

CLASS 2

WHO TO MARRY?

Now that we have seen how much importance Islam has accorded to marriage and marital life you would perhaps ask, how come we see so many couples that are sad, so much abuse, depression, loneliness amongst couples. The most common answer is that it might be a test from Allah, but more often than not these are a result of choices we make.

If we are giving precedence to

- Rich over righteous
- Qualified over knowledgeable in Deen
- Status over character

...we are bound to face troubles, if we are searching for happiness in these things it will be short-lived.

So the most important question is “Who to Marry?” or “How do we select a spouse? What are the guidelines provided by Islam in this regard? Do we look for some particular characteristics or just try to get the best from the worldly point of view?”

First and foremost remember, **TO GET FATIMA, YOU HAVE TO BE ALI** (and Vice Versa) meaning we have to be good ourselves to get a good spouse, as Allah says,

“Indecent woman are for indecent men and indecent men are for indecent woman. Decent women are for decent men and decent men are for decent women. The decent people are innocent of what people allege. They will receive mercy and honourable sustenance”.

(Surah An-Nur Ayah 26)

So before everything we got to correct ourselves for His Sake and then pray to Allah for the best!

Making sure that Muslims are well-matched to their spouses is one of the most important and potentially difficult functions in Muslim society. The individual seeking marriage must have his/her priorities straight and be clear on what characteristics are most important to be sought in a spouse in order to have a successful marriage. There are many characteristics that are important in a husband or a wife but some are much more important than others. Overemphasizing the wrong qualities can lead to disaster down the road just as being neglectful of certain considerations can do likewise. When we come to understand the goals and priorities of marriage in Islam, we may be guided to the Islamic methodology of seeking marriage in Islam and stop blindly following the disbelievers in their ignorant notions of the importance of “*getting to know each other*” and other such concepts which in reality contribute nothing to and more often sabotage a successful marriage.

CHOOSING A WIFE

The Prophet ﷺ said,

"A woman is married for her deen, her wealth or her beauty. You must go for the one with deen, may your hands be in the dust! (if you fail to heed)"

[Muslim]

Religion

In the previous hadith, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned various characteristics that people, by their nature and custom, look for in a spouse. He did not advocate any of them, but merely stated them as facts of human nature except for the issue of "deen", i.e., a prospective spouse's piety and practice of Islam - their fulfilling of the wajib and their avoidance of the haram. About this characteristic, the Prophet ﷺ said "*alaikum bi dhaati ad-deen*" or "*it is upon you to seek the one of piety*". This is an order and quite different from the general statement at the beginning of the hadith which says "a woman IS MARRIED for..." and separates the issue of deen from the other mundane issues and puts it in a category by itself. Also, when the Prophet ﷺ says at the end of the hadith "*may your hands be in the dust*", invoking this negative outcome on those who disregard his order, it can only refer to the order to seek the spouse with piety, since that is the only order in the hadith. (are we amongst those who are bringing this negative invocation on ourselves?)

We must be careful not to be superficial in this issue. The mere wearing of hijab or keeping a beard and praying in the Masjid, while obvious requirements of piety, do not by themselves guarantee it. There are many people who at first glance appear to be abiding by Islam, but upon closer inspection have a twisted understanding of Islam and their practice in reality may leave much to be desired. 'Umar once told someone who had testified to the goodness of a person by the fact that he had seen him in the Masjid that he does not know him as long as he has not had dealings with him that involved money, had lived with him or travelled with him.

Character and Behavior

Character is of extreme importance in Islam and goes hand in hand with faith and piety as mentioned in An-Nur verse 26 (stated above).

One of the important issues of character in the spouses is the quality of wudd. This means kindness and lovingness and compassion.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Marry the loving/friendly, the child-bearing for I shall outstrip the other nations with your numbers on Qiyamah."

[Ahmad, Abu Dawud and others and it is Sahih]

Therefore, the prospective spouses must ask and find out about the other person's behaviour and manners. As a sign also, one may look at the other person's family's manners and behaviour and many times (but not always) the behaviour of people of the same family are similar. In other words, some characteristics tend to run in some families whether they be good or bad characters such as anger, politeness, stinginess, generosity, lying, truthfulness and so forth.

