

The Institution of Marriage in Islamic Perspective

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Abstract: *In Islamic worldview, marriage is a social institution that facilitates the creation of a family. Therefore, in Islam, the institution of marriage always intended to be a lifetime commitment, though it can be dissolved if it fails to reach its goals and objectives. Divinely speaking, it is important to remember that, in Islam the first institution of Marriage was the union of Adam (p.b.u.h) and Hawa (Eve) that eventually produced the children and offsprings.. Furthermore, the prophetic tradition has urged Muslims to get marriage if they can, and considered the marriage as one of the path of Prophet Muhammad (the role model of the Muslim Ummah), because it is only through this contract of Marriage, a productive and healthy Muslim family can emerge. Based on this fact, this article will explore the marriage in Islamic perspective. Yet, the Quranic approach will be applied as a primary source, followed by some scholarly books and articles written by various Muslim Scholars on the subject. Finally, the brief conclusion and some recommendation will be provided.*

Keywords: Marriage, Islam, Husband, Wife, Children, Qur'an, Hadith, Zu Mahram

1. Brief Introduction

In Islam marriage or family is established with the lawful union of man and woman whose relationship in marriage is governed by the law of Allah (S.W.T) The objective and wisdom behind legitimate marriage in Islam is the preservation of human race, satisfying one's sexual desire, Protecting progeny from intermixing, moreover, marriage in Islam is legalized for the cause of establishing of healthy family that is a basic unit of excellent society. Based on above fact, this academic article will examine the concept of marriage in Islam by applying Quranic approach and prophetic Sunnah, followed by a brief conclusion and some recommendations.

2. Definition

What is marriage?

Marriage literally in Arabic is called “Al- Zawajj”¹ which means couple or association and joining together. In addition, the term “Nikah” (Marriage) is defined as coming together and assembling together.

Technically, marriage is a contract between a man and a woman (Al- Ghazali 2022) whom he can lawfully get married to with the aims of having a joint life and procreation. It means that

¹ Munir Al Ba'labaqi, Al Mawrid (1989), *Darul Ilm Lilmalayin*, Beirut.

marriage is a legitimate way to satisfy one's sexual desire; therefore, Islam recognizes the value of companionship and advocates marriage as the foundation for families.

In the most serious notes, the holy scripture of Islam (Qur'an) describes marriage as *Miithq al-Galiz*" which means a strong covenant "and We have taken a strong covenant or a strong pledge from you"²

3. Purposes of Marriage in Islam

What are the Purposes of Marriage in Islam?

There are many purposes and objectives of marriage in Islam, these purposes can be summarized as followed:

1) Progeny and continuation of human race

As a matter of fact, the preservation of lineage (Hifz al- Nasl) is one of the aims of the *Shari'ah* (*Maqasid al- Shari'ah*) that aims to protect the lineage and human race. Therefore, marriage in Islam which is based on mutual contract between a man and a woman can simply achieve this aim.

2) Marriage Compliment One's faith

Indeed, one of the virtue of marriage is that, through marriage, a man will be very chaste and he can refrain himself from looking at other women, this in turn will increase his faith and his belief, as such the man will be closed to Almighty Allah subhanahu wata'ala. This fact is attested in the prophetic hadith "marriage can save one from looking at what one should not, or it prevent one from being involved in adultery (Ibn Majah)

3) Happiness and Joy

Apart from preservation of someone's faith and his belief, undoubtedly, marriage is a source of happiness and joy for both husband and wife, and also it is the source of psychological and mental relief for both husband and wife, which can eventually lead to happiness (in the day of judgement. According to hadith narrated by Muslim" The entire world is source of joy and pleasure and the best source of joy of the world is the righteous woman" (Imam Muslim)

4) Establishment of Family

It is undeniable fact that, family is the basic foundation of any society, it means the healthy society strongly depends on the healthy family, and this follows that, no healthy family can be formed without a legitimate contract between man and woman. With this legitimate contract, and with this legal marriage between the man and the woman, and with the blessings of Almighty Allah and His infinite mercy, the good children and obedient offsprings will emerge, and the sound and healthy family that will eventually be established. According to the holy Qur'an.

² Qur'an, 4:21

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.

5) Enhancing Social Ties and Strengthening the Social Bonds

Marriage is able to improve the social ties and strengthen the social bonds of individuals in the society. It stretches range of family by adding new relatives to the family structure through inclusion of in-laws and children's aunts and uncles. Thus, through this inclusion and through this expansion, people and individuals can enjoy the emotion of togetherness, belonging, love and affection.

