

Marriage

Marriage, as it was practiced in Muslim societies even recently, was fraught with “bulls of inequity.” Young women were often forced to marry whomever their families decided. This practice is dying out, and more and more young women are participating in the selection of their husbands, or making the selection by themselves.

In the West, as in the Muslim world, marriage is an important part of most women’s lives. For young girls of my generation, marriage was the natural order of things. We just assumed we would, of course, get married and raise a family of our own, as our parents had done. We spent hours staging play weddings, and setting up pretend households. Our favorite dolls were brides, all decked out in their pearls and white lace. None of us ever considered that we might be just as happy never marrying. Marriage was the accepted norm and often the stated goal.

While things have changed some in the West since I was a child, from my discussions with friends from other cultures, this still seems to be typical in most countries. It certainly is in Muslim countries.

Indeed, God encourages marriage in the Quran:

*You shall encourage those of you
who are single to get married.
They may marry the righteous among
your male and female servants, if they are poor....
Those among your servants
who wish to be freed in order to marry,
you shall grant them their wish,
once you realize that they are honest.*

*And give them from God's money
that He has bestowed upon you....
(Quran: The Final Testament 24:32-33)*

God not only encourages marriage, but we see here that He does so to the extent of commanding that slaves be freed to marry. Thus, He encourages marriage and discourages slavery in the same verse.

The Bible also speaks of marriage. Genesis speaks as if it were the natural course of things. God brought Eve to Adam:

*Then the man [Adam] said,
"This one at last
Is bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh.
This one shall be called Woman,
For from man was she taken."
Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife,
so that they shall become one flesh.
(Genesis 2:23-24 - The Torah: The Five Books of Moses)*

Jesus reminds us of the equality of men and women stated in Genesis 1:26-27 (quoted in Chapter 2):

*... "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."
(Matthew 19:4-6 - New Revised Standard Version Bible)*

Paul made it clear that that marriage is sacred:

*Let marriage be honored in every way and
the marriage bed be kept undefiled,
for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.
(Hebrews 13:4 - New American Bible, 1970)*

Why is marriage so divinely supported? From these verses, and our common sense, we know that marriage discourages immorality and encourages morality. Thus, God validates the concept of the family, the core unit of all societies.

I believe that there is something even more important though. I think that marriage is a spiritual exercise, of the highest form.

One of the first spiritual concepts presented in the Quran is that of killing the ego, that part of us that keeps us from redemption:

Recall that Moses said to his people, "O my people, you have wronged your souls by worshiping the calf. You must repent to your Creator. You shall kill your egos. This is better for you in the sight of your Creator...."
(Quran: The Final Testament 2:54)

Rashad Khalifa's footnote further clarifies:

It is the ego that led to Satan's fall. It is the ego that caused our exile to this world, and it is the ego that is keeping most of us from redemption to God's Kingdom.

In this discussion I am not using "ego" with the psychological definition of our sense of self. Rather it is the more popular usage of the word as our arrogant self, or that part of our self that is prideful and self-important. It is that part of our self that makes us think we are better than other people. It is that part of our self that keeps us from God.

If our egos are getting in our way spiritually, what better way to work on them than within a marriage? In marriage we cannot just walk away from our disagreements like we can in other situations. In reference to problems in a marriage, God tells us that "*Selfishness is a human trait,*" and that working out our differences is best for us (Quran 4:128).

Furthermore, our spouse is often a very good mirror for us, showing us our strengths as well as our weaknesses.

All spiritual traditions recognize the concept of the male and female principles and the balance they create. To me, one of the most beautiful expressions of this balance is in the Quran.

First, God tells us men and women are not the same, they have different qualities:

*You shall not covet the qualities
bestowed upon each other by God;
the men enjoy certain qualities,
and the women enjoy certain qualities....
(Quran: The Final Testament 4:32)*

Then He tells us the result of pooling those qualities in a marriage. Thus, He tells us the purpose of marriage. That purpose is not mainly reproductive, nor economic, nor social:

*And among His Signs
Is this, that He created
For you mates from among
Yourselves, that ye may
Dwell in tranquillity with them,
And He has put love
And mercy between your (hearts):
Verily in that are Signs
For those who reflect.
(The Holy Quran XXX:21 [30:21])*

Thus, the purpose of marriage is emotional and spiritual: that we may “*dwell in tranquility,*” and to be among God’s signs. The intimacy that develops in a good marriage can act as one of the strongest catalysts to the healing of old emotional wounds. This healing alone fosters spiritual growth. Plus, when you are with someone who is also striving spiritually and supports your spiritual growth, the potential is astonishing.

