

Marital Sexual Relations: Core Shariah Principles in Shi'i Fiqh

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Abstract: This article brings together the ethics of Shariah Talim and classical Fiqh discussions about conjugal life, drawing on both Sunni and Shi'i Fiqh. It argues that sexual relations in marriage are not a crude concession to desire and not only a procreative act. Rather, they are a lawful sphere meant to realise Sakinah (tranquility), Mawaddah (affection), and Raḥmah (mercy), as described in Qur'an 30:21. Conjugal relations are therefore treated as part of the moral structure of Nikah, understood as a covenant of care. They help protect 'iffah (chastity) and strengthen emotional security, rather than being reduced to mere physical access. The study sets out the mutual rights and duties-Huquq al-Zawjayn-across the major schools, highlighting that both spouses have recognised interests in sexual fulfilment and emotional safety. It explains how jurists link sexual neglect and unreasonable refusal to the broader prohibition of harm, and how the duty of good companionship-Ḥusn al-'ishrah-limits any claim of entitlement. In Shi'i Aqidah and juristic discussion, a frequently cited baseline is that a husband should not neglect intercourse with a young wife for more than four months, unless there is genuine hardship, a clear waiver by the wife, or a contractual stipulation. Parallel discussions describe the wife's duty of Tamkin, but treat it as bounded by Sharī'ah and by the obligation to avoid harm. A further contribution is translating classical reasoning into contemporary ethical language about coercion. While earlier manuals often did not use a modern "consent" framework, the Qur'ani image of spouses as "garments" for one another (Qur'an 2:187), Nabawi norms of gentleness, and the maxim "La Darar wa La Dirar" (no harm and no reciprocating harm) support the conclusion that intimidation, violence, or exploiting dependency violates the trust of marriage and amounts to Zulm (oppression). The article highlights areas where the sources explicitly require spousal agreement, showing that marriage does not erase personal agency. It also surveys core prohibitions, including intercourse during menstruation and coerced anal intercourse. Finally, the article addresses modern stressors-pornography, digital recording, and mismatched desire-and argues for privacy-preserving, harm-aware pastoral and therapeutic responses. It outlines measured remedies: dialogue, self-accountability, mediation, and, when harm or persistent refusal continues, recourse to structured Shar'i processes up to dissolution. Overall, conjugal ethics are presented as lawful mutuality ordered toward mercy, restraint, confidentiality, and justice.

Keywords: Nikah; Sakinah; Mawaddah; Raḥmah; Huquq al-Zawjayn; Tamkin; La Darar wa La Dirar; consent; confidentiality; Shi'i Fiqh; pornography and technology.

1. Introduction

The Qur'an presents marriage as a place where Sakinah, Mawaddah, and Rahmah are meant to grow:

"...that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy..." (Qur'an 30:21).

In Shi'i Fiqh, conjugal relations-Muasharah Jinsiyyah-are therefore not seen as an undignified surrender to desire. They are understood as a lawful and honourable form of closeness, comfort, and mutual repose within the Shar'i framework of Nikah. Sexual intimacy is Halal only within a valid permanent Aqd al-Nikah, or within temporary Nikah (Mutah) as recognised in Shi'i Ithna Ashar Fiqh, while Shi'i Ismaili Fiqh considered it illegal. In this legal and ethical view, intimacy serves several legitimate ends: lawful enjoyment, emotional bonding between spouses, and protection from Haram through regulated and principled means. Importantly, even in the privacy of marriage, Adab and Haya are not cancelled. They remain present in ways that fit dignity, modesty, and mutual respect. A spouse remains an Amanah, never an object for use. Intimacy is therefore not separated from moral awareness. It is shaped by restraint, consideration, and ethical accountability.

In Shi'i Fiqh, conjugal life sits within the wider system of Huqaaq al-Zawjayn, meaning each spouse has enforceable rights and serious responsibilities. These are not only legal rules; they reflect a Qur'ani and Nabawi ethical horizon. The Qur'an's description of spouses as "garments" for each other (Qur'an 2:187) points to closeness, protection, and comfort, and it highlights mutual care rather than domination or one-sided control. A sound understanding of these Huquq requires rejecting two reductions: intimacy as unilateral entitlement, or intimacy as mere duty with no moral meaning. Instead, conjugal relations are best understood as a shared moral space governed by Shariah, fairness, and Rahmah, with constant attention to physical wellbeing, emotional safety, and the principled avoidance of harm. In this way, intimacy becomes not only lawful, but ethically meaningful-an expression of mercy, responsibility, and trust within the sacred covenant of marriage.

