

**THE MARRIAGE COURSE**  
Marriage is from my Sunnah

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person</b>
<b>10:00</b>	Intro	Ahmed Soorty
<b>10:10</b>	First Session	Mufti Liaquat
<b>11:00</b>	Break	N/A
<b>11:10</b>	Second Session	Mufti Liaquat
<b>12:00</b>	Lunch	N/A
<b>12:20</b>	Zuhr Athan	Suhaib
<b>12:30</b>	Zuhr Salah	Mufti Liaquat
<b>12:40</b>	Upcoming events presentation	Ahmed Soorty
<b>12:45</b>	Third Session	Mufti Liaquat
<b>14:00</b>	Break	N/A
<b>14:10</b>	Fourth Session	Mufti Liaquat
<b>15:05</b>	Asr Athaan	Suhaib
<b>15:10</b>	Asr Salah	Mufti Liaquat

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## INTRODUCTION

Alhamdulillah, marriage is one of Allah's greatest gifts to the human soul. It provides companionship, emotional grounding, spiritual growth, and a shared path through the tests of life.

- Understand modern challenges
- Understand human nature
- Learn Islamic foundations
- Build communication and conflict-resolution skills
- Prepare to choose a spouse wisely
- Recognise red flags
- Create a home filled with tranquillity
- Approach marriage with emotional maturity

Marriage is not merely a social contract. It is an act of worship, a refuge for the soul, and a partnership built upon love, mercy, and responsibility.

## The History of Marriage: From Institution to Capstone

Big changes have happened in marriage over the years, which goes against the idea that there was a stable "golden age." In North America the 1950s, the goal was for a man to work outside the home and a woman to stay at home and raise the kids. It was a one-time event in history that only happened because of government policies and an economic boom after the war. [Marriage a History - Coontz]

The original reason for marriage was to stay alive and make friends.

Marriage has been a public practice for many hundreds of thousands of years. It was a business deal between two people.

- *Creating Kinship (Most Vital)*: The single most important function of marriage was converting strangers into relatives. It established cooperative networks and peace-weaving alliances between potential enemies or feuding groups.
- *Economic Survival*: Marriage organized the division of labour by gender and age, serving as the primary source of social security, healthcare, and resource consolidation (merging assets and accumulating wealth).
- *Status and Politics*: It served as the key marker of adulthood and regulated the transfer of property and status through legitimate inheritance. For elites, it was a crucial tool for diplomatic treaties and political power.

Feature	Elites & Propertied Families	Commoners
<b>Primary Goal</b>	Power & Accumulation. Used to hoard wealth, merge assets, and solidify political power.	Survival & Practicality. Used to ensure basic economic survival through shared labour.
<b>Strategy</b>	High-Stakes Investments. Marriage involved major economic transfers (dowry, tribute) and served as "corporate mergers" or diplomatic treaties.	Local Efficiency. Decisions were based on practical calculations, such as whether a potential partner's fields were adjacent to one's own.
<b>Political Role</b>	Dynastic & Military. Used to seal alliances, recruit followers, bolster claims to ancestry/legitimacy and even pause warfare.	Social Stability. Focused on creating a network of in-laws to provide social security and support in hard times.
<b>Scope</b>	"Political Thrillers." Marriages were often part of grand political intrigues that could change the course of history.	"Help or Hindrance." The main question was simply whether the partner would be an asset or a burden in daily life.

## The Rise and Fall of "Love"

After the Enlightenment and the rise of market economies in the 1700s, people began to care more about themselves than about the group. Money and politics stopped being the most important things in marriage, and love, friendship, and personal happiness began to take their place.

**New Pressure:** By the 20th century, love had become the only acceptable reason to get married. This put a lot of emotional stress on the partner to be a best friend, lover, and doctor.

### Modern Marriage: The High Point

The world we live in now is so hard because of the fall of the love model and the strange thing that happened after it in the 1950s. The old rules were thrown out by a perfect storm of changes:

- The pill that stops pregnancy gave women freedom to choose.
- Women in the Workforce: Most people no longer needed a family with a single worker.
- No-Fault Divorce: This is since people married for love, so if the love fades, they can get a divorce.

This has made a big difference in how marriage is used in society:

**Old Role (Cornerstone):** Marriage was the first step towards adulthood and the most important event that made everything else possible.

**New Role (Capstone):** For many, marriage is now the last step on the path to success. It happens after they finish school, start working, and get their finances in order.

Today's marriage is fairer and satisfying for everyone, but it will probably never be as strong as it was when it was the only choice. This is because people have more options and more at stake.

<b>Historical Constraint</b>	<b>The Contemporary Erosion</b>
<b>1. Biology &amp; Legitimacy</b>	Decoupling Sex from Marriage. Reliable birth control and the legal abolition of "illegitimacy" mean sex and child-rearing no longer require marriage. Reproductive technology further challenges traditional definitions of parenthood.
<b>2. Economic Dependence</b>	Women's Independence. The decline of the "male breadwinner" model and women's legal/economic autonomy means women no longer <i>need</i> to marry for survival. For some, marriage is now a financial risk; for others, a "luxury consumer item."
<b>3. Patriarchal Authority</b>	Negotiation over Authority. The shift from male dominance to "love, honour, and negotiate" creates conflict. When goals clash, couples divorce. Women now initiate most divorces (2/3 after age 40).
<b>4. Social Necessity</b>	Rise of Alternatives. Marriage is no longer the only gateway to adulthood. Cohabitation is socially acceptable (and legally similar in some places), and solitary living has exploded.

The emotional upheaval of everyday life isn't built into people. The Quran comes to protect us.



## **HUMAN NATURE: MEN & WOMEN**

Men and women are equal in worth, dignity, and spirituality, yet different in emotional wiring.

### **Women (Rapport-Talk)**

Women are more likely to:

- seek closeness
- minimise differences
- share feelings to connect
- match experiences ("This happened to me too...")
- fear emotional distance

### **Men (Report-Talk)**

Men are more likely to:

- seek clarity
- solve problems
- communicate to fix, not to bond
- protect emotions through silence
- fear failure and incompetence

### **Resulting clash:**

- She wants to talk → He wants space
- He gives solutions → She wants understanding

The main imbalance is between status and connection.

One big difference between how men and women talk to each other is that they learn words in very different social spheres. The principles that run these worlds are different, but they work together.

The world of status and freedom for men:

Some people think of life as a social hierarchy, with some people below and others above them. Some people talk to each other to get and keep the upper hand, to stay strong, and to avoid letting other people push them around. To have self-respect, you need to be able to find your own way, and following orders is a sign of low standing.

People who have a more "normal" marriage arrangement might make a husband angry when they show pity for his commuting marriage, because he sees it as an attempt to put him down by the other person.

Men often don't want to ask for directions because it makes them feel bad and like they have to tell a stranger they don't know what they're doing, which can be scary. They believe that the time it takes to keep their pride is worth it.

