

Faculty of Social Science

University of Tromsø

A Moroccan wedding ceremony between tradition
and modernity:

The role of women in the preparations.

MA thesis in Visual Cultural Studies

By *JALILA HAJJI*

Supervised by: PETER I. CRAWFORD

Visual Cultural Studies Program
Department of Social Anthropology
Faculty of Social Science
University of Tromsø
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Dedication:

To my parents Bibiche and Zawzaw.

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“Alhamdou li’llah”²

Introduction:

² Thanks to God.

Last April, I went to my home country for a period of four months to carry out ethnographic fieldwork with a focus on marriage and a wedding ceremony in Fez.

I followed Hanane, a Moroccan girl who was married on the 5th of May 2007. She prepared her own wedding ceremony. During these preparations, I followed her with my camera to understand how a Moroccan girl can make a traditional wedding ceremony in a modern Muslim country like Morocco.

One may ask why I focused my research on Muslims in Morocco, and why I gave more attention to women than to men. My main reasons were that Morocco is a majority Muslim country with a minority of Jewish-Moroccans. Moroccan law is based on Islamic law and the official religion is Islam. As to women, I first of all believe that women have a special position in Islam—a woman is sacred and much respected. Secondly, from my observations during my fieldwork, I clearly saw the important role of women in society. During my field work, men were present only as in regards to the economy, i.e. in the role of providing finances as groom, father, or husband, but the woman/bride decided what to do in the wedding, and where and how to do it.

In this part of the thesis I will try to outline the context of my fieldwork following what Clifford Geertz has described as ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973). I will attempt to answer the Five ‘Ws’: What, Where, Who, Why and How.

What?

This thesis is about a wedding ceremony and preparations for it in Morocco and the role of women in these preparations. An important aspect of this is the relationship between culture and Islam in Moroccan society, which I will discuss in chapter 2.

Where?

Morocco is officially called the Kingdom of Morocco and is located in North Africa. The size of the population is 33,241,259. Morocco has a coast on the Atlantic Ocean that reaches past the straight of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea. As to international borders, Morocco has Algeria to the east, Spain to the north, and Mauritania to the south.

Moroccan people are divided into two main ethnic groupings: Arabic (majority) and Berber, which are divided into four groups: a minority of Kabyle (origin from Algeria) located in the eastern central part of the country; northern Berber called RIFFAIN (in the north-western part of the country); the central Berbers, called AMAZIGH, live in the Atlas mountains; and finally the southern Berber, the CHELEUH. Each group has its own Berber dialect in addition to speaking Moroccan Arabic.

The official religion of the country is Islam but the Hebrew religion represents about one-third of Morocco. In the last century, the Moroccan Hebrew community decreased because of the large number of Jewish Moroccans who left the country to move to Israel, because of discrimination they experienced in cities against them from the Muslim community. This discrimination is not new; it existed since the French protectorate in Morocco. The Hebrew people were protected by the king, first by King Mohamed the Fifth, then by Hassan the Second, and now by the young King Mohamed the Sixth.

That explains the condensed presence of Hebrew people in some cities more than others. The majority of Hebrews live in Rabat and Fez. They have followed the king to the royal palace (the royal residence for Mohamed the Fifth was in Fez, and Hassan the Second moved his residence to Rabat. Now the young king lives between Fez and Rabat) to be near him for protection from racist action.

Who?

My main character, Hanane, is a 26-year-old Moroccan woman. She is originally from Fez, but now lives with her sister in Casablanca where she works as a secretary in the call center of a multinational company. She got married to Hicham, (32-year-old man) who was originally from Fez but has lived in Casablanca since 1998. He works in the same company as Hanane (they first met there).

Why?

I chose to conduct this research about this topic because of the importance of marriage and ceremonies for Moroccans, and also because of the particularity of these wedding ceremonies in Morocco.

Celebrations of happiness in Morocco:

Moroccans are concerned with preserving their traditions irrespective of their ethnicity or religion (Muslims, Jews, and Berbers). Cultural preservation is evident in festivities and parties. One must know that Moroccan people are enjoying these days and celebrating each event by having big festivities celebrating every stage of their children's lives. It starts with the period of pregnancy during which time we celebrate the mother-to-be in her third month of pregnancy with a family celebration, and then we celebrate the seventh month and

finally the ninth month (each celebration is a big happy time to present gifts to the future mother and her child). After celebrating the day of birth, we celebrate the third day by slaughtering a sheep and giving a name to the newborn baby. The seventh day we slaughter another sheep to celebrate the open eyes of the newborn baby. Then, when the baby is seven months old—if the baby is male—we celebrate his circumcision. If the baby is a girl we celebrate the piercing of her ears. When the child reaches the age of puberty, we celebrate the first fasting of Ramadan for the boy, and celebrate the first menstruation for the girl. Other celebrations come and are followed by specific occasion. But the most important and biggest celebration in the Moroccan's life is their wedding ceremony.

Celebrations of different occasions in Morocco are thus extremely important, the most important one being the wedding ceremony. The importance of this is related to the fact that marriage is sacred for Moroccans, it is a 'rite de passage'; we celebrate the new life of a girl who becomes a woman. It is known that a marriage is celebrated once in a lifetime.

How?

The wedding ceremony I attended in Fez is a useful example for me to explain the role of women in the traditional wedding ceremony.

When I was reading some books linked to my research, I was fascinated by the way that Marjo Buitelaar (1993) described her fieldwork in Morocco. She described and then analyzed every step of her topics. I will employ the same technique in this thesis.

The thesis is divided into four chapters: chapter 1 is about my fieldwork and my main informant; chapter 2 is about the marriage institution; chapter 3 looks into the women's role in the wedding

ceremony; while chapter 4 contains a description and analysis of a typical Moroccan wedding ceremony.

My main research questions thus deal with gender and globalization:

- *What Moroccan people kept from tradition? What were the steps followed in a traditional wedding ceremony? What are the actual steps in contemporary wedding ceremonies?*
- *How do women participate in wedding ceremony preparations? What is the role of men in these steps?*

Chapter 1: From fieldwork to paper research:

1-1. Research permit and complications:

My first step in Morocco was to obtain a research permit. This was not easy because of two main reasons: the country's security and political/religious matters.

As to the country's security, I was obliged to explain and prove what my research theme was and to explain why I was using a camera in my research. My presence in Morocco coincided with a terrorist bombing in the downtown area, not far from the American Embassy in Casablanca. In these days, the security alert was at its highest level, and the government was superstitious. Every move, call, and action was controlled by the secret services. So when I applied for a research permit at the Casablanca CCM office (Moroccan Cinematographic Center), I was asked to apply for my permit from the main office in Rabat, which I did, but it took about three weeks. When I was filming in the streets of Fez and Casablanca (some establishing shoots for my film), I was frequently asked by the police to show them my research permit.

I can still remember when I went to the old place called "DERB SOLTANE." I was to film the king's palace, but I was arrested and conducted to the police station. I explained to the policeman that I was a student filming for my research film project, but he ignored my story. When I arrived at the police station, I was asked by a special agent of security police about why I was filming the palace, and whether it was for an arrangement with some terrorist group or if someone paid me to film this place. Of course, I got scared by the situation; I explained to them everything and gave them my documents and some papers to prove my good intentions, and also to

prove that I was a university student. They let me go when they saw the recommendation letter that I kept from my professor. Before being released, I was given some restrictions while filming: I was to not film the court hall, the king's palace, the police station, ministry buildings, all embassies, and also to not film the fire-station. I accepted these restrictions to avoid any further complications with the police.

The second restriction was due to political and religious matters. In September 2005, Danish cartoonists published twelve cartoons in the Danish national newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, including one representing the prophet Mohamed with a terrorist bomb in his turban. This caused a major conflict between some people from Muslim countries and Scandinavian countries. Why the Scandinavian countries and not only Denmark? After this cartoon, Muslim countries asked for official apologies from the newspaper. During this period, some extremist movements called on local media to boycott everything coming from Denmark. Not all Muslim people go to school, which means that the only information and education they receive comes from the media, and they are influenced by it (media); that is why they can not seem to distinguish between Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway. For them, these countries are Scandinavian, which means they are the same in their systems, ideologies and politics.

These influenced people in Morocco who had received the information about the Danish cartoon by the oral method, and this conflict gave them a reason to reject anything or anyone coming from the Scandinavian part of Europe. Unfortunately, most of the people I met during the first part of my research belonged to the kind of people who had been influenced by the media. I was seen as a traitor

every time I presented myself as a student from Norway to some of them, both in public places or with potential main informants.

When I applied for my research permit, I told the responsible person in CCM about my fieldwork and topic of my research. She seemed shocked when I told her that my research is for a university in Norway. She asked me whether I was Muslim, a real Muslim. My answer was affirmative. I do not blame her for her behavior and question because I understand—as a Muslim—that if someone injures our religion or our prophet we can not accept it. But I will not go to the point of stopping all relations with people from these countries-Scandinavian countries-. For me, logically, the injury was committed by a single person, and not all the Scandinavian countries.

1-2. From Casablanca to Fez:

After receiving my research permit, I stayed with my family in Casablanca in hopes of finding a main informant through family and friends. I contacted most of my friends to ask them if they knew of any couples who were going to get married that summer. Unfortunately, none of them were able to help me. I was in an impasse until I met one of my old neighbors. She informed me that her daughter was getting married and was preparing her wedding ceremony. I met her, explained my film idea, and we found a way to start filming her preparations. But two days later, she called me to tell me that her future husband refused to let me film her. His reaction was for two related reasons. One was because he did not want his future wife to be shown to foreign people, especially men, and the other applied particularly to men from a Scandinavian country. I was upset when trying to explain to them that my film would only be an academic film for my research to help me acquire a Master's Degree. But my explanation was in vain.

Days were running by fast and I was still in need of an informant. I put an advertisement in a local radio station (CHADA FM) and then I waited for about two days; but nothing happened. I was depressed and stressed because of this situation.

Then my mother informed me that a cousin of hers was preparing his wedding ceremony in Fez. I contacted my mother's cousin, Hicham, and got his future wife's phone number, her name is Hanane. I contacted her and explained my film and research idea to her. First we talked on the phone, and then I traveled to Fez where she was preparing her wedding ceremony.

When I first arrived in Fez, I called Hanane to hear what her program was for that day. She asked me to join her at a beauty parlor. I went there without filming and I just took some notes. Then we went together to her house. The house was full of family, and the staff making food in the kitchen. I met her aunts Zakia, Latifa and Amina. Her mother, Lalla Fouzia, was preparing couscous for lunch and some chicken for dinner.

I started filming the general ambiance, including Hanane's aunt putting pieces of cake on a tray, then the kitchen and Lalla Fouzia preparing couscous and serving it. But at lunchtime, they all asked me to turn off my camera; I asked Hanane about the reason not to film. She explained to me that the camera will disturb them from being able to eat naturally, they could not imagine themselves being watched by others eating in front of a camera, and they will not feel free in their behavior. I turned off the camera, and I ate the couscous with them, but I stayed in my observational position.