2. Protection against Neglect

A clear and well-known feature of Shi'i Fiqh is its recognition that a wife has a justiciable right not to be left in indefinite neglect within marriage. In particular, it is not permissible for a husband to abstain from intercourse with a young wife for more than four months, except in defined situations. These include cases where intercourse would cause unbearable harm or serious difficulty, situations where the wife knowingly and freely waives her right, or cases where a relevant condition was explicitly included in the marriage contract. This principle is also discussed in the context of temporary marriage. Juristic rulings state that a husband should likewise not avoid intercourse with a young temporary wife beyond a similar four-month period. The reasoning is consistent: it aims to prevent prolonged deprivation and to protect the wife's legitimate rights and wellbeing, whether the Nikah is permanent or temporary. Beyond this minimum legal

safeguard, Shi'i ethical writings and the broader spirit of *Husn al-ishrah* (good companionship) emphasise that what is mutually pleasing between spouses, and not *Shara'i* forbidden, is generally proper and commendable. On this ethical view, ongoing indifference to a spouse's emotional, physical, or psychological needs conflicts with *Mawaddah wa Rahmah*, even when a narrow legal reading might not label a specific instance as *Haram*.

3. Tamkin, Reasonableness, and the Constraint of La Darar

Alongside protection against neglect, Shi'i *Fiqh* also recognises a husband's right to reasonable sexual access in marriage, often discussed under *Tamkin*. This does not mean the wife is always "on call," and it does not treat her body as property. She remains a full moral agent with inviolable dignity. The point is that when a husband makes a reasonable request for intimacy, and there is no valid *Shar'i* excuse, an arbitrary refusal without justification is treated as blameworthy within the ethical framework of marriage. At the same time, this right is controlled by higher principles-especially *La Darar wa La Dirar* ("no harm and no reciprocating harm"). This maxim, along with the obligation of *Husn al-ishrah*, places clear moral limits on conjugal expectations. Physical harm and serious psychological harm are categorically forbidden, including in sexual matters. No conjugal right can be invoked in a way that violates safety, fairness, and justice.

On consent and coercion, classical *Fiqh* did not use modern terminology, yet the moral structure of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*-and the legal-ethical maxims used in Shi'i reasoning-does not sit comfortably with forced sex. A spouse who is terrified, coerced, or battered cannot be said to give meaningful consent. Extracting intimacy through threats, intimidation, force, or exploitation is *Zulm* and a betrayal of the trust of *Nikah*. *La Darar wa La Dirar* is not a decorative slogan; it functions as a real constraint against conduct that causes harm. Where older juristic discussions may reflect social conditions in which women had fewer economic protections or fewer avenues for redress, those assumptions cannot be used today as permission for harm. Interpretation and application must be guided by the higher objectives of *Shariah*, together with the settled prohibitions on *Zulm* and harm. A lawful request cannot be turned into harassment, intimidation, or coercion. Conjugal life cannot become a space for humiliation or domination. A spouse may have valid *Shar'i* excuses such as harm, illness, serious distress, or other circumstances that make intimacy unreasonably burdensome. In those cases, the moral demand on the other spouse is patience, gentleness, and conscientious negotiation-not pressure. Likewise, using intimacy as a weapon-through calculated coldness, manipulative withholding, or threats-destroys *Sakinah* and *Rahmah* and is ethically blameworthy.

4. Pornography and Digital Risk, Privacy, Cleanliness, and Ehsan between Spouses

In contemporary discussion, many Muslim scholars regard pornography as *Haram* for multiple reasons. It involves exposure to the *Awrah* of the non-*Maḥram*, violates the *Qur'ani* and *Nabawi* ethic of guarding the gaze, normalises exploitation and objectification, and distorts moral and psychological expectations about bodies and intimacy. Within marriage, its harms are often described as spiritual and relational. Pornography can bring unrealistic standards into the home,

train desire toward Haram images, and weaken Sakinah by replacing mutual, dignified intimacy with comparisons to externalised representations. Related concerns arise with explicit images exchanged between spouses. Even where someone argues for narrow permissibility under strict conditions, many ethical analyses emphasise foreseeable harms: hacking, device loss, surveillance, and coercive redistribution during marital conflict. Because digital material can become effectively permanent, a spouse's Awrah-which is an Amanah-may be exposed in ways that are difficult or impossible to repair. For this reason, many scholars advise extreme caution, and a significant number advise avoidance altogether due to the high risk of harm.

