

MARRIAGE IN ISLAM: PRINCIPLES AND RUDIMENTS

Definition of Marriage

is a contract between a man and a woman, whom he can lawfully get married to, with the goals of creating a joint life and procreation. Allah the Almighty describes marriage in Quran as a "mithaq Ghalith," which means "a strong covenant":

"And We have taken a strong pledge (Mithaq Ghalith) from you?" (Quran 4:21)

The Purpose of Marriage

As a meaningful institution, marriage has a variety of purposes:

1. **To ensure preservation of the human species and continuation of the human race: In this regard,** Allah says

"O mankind! Be mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it, He created its mate; and from them has spread abroad a multitude of men and women" (Quran: 4:1).

2. **To provide spiritual and legal foundation of the family:** Allah the Almighty said,

"And of His signs is this: He created for you mates from yourself that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, therein indeed are portents for folk who reflect".
(Quran 30:21)

3. Happiness and Joy: Marriage besides preserving the Muslim faith, achieve his worldly happiness which Islam supports. Faith and happiness are important aspects of one's personality. They can support one in his struggle of boosting his souls and getting high levels of religiousness. This is outlined by the prophet (peace be upon him)

"The entire world is-source of pleasure and the best-source of pleasure of the world is the righteous woman." (Imam Muslim)

4. Establishment of Family: Marriage is the only system for establishing family life. No respectable human society could ever exist without family, the primary unit of the framework of society. Family is the avenue where close relation comes out such as parental and maternal relations, parent and child relation as well as that of sibling's relations. Together with these relations, it also inculcates an earnest sense of love and compassion, altruism, kindness, care, and cooperation in a Muslim.

5. Improving Social Relations: Marriage improves and strengthens social connections among the individual members of society. For, it stretches the range of family by adding new relatives to the family structure through inclusion of in-laws and children's aunts and uncles.

6. Sense of Responsibility: Marriage nurtures human character by instilling a sense of responsibility in him and enabling him to bear his responsibility as a husband and a father. In the same manner, marriage inculcates in a woman the sense of responsibility as a wife and a mother. Unfortunately, some people avoid marriage due to distorted mentality and tendency of not willing to bear them responsibly.

Conditions of Marriage in Islam

According to the Quran and Hadith, the 4 conditions of marriage in Islam and they are:

1: Consent of Both Parties (Mutual Agreement)

The first and most fundamental condition for a valid marriage in Islam is the mutual consent of both the bride and the groom. In Islam, no one can be forced into a marriage. Both individuals must willingly agree to enter the marriage contract. This consent must be given freely, without any pressure or compulsion from family or society.

The Quran emphasizes the importance of free will in marriage. Allah states:

“O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion...” (An-Nisa 4:19)

This verse clearly prohibits forcing women into marriage and highlights the necessity of their consent.

The mutual agreement ensures that both parties have chosen their spouse based on their own free will. This promotes harmony and trust in the marriage, aligning with the principles of fairness and justice in Islam.

2: Presence of Wali (Guardian) in Islamic Marriage

The second condition of marriage in Islam is the presence of a Wali, or guardian, for the bride. The Wali is typically the bride's father or closest male relative. His role is to oversee the marriage and ensure that the bride's rights are protected. This is especially important if the bride is inexperienced in matters of marriage or is entering into her first marriage.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of the Wali in marriage. In a Hadith, he said:

“Whichever woman married without the permission of her Wali her marriage is invalid, her marriage is invalid, her marriage is invalid.” (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)

The Wali acts as a protector of the bride's interests, ensuring that she is entering into a marriage that is beneficial and suitable for her. His role is not to make decisions on her behalf but to provide guidance and support.

3: Presence of Two Witnesses in Islamic Marriage

For a marriage contract to be valid, there must be at least two Muslim witnesses present at the time of the marriage ceremony. These witnesses testify to the marriage contract, ensuring that it is a public and recognized event. Islam places great emphasis on transparency and public recognition of marriage. The Prophet Muhammad said:

“There is no marriage without the presence of two witnesses.” (Ibn Hibban)

This Hadith makes it clear that the presence of witnesses is a key requirement for the marriage contract to be legitimate. The presence of witnesses ensures that the marriage is public and cannot be hidden or concealed. This transparency protects both parties and upholds the integrity of the marriage. Witnesses act as a safeguard, confirming that the marriage is conducted in accordance with Islamic teachings.