Beauty

This characteristic has a certain role to play since one of the purposes of marriage is to keep both spouses from sins. The best way to do this is to have a strong attraction between the spouses. Although this is something which surely grows over time, initial impressions can in some cases become an obstacle to a successful marriage. The Prophet ﷺ separated Qais ibn Shamas from his wife in the famous case of Khul'a and her stated reason was that he was exceedingly displeasing to her. There are many hadith which urge the prospective spouse to get a look at the other before undertaking the marriage. Once a companion told him ﷺ that he was going to get married. The Prophet ﷺ asked if he had seen her. When the man said no, he ﷺ said:

"Go and look at her for it is more likely to engender love between the two of you."

[Ahmad and others and it is sahih]

'Umar ibn Al-Khattab once said: *"Do not force your young girls to marry an ugly man, for they also love what you love."*

Beauty has its role, but remember that it is way down on the priority list under piety, character and deen. When a person puts beauty above all else, the results can be disastrous.

Choosing the Mother (for your children)

If someone wishes to produce ripe fruits, he will indeed search for the land that is most fertile. One of the great aspects of wisdom behind getting married is to produce righteous offspring that will worship Allah and serve as a provision for their parents.

The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Marry women that are loving and fertile for indeed I will outnumber the nations through you.”* [Reported by Abu Dawood]

On the other hand, he praised a woman with good religious qualities, saying: *“Shall I not inform you of the best treasure that a man gathers – A righteous wife.”* [Reported by Al-Haakim]

This is from the rights that a child has over his father – that he picks a good mother for him.

A man once came to ‘Umar bin Al-Khattaab complaining about his son being undutiful to him. He had brought his son with him and began blaming him for his disobedience, so the son asked: “Doesn’t a son have a right over his father also?” ‘Umar said: “Of course.” The son said: “Then what is it?” ‘Umar replied: *“That his father carefully chooses a mother for him, that he gives him a good name and that he teaches him the Qur’an.”*

CHOOSING A HUSBAND

One of the ways in which Islam has honoured woman is by giving her the right to choose her husband. Her parents have no right to force her to marry someone she dislikes. The Muslim woman knows this right, but she does not reject the advice and guidance of her parents when a potential suitor comes along because they have her best interests at heart, and they have more experience of life and people. At the same time, she does not forego this right because of her father's wishes that may make him force his daughter into a marriage with someone she dislikes.

There are many texts that support the woman in this sensitive issue, for example the report quoted by Imam Al-Bukhaari from al-Khansa' bint Khidam: *“My father married me to his nephew, and I did not like this match, so I complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He ﷺ said to me: ‘Accept what your father has arranged.’ I said, ‘I do not wish to accept what my father has arranged.’ He ﷺ said, ‘Then this marriage is invalid, go and marry whomever you wish.’ I said, ‘I have accepted what my father has arranged, but I wanted women to know that fathers have no right in their daughter's matters (i.e. they have no right to force a marriage on them).”*

At first, the Prophet ﷺ told al-Khansa' to obey her father, and this is as it should be, because the concern of fathers for their daughters' well-being is well-known. But when he realized that her father wanted to force her into a marriage she did not want, he gave her the freedom to choose, and saved her from the oppression of a father who wanted to force her into an unwanted marriage.

A Muslim woman who understands the teachings of her religion has wise and correct standards when it comes to choosing a husband. She does not concern herself just with good looks, high status, a luxurious lifestyle or any of the other things that usually attract women. She looks into his level of religious commitment and his attitude and behaviour, because these are the pillars of a successful marriage, and the best features of a husband. Islamic teaching indicates the importance of these qualities in a potential husband, as Islam obliges a woman to accept the proposal of anyone who has these qualities, lest fitnah and corruption become widespread in society: The Prophet ﷺ said,

"If there comes to you one with whose religion and attitude you are satisfied, then give your daughter to him in marriage, for if you do not do so, fitnah and mischief will become widespread on earth."

(Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).