The world of intimacy and connection for women

A lot of people see life as a web of links. When people talk to each other, they get closer, give and receive help and reassurance. The goal is to keep disagreements to a minimum, reach a deal, and avoid being pushed apart.

For instance, a wife in a marriage where both partners work might like empathy from others because it makes her feel like other people understand and connect with her.

Women often ask their partners for help with choices not to get permission, but because it makes them feel closer to each other and more involved in each other's lives.

"I need to check with my partner" might make them feel close, so they like to say it.

The Hierarchy Lens sees the world as a race to get ahead, and people use Report-Talk to show how independent and smart they are. One person will often take over the talk by giving lengthy talks or "lectures." The Community Lens, on the other hand, sees talk as a way for people in a network to decide how close they are to each other. It uses Rapport-Talk to find similarities and match events so that there is symmetry. [You Just Don't Understand - Tannen]

## 1. How Genderlects Grow: Different Stages of Childhood

Adults talk to each other in different ways because boys and girls either went to different kinds of schools or played in their own gender groups. When researchers watch kids play, they find very different social systems and language rules.

### Boys' World:

Boys usually play in big, organised groups.

- **Structure:** There is a leader in each group who tells people what to do. You can negotiate your status by giving orders and making them stick.
- **Activities:** Games have rules that are often the subject of arguments and players who win and lose.
- **Communication:** Boys use words to show they are in charge, brag about their skills, tell jokes and stories to get attention, and challenge other boys.

## Girls' World:

Girls usually play in small groups or pairs with their "best friend."

- **Structure:** Groups are equal. The most important thing is closeness and intimacy.
- **Activities:** Games like hopscotch or playing house don't have winners or losers, and everyone gets a turn.
- **Talking:** Girls use words to get along with each other. Instead of telling people what to do, they say things like "Let's do this," which is seen as "bossy." They share secrets to get closer to each other, and they shouldn't brag or act like they're better than others.

## Observational Studies: Contrasts in Action

Videotaped studies of friends talking at various grade levels highlight these learned differences.

Age / Feature	Boys' Interaction (Oppositional Framework)	Girls' Interaction (Supportive Framework)
<b>Physicality</b>	Physically restless, squirming, constant motion. Sit at angles, avoiding direct eye contact. Gaze anchored elsewhere in the room.	Sit still, very close, and face-to-face. Maintain direct eye contact ("anchoring gaze").
<b>Topics</b>	Jump from topic to topic, searching for "something to do" (games, physical activity). Tell jokes, mock authority, and discuss objects (shoes, sprinklers).	Focus on a single topic for an extended time, typically problems concerning people and relationships (e.g., a falling-out with a friend).
<b>Interaction</b>	Show affection through an oppositional format: teasing, play-fighting, put-downs. Disagree directly and resist authority.	Show affection through a supportive format: agreeing with, adding to, and matching each other's stories and complaints. Comply with authority.
<b>Speech Patterns</b>	Short turns, brief spurts of speech. Report-talk (explaining a video game).	Long blocks of talk, telling stories about misfortunes. Use rising intonation to invite participation.

These patterns, observable from age three, demonstrate that men and women have been practicing vastly different conversational rituals for their entire lives. This makes male-female conversation a form of cross-cultural communication.

<b>Divergence Area</b>	<b>Male Approach</b>	<b>Female Approach</b>
<b>A. Speaking Style</b>	Report-Talk (Public)	Rapport-Talk (Private)
<b>Purpose</b>	To impart information, demonstrate knowledge/skill, claim attention, and negotiate status.	To establish connections and negotiate relationships, emphasizing similarities and matching experiences.
<b>Observation</b>	Speak more often and longer in public settings (e.g., meetings, conferences).	More comfortable with talk that builds intimacy (e.g., at home).
<b>B. Troubles Talk</b>	"Mr. Fix-It" (Problem Solving)	Connection & Validation (Seeking Empathy)
<b>Action</b>	Hears a complaint as a challenge and offers advice/a solution. Shows love by being useful (one-up).	Discusses troubles to seek understanding and confirmation of feelings. Builds intimacy (symmetrical).
<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Advice can feel dismissive and invalidate her feelings.	Offers solutions, preventing her from feeling heard and understood.
<b>C. Stress Management</b>	"The Cave" (Withdrawal)	"The Wave" (Talking)
<b>Action</b>	Becomes focused and withdrawn to solve the problem alone, or uses distracting activities (e.g., sports).	Seeks relief by talking about problems in detail to gain perspective and connection.
<b>Misinterpretation</b>	Woman feels ignored/unimportant; trying to "draw him out" is often counterproductive.	Man misinterprets talk as a request for advice or as a blame directed at him.
<b>D. Intimacy Cycle</b>	The Rubber Band Effect (Autonomy Cycle)	The Wave (Emotional Cycle)
<b>The Cycle</b>	Gets close, then instinctively pulls away to reclaim autonomy/independence, and then naturally springs back to seek closeness.	Self-esteem and loving attitudes rise and fall. Sinks into an emotional "well" for "housecleaning" (past hurts surface).
<b>Need</b>	Needs the space to pull away so he can feel his own desire to return.	Needs to talk about feelings and be heard, understood, and reassured.
<b>Obstruction</b>	Chasing him prevents him from feeling the need to return; punishing him breaks the cycle.	Man tries to " <b>fix</b> " her unhappiness, preventing her from completing the natural cleansing cycle.

## 2. Main differences and misunderstandings in communication

It's easy for people to get things mixed up because standing and connection are not the same thing, nor are report and rapport.

### A. Talk about reports instead of meeting people

Being aware of this difference helps us figure out the puzzle of who talks more. Men are better at "report-talk," or talking in public, while women are better at "rapport-talk," or talking in private.

- **Report-Talk (Public):** The main goal is to share information, show off skills and knowledge, and get people's attention so that you can talk about your status.

Researchers have found that men talk more often and for longer amounts of time in public places like faculty meetings and academic conferences. Also, men call radio talk shows a lot more often than women do.

- **Rapport-Talk (Private):** The main goal is to meet new people and build relationships. The main point is to show how problems and experiences are symmetrical [Tannen]

This is the reason why some people think women talk a lot at home while men don't. A lot of women talk to each other at home to get to know each other better. A lot of men feel safe at home, where they don't have to talk well to show who they are.

### B. Talk About Issues: "Mr. Fix-It" vs. The Need to Understand

Men and women often have trouble in their relationships because of how they talk about their problems.

- **The way men deal with problems:** A guy will often see a complaint as a test of his problem-solving skills. He puts on his "Mr. Fix-It" hat and gives advice. This is how he helps and shows love. It's not fair to give advice because it makes the person giving it look better and more in charge (one-up).

Example: Eve was upset about the scar from her surgery, so her husband Mark suggested she get plastic surgery to fix it. He had no idea that what he said made her feel bad.