During the lunch, Hanane received some advice from her mother about her relationship with her future family-in-law. She was also told about her behavior during the ceremony, part of the wedding ceremony protocol: she must smile all the time, she must not show her fatigue, she must not laugh with an open mouth, and not talk a lot with her new husband.

After the lunch, Hanane, her aunt, and two other women started to put dates in dishes to present during the ceremony, and then they arranged dates like a flower on the dish and covered it with cellophane (Moroccans believe that dates give luck and make life sweet).

I also put some dates in the big dish; I helped them in the way that an ethnographer should behave in his/her field in order to be able to get deep information from the local people, as Spradley says:

Ethnographers do not merely make observations; they also participate. Participation allows you to experience activities directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and to record your own perceptions. At the same time, the ethnographer can hardly ever become a complete participant in social situation. (Spradley, 1980; 51)

1-3. My informants:

Hanane, my main informant, is a 26-year-old woman, originally from Fez, but she was now living with her sister in Casablanca where she works as a secretary in the call center of a multinational company. She has one sister, Dounia (30, unmarried and works in a bank), and two brothers, Jalal (33, married with one daughter, Dina 3 years old) and Mohamed (39, married and has two sons).

Hanane used to live with her mother Lalla Fouzia (housewife) and her sister in Casablanca, but her mother moved to Fez after the death of Hanane's father two years ago³.

Hanane is a moderate Muslim; moderate in the way that she is not veiled and she does not pray regularly her five times a day. She lives in a way that may be described as a normal modern life. She wears European clothes, i.e. not long traditional clothes, and she does not cover her hair. She does, however, wear the traditional clothes (*jellaba*, *caftans*, *takchita* -traditional Moroccan dresses)⁴ on some occasions.

Hicham, the groom, is a 32 year-old man, originally from Fez but has been living in Casablanca where he works in the same company as Hanane (they first met there) since 1998.

Hicham has one sister, Fadouwa (29 years old, laboratory engineer, married and has one son, Omar 4 years old) and two brothers Simohamed (34 years old, unmarried military dentist), and Adnane (25 years old, unmarried sales representative).

1-4. Hanane's behavior in Public and in Private:

In presenting my informant Hanane, I feel a need to distinguish between her behavior when she is with others and her behavior when she is alone with me.

³ When her father died, Hanane inherited some million centimes (about 120,000 NOK) and used some of this money for her ceremony.

⁴ See Glossary

During the private moments when Hanane is alone with me or with her mother, she is behaving without protocol, which means she is free to express herself in the way she acts or talks. To give an example, I will refer to a situation when I was present. Hanane and her sister were at home and were cleaning some towels in the bathroom. Dounia, the sister, is talking loudly with Hanane, who is cleaning with warm water. She did not approve of her sister's way to clean and started to scream and shout at her:

Hanane: "Dounia, you should clean this with soap and then put it in hot water! You are so bad in cleaning, that I'm obliged to clean after you."

Dounia: "Don't talk to me like this! I'm not your slave..."

It can be less clear in this example, but in the Arabic spoken language, we can easily see the differences between Hanane's expressions. When she is with others (friends, family) Hanane is talking using subdued and modest language. She shifts her loud voices to a normal tone, and also uses suitable words to describe things. Most importantly, Hanane is always smiling in public. This public behavior demonstrates how she shows her mother and those in her environment that she is a good, educated woman.

1-5.From integration to challenge during fieldwork:

It was challenging for me to feel accepted. During my field work, I was not allowed, for various reasons, to use my camera everywhere. Firstly, there were two terrorist attacks, one at the American Embassy

and another at a primary school. So it was strictly forbidden to film anything, especially in public places. Secondly, Moroccans are Arabic, which means- as the culture- women must not be shown to foreign people, or must not be filmed. All these facts affected my research. The informants changed their ideas, and sometimes refused to be filmed or to participate in my film.

The relation between Hanane and me had a double face. On one hand, she felt more comfortable to show me her feelings (and her tears) when we were alone. On the other hand, my family relationship to the groom (my mother and Hicham are cousins), proved to not always be helpful in a number of situations with Hanane's family.

Hanane and her family were not able to show me everything, simply because I, according to tradition, must not know everything. Examples are the prices of things they prepared for the ceremony, their intimate relationships (Hanane and her sister quarrels), Hanane's point of view about the preparations and the ceremony, and also my presence on the henna day.

I remained quiet and helped her as much as I could, and I tried to convince Hanane about my loyalty and how I was good at keeping secrets. At the end of my initial access, Hanane found that I was the only one at her house and environment whom she could trust about her hidden feelings. In some ways, I think it was because she knew that I was not living in Morocco, and that I would not mention it to my family. She accepted me as a researcher. Then her family accepted my presence because I was the bride's friend.

After being accepted in Hanane's world, we made a program to follow for my film. We talked about what she was going to do before the

marriage ceremony, and I noted everything in my agenda, including being with her to film her negotiations and preparations. At the same time, she told me about some conditions I had to respect:

- 1- Never ever tell anyone about what happens in Hanane's house.
- 2- Never tell anyone about the prices of things she will get for her marriage.
- 3- To not film veiled women in her family.
- 4- Not film her when she will be in the beauty parlor.
- 5- Never film her family eating.

- 6- I had to wear traditional dress in the ceremony with suitable shoes.⁵

Because of all those conditions, I was scared and I started to hesitate. At the same time I tried to find another main character, but no chance; I would have to make a compromise with Hanane.

Hanane initially refused to invite me to her henna day. But after negotiations, I promised her to not show the tapes to the groom and his family and convinced her that I can help her to save money by filming her henna day and make a professional DVD for her and one copy for her mother. She accepted after negotiations: I would film her day, but I would have to pay for the tapes and the editing.

As for the veiled women, I asked them if I could manage to film them without their faces being shown, or to film just their talks, and it worked.

This situation made economical benefit for Hanane. She agreed with me to make a DVD copy. On one side, her behavior is economically calculated, she needed to save as much money as she could, but on

⁵ For it was so hard to wear a traditional dress with high heels, because it made the filming processes hard and uncomfortable.

the other side, she forgot the tradition which normally forbids the presence of somebody from the groom's family.

I was present and I filmed, but I did not show what I had filmed to the groom's family, and I did not tell them anything about what happened in Hanane's house. Even when my mother asked me about the henna day, I just told her: "It was a nice day." I could not say more because I was supposed to respect my deal with Hanane about keeping secrets.

My relationship with Hanane and her behavior are normal in Morocco, and are similar to what Buitelaar experienced during her fieldwork in Morocco:

"...more important, however, was the fact that my freedom of movement was greatly restricted. After I had been with the family for three weeks, I decided that I had met enough friends and relatives by accompanying my hostess on her visits to begin seeing these women alone. One day, when I was about to leave the house, I was stopped by my hostess. Some long, difficult discussions ensued." (1993; 19)

This quote shows the difficulty that Marjo faced during her fieldwork, as she was not allowed to go out alone during her stay with the family from Berkan. She also felt her freedom of movement restricted, as she said. In respect to her hostess, she accepted what they asked her to do and not to do.

1-6 Integration in the modernized wedding ceremony:

Weddings in Morocco used to be a seven day journey, but with this generation everything is fast, they have a speed injury, even in their moments of joy, some shorten it to three days, others to just one day!"

This is what an old woman said to me during my fieldwork in Morocco. She thinks this because of the changes in modern society that wedding ceremonies have experienced in this last century.

It can be referred to life changes. In today's wedding, the duration is shorter than the traditional old wedding ceremonies. The old version of each wedding ceremony lasted at least seven days; now as my main character had her wedding; the whole ceremonial process took two days. The first day was the Henna day on Friday, and the second day was for the wedding ceremony on Saturday.

Many aspects of globalization participate in this compression of things in space and in time. These aspects are all together resulted from what we can call globalization, as in what Friedman says:

One of the most salient aspects of what is often called globalization is, in fact, the intensification of localization that results from time-space compression (Friedman, Rossi 2007; 119)

This compression, as he says, is in the new life conditions resumed in economical conditions and the position of women in the society.

On the one hand, there are the economical conditions due to development in prices, currency fluctuations and inflation. Moroccans face more and more difficulties in spending money on long wedding ceremonies; they make shorter or compress the long ceremonial days to shorter days. Also, they save some money which can be spent on preparations and they keep just the most necessary staff.

In 1976, Melissa Llewellyn-Davies made a film about women in Marrakech. The first part of the film was about the status of women in that period of the 1970s. The second part was about a marriage taking place in Marrakech. This last part shows the old ceremony,

which was very low- cost, if we compare it with today's ceremony. In this film, a woman is preparing her daughter's wedding ceremony; she buys some tissues and dresses, the most expensive price she pays during all the process was 70MAD/52NOK. Nowadays, for the fabric, one needs a minimum of 1,000 MAD/751 NOK.

My main character, from her side, agrees that the wedding ceremony is too expensive, which is what she confirmed in the following excerpt from my field notes:

Hanane started to apply her make-up and I was looking at her without interfering while carrying the heavy mirror. Hanane tried to put eyeliner kohl, but she went wrong with it, she did it again and again (about four times). She was nervous and her hands trembled, that's why she couldn't do it right. I asked her: "Why didn't you go to the esthetic center for your make-up today?!" She looked at me with her red eyes and said: "I'm not going to spend all my money just for this ceremony and this marriage; if it was about me, I would just go to the ADOUL (Muslim notary) and get married with Hicham without any festivity or money loss."

After Hanane's answer, I could not stop my curious tongue to ask: "But if you think it's a loss of your money, why are you doing all these things? Are you obliged?" She looked at me and stopped doing her make-up. I felt that she needed me to be her confidant at that moment, she needed to confess. I sat down next to her, she took my hand and told me: "Jalila, I don't want people and my family to tell that Lalla Fouzia's daughter (Lalla Fouzia is her mother) is not a good girl. I don't want to be the shame of the family, but I feel that I am throwing out my money for things without benefits for me. I need this money for my future life, not to spend it for the temporary happiness or for other's happiness!"

I didn't say anything, because I couldn't say the right words at that moment, I just stood up, carrying the mirror and encouraged her to finish her make up (May; 2007).

I was quite surprised in the beginning to hear Hanane's talk because until that moment I thought that Hanane was happy with her ceremony preparations, or at least that is what she showed in public and that was the first time that I saw her feeling differently (this is another aspect I discuss in chapter 1 section 1-4).

So for Hanane, the happiness was a temporary happiness because of the moment she spent in the ceremonial time itself. This can be the case for other people, if we refer to the Moroccan proverb meaning: the wedding is a born break **العريس هريس** (Chapter 2).

On the other hand, the women's position in the society also changed. Today, the position of women and their school education makes them marry later Weddings in Morocco used to be a seven day journey, but with this generation everything is fast, they have a speed injury, even in their moments of joy, some shorten it to three days, others to just one day!" and with the man of their choice. The fact that a woman can be married later means she will be old for marriage, from the Moroccan society perspectives.