This changes the whole focus of marriage. As we discussed in the last chapter, someone’s looks, or earning ability or social standing are not the main factors to be considered in finding a good spouse. Rather, spiritual and emotional compatibility matter the most.

How then does one find this spiritual and emotional wonder? How does one find a suitable spouse? As I was looking (and I finally came to the point of actively looking), I had to keep reminding myself that God is running the show. If I were to marry, He would provide a good mate... and when I was truly ready, He certainly did.

It is interesting to note that one of the qualities of Paradise is that those who make it there will be matched with wonderful spouses (Quran 52:20 and 56:37, among other verses). Perhaps if we let God match us in this life too, making the spiritual considerations first on our "want list" and asking for His guidance, that paradise can begin here.

Actually finding one to whom we are matched spiritually is not always easy.

In the Muslim world marriages are often arranged. This concept was quite horrifying to me, until I met some couples with arranged marriages and realized what good matches they were. My friends were fortunate that their families worked to find mates who were especially compatible. Their marriages are among the best I know.

But not all arranged marriages are so fortunate. I also know of a very sad case where the results were quite disastrous, leaving a very sensitive man terribly wounded.

In the West most of us must find our own mates. Unfortunately, this is often quite difficult, especially for a Muslim who is not going to be "into the singles scene." If you are part of a large Muslim community, your chances may be much better. However, if you have decided to follow just the Quran, rather than the traditions of Islam, in most cases you might as well be living on a semi-deserted island!!!

If these problems sound familiar, be reassured. God tells us that followers of the Quran may marry chaste believers among the followers of previous scriptures (Quran 5:5). Of course, you must be certain to discuss spiritual and religious matters very carefully. Actually, this is true no matter who you are marrying.

Personally, I believe any woman, whatever her faith, should only marry a man who agrees categorically to support her in her striving to obey God's laws in all matters, according to her own understanding. Otherwise, she may find herself in the situation of having to go against her husband's understanding, or of him trying to make her follow his understanding. This will almost certainly cause strife in the marriage, and may eventually bring divorce.

Even if your spiritual understandings match when you marry, sometimes one or the other changes as time goes on. Unless you agree from the start that each has the right to their own understanding, you may encounter problems.

Once you have found someone you are convinced is compatible, what next? The Quran speaks of engagement, though does not require it (Quran 2:235-236). However, from my personal experience, I think it is a good idea. It gives you both the opportunity to see what you are like together when you have made a commitment. It is not yet the commitment of marriage, but the commitment that you plan to be married. The perspective for some people changes with a commitment. They no longer feel they need to make such an effort. Actually, making a commitment means you need to make a greater effort in order to live up to that commitment. If commitment is going to mean one or both of you is going to start taking the relationship for granted, it is best to find that out before you are actually married. Remember, you are planning to make a lifetime commitment.

Though I touched on this issue of choosing a husband in the previous chapter, let me expand on it. Forgive me if I sound like a mother hen here. When I originally wrote this material, it was for other Muslim women, but so many people told me to leave it in, that I have decided to do so. If you are not Muslim yourself, I hope you will still find value in this sharing from my personal experience.

If you are thinking of getting married, it is a critical decision you are making. Do whatever you can to make sure you are

making the right one. Remember that this man will be the one who has the final say in the marriage. Will you be able to live with his decisions? Are you certain that those decisions will be made with your consultation, and with your needs and best interests in mind? Indeed you are selecting a captain for life. Pick a winner!

In a society where marriages are arranged, the families usually try to make certain that the two people are well matched. For those of us who choose our own mates, making this determination is sometimes difficult. However, since you are intending to live with this man for the rest of your life, it is important to be sure that you are compatible.

The following are common sense suggestions, which you probably would think of yourself. Try to spend as much normal time with your beloved as you can, in as many different types of situations – grocery shopping, doing laundry, visiting elderly relatives, pulling weeds, cleaning, etc. Make sure that you live and work well together, not just that you play well together.

If it is possible, meet each other's families, and watch the interactions there. How the family members treat each other may tell you a great deal about the person you are planning to live the rest of your life with. If things come up that you are uncomfortable with, talk about them.