- **Women's Approach (Connection and Validation):** When a woman talks about her problems, she wants someone to understand and agree with how she feels. By sharing experiences, talking about issues is a way to get to know someone better. When you offer a solution, it might look like you don't care about how she feels.

- As an example, Eve's sister and friend told her, "I know," which made her feel better. "I felt the same way", which made their friendship stronger.

## C. How to Deal with Stress: The Wave and the Cave

There are big differences in how men and women handle stress.

- **Men Hide in Their Caves:** When men are worried, they tend to put their heads down and shut down. In his thoughts, he goes into the "cave" to figure out what to do. He shuts down, gets busy, and doesn't answer. He might do something to pass the time if he can't figure out how to solve his problems, like games or reading the news.

Misunderstanding: A woman might feel ignored, uncared for, or unimportant if her partner stops paying attention to her. Trying to "draw him out" doesn't always work and can even make him mad.

- **Women Talk:** When a woman is stressed, she talks in depth about her issues to feel better. She feels better and can see things more clearly when she talks about how stressed she is. She doesn't always want solutions; sometimes she just wants to connect and understand.

Husbands often think she's asking for help or, if she's really upset, that she's blaming him. When he tries to help or defend himself, she might get even more mad.

### *The Male Intimacy Cycle: How the Rubber Band Works*

The fact that guys have natural cycles shows how much they want to be free.

- **The cycle:** It's said that men are like rubber bands. It gets close, but when it gets too close, they automatically pull away to feel like they're still separate and in control. They will naturally bounce back and want to be close again when they are pushed to their limits.
- **Blockage:** If a woman chases a guy as he pulls away, he never has a chance to stretch and feel the desire to come back. He might not want to pull away again if she punishes him for it. This would break the normal cycle and make him angry, moody, and lose interest.

## *The Wave: How Women Feel and Feel About Things*

The way a woman feels about herself and her ability to give and accept love can change all the time.

- **The Cycle:** A woman's love feelings and sense of self-worth may go up and down. She feels great and wants to give a lot of love when her wave is high. The wave will still break though. The "well" in her mind is where old hurts and bad feelings come back to her. Now is a good time to get your feelings in order.
- **When she's in her "well,"** she needs to be able to talk about how she feels and have someone listen, understand, and comfort her. The man can easily "fix" it. You shouldn't waste your time telling her why she shouldn't be sad.

A guy often thinks he is to blame for her sadness and tries to "fix" it, which keeps her from falling to her knees and getting back up on her own. His anger might also rise when the same issues show up again, since he doesn't understand that they are part of the cleaning process.

### 3. The Language of Asymmetry: Giving and Receiving Support

The status/connection dynamic deeply influences how men and women approach giving help, asking for information, and communicating needs.

Communicative Element	Male Perspective (Status-Focused)	Female Perspective (Connection-Focused)
<b>Asking for Support</b>	Do not offer help unless explicitly asked, as offering implies the other person's incompetence.	Offer help without being asked, as this signals caring and connection.
<b>Expectation</b>	Needs to be asked for support directly.	Expects man to offer support automatically; feels hurt/unloved if she has to ask ("If I have to ask, it doesn't count").
<b>Giving Advice</b>	Unsolicited advice implies he doesn't know what to do or can't do it alone, challenging his competence.	Attempts to "improve" her partner (criticism) are often heard by him as rejection and lack of acceptance.
<b>Response to Criticism</b>	Resists change; needs to feel accepted as he is before he is motivated to improve.	Views advice/suggestions as a normal part of sharing and improving relationships.
<b>Wording of Requests</b>	"Could you...?" is heard as a challenge to his capability (answer is "Yes, I could," but not a commitment to do it).	"Would you...?" is heard as a direct request that gives him the choice to be of service, which he is more likely to fulfil.
<b>Best Phrase to Use</b>	Use "Would you...?" for a direct and fulfilled request.	Understand that "Could you...?" might not be taken as a firm commitment.

## 4. Primary Emotional Needs and "Scoring Points"

Men and women have different primary emotional needs, and they often make the mistake of giving the kind of love they themselves want to receive.

Women's Primary Needs	Men's Primary Needs
Caring	Trust
Understanding	Acceptance
Respect	Appreciation
Devotion	Admiration
Validation	Approval
Reassurance	Encouragement

## ALLAH'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

"Among His signs is that He created for you spouses that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you love and mercy." [Qur'an 30:21]

Marriage is a divine gift, not a burden, not a romantic fantasy, but a balanced, spiritual institution.

### 1. The Divine Foundation: Core Values and Principles

Certain ideas in the Qur'an that offer an intellectual basis for a lasting union:  
Wedlock as a Sign and Goal.

It says in the Qur'an that marriage is an important part of making the world. Verse 51:49 of the Qur'an says, "We made everything in pairs so that you may remember."

- 1. Equal Rights and Parity (Zawjiyyah):** The idea of matching (zawjiyyah) is what makes everything possible. According to the Qur'an, God made people from "one soul, and from it made its spouse" (4:1). This root confirms that men and women are naturally equal. Being a different gender doesn't make one better than the other. In fact, Allah (swt) loves the most pious person.
- 2. Peacefully (Sakeenah):** To find peace and relaxation (sakeenah) together is the main mental goal of the relationship. As stated in the Qur'an (20:21/30:21), Allah (SWT) created women "so that you might find rest in them."
- 3. Love and Mercy (Mawaddah and Rahmah):** The model in the Qur'an is based on justice, love, mercy, and helping each other. God (SWT) has clearly "put love and compassion between you." Love like this isn't just a dream; it's a promise.
- 4. The Solemn covenant (Meethaq Ghaleeth):** People who are married have a "solemn covenant" (4:21) with each other, which means they are very close and committed to each other. In order to end the relationship kindly, both people must be honest with each other and get along (imsaak bi maruf).



## *Understanding the Allegory of 'Clothes'*

In the Qur'an, partners are called "your garments" (for women) and "their garments" (for men). This makes the bond between the two people even stronger. One important part of mutuality is this metaphor:

- **Security and Comfort:** Clothes keep you warm, safe, and looking good. If you're married, this means being close to each other, keeping each other safe, and not letting each other "look elsewhere."
- **Vulnerability:** This picture also shows how open and easy it is to hurt each other when one of them exposes the weakness of the other.
- **"The clothing of righteousness (libaas al-taqwaa)"** [as the Qur'an says in 7:26,] is the best kind of clothing. If both people in a relationship have taqwaa (religious knowledge of Allah), they protect each other right away. This is good for their lives.

## **2. The Key Parts of a Happy Marriage Based on the Qur'an and Sunnah**

The main model or structure for getting ready for a happy marriage is found in the Qur'an. This marriage serves a very important purpose. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ said that anyone who gets married has "completed half of his religion."

### **i. Prepare for the next life (Aakhirah).**

One of the main reasons to get married is to see your loved ones again. This view makes it easier to find a partner by suggesting that people put more stress on their religious devotion.