Today, the position of women and their school education make them marry later, and with the man of their choice⁶. For the festivities, there is a tendency to simplify and to make it brief, but the weight of tradition is still there. The *Neggafa*⁷ still present in our marriages must still abide by the interests of simplification currently underway. The seven nights are now no longer than three or even one night. The

⁶ In Morocco as in all Muslim countries, there is no same-sex marriage.

⁷ The *NAGGAF*A is the dressing woman in charge of the beauty of the bride. Also, she is in charge of the protocol during the ceremony wedding.

Neggafa while ensuring a smooth ceremony must now comply with the wishes of spouses and their families.

Hanane's wedding lasted two days. The first was the henna day, held on a Friday, and the second day for the wedding ceremony itself was on a Saturday.

For the henna day, Hanane asked for a simple drawing in her hands. She told me that she does not like the heavy painting of hands and she does not like the Henna odors but she could not skip this day because in Moroccan thoughts a skipped henna day makes bad luck for the bride in her future life. When she covered her face during the Henna ceremony, it was to protect her from the devil's eye.

The second day was reserved for the wedding ceremony. It went from about 16H00 and finished at about midnight.

During the ceremony, Hanane wore seven traditional costumes to show her beauty in different colors and styles. Every time she changed her *takchita*, she took a tour in the ceremonial place to say hello to guests; to see if everyone was comfortable; and to verify who had attended her wedding. An important part of this tour is that the groom accompanies his wife to present her to his family, and show them what a good choice he has made.

The food was another modern part of the ceremony. In the old type of ceremony, guests were invited to a big dinner, where Moroccan food was served: chicken with lemon or Moroccan PASTILLA, half a roasted sheep, followed by a plate of fruits as dessert. Then, of

course, tea would be served with some Moroccan cookies, at least nine sorts of cookies⁸.

Food is very important for Moroccans, either during ceremonies, or during family receptions. The food is a sign of richness and generosity. Also, it is an act of welcoming. If one does not give food to his guest, he will then be considered to be a miser.

Chapter 2: Generalities about Marriage:

My fieldwork took place in Morocco. The official religion of the country is Islam even if the Hebrew religion represents about one-third of Morocco. In this chapter, I will discuss the marriage in Morocco based on the Islamic Law. To start, I should give some definitions about marriage and its link with Islam.

⁸ In Hanane's wedding, the food served was different, most of it originating from other cultures (Lebanon, China, France or Algeria). See appendix for a descriptive excerpt.

2-1 The definition of marriage:

Marriage is an interpersonal relationship with governmental, social, or religious recognition, usually intimate and sexual, and often created as a contract, or through civil process. Civil marriage is the legal concept of marriage in some jurisdictions.

The most frequently occurring form of marriage a man and a woman as husband and wife. Other forms of marriage also exist; for example, polygamy, in which a person takes more than one spouse (marriage partner), is common in many societies.

The reasons people marry vary, but usually include one or more of the following: legal, social and economic stability; the formation of a family unit; procreation and the education and nurturing of children; legitimizing sexual relations; declaration of love.

A marriage is often declared by a wedding ceremony, which may be performed by a religious officiator, through a similar government-sanctioned secular officiator, or (in weddings that have no church or state affiliation) by a trusted friend of the wedding participants. The act of marriage usually creates obligations between the individuals involved, and in many societies, their extended families (Jobrani, 2006; 54/55)⁹

2-1-a in the law:

In general, Moroccan law is based on the Qur'an. A Moroccan marriage in law is defined as a link between a man and a woman for an eternal period, aiming at protection, fidelity and the foundation of family with well-educated children. The law texts are translated in the indexes part at the end of this paper.

Chapter One: Of Engagement and Wedding:

Article 1. Marriage is a legally binding agreement by which a man and a woman unite for a common life together and durable. Its purpose is life in fidelity, purity and the desire for procreation by the foundation, on a stable and under the direction of her

⁹ I translated this quote from French to English.

husband, house allowing spouses to meet their mutual obligations in the security, peace, affection and mutual respect¹⁰.

2-1-b in Islam:

In Islam, marriage is a link between a man and a woman, by a dowry (sadaq) the man gives to the woman who accepts to finish her life with this man and found a family with children that she promises to educate well.

The value and composition of sadaq vary according to social class and regional customs; some regions such as in Oujda and Fez, in the centre of the country, are renowned for their traditions of high sadaq (Mir-Hosseini 1997; 97).

If the man wants to be married to a second wife (to be polygamous) he must treat all his wives equally: in love, economy and behavior.

2-2 Requirements for Islamic marriages:

The Qur'an stipulates many requirements for a valid Islamic marriage. Abouhourayra, writer and student of our prophet Mohamed (peace be into him), summarizes these requirements on a simple list (see appendix). Important points of these requirements are: a Muslim man can marry a Hebrew, Christian or Muslim woman. But a Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man. A marriage is only valid if the woman accepts to be married and is not forced by anyone. A woman cannot be married without her father or guardian's acceptance. A marriage without dowry is an invalid marriage.

2-3 Divorce laws:

¹⁰ This part was translated for me by MR Bouchaib Jobrani an ADOUL (Muslim-notary). Based on Law Texts and documents MOUDAWANA (code de status personnel et des Successions)

We can not talk about marriage in Islam without adding the topic of divorce, because in Islam, divorce has a special requirement as well. Again these are summarized by Abouhourayra.

A woman who wishes to be divorced usually needs the consent of her husband. However, most schools allow her to obtain a divorce without her husband's consent if she can show the judge that her husband is impotent. If the husband consents she does not have to pay back the dower.

If a man divorces his wife, and after a while he wants to remarry her, he can; but if he divorces her three times, he can not marry her again until she gets married to another man and gets divorced from him. This law was imposed by Muslim law to discourage people to divorce.

2-4- The Moudawana: *code de la famille* :

Having a foundation in Islam, the Moroccan matrimonial law is called *Moudawana*.

The Moroccan government faced a big problem in the matrimonial side (young men refusing marriage, divorces increased, the growth in polygamy), which is why the Moroccan matrimonial law was changed in 2004 to encourage young people to marry Moroccan girls, because there was less marriage, and more unmarried girls.

“The last study made by the HAUTE DELEGATION DE LA PLANIFICATION in September 2004 about young people and refuses of marriage, showed that unmarried girls and boys between ages of 15-24 is 100%. And this number shows the augmentation of marriage’s age which became 28 for women and more than 31 for men.” (Bakor 2007; 30)

These problems are caused by the refusal of young men to get married because they do not want to accept to cover the marriage's responsibilities and costs. They do not find problems with marriage itself, but with the preparation for this marriage (the money and time spent for these preparations). This is why most of the young men prefer to not be married or to be married to European girls. Because they do not ask them for a traditional marriage, they just make it a modern wedding in the town hall.

Moroccan girls also reject tradition because they consider it the cause of their problem in finding a husband. They are scared to become an old girl (which is considered by the society bad for them; especially whom are older than 26 years). In some cases, they "buy" a husband through a specialized agency called "Union 3000" located in Rabat. The prospective husbands are in general from foreign countries. The prices vary depending on the husband's origins: a Moroccan husband MAD 15,000, a European or American can vary between 20,000 and MAD 45,000 (Bakor 2007; 29).

The women are obliged in these cases to make concessions; they accept that they will be married without any ceremonies or traditions. Another conflict is about money spent in the marriage preparations. Young people think that these preparations are a loss of money and that it is better to give this money to the newly married couple to help them to build their new life. In this last point; there is an obligatory role of fathers. Their status and responsibility requires that they have to give financial support to these weddings.

The father gives the money to his wife, because he is obliged to support all the financial necessities: both by the religion and by the society. In the Moroccan society a good man must be a good supporter to his family in all situations. If a man refuses to give

money to his wife for their daughter's ceremony, he will be considered to be a bad father, or a bad husband.

In all these problems, the woman finds herself the one who has to provide traditional organizations and has to make double effort to keep these traditions in spite of the changes in modern life.

So all these efforts can be made by women to show that they are worthy of their husband and children's confidence; they are good mothers and try to make the good things for their children and they are good wives by keeping the culture and tradition and for not losing their identity. Also it is a sort of something to boast about: the woman makes all their effort to make the traditional preparations perfect and to show to everyone (family, neighbors, friends, family-in-laws, and also to their husbands) that she is able to make good things, and she can reveal her competences.

The new Moudawana was approved in February 2004 by the parliament and then by the king. Of course the role of the king and his position in Morocco is very important here. King Mohamed VI is the one to approve or reject laws proposed by the members of the parliament or ministers.

2-5- The new law of February 2004:

The eleven points of the new law:

Co-responsibility: the family is placed under the joint responsibility of both spouses and more exclusive than under the father. The rule of "obedience of a wife to her husband" is dropped.

Guardianship: the wife doesn't need a guardian to get married, which was compulsory under the old text.

Age of marriage is set at 18 years for women (instead of 15 years) and 18 years for men (instead of 13).

Polygamy is under conditions that make it almost impossible. The woman could determine her marriage to a husband's commitment not to take other wives. The husband needs the permission of a judge before marrying a second wife, and of course the consent of his wife.

Civil marriages made abroad are recognized by the new Moudawana, provided that at least two witnesses were Muslims.

Renunciation will be subject to the prior approval of a judge. Before, it was an exclusive right of the husband. The husband could divorce a wife without her knowledge, sending her a letter of divorce by the court transmitter. Now both husband and wife must be present at the moment of the divorce.

Divorce: A woman may seek divorce. Before, the judge accepted the request just in the exceptional case where the wife had evidence of harm suffered and witnesses.

Childcare: In case of divorce, custody of the children is returned to the mother, then the father, then the maternal grandmother.

The custody of the child must be guaranteed by housing and alimentary support.

Out-of-wedlock child: protection of the child's right to paternity if the marriage would not be formalized by an act. Before, the rule was the failure of the child born out of wedlock.

Legacy of children: the side of the mother, they have a right to inherit from their grandfather, as well as on the side of the father.

Distribution of goods: Possibility of spouses to prepare a contract before marriage, to manage the assets acquired.

Apart from the listed points of change in the Moudawana, it has not changed women's status in the society, but it gives them an insurance to approve or reject being part of polygamy. Also, it gives men a chance to not lose their money if they divorce.

This new Moudawana helped women to get married in spite of their parent's refusal or failure to accept the husband. Otherwise, here we can understand that Moroccan people can enter into love marriages; I mean, a couple who loves each other can be married although their parents do not approve.

2-6-The cost of a Moroccan wedding ceremony:

I have tried to explain that Moroccan people spending huge amounts of money for their ceremonies, or when they give women money to complete this ritual, are not necessarily wealthy, but that it reflects the enormous significance of a Moroccan wedding ceremony. The cost of a traditional Moroccan wedding ceremony can vary between 50,000 and more than 80,000NOK.