Allow this discovery time together to be long enough that some of the blush of new love fades. You need to be sure you are choosing someone for the right reasons, and that you are not being fooled by sexual attraction, or your own daydreams. Remember, divorce is allowed in Islam, but it is strongly discouraged. The person you marry must be someone with whom you fully intend to live out the rest of your life.

Of course, during this time you need to be extremely careful not to put yourself into any situations where you end up doing something that is not righteous. Remember that until you have made the commitment of marriage, any sexual relations will be a very serious issue in God's eyes. These next verses show just how serious. God is describing the believers:

*Those who invoke not,
With God, any other god,
Nor slay such life as God
Has made sacred, except
For just cause, nor commit
Fornication; – and any that does
This (not only) meets punishment
(But) the Penalty on the Day
Of Judgment will be doubled....
Unless he repents, believes,
And works righteous deeds,
For God will change
The evil of such persons
Into good....
(The Holy Quran XXV:68-70 [25:68-70])*

These verses class having sexual relations outside of marriage with idol worship and murder! It is not classed with lying or cheating; it is classed with the most serious of offenses. And while God allows repentance for this, no one can intentionally work evil and then just repent without major consequences. One cannot trick God!!!

Now, let us say you have found that perfect person and all has gone well as you have come to know each other. What does the Quran say about the process of getting married? The only requirements stated in the Quran for marriage are a mutually acceptable dowry and mutual attraction (Quran 4:24). There is no requirement even for a ceremony, though it is a very special event and good to share with loved ones. From what I can tell from the Quran, marriage is an issue between the two people and God. However, that does not make it a light matter. God calls it a solemn pledge (Quran 4:21). In fact, it is such a solemn pledge that forbidden marriages already in existence at the time of the revelation, were not to be broken. I believe this also goes for marriages entered into before you first read the Quran:

*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 God is Oft-forgiving,
 Most Merciful
 (The Holy Quran IV:23 [4:23] - emphasis added)

Note the “*Except for what is past.*” Rashad Khalifa translates this as “do not break up existing marriages” (see *Quran: The Final Testament* 4:23). This is even when the man has married his sister, or another forbidden relative. That is how sacred marriage is! In the West we have diminished the importance and sacredness of marriage. However, God has not, and we must do whatever we can to make sure the marriage will last.

Before this last verse, I had not yet mentioned marriage prohibitions. The above verse deals with all of the relationship categories, except women to whom your father had been married, which is covered in the previous verse (Quran 4:22). The Quran also prohibits women who are already married, unless they are fleeing disbelieving husbands who are at war with you (Quran 4:24). Of course, in the woman's case the roles are reversed, and we do not marry our sons, our fathers, etc.

The only other category prohibited is idol worshipers:

Do not marry
Unbelieving women (idolaters),

*Until they believe:
A slave woman who believes
Is better than an unbelieving woman,
Even though she allure you.
Nor marry (your girls)
To unbelievers until
They believe:
A man slave who believes
Is better than an unbeliever....
(The Holy Quran II:221 [2:221])*

We have already discussed how important it is that there be a spiritual compatibility. Certainly having to deal with someone who turns to other than God for help and guidance would be difficult for a Muslim. And raising children in such an environment would be a real problem. It is hard enough to agree on what values to teach your children without basic spiritual values being in dispute.

This brings up the fact that in all healthy marriages there are inevitable times of disagreement. You may know each other very well, communicate wonderfully, love each other dearly, and you will still have times when you do not see eye to eye. Or you may suddenly discover things about this wonderful person that you really do not like, or your own needs and values may change as you continue to grow. These issues exist in all human interactions, be they marriages, friendships, business associations, families, whatever. However, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, in a marriage you cannot just walk away from these difficulties. You must work them out. This takes time, patience, work and commitment. Again, all of this allows us to work on our egos, and thus makes marriage a spiritual exercise and a great gift.



Another issue that we have only touched on is the dowry. In many cultures, including traditional cultures of the West, the bride's family pays the dowry. Interestingly, in Exodus 22:17

and Genesis 35:12 the dowry is paid *to* the bride's family, which is the opposite.