4: Mahr in Islamic Marriage

The fourth condition of marriage in Islam is the giving of a Mahr to the bride by the groom. The Mahr is a mandatory gift that the groom must present to the bride as part of the marriage contract. It symbolizes the groom's commitment and responsibility in the marriage. Allah says:

“And give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously...” (An-Nisa 4:4)

This verse establishes the obligation of the groom to provide the Mahr to his bride. The amount of Mahr can vary and is agreed upon by both the bride and the groom before the marriage. It can be a small or large amount, depending on the financial circumstances of the groom. However, the bride has the right to request a Mahr that she feels is appropriate for her.

The Mahr is a symbol of the groom's respect and commitment to his wife. It also provides financial security to the bride, ensuring that her rights are respected and that the groom is committed to his responsibilities in the marriage.

Why These Conditions of Marriage in Islam Matter

Consent: Protects the individual's right to choose their partner freely.

Wali: Ensures that the bride has guidance and protection.

Witnesses: Provide public recognition of the marriage.

Mahr: Represents the groom's commitment and responsibility in the marriage.

OTHER ISSUES:

Compatibility:

In Islam, compatibility between spouses is highly valued as it contributes to the establishment of a harmonious and fulfilling marital relationship. The Islamic perspective on compatibility emphasizes the importance of shared values, beliefs, and goals, as well as mutual understanding and respect between partners. From an Islamic standpoint, compatibility encompasses various aspects of the marital relationship, including religious faith, moral character, temperament, and life goals. The Quran encourages believers to marry those who are "good and pure" (Quran 24:26), indicating the importance of selecting a spouse who shares one's commitment to faith and righteousness.

Rights and Responsibilities of Husbands and Wives in Islam:

Husbands' Rights and Responsibilities:

Financial Support: Husbands are obligated to provide for the financial needs of their wives and families, including food, clothing, and shelter. This duty stems from the Quranic injunction,

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women" (Quran 4:34),

Highlighting the husband's responsibility as the provider and protector of his family.

Leadership and Decision-making: Husbands are granted the authority to lead their families and make decisions that affect their welfare. However, this authority is tempered by the requirement to consult with and consider the opinions of their wives, as emphasized in the Prophetic tradition.

Physical and Emotional Support: Husbands are expected to provide emotional support and companionship to their wives, fostering a nurturing and loving environment within the marital relationship.

Wives' Rights and Responsibilities:

Financial Security: Wives have the right to be provided with financial support and maintenance by their husbands, as stipulated in Islamic law. This includes the right to receive the Mahr (dowry) at the time of marriage and to be supported financially during the marriage.

Respect and Dignity: Wives are entitled to be treated with kindness, respect, and dignity by their husbands, as exemplified in the Prophetic teachings. Husbands are instructed to interact with their wives in a gentle and compassionate manner, honoring their rights and feelings.

Domestic Management: While husbands are responsible for providing for the financial needs of the family, wives are entrusted with the management of the household and the upbringing of children. This includes tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare, which are highly valued within Islamic tradition.

Role of Family in Islamic Marriages:

Guidance and Counsel: Family members, particularly parents and elders, serve as trusted advisors and mentors for couples embarking on the journey of marriage. They offer wisdom, perspective, and practical advice based on their own experiences, helping couples navigate challenges and make informed decisions.

Emotional Support: Families provide emotional support and reassurance to couples, especially during times of difficulty or uncertainty. The bond of familial love and care serves as a source of strength and resilience, enabling couples to weather the ups and downs of married life with confidence and courage.

Role Modeling: Family members serve as role models for married couples, exemplifying values such as patience, forgiveness, and mutual respect in their own relationships. Observing healthy and harmonious family dynamics can inspire couples to cultivate similar qualities in their own marriage, fostering a culture of love, understanding, and cooperation.

Family Cohesion: Parental approval fosters family cohesion and solidarity, strengthening the bond between generations and ensuring the continuity of family traditions and values. It reinforces the sense of belonging and mutual support within the family unit, enhancing the overall well-being of its members.

Community Involvement in Marital Affairs: Community involvement in marital affairs provides couples with additional resources, support networks, and opportunities for growth and development within the broader Muslim community. Community members, including religious leaders, friends, and peers, offer guidance, encouragement, and practical assistance to couples as they navigate the challenges and joys of married life.

Spiritual Guidance: Religious leaders and scholars within the community provide spiritual guidance and counseling to couples, offering insight into Islamic teachings and principles relevant to marital relationships. Their wisdom and expertise help couples navigate religious obligations, resolve conflicts, and deepen their understanding of Islamic marital ethics.

Social Support: Community members offer social support and companionship to couples through gatherings, events, and social activities that promote friendship, solidarity, and mutual respect. These interactions create opportunities for couples to connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and seek advice in a supportive and nonjudgmental environment.