To be costly or expensive does not mean that all Moroccans are rich; they just manage and make some arrangements in their life to be able

to provide money to make this ceremony. “Morocco is the fourth economic power of Africa... After South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria” (Lahlou 2003; 17)

In normal cases, it is the father who is in charge of financing his daughter’s wedding. For that, he can find different solutions: either saving money since his daughter was young by making a separate bank account for emergency cases, he will then put some money every pay period to be prepared for his daughter’s wedding ceremony. Or he can simply ask for a loan from the bank, which will be paid back by section every month from his salary. The father can spend many years before he finishes paying the loan back from the bank. So this is why Moroccan use to make jokes by telling a proverb meaning: the wedding is a born break “*AL ÂOURS HOURS*”, if you pay attention to the Arabic transcript, you can see that the situation from the good to the bad in the ceremony is made by changing one letter in the Arabic pronunciation: the *Ä* becomes *H*, **العرس هرس**. Just switch one letter in the beginning, and all the meaning will shift from a good thing to a bad thing: the wedding = **العرس**, born break = **هرس**.

This phonographic game is very meaningful: a wedding is a time for happiness and an enjoyable time for everyone, guests, family, bride, groom and parents. They are all happy to celebrate this moment. But soon these moments become a source of problems: the first broken action is the effort and energy spent by parents to prepares this ceremony, they can not have a time to rest before the ceremony finishes. Then the mother finds herself the one to arrange and put order back into her house after the guests have left. Another stage is the father being broke; the father faces the economic reality after his daughter’s wedding ends. He is then obliged to pay back the money to the bank; this action can take years and years.

For the women's money she can spend it in her daughter's wedding or not; if a mother would like to help financially, it will be a choice for her.

The woman is mere consumer, her property and her income remain hers, and neither her husband neither control over nor any share in them (Mir-Hosseini 1997; 119)

2-7- Gender in my research:

One may ask why I focused my research on women. When I was editing my film *Mabrouk*, something brought me back to my fieldwork: the man was quite absent, the domination was female. Furthermore, women have a special place, a particular statement on Islam and in Moroccan society.

2-7-a The spiritual position of the woman in Islam:

The Qur'an clearly states that men and women are similarly spiritual and human. Both received the "divine wind" that gave them dignity and made them managers of God on earth. The woman is not blamed for the fall of man. Pregnancy and childbirth are given as additional reasons to love and appreciate women and not as punishment for eating of the forbidden tree. The man and woman have duties and comparable responsibilities and both face the legal consequences for their decisions and actions. Nowhere does the Qur'an state that men are superior to women. The Qur'an makes it clear that the only basis for superiority is the piety and righteousness, not gender, race, color or wealth.

2-7-b The social status of woman in Islam:

The Qur'an blames the attitude of some parents who tend to favor their sons over their girls. It prescribes a duty to help and show

kindness and justice toward girls. Girls' education is not only a right but a duty for all Muslims, both men and women.

A girl has the right to accept or reject proposals of marriage. Forced marriage without mutual consent is not valid according to the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (Peace and blessings upon him). As a wife: the view of Islam on marriage is expressed in the following verse from the Qur'an: "And among His signs He created you, for you, wives for you to live in peace with them and He has put between you affection and kindness. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect "(Surat 30, verse 21).

2-7-c Woman and marriage in Moroccan Islamic society:

The responsibility of the husband on maintenance, protection and management of the family, in general, in the spirit of consultation and kindness, is the meaning of the Qur'an "Qawwamoune" (Surat 4 v.34). This term is often poorly translated as "who has the authority on women." In the same way God has given men and women equally importance in life, society and in religious practices. This leads to certain roles, and different but complementary duties within the family unit.

This differentiation is strictly in the roles, not in the status or the honor. But we still find some differentiating in rights in some cases either in Morocco or in other Arabic-Muslim countries, "In Kuwait, where women still do not have right to vote, class differences are highly visible." (Cunneen 2000/2001; 508)

In the case of a family dispute, the Qur'an urges the husband to treat his wife kindly and not to neglect her positive sides. In cases where the problem continues, the husband can express his dissatisfaction in a peaceful way, by sleeping in a separate bed from his wife. Instead of divorce, the husband may use another measure that could save her marriage, at least in some cases. This measure is more accurately described as a pat on the body, but never on the face, which is more symbolic than punitive.

Islamic law has made it clear that to use this extreme measure should be regarded as the lesser of two evils and is subject to explicit restrictions. It should not be so severe that it causes injury or even leaves a mark on the body.

This is the same definition that Muslim jurists have given for more than 1400 years. In several words, the Prophet discouraged its use, it may be too mild. "Do not hit the servants of God (women)," said the Prophet, which has demonstrated that noble trait in his own married life.

It follows that when this issue is brought back into context, it has nothing to do in fact to punish "abuse" or "domestic violence" which, unfortunately, is widespread in a country like the United Arab Emirates "where all 10 seconds a woman is beaten every day, and four women are killed by their spouses, making domestic violence causes a third of murders committed on women in the United Arab Emirates" (Ninni 1993; 27)¹¹

In all cases, Muslims who ignore the teachings of their faith and commit excesses must be condemned, like all other transgressors, irrespective of religions.

¹¹ I translated this quote from Arabic to English.

The Prophet Mohammad (Peace and blessings upon him) has clearly stated that "the best of you are the best (in their conduct) to their family and I am the most of you (in my driving) to my family"

As a mother the Qur'an prescribes kindness toward parents, especially mothers. The Muslims are taught that "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

As a sister in faith, the Prophet recommended kindness, attention and respect for women in general, because they are the sisters of men.

As a daughter, parents are obliged to treat the daughter as the son without preference for the male, and to be more helpful and kind with the girl, to let her grow up as a kind future mother.

Islam does not forbid freedom, but debauchery for both man and woman. So Islam does not forbid the mixing between men and women under two main conditions:

A) Observation of a mutual duty of decency.

B) They should not be alone (head to head).

2-7-d The economic status of the Islamic woman :

The Islamic law safeguards the rights of women before and after marriage. In fact, the woman receives greater financial security than men; this last is in the dowry. She has the right to keep all the properties presented or future income and for her own safety. Meanwhile, she is entitled to any financial assistance before, during and after the marriage, regardless of his personal wealth. The additional duties include assistance during the "waiting period" in divorce cases and help for the child.

This helps guarantee at all stages of his life, constitutes financial advantages over men, partially balanced by the lower share of the

inheritance it deserves. The man has the duty to maintain and sustain the multiple needs of his family.

Another important point for her is that the divorced woman in turn becomes in charge of her father after her divorce. This means that the father is obliged to support his daughter during her unmarried period (before being married and after her divorce or husband's death).

A woman is of course allowed to work in Morocco. A woman who works is free to spend her money in her own way, either to help her husband in their household finances, or to help her parents with her own money.

2-7-e- Women and power:

“Yes and no.” This is how I would answer if asked whether women in Morocco are powerful and have influence.

On one side, yes, women have influence and power in Morocco. But this power depends on the status of each woman. A mother for example is the most powerful in the Moroccan society: “If your mother asks you to die: Do it!”¹²

Every woman is sacred in Islam, for many reasons because she is the one who has to suffer during her life over different things. She suffers during her menstruation; when she gets married, she is the one to do the housework; when she is pregnant she suffers nine months and more when she gives birth. Also, she suffers to educate and take care of her children. So in this short list about women's life suffering, it shows some reasons that make the woman sacred in

¹² A Moroccan saying, which means that if your mother asks you something hard, you must not refuse.

religion. Because of these same reasons, Moroccan people are caring about woman.

Another reason can be answered here as to why women have influence in Moroccan society. For this question, I can give a reason linked to marriage; “in each family, the woman is the one to find or choose the bride for her brother or son, in as far as to care about the wedding ceremony rituals” (Maher, 1974; 163).

For my main informants, Hanane and Hicham, however, this was not the case; Hicham met Hanane by himself during his work in the multinational company where he works in Casablanca. Hanane works there as well. They met, went out together, then they fall in love and decided to get married one year after that. Their parent’s role in this case was just to approve Hanane and Hicham’s engagement.

For the Moroccan woman, “freedom is new, because it has been just since the 1980s when women started to have their movement and worked hard for their right to education” (Cunneen 2000/2001; 508).

Chapter 3: From girl to woman:

3-1 Women’s role in the wedding ceremonies:

My film *Mabrouk* shows the role and domination of women during the wedding ceremony. Hanane decided everything. The dressing woman gave orders to the photographer, the cameraman and the four carriers of *Lmida*, a sedan chair which is originally from the carriage used on the top of camel’s back. It is not discrimination against men, but I

can clearly say that women have the power in this ceremony. It was a sort of small women's society involved in a big mixed society.

In this small society, the hierarchy was dominating. Hanane was in the position of the boss; she was the queen of her ceremony. Everything was done to satisfy her choices and her desires. She had the power by giving the money and for paying for things. At the same time, she was under another power, and received an order from another boss which was the dressing woman during the ceremony wedding. She was the executive boss of the power of tradition and the ceremonial master.

All this switching of power and rules put Hanane in a double position: both active and passive. She was active before her wedding ceremony; she gave money, orders and supervised every step. But one day after, or just some hours later, she became passive in her chair. Especially in the *Lmida*, she was looking onto her environment without interfering.

Hanane became nervous as a sign of the tradition's pressing and stress to make everything perfect and at the same time it was the pressure she felt because of these preparations. She cannot react in public because of different things. First of all, because of her mother's feelings, she tried to not hurt her mother in public.

So, for her mother a good daughter must be happy during her ceremony and preparations, and must show to all people how good her mother has educated her from her childhood until her present age. These facts can be because of pressure made by the Islamic law, which said that all Muslim people must respect and love their parents by doing everything they ask; to disobey their parents is a sin,

especially the mother. The Qur'an says: "*WALA TAQOL LAHOMA OUFFINE WALA TANHARHOUM, WA KHFID LAHOUMA JANAHA DOULLI MINA ERRAHMATI WAQOL RABBI ERHAMHOUMA KAMA RABBAYANI SAGHIRANE*" which means: "don't shut out your parents, and don't say to them any bad words; be kind to them, make them happy during their life, and pray God to protect and bless them as they raised you since you were a little child." This translation is a translation of meaning, not a literal translation. So Hanane is obliged to do these ceremonial preparations in order to make her mother proud of her.

For Hanane, respecting her mother is includeded in her religion, but also respecting her society is includeded in her life. Then, if she respects her mother, she also has to respect her family; and by respecting her family dignity, she will respect her environment. Hanane must protect and respect her family dignity by doing these traditional ceremony preparations. She spends her money and time on preserving this dignity.

Hanane is playing the same game for her society. She wants to make a ceremony just for the pleasure of the family (mother), at the same time she is trying to make her ceremony a good one to show how good she is, and how beautiful is her choice in dresses. When she demanded that I wore traditional robes, and when she wore seven different robes at the same ceremony, she proved that she is one from the society despite her modern way of life. And I think this is an image she wants to show to her environment, an image of a good social woman which can be a sort of boasting show.