This does not mean that the Muslim woman should completely ignore the matter of physical appearance, and put up with unattractiveness or ugliness. It is her right - as stated above - to marry a man for whom her heart may be filled with love, and who is pleasing to her both in his appearance but more so in his conduct. The true Muslim woman is never dazzled by outward appearances, and she never lets them distract her from seeing the essence of a potential spouse. The Muslim woman knows that the man has the right of qiwamah over her, as the Qur'an says:

"Men are the protectors and maintainers [qawwamun] of women, because Allah has given the one more [strength] than the other, and because they support them from their means . . ."

(Qur'an 4:34)

Hence she wants to marry a man of whose qiwamah over her she will feel proud, one whom she will be happy to marry and never regret it. She wants a man who will take her hand in his and set out to fulfil their life's mission of establishing a Muslim family and raising a new generation of intelligent and caring children, in an atmosphere of love and harmony, which will not be impeded by conflicting attitudes or religious differences. Believing men and believing women are supposed to walk side-by-side on the journey of life, which is a serious matter for the believer, so that they may fulfil the great mission with which Allah (subhaanahu wa 'ta'aalaa) has entrusted mankind, men and women alike, as the Qur'an says:

“For Muslim men and women - for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are constant and patient, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast [and deny themselves], for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise - for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.” (Qur'an 33:35)

In order to achieve this great goal of strengthening the marriage bond, and establishing a stable family life, it is essential to choose the right partner in the first place.

Is Wealth Important?

Unfortunately, when looking for a husband, the woman's family or wali first look at his wealth or job, instead of his iman, taqwa, and 'aqidah (creed).

Furthermore, many of today's Muslim women have been affected by un-Islamic ideologies. They do not seek a husband who has taqwa and good character, which would more likely guarantee for them a lasting, loving relationship. Rather, they seek a husband who is affluent, has a prominent position, or holds a higher degree of education - all at the cost of religion, morals, and, eventually, happiness.

While we do not call on Muslims to live in poverty, we emphasize that wealth is a minor factor that should never be compared to deen and manners.

When a woman marries a man with deen and good character, she will not lose out in any respect: if he keeps her, he will do so in a good manner; and if he releases her, he will do so in a good manner. Furthermore, a man with deen and good character will be a blessing for her and her children, and they will all help each other learn and improve in their Deen.

Wealth is something that gives short term happiness and then we see women who complain about loneliness, not being loved etc, it can be mainly because we choose men with wealth over men with deen & manners.

DO PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE YOUR SPOUSE?

Consent is essential in the case of the husband, and also in the case of the wife. The parents have no right to force their son or their daughter to marry someone they do not want.

But if the person whom the parents have chosen is righteous, then the child, whether male or female, should obey the parents in that, because the Prophet ﷺ said:

“If there comes to you one with whose religious commitment and character you are pleased, then marry (your daughter) to him.”

[Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1084; Ibn Maajah, 1967. Classed as hasan by al-Albaani]

But if obeying them will lead to divorce later on, then the child does not have to obey them in that, because consent is the foundation of the marital relationship, and this consent must be in accordance with sharee'ah, which is approval of the one who is religiously committed and of good character. A child is not considered to be disobedient or sinful if he does not obey his parents in this regard.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: *The parents do not have the right to force their child to marry someone whom he does not want, and if he refuses he is not being disobedient towards them, as is the case when he does not eat what he does not want.* (Al-Ikhtiyaaraat, 344.)

RECOMMENDED STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE MARRIAGE

The following are important steps not only for those interested in getting married but also for any others involved in the process of facilitating a marriage. The entire process, in order to be successful with Allah's blessing, should be proper and consistent with the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. All other endeavours will or can lead to misery and discord.

- They should make du'a to Allah for a pious spouse who will aid them in their Islam and worship. They should be very patient. The process of marriage may take a long time especially in areas where Muslims are a small minority.
- Both spouses should seek to get married purely for Allah's pleasure and in order to fulfil the purpose of marriage in Islam.
- Both should pray istikhara to seek Allah's counsel.
- Both must put full trust in Allah that if they do everything properly and in accordance to the Shari'a that Allah will bless them with a good spouse and that any other approaches are falsehood and will not lead to Allah's blessing and success in marriage.

