

Marriage Advice (part 2 of 2): Practical Steps

Description: The article explains the types of marriage partners forbidden for a Muslim man and woman and gives advice on getting married through personal contacts and matrimonial websites.

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Objective:

- To learn the Islamic rulings on boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, interfaith marriages, and same-sex marriage.
- To learn some practical tips on finding a Muslim life partner.
- To identify pitfalls of finding a spouse online.

Arabic Terms:

- *Imam* - someone who leads the prayer.

Since Islam does not allow boyfriend or girlfriend relationships, the only natural way for a new Muslim to keep himself chaste and have the companionship from the opposite gender is to get married.



Interfaith marriage

The only form of interfaith marriages permitted are between a Muslim man and a Christian or Jewish woman with the condition that she be chaste. What it means is that she does not have a boyfriend and does not have sex before marriage.

The Quran states:

"This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you, when you have given them their due compensation (bridal money given by the husband

to his wife at the time of marriage), desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse or taking (secret) lovers. And whoever denies the faith - his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." [Quran 5:5]

Nevertheless, in a non-Muslim country, a Muslim man is *discouraged* to marry a non-Muslim. Some scholars even say it is forbidden. The reason is that it creates many complexities in case of divorce, which is common, especially with children custody issues.

A Muslim woman is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man, even if he is a Jew or a Christian, under any circumstance.

Furthermore, a Muslim man can not marry a non-Jewish or non-Christian woman under any circumstance. Therefore, marriage to atheists, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, agnostics, and Qadianis is not allowed for a Muslim man or woman.

Same sex "marriage"

There is no concept in Islam of same sex or homosexual 'marriage'. On the contrary, committing a homosexual act is sinful, and a forbidden act.

Finding a spouse

So, how do you go about getting married? How do you search for a spouse?

There are a few simple ways to look for a marriage partner.

1. If you like someone, for example, from work or school, you should talk to the *Imam* of your mosque or some close Muslim friends on how to proceed. Cultural practices differ greatly on what is considered appropriate or inappropriate in this regard. You can start by asking your Pakistani (or Arab) friends, 'What is the best way to approach a Pakistani (or Arab) family for marriage?'

2. If you are starting from scratch, it will be a good idea to first make a 'marriage resume,' with the following information:

- Name
- Contact information (address, email, phone, etc)
- Age
- Education
- Work details
- Height
- Weight

- Little bit about your family
- What you are looking for (age, education, etc)
- Little bit about yourself and your future plans
- May indicate whether previously married or never married, and any children
- May indicate that "special personal information" (like criminal record, health issues, mental illness, etc) will be shared later
- References

Get some help from friends in making this resume if you need to.

You will use this 'resume' to email or give print outs to people you know. Otherwise, they will forget. It also shows them that you are serious.

3. Other sources are Muslim matrimonial websites and social networking websites. There are two types of matrimonial websites: general websites not geared towards any particular faith and websites geared towards Muslims. Some of the Muslim matrimonial websites are run by non-Muslims!

Going through them is a more productive way to find a spouse, but is not as reliable as personal networking. What this means is that you will find a bigger pool of online people for marriage, but you will have to be more careful.

There are a lot of people on Muslim matrimonial websites who are serious about looking for a marriage partner. At the same time, there are many who are either not serious, or, even worse, some who run scams. They know how to explore your weaknesses, or win your sympathy, and lure you into sending them money or sponsoring them from overseas to come to the US for a better life. Some might even not be Muslim, but pretend to be one. Yet, some men might pretend to be women. You should be careful not to send money to anyone overseas. If you do, you need to at least understand that it may not be used for the purpose you are sending it for. Beware that it is common for people to lie and misrepresent themselves to get more profile views.

There will be immense cultural differences if you decide to marry someone outside of your home country, and you will do best to follow the advice of someone who has used matrimonial websites successfully and can help you maneuver through them.

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