Within this ethical approach, Niyyah matters greatly. Lawful intimacy is recommended to be approached with intentions like fulfilling a spouse's right, guarding chastity, and seeking Allah's pleasure through what He permitted. The ethos of the Riwayat supports the idea that lawful acts may carry spiritual reward when ordered by sincere intention and kept within the bounds of the Shar'i ethic. Privacy is also treated as categorical. Conjugal life is not content. It is not to be exposed, narrated, or commodified. The sanctity of the marital bed requires concealment of intimate details and strict avoidance of recording or sharing images, videos, or messages that compromise a spouse's Awrah. Since the spouse's body and vulnerabilities are an Amanah, safeguarding that trust includes avoiding behaviour that foreseeably creates the risk of leakage, coercive redistribution, or lasting digital harm.

Cleanliness and preparation also fall under Ehsan in marital life. Personal hygiene, grooming, and a pleasing presentation are not trivial. They communicate consideration for the other spouse's comfort and dignity, and they can nurture Mawaddah. Kindness within marriage is therefore not only financial provision; it is also realised in daily attentiveness. More broadly, the governing themes remain kindness, gentleness, and emotional safety. Each spouse should be attentive to readiness and comfort, avoid seeking gratification at the other's expense, and respond immediately to signs of discomfort. Humiliation, mockery, or degrading speech violates Husn al-ishrah and clashes with the Qur'ani image of spouses as "garments" for one another-symbols of protection, closeness, and care.

5. After Intimacy, Taharah, and Spiritual Continuity

After intimacy, good companionship includes continuing affection and not turning away abruptly. Tenderness and appreciation are signs of Mawaddah, and abrupt withdrawal can undermine the Qur'ani vision of marital closeness. Ghusl becomes Wajib after intercourse, and this obligation honours Taharah as the gateway to certain acts of ibadah. Purification here is not only ritual; it reflects the continuity between bodily life and spiritual discipline. General Dua and Dhikr remain meaningful at all times, and reported Adiyyah before intercourse are often mentioned in the broader Muslim tradition as a way to seek protection and blessing in offspring. The deeper ethical point is that lawful enjoyment is not meant to cut a person off from remembrance of Allah. Intimacy remains part of a life oriented toward Ibadah, so physical closeness does not require spiritual neglect.

6. Adab During Intimacy and the Ethic of Emotional Safety

During intimacy, the guiding Adab is kindness, gentleness, and emotional safety, discussed at a high level without graphic detail. A spouse should not rush toward personal gratification while ignoring the other's readiness, dignity, or comfort. Attentiveness, warm communication, and responding immediately to discomfort are practical expressions of Raḥmah, not optional extras. Speech or behaviour that mocks, humiliates, or degrades is ethically corrupting and directly contradicts the Qur'āni image of spouses as "garments" for each other. Mutual pleasure is not a frivolous add-on. It is a real part of marital wellbeing. Habitual indifference to a spouse's fulfilment falls short of Ḥusn al-ishrah and the Qur'āni horizon of Mawaddah wa Raḥmah, even if legal outcomes in a given case may depend on proof, context, and judicial assessment. The ethical standard therefore goes beyond minimal legal compliance and calls spouses toward a higher moral ideal.

7. Masturbation, Sex Toys, and Technology

Masturbation is not permissible, and the use of sex toys for sexual pleasure is likewise not permissible, whether a person is single or married. The ethical framing often given with this ruling is that marital intimacy should be cultivated through one another, within Halal boundaries, rather than transferred to external devices that redirect desire away from reciprocal human presence. Digital intimacy is a newer area of Fiqh discussion, but the controlling principles are longstanding. These include strict rules concerning Awrah, the seriousness of Faḍīḥah, and the realistic likelihood of harm if explicit material is exposed. For these reasons, strong ethical counsel is given to avoid taking, storing, or sending explicit images or recordings between spouses, even within marriage. This caution is based on risk, modesty, and protection of honour, because the harms of leakage, coercive redistribution, and permanent digital exposure can be severe and often irreversible.