The Quran makes it clear that the groom pays the dowry to the bride *herself*. It is an amount that is set by mutual consultation, with both parties agreeing. There are no limits set on it, except that it should be acceptable to both parties:

*You shall give the women their due dowries, equitably.
If they willingly forfeit anything,
then you may accept it; it is rightfully yours.
(Quran: The Final Testament 4:4)*

In the traditional Muslim world the dowry can be very complex and expensive. In most areas, for instance Egypt, the dowry for an educated young woman from a good family may be quite a bit more than the normal annual salary for a young man of the same class. I have friends who had to postpone their marriage for years while the husband saved up the dowry.

In some areas like urban Iran, couples often have an arrangement where the man signs an agreement to pay a dowry of a substantial sum only if he decides to divorce the woman. Some women are also including a clause in such contracts that forbids their future husbands from taking a second wife.

Some of my friends feel that this arrangement for the dowry does not meet God's commandment to "*give the women their due dowries.*" They feel that the commandment is to physically give the dowry at the time of the marriage. I understand their point, but I am not certain that I fully agree. If the bride has no objection to this method, how does that differ from "*If they willingly forfeit anything, then you may accept it?*" In this case the woman is forfeiting a tangible dowry right now and gaining the promise of a substantial settlement should there be a divorce. That promise might be seen as the dowry. This practice may actually act as a deterrent to divorce. In either case, there is no question that the dowry must be agreed upon by both parties.

For Indian and Pakistani families the situation with the dowry is more complex. While the groom gives the bride what

is often a token dowry, both families provide the household furnishings, clothing, etc.; everything which the couple will need to set up a new household.

In some rural areas of India, the practice is more heavily influenced by the Hindu tradition. There the bride actually pays the groom the dowry. The expense is so great that many young women from poorer backgrounds are doomed to remain single. Unlike the young men who scrimp to save for the dowry, a young woman who must save for her own marriage, with or without having to pay the dowry, may well be too old once the money is finally gathered to make much of a match. This is especially true since most Indian and Pakistani women marry quite young.

In many parts of the Muslim world, the dowry goes to the bride's family and she may or may not see any benefit from it. I want to stress again that the Quran specifies that the dowry goes to the bride, not to the groom or to the bride's family.

For most of us in the West, the dowry is not as big an issue because women are more easily able to make their own living. Here many of my friends have accepted their wedding rings as their dowry. I asked for and received a beautiful piece of stained glass that my husband had made. It is one of my greatest treasures.



There is one more issue that I feel compelled to mention here, that of so called temporary marriages. Unfortunately, the growing Western idea of "living together" has its parallel among many traditional Muslims, particularly among the Shia community. (The Shias are one of the main Muslim sects. Most Muslims in Iran are Shia, as well as other smaller groups throughout the Muslim world.) In Iran this concept of temporary marriages even has official sanction.

However, we saw above that God calls marriage a "*solemn pledge*" (Quran 4:21). As we will see in Chapter 9, ending a marriage requires extensive counseling, a cooling off period and the witnessing of a divorce agreement.

Marriage cannot be entered into lightly with the idea of it being temporary. That is not marriage!



The following are the stories of two different women. The first tells of the beginning of one of the best marriages I know. The second tells of a convert in a traditional community, and her many dilemmas, especially around marriage.

An Arranged Marriage

Being born in an Indian “Muslim” family, arranged marriages were the norm. My elder sister had an arranged marriage and by GOD’s grace was happily settled. My uncle (Dad’s younger brother) had come from the US to get married and was planning to “meet girls” in Bombay – since I had vacations, he requested me to accompany him and my aunt from Calcutta. My parents did not accompany us on this trip. We met quite a few girls, but he could not make up his mind.

It was usually the elders of the family who planned these “meetings,” generally after considering suitable family and other background. As GOD willed it (and I got to know later on) my grand aunt (Dad’s aunt) happened to be a neighbor and cousin of an eligible young man’s sister. We were often at this grand aunt’s place, as my uncle was staying there. So I was not surprised when I was told that we were going to visit her on a particular evening. However what intrigued me was that my aunt was paying extra attention to what I was to wear. I was 21 but in those days, one was not brought up to question “why?” We reached this grand aunt’s house and there were some visitors there – her neighbors.

There was some general conversation, but I found myself the center of a lot of polite questions – particularly about my religious beliefs, also my likes and dislikes, whether I was fond

of reading, cooking and so on. Most of these questions were from the young man's sister and family members, while he was apparently shy and hardly spoke anything. The meeting was followed by tea – by which time I was quite self-conscious and I was very relieved when it was all over. Afterwards I was asked how I had liked “the young man.” All I could say was that he was a pleasant person and there was nothing I disliked about him. What could I judge in a short meeting with not much interaction!

