

Marriage Advice (part 1 of 2)

Description: Simple and straightforward essential marriage advice for new Muslims.

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Objective:

- To list some matters for a new Muslim to reflect upon before getting serious about marriage

Arabic Terms:

- *Istikharah prayer* - the prayer for Guidance
- *InshaAllah* - God willing, if God wills it to be so. It is a reminder and acknowledgment that nothing happens except by the will of Allah

First Things to Know

One of the most useful advice, in the opinion of this author, is that a new Muslim should take Islam one piece at a time. It is a total way of life that needs time to adjust. It can take years to leave many non-Islamic behaviors, but sticking to Islam brings happiness in this life and in the one to come. Therefore, allow yourself time to grow as a Muslim and practice what you learn.



For a new Muslim, this author would advise to wait at least a year, preferably more, before thinking about getting married. Marriage is a big decision and one must allow oneself sufficient time to grow before making such a life-changing decision. Many of your views will change after entering into Islam. Marriage will set a direction for your life and determine how you identify yourself later in life. What you may find acceptable today, may not be acceptable after a few years of being a Muslim. Instead of looking to getting married right away, spend some time to not just learn, but live Islam. You would want to marry someone with the same dedication and level of application to Islam as you. That level will fluctuate in the formative years of becoming a Muslim.

Often times, a new Muslim finds himself lonely after accepting Islam, therefore, getting married too early to seek companionship usually results in a quick divorce and bitterness. People often times forget that marriage requires financial and emotional stability.

After establishing a stable base to stand on for your new religion, you can learn the details of marriage in Islam.

Finding a Muslim Life Partner

What is the purpose of your creation? It is to worship Allah and to draw close to Him. Consequently, choose a mate who will help you fulfill your purpose of creation. Do not ignore the factors in a prospective partner that will assist you in the life to come. This way, Insha-Allah, your love will be blessed.

Consider how seriously your prospective partner tries to draw close to Allah, and not just how physically attractive he or she appears. At the same time, keep in mind that certain level of physical attraction is necessary to get married. Moreover, just because someone is trying their best to be good Muslim does not mean they are faultless or even suitable for marriage. Sufficient inquiries will have to be made.

A new Muslim enters into Islam with a lot of preconceived notions and ideas that shape their outlook on how they perceive things. Western culture promotes marriage as a commitment to one person after having dated or even lived with many, knowing that one is the “right” person. The Islamic concept is much different. For example, in Islam you typically do not “fall in love” before marriage, but after marriage. In Islam, marriage is not a result of romantic love only, which brings intense love in the beginning, followed by later disappointment. In the West, as quickly as people “fall in love,” they “fall out of love!” In the West, people imagine their “honeymoon phase” will last forever. It never does. That is why, people keep hopping from one partner to another, trying to keep up the excitement.

Islam, on the other hand, sobers us to stay together when the “honeymoon phase” ends. It gives you guidelines to sustain a healthy relationship for the rest of your life. Love is definitely part of an Islamic marriage, but not the type that is shown in movies and teen romance novels. It is not sensible to destroy your life looking for romantic love that only exists in movies and novels.

Common Sense in Marriage

1. Allah warns us,

“And do not marry unbelieving women until they believe...even though she attracts you. Nor marry believing women to unbelievers until they believe...even though he attracts you. Unbelievers invite you towards the Fire...” (Quran 2:221)

The person you will live with the rest of your life will without doubt have a great influence on you. Therefore, you should ensure you have similar goals in life. The top of those goals should be seeking Allah’s pleasure. When you meet your prospective spouse, ask questions. Just because a man looks religious, does not mean he does not smoke or prays regularly on time. Similarly, if a woman appears religious does not mean she knows

how to be a good Muslim wife and mother. Ask about matters that are important to you. Do not take anything for granted. Discuss finances, children, in-laws, work or study after marriage, division of chores, in short, anything that is important to you. It will help you make a decision about whether you want to marry that person or not.

Finding out about the person before marriage is not un-Islamic. Informed decision will save you from much pain and suffering later. Moreover, offer the *Istikharah* prayer (the prayer for Guidance).^[1]

2. Do not expect major changes in a person after marriage. People change with time, and often they do not change how we expect them to or want them to change. For example, if someone has a particular personality trait like stinginess or wastefulness, it is unlikely to change quickly and easily. Getting married with false hopes is ill-advised and risky. Do not criticize someone for their physical flaws later in life. It will ruin your marriage. Be honest with others and yourself and take responsibility for your choices. An initial choice will determine how much effort you will have to put later in your marriage to lead a happy married life pleasing to your Creator.

It is also important to think carefully before bringing a child into the couple's life. A baby should be brought into a healthy, stable marriage. Many people end up being single parents, bringing children into a dysfunctional family where there is either no dad or no mom.

3. That two people are good Muslims does not mean they will make a good couple. Compatibility is essential. It is important to choose a spouse who views and practices Islam like you. Furthermore, religion is not the only area of compatibility. Work, continuing education, socialization, city of residence, kids, and finances are also among important areas.

4. Realize what are your rights and responsibilities as a Muslim husband or wife and fulfill them to the best of your ability.

5. Lastly, it is beneficial for newcomers to Islam to search for a role model. Follow the role model in what they do according to Islam and leave the rest.

Endnotes:

[1] For more information on *Istikharah*, please see: <http://www.newmuslims.com/lessons/163/>

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