



A man once entered a tattoo parlour and asked the artist to give him a tattoo. "What tattoo would you like?" the artist enquired. The man pondered a moment then declared, "*A Lion! A ferocious lion with his fangs bared, about to roar and pounce on his prey!*"

The tattoo artist nodded and began to prepare his needles and ink while the man settled back with a dreamy look of anticipation on his face - how grand the lion will look! How his friends will marvel! But as soon as the artist began working, he yelled in pain and jumped! "Ow!" he exclaimed. "What are you drawing?" "The tail." replied the artist. The taste of the pain still fresh in his mind he muttered, "Skip the tail, he won't need to swot any flies away." The needle was then placed on a lower spot to tattoo the feet. The artist had hardly started when the man once again yelped in pain and sheepishly said, "Leave out the feet, this lion doesn't need to go anywhere." The artist then placed the needle on a third spot to tattoo the head. "No! No!" he moaned, "this lion has no need for a head." This was too much for the artist. He put his needle down in disgust and walked away saying, "Can there ever be a lion without a tail, feet and a head?"

To give or receive a tattoo is not allowed in Islam. The lesson of the story, however, is that this man wanted the image of a lion tattooed on his body, but was not prepared to undergo any pain. He wanted a "rose" without any "thorns". As a result he was left without even a bare stem in his hand. Thus, we who desire to enjoy married life, should expect and prepare ourselves for the occasional hiccup when it comes to our spouse, children, in-laws and our extended families. If we keep the bigger picture in mind and remember that the petals always outnumber the thorns, we will cheerfully undergo every difficulty with a smile, ready to take on the challenges of tomorrow.