A few days later we returned to Calcutta and my uncle returned to the US without any tie-ups. About a year later he married a girl with whom he had an arranged meeting for a few hours at an airport in a neighboring country on his way in to India. After getting together a number of other times, they were married. (Their marriage ceremony was performed over the telephone with the bride and groom on two different continents.)

In the community we were brought up in, it is the boy's family that proposes the engagement and then the girl's family makes independent check-outs about the suitability of the boy and the family, considering any specific aspects observed. Well one day, after I had been back home for awhile, there was a phone call from Bombay requesting my parents for further meetings. Since we were not planning to visit Bombay, the young man visited our hometown. We met on two days. We went out for meals along with my parents, and my parents left us to chat for awhile. We spoke about our personal interests, etc. I do remember that one of our common interests was that we both enjoyed reading the *Readers Digest!!!!*

Well he left for Bombay after a couple of days and a short while later his family proposed our engagement. I told my parents that I had liked what I had seen of the young man but left the final decision to my parents. After that my parents made appropriate inquiries over many weeks and after receiving very positive feedback we were engaged for several months, during which we wrote and spoke to each other and met when I went to Bombay with my family.

When I look back over 29 years of our marriage and try to appreciate all the awesome blessings from GOD, I realize that in fact it was only GOD in His infinite grace and mercy who had arranged, nurtured and guided everything so perfectly. He has blessed us and our two grown up “children” so awesomely with a great common faith and bond of being submitters to GOD Alone.

– N., India



New Muslim in Traditional Islam

God Most Gracious, Most Merciful, blessed me to officially become Muslim in December, 1978. After the ceremony, I was given the name of a sister to contact who lived in Berkeley and hosted a women’s Quranic study group. I did so, and thus began my strange odyssey into the world of *Hadith* (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) and *Sunna* (practices of the Prophet). For though the study was called Quranic, it really wasn’t. We did spend some time each week reading the Quran, but the greater part of the study was given over to my instruction in the proper attire and conduct of a Muslim woman. Most of the women in the group were either foreign students or the wives of foreign students attending the University of California at Berkeley. They hailed from all over the Muslim world. And each woman found a different *Hadith* or *Sunna* to corroborate her opinion on attire, conduct, etc. Whenever I summoned the courage to ask why these varied opinions were not based on anything I had read in the Quran, I was politely but firmly told not to question. The inference was that I was an American convert and they being “born” Muslim had superior knowledge. The idea of not questioning is, of course, a direct contradiction of Chapter 17, Verse 36, which commands us not to accept any information without verifying it for ourselves.

The matter of dress having finally been got through, the real “fun” began. I was informed that as a Muslim woman I should begin seeking a spouse as soon as possible. These women found it even stranger than the brothers had that I had converted to Islam without prompting by a man. I was dismayed by their seemingly casual attitude regarding the selection of a mate. It seemed to be put on a par with shopping for a new dress or a pair of shoes. The concept of arranged marriages was both foreign and frightening to me. The prospect of marrying an unknown man just because he happened to be Muslim without necessarily having any other redeeming qualities was downright terrifying! And while I knew the Quran encourages single believers to marry, I couldn't believe that this was what God intended. One of the single sisters held interviews with prospective husbands and had a list of requirements they were expected to meet. This wouldn't have been so bad had these men not been complete strangers. Many of the men were just passing through town and read her advertisement in one of the Muslim journals.

It seemed every woman in the group knew of some Muslim man in need of a wife. I felt gently pressured to accept someone's recommendation. They were sincerely trying to be helpful and couldn't understand my reluctance. I was, in turn, gentle in my refusals.

But one night things took a turn for the worse. I received a middle-of-the-night phone call from one of the sisters who was assisting a traveling brother in finding a wife. Being awakened from a deep sleep, I was disoriented and muddled. I thought she was telling me that there was a brother on the rack who was looking for a wife immediately. I couldn't understand why a brother would be on a rack in the first place, and secondly, why he would need a wife in the middle of the night. I wondered if his being on a rack made his need for a wife more urgent. The conversation became more ludicrous until finally I was awake enough to understand that she was trying to get me married to a brother from Iraq. Well, my first question was answered, but I still could not understand the urgency. At last I realized that he wanted a temporary marriage. He was in town for the night and wanted a sexual encounter in the guise of marriage.