What the Shari'ah (Maqaasid al-Shari'ah) aims to do: To have a happy marriage, both people must promise to follow the main ideas and goals of the Shari'ah. These maqaasid are the bases of reality:

- **Protection of faith (Deen),** marriage should not put a person's relationship with Allah (swt) at risk. "Fortress against Satan" means that a good marriage helps a person stay on the right track.
- **Protection of Honour:** This means that spouses must follow Islamic rules about how to act, e.g. shouldn't lie, insult, slander, or do anything else that hurts someone's honour.
- **Protection of Children:** Marriage makes it possible to raise children and make the home a healthy place for everyone.
- **Protection of intelligence and well-being:** The relationship needs to be safe so that people can say and think what they want without being shut down, laughed at, or criticised.
- **Protection of property:** Partners must work together to safeguard the family's possessions and money.

## ii. Farming, working, and having a plan

It's not enough for a marriage to be "made in Heaven"; it needs to be "cultivated in exactly the same way" as a garden.

- **Stewardship (Khulafa):** God made people to be caretakers. You have to work hard, think about yourself, and earn the right to lead your partner before you can be married.
- **Shared Responsibility:** For the marriage to work, both people in it need to work on being the best partners they can be and growing spiritually together.
- **Fulfilling Mutual Rights (Ihsaan):** Being kind is the base, which means going above and beyond what is expected. This means you should be there for each other sexually, mentally, and financially. If a person owes his wife money, he should pay her back. It's not a gift; it's his duty to Allah (swt).

## iii. Making use of important skills

To support the foundation of the Qur'an, spouses must use practical skills:

- **Consultation (Shura):** The Qur'an says that a family should talk about their problems and agree on how to solve them (42:38). The man is in charge, which means he must work with his wife, just like the Prophet ﷺ did with his wives and friends.
- **Patience and Forgiveness:** In Qur'an 64:14, it says, "Allah will forgive and be merciful if you forgive and pardon them." Patience means that neither partner will leave or give up when things go badly. Being able to control your anger and not getting angry is a sign of great strength.
- **Communication:** You need to be able to speak clearly, like the Prophet ﷺ did. He was patient, clear, and listened carefully. This will help everyone understand what you mean and get things back on track.

For a Muslim marriage to be successful, the three main ideas in the Qur'an must be followed every day in a way that supports the maqaasid al-Shari'ah and ensures success for all time.

## THE PROPHETIC MODLE

The Prophet ﷺ set the gold standard for marital excellence.

- The Prophet ﷺ married Khadījah (RA), who was 15 years older than him.
- He did not marry anyone else until he was around 50 years old.
- He provided separate accommodation for each wife.
- He played with them and spent light-hearted moments at home.
- He discussed important matters with them.
- He helped with household chores.
- He joked with them and created a warm atmosphere.
- He maintained high standards of hygiene at home.
- He shared acts of worship (‘ibādah) with them.
- He praised them and expressed appreciation.
- He took his wives on journeys with him.
- He visited them and asked about their health when they were ill.
- He shared food and drink with them.
- He did not show anger toward them.
- He had normal human disagreements at home.
- He once separated from them for 29 days during a domestic conflict.
- He expressed love openly.
- He listened attentively.
- He validated their emotions.
- He avoided harshness.
- He acted with fairness.
- He consulted his wives and valued their counsel.
- He balanced worship and spirituality with the needs of his family.

He was the busiest man in the world but still the best husband.

This is the role model for all Muslim households.

The *Sunnah* as the Foundational Requirement for Marriage

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ made it clear that he endorsed of marriage and made it his required way (Sunnah):

- **The Prophet's ﷺ Way is to get married:** "Nikah (marriage) is my sunnah," the Prophet ﷺ said. "He who doesn't follow my sunnah is not of me." He said that being totally celibate was not normal and was against Allah's will.
- **Completing Half the Religion:** The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever has married has completed half of his religion; therefore, let him fear Allah in the other half!" This means that marriage completes a big part of a person's faith.

- **The Qur'an walking:** It was said that the Prophet ﷺ lived his life like "the Qur'an walking," which means that his Sunnah is how he put divine revelation into practice. For Muslims, trying to live like he did is their job, and following his example is how they do it.

Important Parts of a Marriage Set up by the Prophet's Example

Character, kindness, and mutual rights were very important in the Prophet's life and lessons, and they gave clear advice on how to be in a marriage:

## 1. The Perfect Husband: How to Treat Your Wife

According to the Sunnah, the husband's character must be the best, and his faith is directly linked to how he treats his wife:

- **The Best Character:** The Prophet ﷺ said, "The most perfect believer in faith is the one who has the best character and treats his wife the nicest." [Tirmidhi – Handbook of a healthy Muslim marriage] He said, "the best of you are those who are kindest to their wives and families". [Tirmidhi – Handbook of a healthy Muslim marriage]
- **The Ideal Gentleman:** The Prophet ﷺ was a great example of a gentleman because he helped his wives with their work at home until it was time to go out and lead the prayers. This showed that he "did not regard helping his wives as a slur on his manhood." His wives agreed that his character (khuluq) was the Qur'an itself. This meant that in his personal life, he followed God's enlightened and wise rules for behaviour.
- **Avoiding Neglect:** The teaching of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was quite clear on this score. A man who neglected his wife was not the 'best of Muslims' and was not scoring 'good points' for himself by his long hours away from her and his family even if he was busily saying extra voluntary prayers. even if he was performing extra voluntary prayers. [The Muslim Marriage Guide - Maqsood] He advised an ascetic companion, Abdallah Ibn 'Amr, to moderate his devotions, pointing out that "**Your eye has a right over you, your guests have a right over you, and your wife has a right over you**". [Bukhari]
- **Kindness as a Command:** The Prophet ﷺ stressed kindness by telling men, "Be kind to your wives, for they are your helpers." [Tirmidhi - The Muslim Marriage Guide - Maqsood] You only took them as a gift from God, and with a word, you made their private parts legal.

## 2. Encouraging friendship and kindness

According to the Sunnah, loving and being close to your spouse is holy and equal to acts of worship (sadaqa):

- **Sexual activity as Sadaqa:** The Prophet ﷺ said, "In the sexual act of each of you there is a sadaqa." The Companions replied: 'O Messenger of God! When one of us fulfils his sexual desire, will he be given a reward for that?' And he said, 'Do you not think that were he to act upon it unlawfully, he would be sinning? Likewise, if he acts upon it lawfully, he will be rewarded.' [Muslim - The Muslim Marriage Guide - Maqsood] The act is elevated above mere self-gratification when done out of love for one's partner and the desire to please Allah (swt).
- **Foreplay and Gentleness:** The Prophet ﷺ told men not to "leap upon his wife like an animal," but to "send a messenger," whom he described as "kissing and words."