8. Differences in Libido and Pastoral Treatment

Differences in libido are very common in marriage. They should be treated as a shared pastoral issue, not as a courtroom battle where one spouse tries to "prove" the other is wrong. When desire does not match, the ethical response is Ṣabr, careful and honest negotiation, and looking for practical solutions within Halal boundaries. This can include seeking medical advice when health, hormones, medication, stress, depression, or fatigue may be involved. It can also include adjusting expectations, planning time for closeness, and exploring non-intercourse forms of affection and comfort when appropriate—such as emotional reassurance, gentle touch, companionship, and other forms of warmth that do not create pressure. In these situations, the goal should never be to embarrass the other spouse, shame them, or treat them as a problem. Likewise, it is wrong to weaponise Fiqh texts in order to "win" an argument. Fiqh is meant to guide fairness and mercy, not to become a tool of domination or moral intimidation. The constant question should be: are both spouses behaving with Eḥs'ān, and are they staying within the limits of La Darar wa La Dirar? If this ethical compass stays intact, even real differences in desire can be handled with dignity, compassion, and mutual respect, instead of bitterness and resentment.

9. Remedies, Mediation, and Lawful Pathways

When conjugal tensions continue, the first step should be calm dialogue, self-accountability, and a serious effort to repair what has been neglected-especially kindness, respect, and emotional care. Many marital problems grow not from one dramatic incident, but from the slow weakening of *Husn al-ishrah*. When spouses rebuild basic gentleness, appreciation, and emotional safety, many intimate difficulties improve naturally. If direct communication fails, then mediation can help. Mediation may involve trusted elders, family members with wisdom, or qualified professionals-especially those who understand both *Fiqh* and psychological realities. The aim of mediation is not to shame either spouse, but to restore balance, clarify expectations, and help the couple speak to each other without escalation. If one spouse persistently refuses conjugal life without a valid reason while the other spouse continues to fulfil their own obligations, *Fiqh* provides structured routes for remedy. These steps are not designed as punishment. They are corrective mechanisms meant to restore justice. If reconciliation fails, they may eventually lead to separation or dissolution. On the other hand, if conjugal life involves ongoing harm, abuse, or coercion, the harmed spouse also has recognised pathways for protection and, where needed, separation. The purpose of these legal routes is not to trap people inside injustice. The purpose is to balance rights and duties in a way that reduces *Zulm* and protects human dignity.

10. Mutual Pleasure as Part of Mawaddah, Continued Affection, and Ṭaharah

Conjugal life in marriage is not only about procreation. Mutual satisfaction, warmth, and emotional reassurance are important parts of marital wellbeing. If a spouse repeatedly shows indifference to the other's fulfilment, this falls short of *Mawaddah wa Raḥmah*, even if a narrow legal analysis does not label every instance as *Haram*. The moral standard of *Eḥsan* asks for more than minimum compliance. It asks for active care. Because of this, good companionship requires continued kindness after intimacy rather than sudden coldness or abrupt emotional withdrawal. Tenderness, reassurance, and appreciation are lived expressions of *Husn al-ishrah*. *Mawaddah wa Raḥmah* are not only shown during intimacy, but also in what follows it-how spouses speak, how they comfort, and whether they remain emotionally present.

After intercourse, *Ghusl* becomes *Wajib*, and honouring *Taharah* is part of respecting the pathway to certain acts of *ibadah*. *Ghusl al-Janabah* is *Wajib* after intercourse or ejaculation, and *Farḍ* acts of *ibadah* that require *Taharah* must be delayed until purification is completed. At the same time, *Dhikr* and *Dua* remain meaningful, and reported supplications before intercourse are often mentioned as ways of seeking *Hifāzah* and *Barakah*. The deeper point is that lawful enjoyment should remain connected to moral consciousness, rather than being separated from it. Within this ethical frame, the prohibition against exposing bedroom details is treated as especially serious. In modern life, this clearly includes digital disclosure-whether in spoken descriptions, written messages, images, or recordings. A spouse's *Awrah* remains an *Amanah*, entrusted to concealment and protection, not content for circulation. Guarding this trust is therefore a central part of marital ethics and spiritual responsibility.