During the first ceremonial day, called the Henna day, all guests were women. Present at the house was Hanane, of course, her sister

Dounia, her mother Lalla Fouzia, three of their maids, three of Hanane's aunts, her uncle's wife and daughter, two neighbors and me. It was a harem house without a king.

The second day, the official ceremonial day, friends and family from both sexes were present. But again, women dominated. The organizer is a woman, her assistants are women, and the ceremony is made for women (even if the couple getting married is man and woman, the protocol gives more importance to the woman). So, during this ceremony, Hanane is treated as a queen.

In 1976, Melissa Llewellyn-Davies made a film about women in Marrakech. The first part of the film was about the status of women in that period of the 1970s. The second part was about a marriage taking place in Marrakech. This last part shows the old ceremony, which was very low cost, if we compare it with today's ceremony. The fabric needed for a caftan was about 70MAD/52NOK, now it is a minimum of 1,000 MAD/751 NOK. Also the ceremony, in the film, was celebrated separately between women and men.

Now, if we talk about men's presence and roles, we can find two levels, before the ceremony and during the ceremony.

Before the ceremony the man is present for the financial aims he gives money to women to execute the protocol. Hicham gave a dowry to Hanane.

An exception to the protocol was that Hanane paid for the wedding ceremonial preparation herself. Normally in Moroccan ceremonies, the father or brother pays for everything. But for her case, Hanane paid from the money she inherited from her dead father.

During the ceremony, the man is present during the marriage ceremony as a part of the ritual. A man is there to execute the protocol already prepared by the women, by being a groom to complete the decor. In my case, Hicham was present just during the ceremonial day to be a groom. The men's presence is always inactive during the ceremony or to execute the woman's order. The dressing woman –Neggafa- gave orders to the four helping men to hold the bride in the sedan chair. Then, we met men playing music for the woman. Also we met men who were serving food for guests who were in the majority women.

As an explanation of the reason why the majority of the guests present were women during the wedding ceremony, I refer this situation to the fact that women come to the ceremony to enjoy happiness and dance freely. In Morocco as in Arabic countries, a woman is not allowed by the social laws to go out to dance, to go parties or to go to dancing clubs. Only a man is allowed to do that.

In Morocco, there is a minority of girls or women present in the dancing clubs, who are present their without their family's permission. In other words, they are hiding from their families, and they would be seen as bad girls.

As I asked one of my friends in Morocco, if his sister goes to the dancing club, he told me that a girl in a dancing club is a "bitch." For him, a good respectable girl must not go to these places. If his sister wants to dance, she can do it at home with her close family or in a wedding ceremony.

3-2 Scheduled for marriage:

Most Moroccan girls receive an education based on a code of conduct within the society, and how to belong to a group. Parents are worried

that the outside world is a threat to their daughters and diplomas no longer lead inevitably to work. So the girl is programmed from her young age to marriage. Thus, the girl is educated in an environment of women, instead of dialogue, she learns to be wise, a weapon of all women, it initiates her with household chores and traditions.

The mother begins to prepare her daughter at an early age: *“If I remember correctly, it was around 8 / 9 years,”* said Hanane, *“my mother was usually telling me that a good girl doesn’t make this, doesn’t tell that”* or *“it would be a disgrace to our family that...”*

At the same time, mothers educate their boys completely discharged, I mean here e that a boy grows with the conviction that the woman is the one to make everything for his home life, the boy grows and he does not learn how to cook, to clean or to arrange his own house; they learn them notions of machismo: *“Do not be feeble in front of a woman; she must serve you, which should take care of household chores....”*¹³. This situation was criticized by Dr. Soumia Naamane¹⁴:

Mothers believe they should preserve the virility of their son and think to give him strength. But on the contrary, they are the weak, men unable to cope without a woman, completely deprived of responsibility and who can not live as the expense of their mother and, later, for their spouses... The solution is that mothers would educate in the same way the girl and the boy. A man must be responsible in his home. He must know how to cope, cooking... Joining with household chores does not touch virility or to the honor. Instead, teach him how to iron a shirt, or concoct a dish, can only serve him. There is no shame. The greatest chefs are men. If we want to move forward, it starts with the education level of the household. We must learn to respect the boy's sister. If the boy learns these concepts when he is young, he will have a better respect for women and their reports will not be confrontational. It has been observed, according to a study in Tunisia, the spouses who

¹³ Moroccan saying.

¹⁴ Dr Soumia Naamane Guessous Lahlou is a Moroccan sociologist; she is also Professor in the university Hassan II in Casablanca.

have not had sisters much respect their wives and live harmoniously their marital relationship” (Naamane 2004:37/38)¹⁵

In the primary school, the Moroccan government gives a wide Islamic education with in the normal education; in addition to special lectures and courses s about sexuality and tradition, in general, these lectures aim to make the girl a good woman in her society, and make the boy a proper man in his future. I want to note here that the Moroccan society gives more attention to women, and gives her more rights than men, because at home, it is always the woman who teaches children, and educates them. So the Moroccan mentality is based on the proverb: the woman is the first schooled, the better you educate her, the better the society you will get.

I have inserted some diagrams in the Appendixes¹⁶ to explain the programs in Moroccan public schools. There are also some private schools for non-residents. In these private schools, they have the same program as the original country i.e. in the Spanish school they have the same program as the schools in Spain.

Chapter 4: The typical Moroccan wedding ceremony

4-1 Similarity in Moroccan wedding ceremonies:

In general, a Moroccan ceremony has the same steps and protocol in all Moroccan cities; but differs in some aspects which depends on the local tradition, such as the clothes, and some particular traditions, for example s in the Saharan south part or Berber part.

¹⁵ This is my own translation of Naamane's text.

¹⁶ Appendix pages 65 to 68.

In this [chapter](#), I will describe the major steps of ceremonial protocol in Morocco, and then I will describe some specific elements of the wedding ceremony in some Moroccan cities. These steps are the old ones, which have now changed. The old traditional wedding ceremonies were longer than [they are](#) nowadays. It was seven days [of](#) festivities; and each day was a special day.

4-2- The bath and its meaning:

The first day, the most important step before the wedding ceremony is the *Hammam*¹⁷ or bath day; to leave it out can bring bad luck to the bride in her future life with her husband.

Since old times the public bath or *Hammam* -as called in Arabic- had a very important place in Moroccan society for the married couple. This step is the beginning of the ceremonial festivity, which takes place on the first day, usually on a Thursday.

The public bath is reserved for this day. [Some](#) women from the bride's side are in charge of cleaning and preparing the place in the morning; they aromatize the area with incense to clean out the bad spirits from the place. At noon, the bride's mother and her aunts apply henna and a special mixture of henna, roses, and basil to the bride's hair before sending her to the public bath escorted by her unmarried friends and girls from her family. Only the unmarried girls can accompany the bride, to celebrate her "rite de passage" to a new life, new status. It may bring bad luck if married women are present in this ceremony. During the way to the *Hammam*, the bride is covered with a long hooded cloak. Her head is concealed to protect her from the devil's eyes. The procession accompanying her is telling praise on prophet and ululating during the entire road and also during

¹⁷ Public traditional bath or sauna.

her bath to ask God for protection and to show the happiness of this special moment.

When the bride arrives to the *Hammam*, she is received by ululating, and drinks milk and eats dates offered by her friends to have a sweet and clear happy life. Then she is helped by the *Gallassa*, the assistant, to take off her clothes, which she distributes to the accompanying girls who take one piece each. These clothes must not return to the bride's house since it would bring bad luck; these cloths can serve the unmarried girls to get married and bring luck.

The bride's mother is in charge payoff by paying for everything during this bath day, and also she pays the *Gallassa*. But she will be reimbursed by her husband (the bride's father).

In a special bucket, made in silver and platinum, the bride puts a traditional mixture of herbs for her face and body. This special mixture, made from *Ghassoul*, olive oil, lavender and rosewater, gives her body softness and makes her face clear. At the middle of the process, she covers her body with traditional soap, which helps the skin to shed off the dead skin.

The person responsible for the *Hammam* chooses a special place for the bride in the bath. The middle room, where the temperature is moderate, between 25°C and 35°C, is where the bride sits down surrounded by white, yellow and green candles (to communicate with spirits and ask them to protect the bride during her bath). Each color has a signification: white is for purity, yellow for happiness and green for fertility.

Sugar is given to the *Gallassa*, by the bride, to improve her hope to have a sweet moment in that place. All these things have a meaning in Moroccan culture, which are property and are the passage to a new life better than the first one.

The bride uses her cosmetics in stages, and each stage needs a specific duration; between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Between these stages, the girls sing and chat. During the last stage, the bride changes the room. She moves to the hot room, between 30° and 50° C, where she is given a massage by the person responsible for the place, *Gallassa*. At the same time, she is given advice and hears secrets about her future new life or status; this includes how to take care of her body, to be sensual and sexual for her husband. Nowadays, of course, most people know these things through the internet or the media.

Finishing her bath, the bride drinks milk and eats dates, signifying good luck in her new life. She also eats some orange with honey, which she shares with the girls to share her good luck with them, and so that like her, they might find a husband.

4-3 DFOUA or the gifts cortege:

On Friday morning the groom sends gifts to his future wife (dates, milk, cookies, special sugar, underwear, pyjamas, slippers, traditional *takchita* (robe), perfume and henna).

These goods are placed on a large tray, and escorted by women of the groom's family who wear traditional *takchita*. They sing and dance the entire road from the groom's house until they reach the bride's house. A big cow is sent to the bride's house. This cow is slaughtered on the same day (Friday), but cooked and served at lunch for family present before the ceremonial party.

4-3- The henna day:

4-3-a Definition of henna:

Henna is a plant of the family *lythracées* and its scientific name is: *Lawsonia Interemis*. The plant reaches a meter in height in the regions of the Moroccan Sahara. It is a branching plant, a mixture of single sheets of green and white four petals arranged in bouquets. The peculiarity of Moroccan henna is the intensity of the green, darker than the green of the olive tree.

To use it, we buy henna powder, add water and lemon juice, then we put it in a special syringe. The resulting colors are orange, red or black, depending on the skin color and the mixture. For brides an orange color is used, because the black color brings bad luck.

4-3-bThe henna day:

The henna party is an important pre-wedding ceremony that takes place on the Friday after the *Hammam* day, according to the Moroccan wedding, a night before the wedding. The henna party is typically for the women of the family, relatives and female friends from the bride's side. A henna specialist, *Naqqacha*, paints the hands and feet of the bride with henna with intricate designs, usually floral and geometrical designs that are meant to ward off evil spirits, bring good luck and increase fertility. The party enjoys tea and cookies,

dances to Moroccan music and makes merry. Often, a bride is not expected to do any housework until her henna has faded. Later in the party, the older, married women discuss the 'secrets' of marriage with the young virgin bride-to-be. In some ceremonies, the bride is placed behind a curtain to symbolize her change of lifestyle.