I was really shocked! I didn't know about the practice of temporary marriage in so-called Islam. In my opinion, this sister was acting as a panderer for this brother. To this day I shudder when I think what could have happened if God Most Merciful had not protected me. What if I had agreed to this temporary liaison, conceived, and then never heard from this man again? Would this same sister have been equally willing to track this man down for me if I later needed to find him? And what would my dowry have been? Would he have given me money for the encounter? God forbid!

What an experience for a new submitter. I don't know if this practice of temporary "marriage" is still as prevalent today. Thank God, I now am far removed from those who follow *Hadith* and *Sunna*. God willing, my experience may serve as a deterrent example for a sister who may find herself in a similar situation and not know what to do.

– Lory, U.S.A.



Though the Quran does not require a public ceremony, getting married is a very special event. It is something that most of us want to share with those who are dear to us. Each couple is unique and special. I believe the ceremony with which they bind their lives should reflect that unique specialness. Here are two lovely examples of ceremonies, reproduced with permission from www.submission.org:

First Ceremony

Person doing the marriage service: I seek refuge in GOD, from Satan the rejected. In the name of GOD, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Peace be upon you.

We are gathered here to witness the marriage of Mr. (Groom) and Ms. (Bride).

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Marriage, like all of God's provisions is a sign and a gift for us:

"Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have tranquility and contentment with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think. " (30:21)

This gift is thankfully accepted, for God tells us:

"...The more you thank Me, the more I give you...." (14:7)

Bride : God, I thankfully and joyfully accept this gift from God of (Groom) as my husband.

Groom : God, I thankfully and joyfully accept this gift from God of (Bride) as my wife.

Person doing marriage service, as he lights candle:

"GOD is the light of the heavens and the earth. The allegory of His light is that of a concave mirror behind a lamp that is placed inside a glass container. The glass container is like a bright, pearl-like star. The fuel thereof is supplied from a blessed oil-producing tree, that is neither eastern, nor western. Its oil is almost self-radiating; needs no fire to ignite it. Light upon light. GOD guides to His light whoever wills (to be guided). GOD thus cites the parables for the people. GOD is fully aware of all things." (24:35)

Husband and wife together:

God, take our will and our life. Guide our marriage. Show us how to live.

Second Ceremony

Person doing the marriage service (Officiant):

In the name of GOD, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe. Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help. Guide us in the right path, the path of those whom You blessed; not of those who have deserved wrath, nor of the strayers. (1:1-7)

Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have tranquility and contentment with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think. (30:21)

Love has given you wings, and your journey begins today, (Bride) and (Groom), wherever the wind may carry you, you will stay side by side, day after day. Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will

be shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. May God's blessings surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years. May happiness be your companion, on this earth and in the Hereafter, and your days together be good, righteous and long upon the earth.

I ask you now in the presence of God and this congregation to declare your intent. Will you, (Bride), have this man to be your husband, to live together in a holy marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

Bride: I will

Officiant: Will you, (Groom), have this woman to be your wife, to live together in a holy marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

Groom: I will

Officiant -The Blessing of the Rings: The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts in endless love. It is a seal of the vows (Groom) and (Bride) have made to one another. Bless O God these rings, that (Bride) and (Groom), who give them, and who wear them, may ever abide in thy peace. Living together in unity, love and happiness for the rest of their lives

The Exchange of rings: Groom: (Bride's name), I give you this ring as a symbol of our vows, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you. In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful. With this ring, I thee wed.

Bride: (Groom's name), I give you this ring as a symbol of our vows, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you. In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful. With this ring, I thee wed.

Officiant - Declaration of Marriage: In as much as you have each pledged to the other your lifelong commitment, love and devotion, I now pronounce you husband and wife, In the name of God, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

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"Our Lord, direct us to appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon us and upon our parents, and to work righteousness that pleases You. Let our children be righteous as well" (46:15),

"...and admit us an honorable admittance and let us depart an honorable departure. Grant us from You a powerful support" (17:80).

"...and shower our parents with Your mercy for they have raised us from infancy" (17:24).

"Our Lord, let our spouses and our children be a source of joy for us, and keep us in the forefront of the righteous" (25:74).

"Grant us what you promised us through Your messengers and do not forsake us on the Day of Resurrection. You never break a promise" (3:194).

God bless you and Congratulations.