[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

[Subject]

[Date]

Marriage, its Rituals, and Law

Marriage is a legal relationship as a husband and wife between a man and a woman. There are different rituals of marriage and the people celebrate them according to their own cultures and religions. Most of the time it is taken as a relationship that is private and intimate that is shaped by love, commitment, and the needs of the two people. In many of the cultures, the unmarried couples that live together as a husband and wife are not given respect and are not accepted by society. This is the case in most of the eastern countries, as the society's norms and the religion do not allow this. However in many of the European and the western countries the practice of living together before marriage is common now and society is also not that strict as in the eastern countries. Though the world today has changed and the people are more liberated in their ideas, still the state controls and regulates the constitution of marriage. Laws of marriage in America are made by the individual states, not the central government (*Marriage in the United States*). The states determine the rights of the married couple towards each other, she determines the legal age to get married and the obligations and the duties of a married couple that continue in case after they get separated. The states want to promote the culture of marriage and this being the reason many rights and privileges are attached to the marriage.

After a couple gets married, each of the partners becomes connected to the family of the other one. The mirror relationships are created such as the mother of one becomes the “mother in law” of the other partner. In many of the eastern countries, it is a ritual that the bride and groom don't get a separate home for them, instead, the bride comes to the husband’s home and starts living there with the husband and his family. This practice is really common in India. However in the western countries, the married couple gets a separate house for them, and they start living there. Before marriage, the permission of the elders is asked for in many of the cultures, out of respect. It is usually the male that asks for the hand of the girl from her father, and the kids have to ask their parents separately too. If the parents do not allow, the things do not proceed. In the modern age, the permission of the parents has become just a customary thing, they are asked for permission out of respect. In America usually, things are not like that. Usually, couples do not ask for permission from their parents. People are more liberated in making their own decisions and choices.

The role of married women in the previous ages was considered only to be that of a homemaker, wife, and mother. It was restricted to these jobs only. They were not expected to do any other job and were supposed to take good care of their husbands to be a “good wife”. There is a common saying that the way to the heart of a man goes through his stomach (Neuhaus). A woman that was good at the house chores and was really good at cooking the food, was considered to be a good housewife. Women were restricted to their roles for the centuries, however, the time has changed now and the people don't think the same way as they used to, and they have become a lot open-minded. Still, in some parts of the world, women suffer from oppression and they are not allowed do the jobs. They are supposed to fulfill the roles of good housewife and a good mother and are not allowed to make decisions of their own choice.

Despite the cultural, and the social differences the laws everywhere are meant to protect the legal rights of both the partners. The share in the property is predetermined, and the rights of the married couple are secured. In case the couple gets to separate the law enforcing agencies make sure that both the parties get their due share in the property. Such a facility is not given to the couples that live together illegally and then get separated. With the institution of marriage, many of the responsibilities are also attached. The couples are legally obliged to support each other. In the older times to support was the responsibility of the husband only however the concept has changed now and both have equal responsibility. The state gives the right to both the man and the woman to get divorced if they want to separate. Divorce is also a legal process of separation between the married ones. The legal process is followed and the rights of both the parties are protected by the law.

Marriage is not the just a couple living together and having an intimate relationship, rather it is about sharing your life with some other person. It is a process by which two people announce their relationship publically, and make it permanent, and official (“Marriage”). By sharing life, it means that you have to take care of the other person’s needs, have to make compromises too, that’s why couples are called life partners.

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