- **Tender Gestures** Putting "a morsel of food into your wife's mouth is a sadaqa," which means to be tender. He would cup his drink from the same spot where his wife Aisha (ra) had her mouth. To rest, he would put his head on her lap.
- **Marrying for Piety** When the Prophet ﷺ told men how to choose a spouse, he told them not to prioritise a woman's wealth, rank, or beauty. He said, "**A woman is married for four reasons: for her property, her rank, her beauty and her religion. Win the one who is religious, and you will prosper**". [Muslim - Handbook of a healthy Muslim marriage]

### 3. Guidance on Communication and Conflict Resolution

The Prophet's actions show how to talk to people politely and respectfully, even when you disagree:

- **Effective Communication:** He stood facing the person he was talking to, waited for them to finish speaking, and repeated himself several times to make sure he was understood. "Good listener" was how people knew him.
- **Tolerance of Wives' Expression:** He didn't punish his wives when they were loud or even arguing. Umar (ra), his friend and father-in-law, was honestly "amazed that he did not punish his wives as they expected." His wife, Hafsa, often argued with him, but he always replied with kindness.
- **Mediating Disputes:** The Prophet ﷺ showed how to use a third party to settle a dispute. He showed respect for his wife Aisha's (ra) judgement by asking her to pick a referee in one case. In another, he physically and spiritual stepped in to help his daughter Fatima (ra) and Ali (ra) get along again. [Before your tie the knot - Magid]
- **Managing Anger:** The Prophet ﷺ said that self-control is the real power. He told an angry man to say, "I seek refuge in Allah from Shaytan," and then he told the man to move around. He never hurt someone physically or verbally when he was angry.

### 4. Social life and how to act in public

The Prophet's Sunnah promotes a healthy social life that includes the spouse and keeps people safe from outside temptations:

- **Being seen with his wives in public:** The Prophet ﷺ was proud to be with his wives and to be seen with them in public. He stayed until his wife Aisha (ra) was ready to leave to watch the Abyssinians perform on Eid. When he was called to dinner one time, he asked if his wife was also invited and said, "Either she comes or I won't come."
- **To protect family time,** he would not stay in the mosque or with others after the last prayer of the day, but to leave the mosque and go home.
- **Respecting the Memories of Wives:** After his first wife Khadijah (ra) died, he kept going to see her friends to honour her.
- **Safety from Zina:** The Prophet ﷺ said "Whenever any one of you comes across an attractive woman, and his heart is inclined towards her, he should go straight to his wife and have sexual intercourse with her, so that he might keep himself away from evil thoughts." [Muslim - The Muslim Marriage Guide - Maqsood]

The Prophet's Sunnah on marriage is like a very detailed map for getting around a new city. The Qur'an tells you about the ultimate destination (Paradise) and the moral law of the land. The Sunnah, on the other hand, tells you the practical routes, customs, and behaviours you and your partner need to follow every day to make sure you get there safely.

## CHOOSING A SPOUSE WISELY

Marriage success depends heavily on who you choose, not just how you behave.

### **The Correct Motivation:**

<b>Misguided Motivation</b>	<b>Description &amp; Consequences</b>
<b>Focusing on Worldly Gains (Looks, Wealth, Rank)</b>	Relationships founded on only physical looks, wealth, or rank are misguided and dangerous. If looks deteriorate due to age, illness, or accident, the relationship built only on them will be on tricky ground. An obsession with <i>dunya</i> is a "tricky illusion".
<b>Solely Sexual Gratification</b>	Getting married simply to satisfy sexual needs can be an abuse of the institution of marriage. Physical attraction alone is not sufficient for having a meaningful long-term relationship. Young people who rush to marry simply to avoid sin ( <i>zina</i> ) without exploring compatibility are abusing the institution of marriage.
<b>Escaping a Situation (Financial or Social)</b>	Marrying to escape financial problems or social pressure is dangerous. Seeking stability through marriage is not realistic; one must be stable first. The need to escape may prevent the needed exploration of compatibility for long-term success.
<b>False Hopes and Idealization</b>	Falling in love with someone who is idealized (e.g., a teacher or employer) may lead to disappointment when the "dream person does not exist beyond their own fantasies". Marriages based on fantasy, fakery and illusion are doomed.
<b>Feelings of Obligation or Guilt</b>	Marrying someone out of a sense of duty or indebtedness, or to make a dating-type relationship "halal," is discouraged. It is better to end an improper relationship first and then assess compatibility.

People say that marriage is like building a house, and the process of picking makes sure that the base is strong enough to handle the "storms and shocks of stress."

## I. Criteria for Selection: Self-Analysis and a Clear Goal

Before starting the search, the person must do a lot of deep self-reflection to clarify their goals and make sure they are looking for marriage for the right reasons. This is the first and most important step:

- **Goal (Niyyah):** Getting married is a form of worship (‘ibādah), and you should choose a partner and do everything else with the goal of pleasing Allah (swt). When making a choice, each option must be looked at from the point of view of getting to the Hereafter (Aakhirah).
- **Understanding Core Needs:** For people to understand their core needs, they need to sit down calmly and become aware of what their needs truly are. These needs are physical (like food, shelter, and sexual pleasure), emotional (like kindness, understanding, and company), and most importantly spiritual (like inner peace and happiness, which needs a partner whose morals are good in God's eyes).
- **Setting Values and Goals:** If you want to "know yourself pretty well," you need to know your values, goals, and real needs. You should also find out if the person you want to marry gets these things and is willing to meet them. Write down your beliefs and make a list of things that you will not give up on "non-negotiable."
- **Avoiding Worldly Obsession:** It is misguided and dangerous to only care about looks, money, or rank. It's not likely that you'll find a partner based on traits that are only present in this world, which is called dunya. The wise Prophet ﷺ told us to pick based on how religious we are.

## II. Things You Should Think About When Picking a Partner

In some areas, compatibility should come first, with faith compatibility being the most important:

### 1. Loyalty (Deen) and Character

Religion and good manners are the most important things to look for in a partner:

- **Advice from the Prophet ﷺ:** He told people to marry a woman for her faith, not her wealth, fame, or beauty. In addition, he advised that you marry a man whose "religious commitment and moral conduct you approve of." He said that not doing it could cause "great corruption." [Tirmidhi – Before you tie the knot]
- **Character Assessment:** Really being religious means having "true Islamic character," which means handling other people "in the best way." In order to judge this, one must check to see if the outward expression of religion matches the moral framework that shapes beliefs and actions.
- **Compatibility in Practice:** When it comes to real life, two people who are compatible must share the same religious beliefs. Different ways of practicing or understanding religion (for example, literal/fiqh versus mystical/tassawuf methods) can lead to "unnecessary conflict"



and divorce, even if both people are seen as "good Muslims." [Muslim - The Muslim Marriage Guide - Maqsood]

## 2. Being compatible

Not only piety, but also physical and mental harmony are part of compatibility:

- **Physical Attraction:** Attraction is important. If a partner meets all the other requirements "but you don't like how they look," then those requirements don't matter. People who want to get married should meet the person they want to marry to make sure they are happy with their appearance. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **Personality and Temperament:** Because personality doesn't change much, it's an important trait. People who are looking into a potential suitor should watch how that person deals with stress and anger (for example, do they shut down and withdraw or lash out and become violent) and make sure that the other does the same too. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **Health and Disclosure:** If you are going to marry someone, you should tell them about any health problems you know about. A full medical examination should be done on everyone before they get married. Getting married is not the answer to mental or emotional problems.