11. Mismatch in Desire: Şabr, Negotiation, Ḥalal Solutions, and Remedies

Differences in sexual desire should be handled with Şabr, serious negotiation, and practical problem-solving-not with accusation, humiliation, or moral posturing. If health factors may be involved, seeking medical advice can be a responsible step. If life pressures are the issue, couples may need to agree on reasonable compromises about timing, rest, and emotional support. It can also help to maintain non-intercourse forms of closeness-shared affection, companionship, gentle communication, and emotional reassurance-so that Mawaddah stays alive even when desire is not equal. Within this framework, neither spouse has the right to use Fiqh as a weapon of pressure. The aim is not domination, but fairness under Shariah, with Raḥmah. When tensions arise, the ethical order begins with dialogue and self-accountability. If needed, it can move to mediation by trusted people who understand both Fiqh and psychological realities. If one spouse persistently refuses conjugal life without a valid reason while the other spouse continues to fulfil their obligations, Fiqh provides structured pathways for remedy, and if reconciliation fails those remedies may end in separation or dissolution. Conversely, if conjugal life is marked by harm, abuse, or coercion, the harmed spouse has recognised pathways to protection and separation. In every case, the governing goal is to balance rights and obligations, minimise Zulm, and preserve dignity.

12. General Ethical Frame: “Whatever Is Mutually Pleasing” and Shar’i Limits on Conjugal Acts

Shia marriage manuals, including works such as Islamic Marriage Handbook and From Marriage to Parenthood: The Heavenly Path, present a broad organising principle for conjugal life. Instead of giving detailed step-by-step instructions, these texts generally affirm that whatever is mutually pleasing between spouses is right and proper, and whatever is mutually displeasing should be avoided-so long as the act is not prohibited by Sharī’ah. On this approach, issues like technique, sequence, and style are mostly left to the spouses’ private judgement. They are regulated by mutual concern, dignity, and Ḥusn al-Muasharah, rather than outside micromanagement. However, Shariah boundaries remain firm. In Shi’i Fiqh, vaginal intercourse with a wife during Hayḍ is Haram, and if it occurs the husband must seek forgiveness. While Kaffarah is not obligatory in this case, it is recommended, and the recommended amount is described as graded depending on whether the act occurred early, mid, or late in Hayḍ. Other forms of sexual enjoyment, including kissing and foreplay, remain permitted as long as they do not amount in practice to vaginal intercourse.

Intercourse is also prohibited during postnatal bleeding (Nifas). More generally, any act that causes serious physical harm or lasting damage is forbidden under La Darar wa La Dirar. Acts involving third parties-whether physical participation or live facilitation-fall completely outside the Shar’i boundaries of conjugal privacy, and all forms of Zina remain categorically prohibited. Likewise, intoxicants and other independent Haram acts do not become permissible just because they are connected to a sexual setting. These limits keep conjugal life governed not only by mutual pleasure, but also by restraint, responsibility, and moral consistency.

13. Recommended and Non-Recommended Etiquettes: Neglect, Harm, and Judicial Remedies

Shi'i ethical handbooks-drawing on Fiqh and Adab-often distinguish between *Mustahab* etiquettes and *Makruh* practices. This approach presents marital intimacy as spiritually disciplined, without turning every etiquette issue into an outright prohibition. A repeated focus is placed on *Niyyah*: seeking Allah's pleasure, guarding chastity, and fulfilling *Huquq al-Zawjayn*. Many texts encourage tenderness, foreplay, gentle speech, and affectionate attentiveness. They also mention the well-known *Dua* before intercourse, seeking protection from *Shayṭ'an*, and maintaining general remembrance. Ordinary cleanliness and grooming-such as oral hygiene and pleasant fragrance-are often described as expressions of *Ehs'an* between spouses. Privacy is treated as a binding ethical duty, not a personal preference. Sharing conjugal details with others is condemned as a breach of *Amanah* and *Satr al-Awrah*, reflecting the sanctity of the marital sphere. This logic becomes even stronger in modern digital life, where images, recordings, and messages can lead to exposure and scandal (*Faḍīḥah*) and can create severe harm through leakage, coercion, or permanent reputational damage. Within the same etiquette-based approach, some practices are described as *Makruh* rather than *Haram*, reflecting spiritual refinement rather than strict juridical condemnation. Some texts, for example, mention guidance about facing the *Qiblah*, or discouraging intercourse in certain circumstances (such as being fully naked under an open sky, or at particular times). These are presented as matters of *Adab*, not absolute legal bans. Some handbooks also describe it as disliked to prolong intercourse while wearing a ring bearing an *Ayah* or *Asma al-Ḥusna*, again as a caution rooted in etiquette.