The unused henna after the bride's drawing is finished can be used by unmarried girls to bring them luck.

4-4- LMIDA:

*Lmida*¹⁸ is a circular tray or sedan chair where the bride sits and is carried during the ceremony, either at the beginning or at the middle of the ceremony when she is wearing the golden caftan. Its origin is from the chair that Arabs placed on the camel's back to carry the princess and queen. We use it in Moroccan ceremony to signify that the bride is a princess on her wedding.

During the part of carrying her, the guests stand up, applaud and throw flowers on the bride as a sign of respect and happiness for her royal beauty.

The *Lmida* is carried by the bride's father, brothers and uncles, to show that the bride belongs to respectable men in her family, to support her if she is in need of economic help or to solve any problems. But nowadays, it is the role of some specially paid strong boys, who work with the dressing woman *Neggafa*.

¹⁸ It is only since 1986 that the *LAAMARIA* appeared at Moroccan wedding ceremonies. This chair is an imitation of the *LMIDA*, used to enter the bride to the ceremonial place in a choreographic show.

The groom is also carried on the *Lmida*. He is handled by his brothers and cousins from his father's side to show that he is from a strong family.

When the newly married are carried on the *Lmida*, the groom stands up and kisses the bride in the air, to show his courageous behavior and to reach his wife wherever she is.

4-5- Clothes and accessories:

In Morocco, the traditional dress that women wear in ceremonies is called *takchita*, which may consist of two, three or four pieces. If it is a one-piece dress it is called a *Caftan*.

The dress is made by hand by professional tailors. It can be made from different kinds of fabric: silk, linen, satin, taffeta, lace, sari, etc.

The dress is always long, falling even lower than the feet, to hide the legs, because an Arabic or Muslim woman must not show her legs in public. The woman has to carry her dress at the knee level to walk with high-heeled shoes. The price depends on the style, the seam, the quality of the fabric and also on the tailor. It is a kind of Moroccan "haute couture." Prices start from 4,000 NOK and can climb to more than 20,500 NOK. Older models, no longer fashionable, vary between 1,000 NOK and 3,000 NOK.

The bride, as was the case for Hanane, is helped by the dressing woman, *Neggafa*, who changes her dresses several times. Every time she changes her dress, she also changes her shoes and changes her accessories, shifting between platinum, yellow gold and red-orange gold. The accessories are different in style; in the color of the gold

and also in the rubies color, which fits with the dress colors. The accessories are all composed of a ring, a crown, a collar, a crew-neck sweater, a bracelet, earrings, and a big golden belt and grips-hang to put in the breast part of the robe.

The groom changes his cloths as well, but only twice. At the beginning he is wearing the traditional *jellaba*, then he changes it for a European suit (a French costume, because Moroccan society is influenced by French culture in many things like clothes and language, many words in Moroccan Arabic are originally from French).

4-6- The first night contact and the exhibition of the virginity:

A wedding ceremony takes place under great gaiety and celebrations. In times past, the men and women would celebrate these festivities at separate locations. At some point in the evening, the groom, accompanied by his family members, relatives, and friends, would move towards the bridal party. They would go singing, beating drums, and dancing. The groom and the bride are then lead to the bridal chamber.

Up to one in the morning, the patio and ground floor were reserved for men. All women, including the bride, withdrew to the first floor. The *Neggafa* drove the veiled bride into the bridal room and gives her two loaves of breads. The bride takes each bread under each arm and holds a set of keys (bread as sign of richness; keys are to give luck to have a new house). Then the *Neggafa* stands up next to the bride, holding a bowl of milk and a plate of dates as sign of fertility and welcoming the members of the new family.

Meanwhile, two *Neggafa* will seek the husband around five o'clock in the morning. They give him a *jellaba* and a silk white (*ksa*) hat of fine wool (*bourousse*), that his friends help him to wear. Young men and *Neggafa* escort the bride until the entrance of the bridal place, the young men stay outside; only the husband enters the house. In most cases, both spouses meet for the first time. That night is generally when the marriage is consummated.

The new couple will then be carried to the bridal chamber where they will be expected to consummate their marriage. This moment is so sensitive for both the bride and the groom and also for the bride's parents and brothers. The groom should be a man, which means that he must prove not to be impotent. He will also discover whether his bride is a virgin or not. For the bride, it is a different experience, a hard one. The first contact is hard and causes pain, in some cases it may cause trauma:

“...In some case an Arabic girl can feel herself violated even if the man is her groom, because of the emotional shock of the moment to discover the male nudity, and show her body to a foreign man who is her own husband, these shock can also be a cause of rejecting her husband or having sex just as an obligation for her husband without feeling any pleasure at the moment of the contact...All these cases are submerging from a strict education received from the family, and the ignorance of sexuality in some Arabic societies...” (Choukri 2006: 17)¹⁹.

The bride at this level is responsible for the next steps of the wedding. If she proves her virginity, everything will continue as normal; if not, everything will be stopped and given a place for problems.

In the early morning of the next day (*SBOHI*), after the sexual contact, all married women meet in the bridal house, waiting for

¹⁹ My own translation from Arabic.

Neggafa, who examines the new spouse's sheets for signs of blood to confirm the bride's virginity. She brings out sheets, and pants with blood of the young married. She initially shows it to the parents of husband, and gets money from them as a sign of joy. The same ceremony will be repeated among the parents of the bride. The joy here is about virginity; if there is some blood in the sheets, this means the bride was a virgin until her nuptial night. If not, the bride can be repudiateded for not being virgin.

The virginity is very important in Arabic societies; it's a symbol of good education and the sign of a family's honor. The sheets are given to women outside the bridal room, placed in a special tray with special sugar, and then the bride's mother holds the tray on her head. All the present guests go out in public, crossing the neighborhood street, singing special songs to show all the neighbors that the bride did not bring shame to her family: she was a virgin until her wedding. This last ceremony of showing the sheets in public is considered a sin in Islam:

“it's an intimate personal affair between man and his wife. And also because Islam asks man to protect his family; his wife and her secret what ever can happen” (Al Albany 1409 Hejiri: 24)²⁰

4-7- “L’FTOUR” the breakfast:

The Furnishing Party is a post-wedding ceremony that takes place the day after the wedding ceremony. The “Furnishing Party” focuses on the preparation of the bride's new home. The party, which is primarily a women's party, delivers household belongings, such as handmade blankets, a mattress, bedding, carpet, Moroccan couch etc., to the couple's new apartment.

²⁰ My own translation from Arabic.

The same day, the bride's family brings breakfast to the spouses, to their new home, accompanied by a group of percussion playing. The following afternoon, the family of the groom is the bride's guest in the house of the parents. The bride wears a caftan, and wears a golden belt offered by her mother.

The bride's parent also brings the gifts that guests bring on the wedding's the last day. These gifts are important to show the value of the bride. The more gifts she gets, the more important she is. These gifts, and "the girl's dowry are displayed in her house and assessed critically by the guests. It is shameful for a girl to have little to display." (Maher 1974: 179)

The fifth day is called NHAR HEL ER-RAS (the day of liberation of the head): *Neggafa* opens the new wife's hairdressing (*SELTA*) and replaced it by married women's hairdressing: a mat on each side of the head. Many guests attend the ceremony, to share in the change in status of the young woman. The bride, always richly adorned, is dressed in simple clothes.

On the ninth day, the bride bakes bread, in order to always have a lot in the house, and prepares fish, because eating fish brings luck.

All these steps make the Moroccan wedding one of the most expensive weddings in the world; and Moroccans s feel the obligation to make the ceremony, according to Hanane, "...*in order to preserve the appearance of a family's social status.*" (May; 2007)

4-8- Some examples and differences from Moroccan cities:

Moroccan cities have the same basic wedding ceremony but they differ in some rituals, food and clothing styles.

In this part I will give just a short description of what is special in each city or part of Morocco.

4-8-a Tangier (Riff and North Atlas):

In Tangier and the northern part of Morocco, there are some special steps during the wedding ceremony.

In Tangier and Tetouan, the wedding ceremony preparation starts with the cookies party. This takes place one week before the wedding ceremony. In the presence of the bride—who mixes the ingredients for the cookies—which is to show to the family present (aunts and cousins) how good the bride is in kitchen.

Another special step in Tangier is the signature of the marriage certificate. All the guests and family meet at the mosque. They take the bride and her groom to the gate of the mosque. Then women and men enter the mosque separately (in Islam men must pray separately from women). When every one is inside, they pray, asking God to protect the new couple.

At the end, they come out again and the couple signs the marriage certificate in the entrance of the mosque to be protected by the God.

4-8-b Central southern part (DOUKALA and SAFI):

In the central southern part, in SAFI, ESSAOUIRA and DOUKALA, the ceremony takes a special atmosphere with the henna day. The

bride has her henna as in other cities, but the special local tradition is the end of henna: the bride and her future husband are escorted to the river, where they take a swim in the river together fully clothed. This river is purification place for the future couple.

The henna day in these cities takes more than one day, because the bride keeps her henna until the day after the henna day.

4-8-c Oujda.

In Oujda, in addition to what is brought in other cities, the groom also offers vegetables and olive oil to participate in the dinner with the bride's family. Also the bride in Oujda wears special clothes originating in Algeria. This robe is called TAKHMILA, made by silk and adorned with bamboo.

4-8-d Marrakech:

In Marrakech, during the wedding ceremony, the bride and the groom receive money as gift from the guests. When the bride and the groom are sitting in their special place, the *NEGGAGA* calls on the microphone to open "the gifts time" called *LAGHRAMA*. Guests then come and give money to the *NEGGAGA*, who tells something like: "this money 100Dh is from the bride's cousin." This money is given to the bride; she can do what ever she wants with it.

4-8-e South and Sahara:

In southern communities, the bride receives about six camels and black henna in addition to other gifts. The more important the bride is

the more the number of camels increases. The importance of the bride depends on the wealth of her family.

Conclusion:

During my research I learned a lot about my own culture, about how Moroccans_s in spite of modernity_s kept their traditions_s and culture and how young people are practicing traditions_s in their own way.

I spent some days with Hanane, and I learned how heavy the tradition can be for a woman, when she is the one to prepare everything. These traditions seem easy when completed, but they need a lot of money, time_s and energy.

Hanane did her best to make her wedding ceremony in the right way, and she respected her family dignity.

Hicham's parents_s from their part, believe that their son, Hicham, made a good choice, and he married a good woman.

For them, Hanane is from a good family, they can be happy for their future progenitor; they will have some well-educated grandchildren, because the mother_s Hanane_s is well educated.

Also Hicham's family will respect Hanane, because she deserves to be respected for keeping her family's tradition.

The Moroccan wedding ceremony is long to prepare, even if it was compressed. Moroccans have kept their traditions in spite of the modernity of their style life.