**Age and Education:** The Prophet's weddings show that big age gaps are fine, but people who want to get married should talk about their goals to see if the age gap is right for them. The Prophet ﷺ was not known to have used his prophethood to pull rank or impose his authority as a husband. In the same way, spouses should not use their degree, age, or other elements of status to control or dominate the other. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]



## **RED FLAGS & GREEN FLAGS And the Wali**

### **Red Flags (Danger Signs)**

- shouting, insults
- extreme jealousy
- secrecy with the phone
- disrespect to parents
- laziness or no direction
- manipulation
- guilt-tripping
- impulsive financial behaviour

### **Green Flags (Healthy Qualities)**

- kindness under pressure
- consistency
- humility
- stable emotions
- honesty
- ability to apologise
- reliability
- respectful disagreement

Choose character over charm.

### **Investigation and Due Diligence Steps**

In order to get a clear picture of the partner, the selection process is strategic and involves gathering information from a lot of different sources.

## Checking for compatibility and red flags

The method involves in-depth questions and observing how people act in specific situations:

- **Asking Questions That Are Specific:** Too broad of a question is "Is he or she a good Muslim?" It is important that you know how they pray, how they handle money, how they deal with anger, and how they treat their family. There is a long Premarital Questionnaire in the book with more than 100 questions that can help you with this [See QR code at the end of the booklet].
- **Watching Behaviour:** Another thing you should do is watch how the person you want to marry acts around their parents and brothers when they're not in public.
- **Checking the Background:** As part of your due diligence, you should get references. In some cases, it might be a good idea to get a criminal background check on the person to see if they have a past of domestic violence, child abuse, or drug abuse.
- **Recognising Red Flags:** Being extremely strict about gender roles, getting divorced without taking responsibility, or being mean to other family members are all red flags that someone might be violent.

## What the Walī (Guardian) Does

The walī is a very important part of the process, but the woman's approval is more important:

- **Protection of Interests:** The walī's job is to "protect the woman's interests." This means making sure that partners are a good fit, checking to see if they are real, and keeping the woman from being harmed.
- **Not Dictatorial, But Consultative:** The walī is a guide and supporter, not someone who should "control or dictate" the choice. A woman can't be married against her will, and if she is

then the marriage isn't counted as legal. The woman can pick someone else if the walī is unfair or wrong.

- **Safety and openness:** The walī makes sure that the couple's activities before marriage are legal in Islam. One thing that is against the law is for them to be alone together (khalwah) until the marriage contract is signed.

There must be honesty and a clear vision at the end of the selection process, because relationships built on fantasy, lies, and fiction are doomed to fail. Choose a partner who fits, whose spiritual life is right for you, and who can be a "garment" (protecting and comforting) for you. This will help your relationship last and your spiritual growth.

## ISTIKHARAH DONE RIGHT

Asking Friends, Family, and Scholars for Help

Parents Should Be Involved: Parents should be involved "as much as possible and as early as possible." Like a safety net, they can help you figure out if getting married is the right thing for you. The adult child, though, has the final say.

- **Istishara (Consultation):** It's a good idea to get advice from family and friends who know you well. If a couple doesn't agree on something or doesn't know what to do, they should talk to someone they trust who can help them see both sides.
- **Istikarah (Prayer for Guidance):** After doing some research and talking to other people, the person should say the Istikharah prayer to ask Allah (swt) for help. As an answer, people often say they feel "more at ease or confident with the decision."
- Remember Istikhara is only done after the potential person has ticked off all the boxes and there's nothing left but the marriage ceremony.
- Some people assume that istikhara is done as soon as a person spots someone they are interested in. This is not the correct way.

## NIKAH & WALIMAH

### **Marriage Contract (Nikaah)**

The Marriage Contract (Nikaah) and Ceremony (Waleemah) are more than just ceremonies; they set the formal, spiritual, and moral groundwork for a Muslim marriage. A Muslim Marriage contract turns the original intention into a legally binding promise (meethaq ghaleeth). Allah (swt) recognises this. The marriage contract, also known as Nikah or Kitaab, is very important. Legal and spiritual commitments are marked by contracts that spell out rights and duties.

### **1. Conditions under which a deal is valid**

1. If the Guardian (walī) is not present or refuses in an unfair way, the qadi (judge) must allow the marriage to happen.
2. It must be allowed for the man and woman to agree and not be forced into it.
3. Agreed, Dower (Mahr): This is very important.
4. Two Muslim witnesses.
5. A "Offer and Immediate Acceptance" (ijab wa-qubul) that includes the words "marriage" or "wedding"

## 2. A promise to work together, Meethaq Ghaleeth

In the Qur'an, marriage is called a "solemn covenant." This friendship seems very important.

When people get married, according to the Qur'an and Sunnah they must be kind (ihsān) and no harm one another. The agreement says that if they break up, they will be kind to each other and let each other go slowly. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]

**Dowry (Mahr):** The groom gives the bride the Mahr for free, which is an important part of the contract. It shows that he cares about her and let her have money. He must give her whatever she asked for at the time of the contract.

Sometimes fathers waiver the mahr to show that the family is not interested in material wealth. This is not correct as mahr is only for the woman and in case of divorce, and the right of wavering is left to her.

## 3. Prenuptial agreements

Shari'ah allows these terms (Shurut) to be included in the contract as long as they don't go against Islamic principles.

What women's rights are: According to the Hanbali school, women can officially stop their husbands from marrying other women.

Women sometimes add conditions such as if he was to harm her physically or marry another wife without letting her know then she can be given power to divorce herself. This is known as delegating divorce to the wife.

## 4. Nikah

It becomes official when two people verbally agree or sign a kitāb or nikāh-nama. Once this is done, they are Islamically considered husband and wife and can be alone together.

- **Real Marriage:** When the pair signs the contract, they are legally married and have all the rights and responsibilities that come with that.

- **Consummation:** Families usually wait to consummate the marriage after the walimah [post marriage feast]. In Islam, people are allowed to have sexual relations after the contract is done.

If they break up after making the contract, they will need to get a divorce. For Muslims, this is not a "trial period," but a legal relationship.

## *Spiritual importance of the wedding ceremony (Walimah).*

The ritual and feast (walimah) make the promise public and marks the start of a new life.

