advice of your parents. Take the help of the elders. But make sure that you are choosing and deciding who is your life-partner. So it is not enough that your parents make the enquirers about your future spouse. You yourself meet the possible spouse and inquire and observe his/her behaviour, ideals, ideas about marriage, married life together and about children, etc. Then, if you are fully satisfied, make your choice, not otherwise.

Third, meet the persons who could become your spouse. Let him/her know your ideas of marriage, your hopes and aspirations and everything else a spouse wanted to know about you. Share everything through personal encounter and dialogue. Let the opposite party know your doubts and anxieties, your difficulties and questions. Make sure if there is the meeting of mind and complementarity between the two of you. Make sure as much as possible that you would be able to live with the person for the rest of your life. Check the reliability and the dependability of the person. Ancient Tamil poet Thiruvellur has said that, “there is no other great happiness as family life if the husband and wife can trust eachother.”

Fourth, evaluate the possible life-partner both from you own point of view and also as others judge the person. Look into all aspects of his/her life. Meet the persons who know well your future life-partner. Evaluate the person together with your parents or other trustworthy persons like a friend who could help you. Examine all the information you can get about your future spouse. The success of marriage depends on both finding the right partner for you and you yourself becoming a suitable life-partner to your spouse.

Fifth, one can see some sort of cheating in many the marriages, which have ended in failure. So make sure about certain basic things about marriage. Get correct the basic information like the age of a person, education, job, income, financial commitment, the suitability to contract marriage, (that is, is the person previously married or single; is the person has any relationship which may come on way of marriage?), etc. If you take initiative and provide the information to the person, whom you think of marrying, then that person too will feel obliged to help and provide you such information. But do not depend only on the person concerned. Collect and check the veracity of the information gathered. Never take these matters for granted nor put your blind faith in the person whom you are going to marry without satisfactory information.

Sixth, the character of the person, who you contemplate to marry, is the most important thing in your inquiry about a person. Is he/she of noble character? Is there morality in his/her behaviour? Does he/she has any bad habit or addiction? How does he/she behave with your friends, parents and other elders? Is he/she respectful towards other persons? The noble character of person is much more important than his/her material possessions and wealth.

Seventh, in the context of marriage cultivate maturity in evaluating a person. Many young men and women do not get the formation at home which helps them to take their own responsibility and make responsible decisions. Being aware of this situation the boy or the girl getting married should form himself/herself in such a way that he/she is able to take informed decision. Learn to take initiatives. On personal matters you take your own decisions. It may be difficult to do such decision-making at the beginning. But a person will learn by trial and error. Plato has said that, "If the beginning is hard, then the end would be sweet".

Eight, recognize those who are out to create problems and obstacles on your way. You need to be alert and cautious about marriage proposals. There are people creating obstacles for no reasons other than for self gratification. Even when the proposed couple may be suitable for one another, the envious people take pleasure in obstructing such marriage proposals. These people may be the relatives or friends of the boy or the girl proposed to get married. In Gujarati we say, "there are hundred obstacles in a good cause." So without being over concerned with the creators of problems and obstacles, you proceed in the most appropriate way you think fit. But keeping secret the things like marriage proposal is also not a good idea. In that way you will deprive yourself the people of good will in helping you in your information gathering about your future spouse.

Ninth, be cautious about girls who may trap boys with false promises and false hopes and also of boys who trap girls with false hopes and false promises. A boy or a girl who wishes to get married need to be extremely cautious and be on his/her guard against being deceived. The parents and other elders can help their son or daughter in this. There is a saying in Gujarati, "Woman cry before marriage and man after marriage." But if the man and woman contemplating marriage are not careful and cautious, occasion may come for both man and woman to cry and regret.

Finally, on no account marriage should be contracted in a hurry. Boy or girl may be working abroad. They may be visiting homeland for a short duration. The auspicious moment may be very near. The close relative may not like to have the marriage prolonged. There may be many such reasons for undertaking marriage in a hurry. But the young people who understand the responsibility and the importance of marriage in their life should not be urged to marry in a hurry for any such reasons. Marriage is not a child's play. Marriage belongs to fully adult man and woman. So the maturity is called for in not hurrying with your marriage. If you neglect these thing then... (contact the author: ciss@satyam.net.in)

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