Anal intercourse is frequently treated in Shia *ithna Ashar Fiqh* and ethical discussions as deeply controversial. In any event, marriage does not cancel the wife's agency regarding the form of sexual access. If she does not consent, the husband must refrain, and this functions as a doctrinal acknowledgement of her moral agency within conjugal life. Shi'i Fiqh also recognises that persistent denial of a wife's conjugal right-often described, without valid excuse, as neglecting intercourse beyond four months-may support complaint and, in serious cases, movement toward separation. Continued physical harm or severe psychological harm violates *La Darar wa La Dirar* and can justify intervention and legal remedy. In modern ethical and legal language, forced or violent sexual conduct that creates serious fear or harm is incompatible with *Ja'fari* principles, even if earlier texts did not use contemporary terms like "marital rape." Coercion and harm are *Zulm* and contradict the trust, mercy, and dignity within *Nikah*.

14. Practical Handling of Conjugal Conflict in Shi'i Fiqh

When conjugal disputes arise-about frequency, mismatch of desire, refusal, or allegations of coercion-Shi'i ethics and Fiqh generally point toward a structured and morally disciplined sequence of response. The first step is dialogue grounded in *Husn al-Muasharah*: calm speech, self-restraint, and a clear refusal to weaponise Fiqh as pressure or control. The aim at this stage is to reduce heat, rebuild safety, and speak honestly about needs and harms. This stage should include self-audit by both spouses. Each person should ask: am I fulfilling my own duties under *Huquq al-Zawjayn*? For the husband, that includes financial support, emotional care, and basic

respect. For the wife, it includes not refusing conjugal life without a valid Shar'i excuse and not using intimacy as leverage. The ethical demand here is not mutual accusation, but honest self-examination. If direct resolution does not work, the next step is mediation. This may involve trusted family elders or professional counsellors who understand both Shia Fiqh and psychological realities. Mediation aims to restore balance, clarify obligations, and de-escalate conflict without rushing into adversarial legal pathways. If unjust denial of conjugal rights continues, or harmful conduct continues despite these efforts, the affected spouse may pursue recognised Shar'i remedies. Depending on the facts, this may include separation through mechanisms such as Faskh or Talaq. Throughout the process, the guiding aim is to remove harm and restore justice, not to force either spouse to remain trapped in coercion or unjust endurance.

Conclusion

In Shi'i Fiqh, conjugal relations are both a right and a duty between spouses, structured within permanent or temporary marriage. The wife has a minimum, enforceable right to intercourse at least once every four months, unless there is a valid excuse or a knowing waiver. Prolonged neglect is not accepted within the legal or ethical order. The husband also has a right to reasonable sexual access, but this right is not absolute. It does not allow harm, does not permit forms of intimacy restricted by Shari'ah, and does not justify compelling acts the wife validly refuses-especially anal intercourse. Practices such as pornography, masturbation, and sex toys are generally treated as prohibited, including within marriage, on ethical and juristic grounds. Across the entire conjugal sphere, overarching principles-good companionship (Husn al-Muasharah), modesty, and confidentiality-remain active and controlling. A consistent Islamic account must begin with purpose. Marriage is a covenant oriented toward Sakinah, Mawaddah, and Rahmah (Qur'an 30:21), not a structure of domination or entitlement. From this foundation, mutual conjugal rights are affirmed as real, but always relational and morally qualified. They remain continuously limited by (i) good companionship, (ii) privacy and confidentiality, and (iii) the controlling maxim of non-harm, La Darar wa La Dirar. Contemporary ethical language can clarify what the tradition already implies: fear, coercion, and violence destroy the moral meaning of intimacy and betray the trust of Nikah. For this reason, juristic remedies should be understood as harm-reducing mechanisms, not punishment. They prioritise dialogue, self-accountability, and mediation, while allowing separation where ongoing harm, coercion, or persistent unjust refusal defeats the aims of the covenant. In this way, Shi'i Fiqh seeks not only to regulate intimacy, but to protect dignity and preserve the ethical integrity of marital life.

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