The women's roles in wedding ceremony_s preparations_s are the most important way that these traditions were kept properly. The woman is honored and sacred by the Islamic religion, and also by the Arabic societies; they (women) deserve this status for the effort they make every day to keep traditions_s in our lives_s.

While finishing this paper, Hanane and Hicham celebrated their daughter's baptism in Fez. The baby, Ghita, born in Casablanca, but

as the tradition says: the maternal grandmother is responsible for baptizing the first baby, and makes a ceremony for her granddaughter or grandson. So Hanane and Hicham went to Fez where Hanane's mother lives to celebrate Lalla Ghita's baptism.

| I hoped if I had time to assist the baptism and to film it to be a sort of continuation for my Film *Mabrouk*.

Glossary:

- 1- **Ululating, “Tzaghrira”** is an Arabic yodeling made by women to express the happiness. To do it you should move your tongue from right to left saying YOY loudly from the throat.
- 2- The Moroccan **Hammam** is a center where you pay (10dh for adult and 7dh for kids under 5years old) to enter the big center is a separate place between men and women. You pay in the entrance, you putt off your clothes in the first room- dressing room- you will be in only pant, you putt your cloths in your bag and give it to the guardian woman in the shelve who you pay 1dh to keep your bag in security. Then you can enter to the first or second room (not so hot), with your bucket and toilet tools. If you prefer the hot room you have to go to the third room. In Moroccan *Hammam* only boy under 5years old are accepted in women section (Renerts, 1987).
- 3- **Gallassa** is a woman working in the public bath Hammam, she is in charge to make massage or help people to clean their long hairs or clean their body especially back and shoulders (Renerts, 1987).
- 4- **Lmida** and **Laamaria** are two sedan chairs, which are originally from the carriage used on the top of camel’s back.
- 5- **Ghassoul** a traditional black soap It is a Clay, a fat land, which is levied in the Atlas mountains stretching all from Morocco to Tunisia. It is sold as a powder or tablets. Treaty, it is cleaned and adds various dried flowers for perfuming, such as jasmine (Tunisia) or rose petals (Morocco) ... Once mixed with water, it

turns into a kind of mud which may surprise appearance when used for the first time (Renerts,1987).

- 6- **Takchita:** a Moroccan women dress, composed of two or three pieces, worn in general during ceremonies, with a golden belt.
- 7- **Naqqacha:** an artist henna specialist, her job is to paint henna in brides hand and foot. Using a special syringe.
- 8- **Neggafa:** a dressing woman present during the wedding ceremony. She is the responsible of the protocol and the organization during whole the ceremony. Helped by her assistants, she is in charge of the bride's beauty: wears and accessories.
- 9- **Jellaba:** an outdoor woman dress, aims to cover the woman to not show her legs or arms to public.
- 10- **Caftan:** a woman dress composed of one piece. Less heavy than Takchita. Caftan is usually worn during close family ceremonies, and during the festivities.

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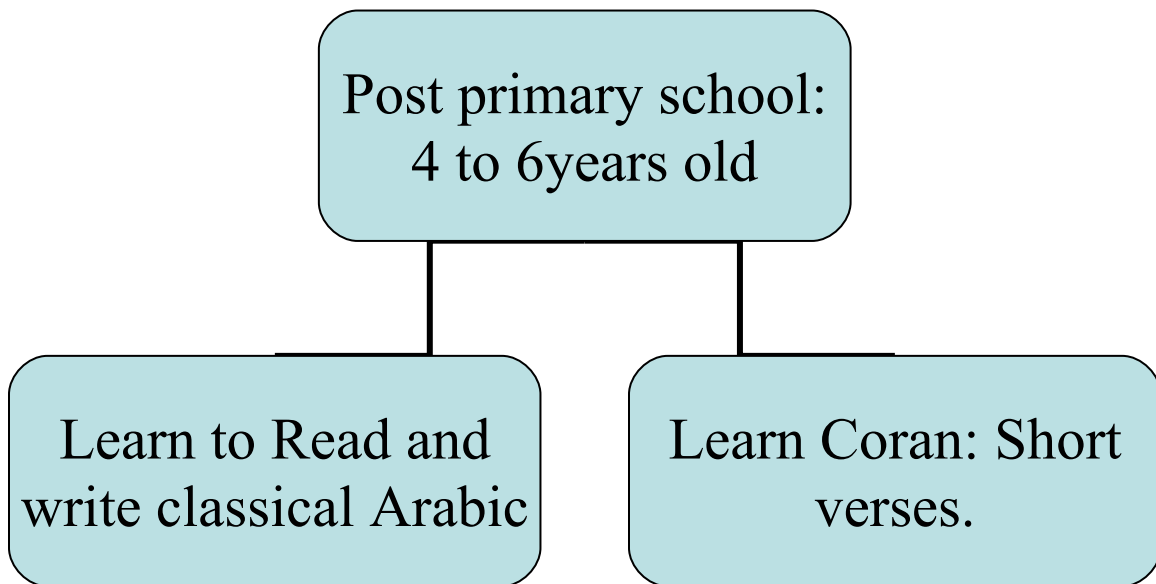
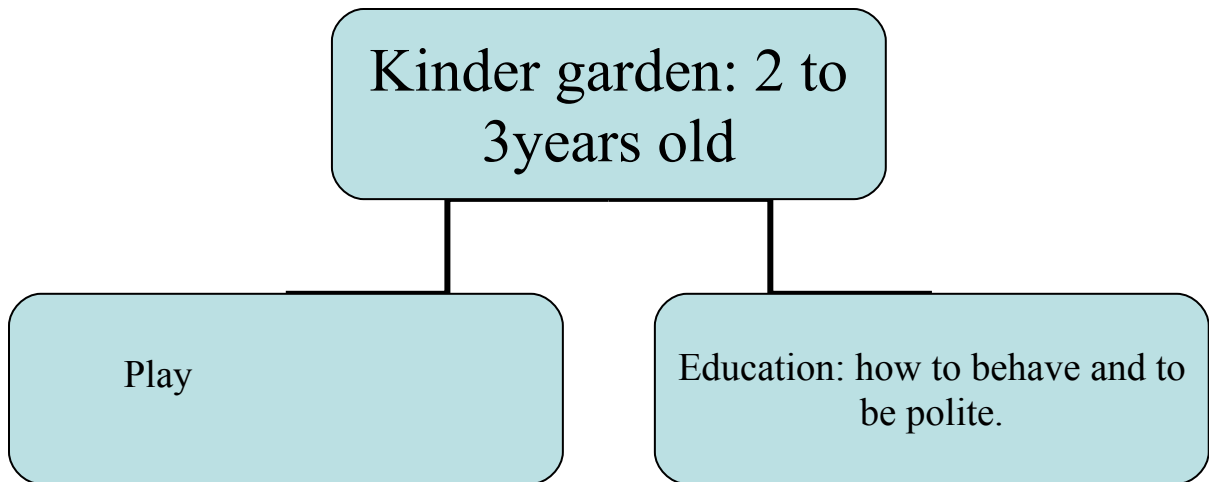
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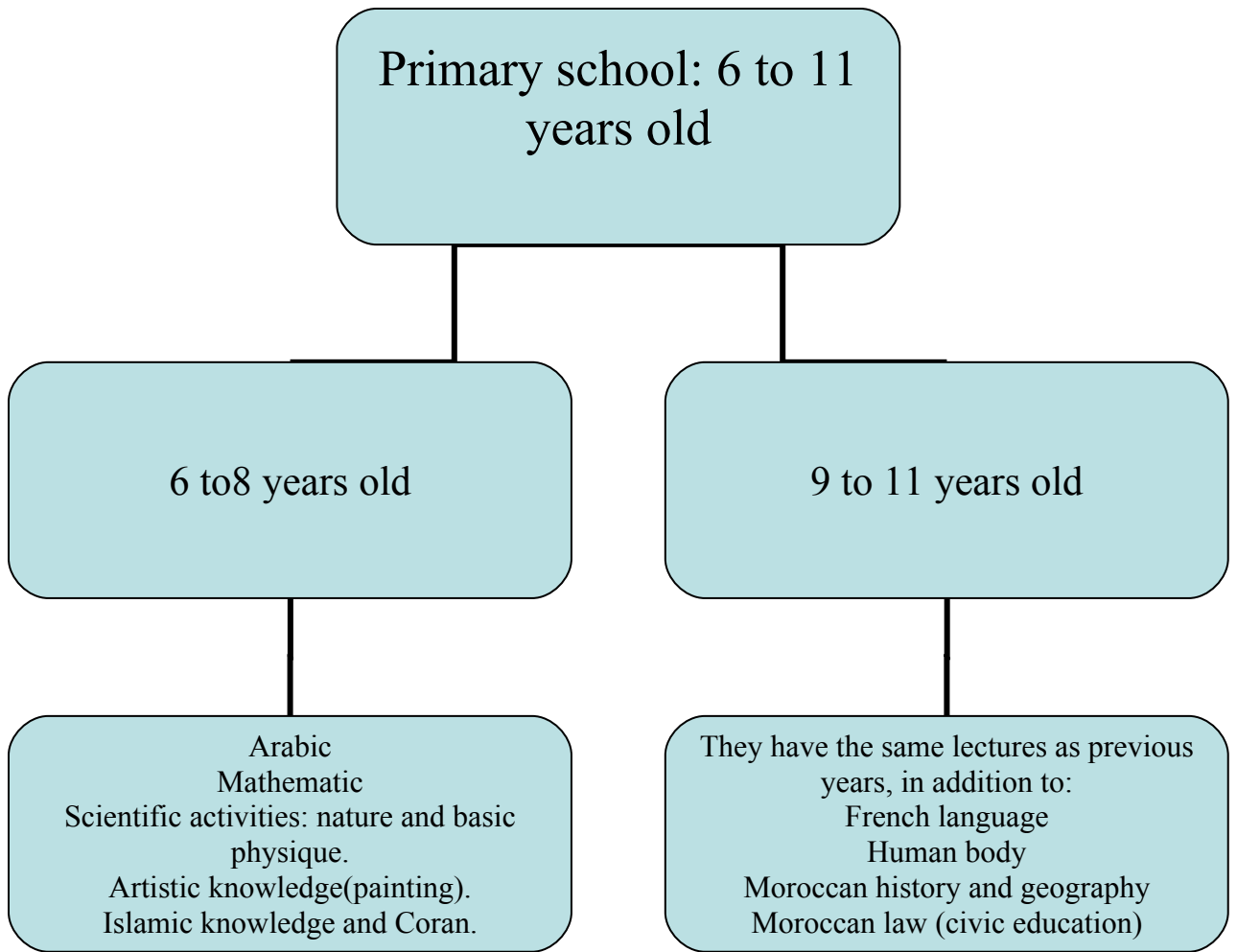
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- *Some women of Marrakech.* Directed by **MELISSA L. DAVIES,** Spain: the Disappearing World series of Granada Television, 1976.
- *Mabrouk: a Moroccan wedding ceremony.* DVD. Directed by **Hajji Jalila,** Norway: University of Tromsø, 2008.