In fact, according to the holy Qur'an, kingship and marriage relations are extremely important; therefore, the Qur'an encourages the family members to maintain both kingship and family relations strongly. Allah (s.w) said "And Allah is He Who has created man from water and has selected for him relation by blood and relation by marriage for thy Lord is ever peaceful"³

4. Marriage in the Holy Qur'an

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ -

And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may Dwell in tranquility with them, And He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily in that are Signs For those who reflect.⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.⁵

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope.⁶

It is important to note that Islam does not prohibit Muslims from enjoying this adornment as long as it is limited to what's lawful.

Hence, the nature of man loves adornment because Almighty Allah beautify for people love of children.

³ Qur'an, Al- Furqan, 54

⁴ Qur'an, 30:21

⁵ Quran: 4:1

⁶ Qur'an: 18:46

رُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ

Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return⁷

Furthermore, the importance of marriage has been emphasized again in surah al- Nur, when Allah says that

أَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۖ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"Marry the single people from among you and the righteous slaves and slave-girls. If you are poor, Allah (SWT) will make you rich through His favour; and Allah (SWT) is Bountiful, All-Knowing."⁸

In this verse, Allah (SWT) commands us (by Him using the imperative form of the verb) to marry the single, righteous man/woman from among us. Allah (SWT) even gives us a guarantee that if we are poor or lack the proper funds, still we should not delay the marriage as Allah will take care of the couple and grant them bounties from His Grace and Mercy.

Lastly, the holy Qur'an makes a beautiful analogy when Allah (SWT) compares the husband and wife to garments for one another:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

"They (your wives) are clothing (covering) for you and you too are a clothing (covering) for them."⁹

In our day-to-day life, we see many uses for clothing. Not only does our dress act as a beautification for ourselves, but it also covers any defects that we may have on our physical body - thus, if a person has a scar or burn mark on his body, the clothing will cover this from others around him and thus, they would not know that he has such a physical 'defect'.

The husband and wife are to play the same role in relation to one another. If the wife has spiritual defects or lacks something in her character, then the husband must cover these up and not expose her shortcomings to others. The wife too, must cover up and hide her husband's deficiencies and weaknesses and protect her mate. Not only has Allah (SWT) commanded the believers not to make fun of one another and not to mock or ridicule others, but they are also supposed to protect the honor and integrity of one another.

5. Marriage in the *Prophetic Sunnah*

In the most serious note the issue of marriage has gained a serious attention by the prophetic *Sunnah*, in this regard, the noble ahadiths are also replete with traditions narrated from the Prophet (S) and his immediate successors, some of which we present below.

⁷ Al- Qur'an: 3:14

⁸ Al-Qur'an: 24:32

⁹ Al- Qur'an: 2:187

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ): مَنْ سُنَّتِي أَلْتَرَوِيحُ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said, "Of my tradition is to marry. So then whoever turns away from my tradition (*Sunnah*) is not from me (my nation)."

In this famous tradition, the Prophet (S) clearly spelled it out to the believers that in order to stay on his path which is the true path of salvation, we must marry - not only the youth who are getting married for the first time - but also older people who may have divorced or lost a spouse must also marry in order to remain on the Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W).

In another Hadith, it is mentioned by prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) that

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ): مَا بُنِيَ بِنَاءٌ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنَ التَّرْوِيحِ

The Messenger of Allah has said, "There is no foundation that has been built in Islam more loved by Allah, (The Greatest and Noblest) than marriage." (Imam Bukhari)

This hadith shows us the great importance that Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (S.A.W) have placed on marriage, such that it is the most loved foundation or establishment upon which the Muslim man and woman can build their life upon. If such a foundation is built with love, honesty, sincerity and true faith in Allah (SWT) and all that He has commanded, then there is nothing that could destroy such a firm building.

Lastly,

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ الْأَزْهَرِ، حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا عِيسَى بْنُ مَيْمُونٍ، عَنِ الْقَاسِمِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " الْبَيْتُ الَّذِي بُنِيَ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَتَزَوَّجُوا فَإِنِّي مُكَاتِّرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَمَ وَمَنْ كَانَ ذَا طَوْلٍ فَلْيَنْكِحْ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّيْتَامِ فَإِنَّ الصَّوْمَ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ

It was narrated from Aisha that:

"The Messenger of Allah said: "Marriage is part of my *sunnah*, and whoever does not follow my *sunnah* has nothing to do with me. Get married, for I will boast of your great numbers before the nations. Whoever has the means, let him get married, and whoever does not, then he should fast for it will diminish his desire."¹⁰

حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ عَمَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عِيسَى بْنُ يُونُسَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ زِيَادٍ بْنِ أَنْعُمٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَ " إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَلَيْسَ مِنْ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا شَيْءٌ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ الْمَرْأَةِ الصَّالِحَةِ

It was narrated from Abdullah bin Amr that:

"The Messenger of Allah said: "This world is but provisions, and there is no provision in this world better than a righteous wife."¹¹

Thus, the above Quranic verses and the prophetic *Ahadiths* indicate that marriage is very important in Islamic worldview for the cause of progeny and for the cause of fulfilment of human desire, and which undoubtedly is one of the objectives of the *shariah* (*Maqasid Al-Shariah*).

¹⁰ Sunan Ibn Majah 1846 Book 9, Hadith 2 Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1846

¹¹ Sunan Ibn Majah 1855, Book 9, Hadith 11 Vol. 3.

Meanwhile, in Islam marriage can be considered illegal with *Zu-Mahram*. (*Zu Mahram* is a member of one's family with whom marriage will be considered haram (illegal in Islam) excluding husband whom the woman is already wedded to. Therefore, concealment Purdah or concealment the body with Hijab is not obligatory, and with whom if he is an adult male, she may be escorted during a journey, although an escort may not be an obligatory. According to Yusuf Al- Qaradawi (2001), with reference to a woman a *Mahram* is either her husband or any male relative with whom marriage is permanently prohibited.

People with whom Marriage is prohibited are as followed:

- Permanent or blood *Mahrams* include;
- All direct ancestors
- All direct descendants
- Siblings
- Siblings of parents, grandparents and further antecedents
- Children and further antecedents of siblings

In-law with whom one becomes Mahram by marrying someone:

- All ancestors of one's spouse
- All the descendants of one's spouse
- All who marry a direct ancestor
- All who marry a direct descendant

Indeed, the issue of Zu Mahram has strongly emphasised in the Holy Qur'an, when Allah (S.W) said:

“Prohibited to you (For marriage) are:- Your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, Mother's sisters; brother's daughters, sister's daughters; foster-mothers (Who gave you suck), foster-sisters; your wives' mothers; your step-daughters under your guardianship, born of your wives to whom ye have gone in,- no prohibition if ye have not gone in;- (Those who have been) wives of your sons proceeding from your loins; and two sisters in wedlock at one and the same time, except for what is past; for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”¹²

Zu Mahram in the Prophetic Sunnah

One of the hadith text which become the basic of accompanying mahram is the narration of Abdullah bin Umar ra. that the Prophet PBUH said, “A woman can't travel in three days, only if she accompanied by a mahram”

6. Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations

Obviously, Islam sees marriage as a primary institution for establishing healthy family. It is an agreement between two people to live together as husband and wife based on mutual consent and understanding. Hence, Islam emphasizes the importance of husband and wife's roles in marriage. It is husband's responsibility to support his wife and family both materially and emotionally. The husband and the father is responsible for providing financial stability of the family and ensuring all the material needs such food, shelter, clothing and other essentials are met. In addition, he is responsible for providing protection and security for his family, both physically and emotionally. He should also guide them spiritually in matters of faith and lead the family members in prayer and religious practices.

¹² Al- Qur.an 4:23

On the other hand, in Islamic perspective, the wife or mother plays a complementary role by supporting her husband in his pursuit while assuming the crucial responsibility of managing the household and nurturing the emotional and spiritual well-being of the family. In addition, the wife is responsible to offer obedience to her husband, but the obedience should be with the boundary of Islamic law and not against the *shariah*. She is expected to be a loving and caring companion to her husband.

Indeed, as far as marriage institution in Islamic worldview is concerned, Islam has recognized the importance of mutual reciprocal beneficial communication and understanding within the marriage; this is in line with Quranic verse that stated “ And among His signs this, that He created for you mates from among yourself, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your(hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect.”(Qur’an, 30:21). This verse emphasizes the importance of love, mercy and communication between spouses to achieve a peaceful and harmonious marriage.

Lastly, marriage in Islamic perspective concerns with the importance of forgiveness, it means both husband and wife should try to forgive each other in every tin or thick error that might occur between them. According to the authentic saying of the prophet (s.w) “whoever covers the faults of a Muslim, Allah will cover his fault on the day of judgement (Imam Bukhari)

So, this hadith reminds both husband and wife of the need for compassion and forgiveness in marriage, as well as the necessity of putting up with minor mistakes and errors for the sake of healthy marriage and happy life.

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