### 1. **Public marriage (Sunnah).**

On the wedding day, Muslims should hold a feast called a walimah and inform other Muslims about the union. He said, "Make this marriage known; celebrate it in the mosques; play the tambourines to mark it!" [Tirmidhi]

- **Not being too flashy:** a wedding can be a lovely way to start a new life, but if the couple goes all out, it might not be Islamic. A Muslim wedding is happy and easy.
- **Costs of the wedding:** Based on Islamic law, the husband oversees the walimah. Culture is fine if it doesn't go against Islam.

### 2. **The Spiritual Start of Being Close**

- **Praying two rak'ahs** on the wedding night to ask Allah (SWT) to bless the marriage. To join spiritually, Du'ā should do what comes next. This sets the tone and rules for the interaction. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **Sadaqa closeness:** Giving someone what they need and having sexual relations with them without expecting anything in return is known as acts of charity (sadaqa). Allah likes it when people care for their partner without expecting anything in return. Men were told that to fulfil a wife's right would be rewarded. Abū Dharr narrated: "The Prophet ﷺ said: "Intercourse is a ṣadaqa (charity)". He was asked: "O Prophet, will one of us fulfil his desire and be rewarded for it?" He said: "If it was performed by unlawful means it would be punished for being sinful, therefore if it is performed lawfully, it will be rewarded [Muslim]"

### 3. **Strong bases and a marriage contract with a ceremony**

The contract sets the rules for the process and the pillars of a successful Muslim marriage.

To begin, stop: In an Islamic marriage, problems are avoided so that the relationship is stronger. You agree to work together to reach a goal when you sign the contract.

- **Open Communication:** Talking about the wedding's guest list, food, entertainment and budget could show how the pair will talk to each other and handle disagreements in the future. If you can't work out your differences, you might not be able to get married. It's better than a bad marriage.
- **Being accountable:** The contract makes sure that both sides know they can't hurt each other and will always be there for each other. It gives you strength and comfort to know that Allah (SWT), the ultimate observer, is watching. It keeps things fair and kind even when there are disagreements.

## Roles after marriage

Being intimate is more than just a physical pleasure. It is an act of worship (ibādah), a shared right, and a key part of keeping the spiritual and mental health of a relationship strong.

In the face of constant duties and challenges. Neglecting intimacy can cause harm that can't be fixed. On the other hand, putting it first can bring peace (sakeenah), love (mawaddah), and kindness (rahmah).

## I. Performing Duties for satisfaction

Talk to each other, work hard, and think about what the other person needs for the marriage to work. In Islam, people often act mean and selfishly. This is not correct at all.

### 1. Being a good husband

The men are called Qawwamuna, which means "protectors and maintainers of women" because he is given leadership of the house. He is required to support his family financially and physically.

- **Servant, Not Tyrant:** The husband leads the family. Overseeing the family does not mean that he treats his wife like a slave or an employee. However, this leadership must be fulfilled with the utmost *taqwā* (consciousness of Allah), and should not be misinterpreted as a privilege or as an opportunity to oppress women
- **Consultation and Justice (Shura):** When the Prophet ﷺ was married to Khadijah (ra) and worked for her running her business, there were times when she relied on him to make decisions and other times when he was not involved at all. As his employer, she gave him time off to go to Hira, during which time he could not have been part of the decision-making process. Their marriage reflects a mutual trust and a partnership in which they both participated in decision-making. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **To earn respect,** the husband must prove himself worthy of that position through his actions and words. If a husband treats his wife well, she is more likely to naturally want to please him and comply with his requests.

## 2. The Domain of the Wife

The "queen of the house" looks out for her husband's kids and home.

The Minister of the Home is the centre of the Muslim family, and his or her mood fills the whole house. She calms. In family matters, it makes sense for men to have a final say in matters where they have the most expertise, and for women to have the final say in matters where their expertise is greater. In my household

- **Not a Servant:** "Bare bones of a marriage" are the wife's legal responsibilities, such as being sexually available and protecting the husband's property. When a husband treats his wife like a "cheap servant or concubine," the marriage ends. Ultimately, she is not considered as his slave. Certain schools of law say that cleaning is a wife's religious duty, but the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ "helped his wives with their work at home until it was time to go out and lead the prayers." [Bukhari]

## 3. Being fair and not wanting what you want only

Making sure both pairs are happy is the main job. This means that the husband can't just do what makes him happy and ignore what his wife wants.

- **Duty of the Husband:** All four orthodox lawyers say that "it is the husband's duty to make sure his wife is happy and content in this way."
- **What a wife wants:** A wife's "heart is very tender and delicate," and being mean or rude to her hurts her feelings. A "selfish boor" is a man who only wants to be happy.
- **The Farmer Metaphor:** The partner needs to act like a farmer tending to his fields, not doing anything that could hurt the soil.

## II. Closeness as a spiritual base and a right for everyone

According to Islamic tradition, sexual intimacy is more than just a right; it is an act of love and responsibility and an act of Sadaqa.

There is no doubt that having sex is a good thing to do. The Prophet ﷺ said, "In the sexual act of each of you there is a sadaqa." [Muslim] to meet the need in a legal way while married is rewarding just as doing the same out of wedlock is counted as a crime.

To get the reward, you must rise above the mere animal level and want to please Allah by unselfishly caring for one's partner.

Marriage is seen as "half of his religion," and being physically close to your partner is seen as the will of Allah for His subjects.

People who get married have the important right that "each spouse should therefore provide sexual fulfilment (imta') to the other, as part of the bargain." This is a clear promise that is written into the marriage contract.

#### 4. Why Foreplay and getting ready are important

Foreplay is a regular but important task that keeps the wife comfortable and happy:

**Sending a message:** “Not one of you should fall upon his wife like an animal: but let there first be a messenger between you.” “And what is that messenger?” they asked, and he replied: “Kisses and words. (Daylami)

- **Staying away from pain:** Using female organs for sex without proper preparation is harmful and painful, which means they need natural lubrication to not cause unnecessary pain.
- **Making Sure She Climaxes:** The husband should wait until his wife orgasms because her climax may well come slowly. If it's the husband's turn, he should not give up but keep caressing her until she is satisfied.

#### 5. Taking care of the wife's mental and spiritual health

The close friendship has a direct effect on how the couple feels about each other:

- **Treating the Wife with Respect:** Husbands must respect their wives in the sexual relationship. If a man is cruel to his wife all day, he can't expect her to happily fall asleep in his arms at night. Harsh treatment does damage that can't be fixed, just like neglect. A hadith states: “Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty, and it is not withdrawn from anything, but it makes it defective” [Muslim]
- **Emotional Connection:** Many women say that they need to feel emotionally connected to their husband before they want to have sex. Many women need to feel emotionally connected to their husband before they are interested in having sex. On the other hand, many men feel more emotionally connected by having sex. Learning about gender differences can be helpful in having a better understanding of your partner. Ultimately, what is most important [Before you tie the knot]
- **After sex** the husband shouldn't push his wife away right after sex. Instead, he should lie with his arms around her for a few minutes, after checking her happiness, telling her that he loves her, and in his heart thanking Allah for his happiness and good fortune.