Appendix:

Diagram representing school programs in Morocco:





Secondary school: 12 to 14 years old

Arabic+ French
Mathematic+ Natural sciences+ Physic sciences+
Islamic education+ sports
Civic education and Moroccan law
History and geography of African and European countries
Economy, bank and bourse action
Artistic education
Sexual education: students take this lecture separately: a class for girls and other for boys.
Technology (odd jobs) **just for boys**
Female education (**just for girls**) 1st year: odd women job: hand craft cloths, sewing and odd work for woman.
2nd year: give a birth, and how take care of a baby.
3rd year: Moroccan cooking, and health cooking (nutritive science)

High school : 15 to 17 years old

The same lectures as the secondary school are programmed for the high school, in addition to English language or Spanish + philosophy+ communication. But the history and geography changes: they learn American, Asian and Australian history and geography.

The education in this level depends of what section the students choose: literature or scientific studies.

Excerpt about the food:

In the garden, just in the right of the entrance, we can see a big table (buffet) where different dishes with salted and sweet cookies are put: 18 types of cookies are presented in bronze circular trays: MAAQROUT- semolina cookies and date cookies (Algerian specialty), hard cookies with cheese, hard hot cookies and cat tongue cookies (French cookies), walnut cookies, sugar cookies, coconut cookies, cacao cookies, chocolate cookies, honey cookies, almond cigar, almond arch, chocolate moon, peanut cookies, stuffed dates with almond pasta, hard sweet cookies, hard spicy cookies (Moroccan cookies). In the corner of the table, putted trays where we can find 4 kinds of cream cake (French cake). Also there are dishes of 3 kind tastes of cheese: red cheese, yellow cheese and Roquefort cheese. And 5 kinds of charcuterie Salami: beef salami, spicy beef salami, hot beef salami, Turkish salami, and spicy Turkish salami. Then a **seven** stages cake (baked from nuts, almonds and SAINT MICHELLE mixture) is put also near the dishes.

In the middle corner of the garden, was established a special Kebab barbecue machine for Panini (Lebanese food). On the same table where posed three bottles of sauce witch used for sandwiches (CHAWARMA): a bottle of green garlic sauce (mixture of onion, salt, vinegar, garlic, herbs coriander, basilica, olive oil and water),

a second bottle full of red sauce (mayonnaise, salt, garlic and hot red pepper) the third bottle, contained a mixture of yellow sauce (salt, mustard, cumin, the yellow part of egg, and ginger). A bowl of cut lutes (for CHAWARMA), aluminum paper to wrap sandwiches, (CHAWARMA) Grill machine with chicken meat, ready chicken sandwiches (PANINI), Lebanese bread (LAËICH) for CHAWARMA, a micro wave to re-heat up sandwiches and a traditional Grill for kebab.

In the kitchen on the right back corner of the garden. There drinks and some foods are prepared.

For drinks we had:

- Eight tasted of juice: two pure juices (lemon, orange) and five juices each fruit is added to milk (mango, strawberry, apple, banana, pineapple, and avocado).
- Coke and OULMAS a soda water (helps to digest, this water exist just in morocco; we get it from a natural source in a small city in atlas called WALMASSE).
- The Coffee (in morocco we called black coffee, and we always drink it with sugar!).
- And of course the green mint tea (green tea powder, mint, sugar and hot water).

For foods we had:

- A heavy cookies made by honey and more than 50 ingredients (CHABBAKIYA).

- Stuffed envelopes of minced meat (it's a small triangle of a special thin paper made by flour and water, which envelopes spicy hacked meat and fried in very hot oil).
- Hot dog cigar (also enveloped in the flour paper)
- The NÊMES (a Chinese envelope cream with little hot dog).
- A traditional Moroccan soup: HARIRA (made from chickpea, lens, onion, tomatoes, celery, ginger, saffron, rancid butter, black pepper, parsley, coriander, salt, water, tomatoes pure, angel hairs (very thin small pasta-spaghetti), flour and small cube of meat veal).
- They also prepared Kebabs of chicken and turkey which will be cooked outside in the traditional Grill in the garden.

Some pictures to give an idea about what I described in some parts of this text:



PANINI machine



Sweet hard cookies.



LES NEMES: Chinese cigars.



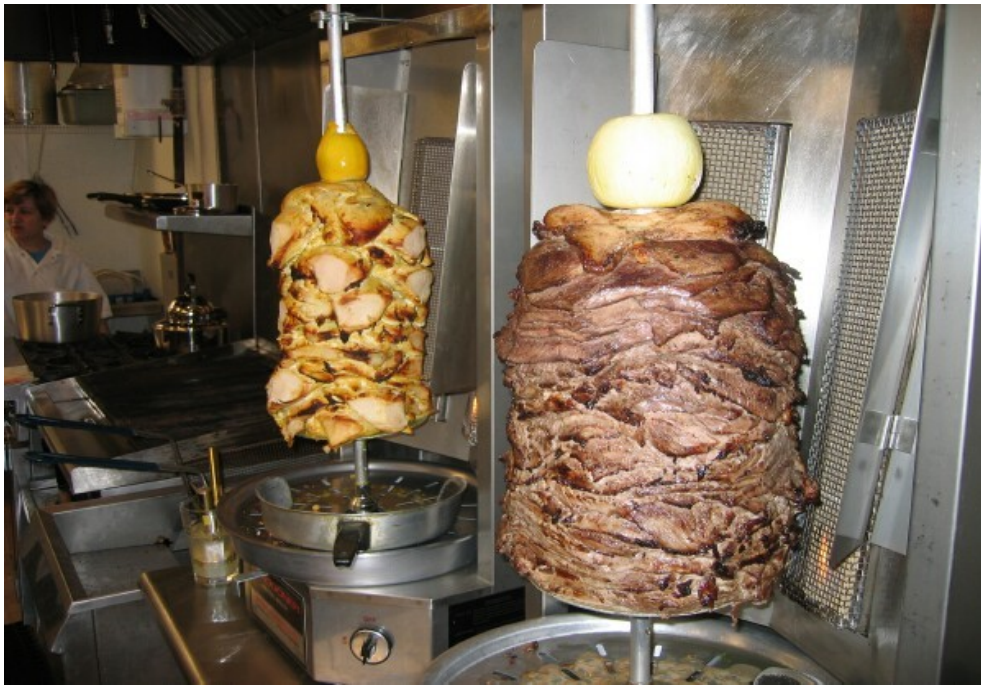
Stuffed envelopes of minced meat



Hot dog cigar



Cat tong (LANGUE DE CHAT)



CHAWARMA grill machine.



A two pieces TAKCHITAS



Brides carried in LMIDDA,
wearing the traditional golden CAFTAN with golden accessories.



The couple wears a traditional golden robe for the bride and a DJELLABA for the groom.



I was wearing [a dress](#) like this during the wedding ceremony in Fez.

| The map of Morocco.



The Marriage in Moroccan law²¹:

Chapter One:

Of Engagement and Wedding:

Article 1. Marriage is a legally binding agreement by which a man and a woman unite for a common life together and durable.

Its purpose is life in fidelity, purity and the desire for procreation by the foundation, on a stable and under the direction of her husband, house allowing spouses to meet their mutual obligations in the security, peace, affection and mutual respect.

Article 2. The betrothal constitutes only a promise of marriage.

The same is true of the recitation of the Fatiha (Chapter 1 of the Koran) and practices accepted by usage actually exchange of gifts.

Article 3. Each of the betrothed has the right to break the engagement.

The saying may then seek restitution gifts, unless the failure is not attributable to him.

Chapter II

Some elements of marriage and the conditions needed for its validity

Article 4. 1 ° the marriage was validly concluded by the exchange of consent of the parties, expressed in terms enshrined or using any expression permitted by

²¹ This part was translated for me by MR Bouchaib Jobrani an ADOUL (Muslim-notary). Based on Law Texts and documents MOUDAWANA (code de status personnel et des Successions)

usage;

2 ° for anyone unable to speak, validly consent result of writing if the person is literate, if not involving any sign of reasonable certainty consent from him.

Article 5. (As amended and supplemented by the Dahir No. 1-93-347 of 22 rebia I1414 (September 10, 1993, published in the Official Gazette on December 1, 1993).

1 ° Marriage shall be entered into only with the consent and agreement of the wife as well as by affixing the signature of the latter on the extract of the marriage certificate prepared by two adoul; in no if the wali not have the power to compel, subject to the provisions of Articles 12 and 13 below.

2 ° the validity of the marriage depends on the simultaneous presence of two adoul to certify the exchange of consent between the future husband or his representative and the wali.

3 ° the establishment of a dot (Sadaq) given by the husband to the wife is mandatory. Any agreement involving the abolition of the dowry is prohibited.

4 ° In exceptional cases, the judge can consider any action in recognition of marriage and admit to that effect all legal evidence.

Article 6. Each of the spouses has to be sane, pubère and free from all legal impediments.

Article 7. The judge may authorize the marriage of lunatic or simple-minded on the report of a board of forensic psychiatrists stating that marriage can be beneficial to the patient, provided that the other

party is informed of the disease and give its consent marriage.

Article 9. Marriage before the age of legal majority is subject to the approval of the Wali (guardian marital); if the latter refuses, and if the disagreement between the parties, the judge is seized.

Article 10. 1 ° the wali acting for his pupil and the future spouses can give a mandate for the conclusion of marriage.

2 ° a judge can take personal responsibility to conclude, either for himself or for his ascendants or descendants, the marriage of a person under guardianship.

Requirements for Islamic Marriages:

The man who is not currently a fornicator can only marry a woman who is not currently a fornicatress or a chaste woman from the people of the Book.

The woman can only marry a Muslim man.

The woman who is not currently a fornicatress can only marry a man who is not currently a fornicator.

The fornicator can only marry a fornicatress -- and vice versa.

The woman cannot marry without the consent of her guardian -- if she marries, her husband becomes her new guardian.

The guardian may choose a suitable partner for a virgin girl, but the girl is free to contest and has the right to say 'no'.

The guardian cannot marry the divorced woman or the widow if she didn't ask to be married.

It is obligatory for a man to give bride wealth (gifts) to the woman he marries -- *"Do not marry unless you give your wife something that is her right."*

Divorce laws

Men have the right of unilateral divorce. A divorce is effective when the man tells his wife that he is divorcing her. At this point the husband must pay the wife the "delayed" component of the dower.

A divorced woman of reproductive age must wait four months and ten days before marrying again to ensure that she is not pregnant. Her ex-husband should support her financially during this period. If a man divorces his wife three times, he can no longer marry her again unless she marries another man and then divorces him.

These are guidelines; Islamic law on divorce is different depending on the school of thought.²²

²² Morocco follows the Sunnite school. And follows Mohamed the prophet. In India for example, Muslims there follow the Shiite school, they follow ALI the student of Mohamed.