- If a person has Muslim parents, they should seek their help in finding a spouse. If not, they should seek help from married Muslim men and women.
- When a person is found, they should seek advice from various parties familiar with the person.
- They should see the prospective spouse and perhaps speak with them (not alone).
- One should ask relevant questions and make clear the Islamic foundation of the marriage.
- Before the marriage contract, all dealings should be with the wali, and no attempt should be made to strike up a relationship with the future spouse before the marriage.
- They should avoid all of the innovations surrounding marriage which are so widespread among the Muslims.

WORLDLY MATTERS TO BE KEPT IN MIND WHILE SELECTING A SPOUSE

These are some of the matters which are not related to religion but are important. It's your right to have sufficient information about the person you want to marry. . Since it is not possible to know all of the below points beforehand, it may be achieved by enquiring about them through various channels, such as talking to their siblings (same gender as you) and asking some of your relatives to ask their friends and those who know them well, because they may know a lot about his good and bad points which other people would not know about.

How he handles power:

If he is in a position of power (manager/employer/business owner/etc) make sure you try to find out how he deals with them, if he is good he will be good with you if he is not then there are high chances that he will abuse the power he gets of being a husband. There are many men who were seen to be good by people but are abusive husbands, this is because they never had this power and get carried away with the power he gets on his wife.

Habits:

What kind of habits does this person have? Many times you don't know what kind of habits a person has until you've lived with them. Ask the person what their bad habits are, that way you know what to expect before getting married, this way you're not taken by surprise.

Likes/Dislikes:

What does this person like/dislike when it comes to anything and everything? What kinds of food, entertainment, sports, and work do they like to do? What do they do for fun? Do they have any hobbies, collections, special skills? Do they have a few close friends, lots of friends? These things say a lot about a person and you can figure out if he/she is compatible.

Opinions:

Many people are very opinionated. Some people feel as though they're never wrong. It's important to get an idea of what this person's opinions in life are. Some people don't want to be with someone who doesn't share their same or similar opinion. What do they believe in? You could ask any number of questions to get their opinion on anything that's important to you. You could easily ask by saying "*What's your opinion on....*" or "Do you believe...".

Expectations / Role:

It's important to talk to a potential spouse/partner or someone you've already chosen as a spouse/partner about their expectations and their role in both life and your relationship. If you are a woman do you expect to stay at home with children if you have any or do you expect to go back to work after having children, do you expect a man to take care of the lawn and fixing anything that's broken, do you expect the man to take out the trash? If you are a man you expect to be the sole breadwinner and the sole provider, do you expect the woman to stay at home or work? Some women and men have pre-set gender role expectations they should let the other person know about beforehand, to let the other person know this is what they expect. In any situation it is good to have clear expectations and roles that are well defined between the two partners.

Compatibility:

Some people are the opposite, yet they stay together and have a good relationship, while others who are opposite or maybe even the same are just not compatible with one another. Ask yourself do you generally like this person? Do you feel you are at least somewhat compatible to them? Imagine yourself with this person for five years, and then ten years down the road, are you still compatible? If you can see yourself with someone for a lengthened amount of time and you feel very compatible with them, you have a better chance of sticking it out and having a better relationship than with someone you are just not that compatible with.

Temperament:

What is this person's temperament like? Are they laid back, impatient, quick to anger, calm or rude? Temperament is important because in it you can see how people will act in certain situations, like in an argument or fight. Does this person fight fair or fight dirty? This may be something that is important to take into account when choosing a spouse/partner.

Future Goals:

What kind of goals and aspirations does this person have for their future? Do they have any? What are their hopes and dreams for the future? If you share in some of their hopes and dreams then it will be easier for the both of you to get where you want to go and you can serve as encouragement for each other in getting there.

Past:

Firstly we should not try to seek for sins from their pasts that are between them and Allah and that they have repented for, but knowing how did they grow up? Where did they grow up? These are important things to learn because it is the background the person has lived through and why they are who they are now.

Why?

The choice of a marriage partner is one of the most important decisions a person will make in his or her lifetime. It should not be taken lightly, nor left to chance or hormones. It should be taken as seriously as any other major decision in life - with prayer, careful investigation, and family involvement.

A relationship outside the confines of marriage is essentially haram. If you meet someone and there is a mutual attraction. You do it the right way. He informs your family. You do not get too cosy by exchanging text messages and calls. You do it the right way. If he is serious, he'd contact your guardian.

Before making a decision to marry this person, you guys can have conversations in the presence of your mahram (guardian), not locked up in a room. The guardian doesn't have to sit on the same table with you; basically your conversation has to be in an open area. This is a very important point and you should take advantage by finding out as much as you can about your potential spouse.

Ask the tough questions and see how you both get along in conversations. Is he/she comfortable with your aspirations? What does he look for in a spouse?

IMPORTANT RULE

Having said all of this above, we need to remember one very important rule, if you keep digging to look for some negatives, you will surely find things that you dislike as no one is perfect. The important thing to remember is that we know the things that matters the most to us.

The first thing is to know their deen & manners, after this each person has certain things that they just cannot stand, so know about these things if these are ok then do not keep digging and let shaitaan put doubts in your mind.

COURTING/DATING TO KNOW A PERSON

"Dating" as it is currently practiced in much of the world does (should) not exist among Muslims. Young Muslim men and women (or boys and girls) do (should) not enter into one-on-one intimate relationships, spending time alone together, "getting to know each other" in a very deep way before deciding whether that's the person they will marry. Rather, in Islam pre-marital relationships of any kind between members of the opposite sex is forbidden.

WARNING!

It is not permissible for her under any circumstances to be alone with him (khulwah) before marriage. It is well known that in such meetings none of them show their true nature, but rather they are on their best behaviours and trying to make a good impression. Even if they were to be alone or to go out, they will not show their true character. Many of those who go out with a fiancé in this sinful manner end up in tragedy and these sinful steps, whether they were taken in private or in public, do not bring any benefits.

Often the fiancé will use sweet words and play with the emotions of his fiancée when he goes out with her, and he shows her his best side, but when she makes enquiries about him and tries to find out more about him, she will discover something entirely different. So going out with him or being alone with him does not solve the problem. Even if for the sake of argument we were to say that it does serve some purpose in finding out about the man's character, the resulting sin and possibility of leading to bad consequences is far greater than that (potential benefit). This is why Islam forbids being alone with a strange (non-mahram) man – and the fiancé is still a stranger.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

"Whenever a man is alone with a woman the Devil makes a third."

(Sahih Bukhari)

You can meet multiple times if needed but all in the presence of a guardian; If you have things in particular that put you off then make sure you ask him/her about it and ask him/her to be honest because it will lead to problems in future, do not hesitate in this matter even if the Qs are a little embarrassing ask it in a dignified manner without offending the person.

After this, you make a decision whether you want him as a husband, he also decides whether he wants you as a wife. When there is an agreement, you start making plans for marriage.

"Do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree between themselves in a lawful manner."

[Quran 2:232]

During the whole process you can do Istikhaara as many times as you want to seek Allah's help in making the right decision and InShaAllah it will be the right one for you for this world & the Hereafter. Make sure you also read the translation of Istikhaara, it is a powerful dua, read and have tawakkul.

Just remember, Marriage is difficult, after all this there is no guarantee it will work; but if you have two people that believe in and love Allah.. Then no matter what happens you know that the rights of the other will not be violated.

YOU ARE ALREADY MARRIED

The points discussed above are all for those who are looking to get married, if you are already married and are looking to make a positive Islamic change and better your relation with your spouse there are things that we need to do:

1. First and foremost, learn and implement the Deen ourselves.
2. Then next most important thing is to make loads of Dua to Allah to bless your relation and give you the Hidayah to do the right thing, to make you a source of guidance for your family and others.
3. Make sure that your spouse sees a positive change in you and get the benefits, like a husband is more polite and calm dealing with the women or the wife is more submissive and serves him better.
4. Learn the rights of husband and wife and start by giving those rights before demanding them.
5. Get into a habit of sharing and discussing what you learn with your spouse.
6. Acknowledge the good the spouse does for you and give glad tidings that he/she will be rewarded by Allah.
7. Get rid of things that stops the angels from entering the house (pictures of animate things, music, dog).
8. Make sure to have intimate relations often (not letting it go for too long as that creates distances). Make sure you and your partner are satisfied, communicate if you need to.
9. Keep it Halal. Let go of things that are Haram - wealth, food, clothes, dealing with interest, etc.
10. HAVE PATIENCE!