### III. Problems with not being close enough and not being satisfied sexually

Problems with intimacy include emotional blocks, pressure from outside sources, and a lack of information.



## 1. Not caring, ignoring, or avoiding

Not dealing with personal issues right now is very bad for the marriage and can cause deep anger and divorce:

- **Wife's Lack of Interest** Usually, it's the husband's lack of consideration and understanding that makes the wife shy away from him or be cold. She may not care about her husband, but that could hurt him and kill his potency or even make him like feel alienated.
- **Husband's Neglect** It's not right for a man to deprive a loving partner through his religious practices, like long prayers or fasting. It comes in a narration: "Your wife has a right over you." [Bukhari]
- **Avoidance and Shame** In certain Muslim cultures, many women are taught that it is shameful to talk about sex, express any sexual needs or preferences, or take any initiative in the sexual relationship. Yet, men may become frustrated that their wives don't communicate openly about what they need or want, preventing the husband from knowing how to approach her [Before you tie the knot - Magid]

## 2. Outside temptations and expectations that are too high

As part of their ongoing duty, they must protect the marriage from outside forces and unrealistic ideas about sex:

- **Protection from Zina:** A Hadith says that if a man sees a pretty woman, he should "go straight to his wife and have sex with her to keep himself from having bad thoughts." [Muslim]
- **Pornography and Fantasy:** It is against the law (haram) for men to watch pornographic films because they make them want and dream about "very unrealistic sex. People get false ideas that they are close. Men who watch a lot of porn may be very upset and try to get their wives to do things they saw in films, which is "not acceptable. Porn hurts the person who watches it and their family by making them feel betrayed, physically inadequate, and numb.
- **Expectations that aren't realistic:** Men's expectations can be off if their wives have never done anything like this before and their expectations are based on what they see in the media. If things don't go as planned on the wedding night, women are likely to be upset and have a traumatic experience.

## 3. Talking, being honest, and asking for help

It's best to be honest and get professional help if you're having problems with intimacy:

- **Open Communication:** Husbands and wives should be honest and open with each other about what they need and want. The best source of information about your partner is your partner. If you want to have sex, don't wait until both people are tired. It's a kind of insult and a marital time-bomb.
- **Getting professional help:** If a couple's relationship problems can't be solved on their own, they should see a doctor, marriage psychologist, or sex therapist. Kindness and not judging should be used when people talk about sexual problems. In public, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned

matters related sexual issues. This was seen as a great mercy to people and that Islam does not shy away from what is needed.

- **Health and Disclosure:** Before you get married, you must tell your fiancé about any mental health issues or sexually transmitted infections that stop you from wanting to be married or performing well.

Both partners must always look out for each other's personal and intimate needs and care for each other without expecting anything in return (ihsān). The promise of marriage is what makes this possible. The ongoing job is to keep the relationship a place of love and peace, not anger, neglect, or abuse.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### The Four Horsemen Predict Divorce

Gottman's 4 Killers:

1. Criticism
2. Contempt
3. Defensiveness
4. Stonewalling

### The Four Horsemen Predict Divorce

Four types of bad things that could end a relationship are shown in the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" image. These actions that lead to arguments are a big sign that your marriage is failing. Dr. Gottman could tell 91% of the time from watching couples for five minutes whether they would stay together or get a divorce. If you only look at the Four Horsemen, they can accurately predict divorce 82% of the time, but when efforts to fix things fail, that chance rises to 90%.

The Horsemen usually show up in a marriage at regular times, which makes it impossible to solve problems.

#### 1. Criticism

Criticism is more than just a complaint; it also includes criticism of the partner's personality or behaviour.

Anger vs. Criticism: People complain about their partner's mistake ("I'm mad that you didn't sweep the floor"). Assaulting someone's character and pointing the finger at them ("Why are you forgetful?" "You're indifferent").

**Changes:** Criticism often hides a rough start, and if it spreads, it makes it easier for the other, deadlier horses to show up.

## 2. Contempt [Disrespect]

Contempt is the worst of the Four Horsemen because it shows dislike and is bad for relationships.

- **Signs:** insults, sarcasm, cynicism, calling people names, rolling your eyes, sneering, making fun of them, and aggressive humour are all rude.
- **Physical Impact:** Couples who are disrespectful to each other are more likely to get colds, flu, and other illnesses.
- **Origin:** Negative thoughts about the relationship that have been building up for a long-time lead to contempt when complaints and criticisms from the past are not addressed.

## 3. Being defensive

Being defensive in the face of criticism and disdain is a bad way to deal with it because it puts the blame on the partner.

"The problem isn't me, it's you" are what defensiveness means.

While defence makes sense, study shows that it usually makes things worse in a conflict. If one partner charges and the other defend, the attacker will often attack again, making a destructive relay match.

## 4. Stonewalling

One partner says nothing or acts like they "couldn't care less" about what the other person says.

Stonewallers don't look at you, sit still like stone walls, and don't nod or say "uh-huh."

**Gender Dynamics:** This is more often done by men in 85% of marriages. Because men's circulatory systems are biologically different, they are more reactive to stress and take longer to recover from it. This makes men more easily overwhelmed by marriage conflict.

Stonewalling generally happens after the first three Horsemen have done enough damage to the marriage.

Gottman says that the Four Horsemen are at the root of a chain of events that hurts marriages and leads to divorce.

When you criticise or sarcasm, you start a fight, which means the argument is "doomed to fail." A rough start brings up at least one of the Four Horsemen and sets the tone for the debate. 96% of the time, the first three minutes may predict the rest of the talk. [The seven principles of making marriage work]

### Flooding

When the Four Horsemen are always around, it causes flooding, a state of constant, widespread physiological arousal in which one partner feels overwhelmed, shell-shocked, and helpless against the other's negativity.

Flooding makes the heartbeat fast (more than 100 beats per minute), releases adrenaline (the "fight or flight response"), and raises blood pressure.

People who are flooded have trouble figuring out how to solve creative problems and processing knowledge. This makes us react automatically with anger, defensiveness, criticism, or refusing to move.

**Avoiding Flooding:** If one partner's heart rate goes above 100 beats per minute, the other person can't hear what they're saying, which makes it hard to work together. The body needs a break for 20 minutes to get back to normal.

**Failed Repair Attempts:** De-escalation is the "secret weapon" of emotionally mature partners. When the Four Horsemen control conversation and one partner feel overwhelmed, it's hard to fix the relationship and keep it stable. Repair fails and the Four Horsemen are the best ways to tell when bad things are going to happen.

The "death knell of a relationship" sounds when partners pull away, mentally distance themselves, and may even live separate, lonely lives. [The seven principles of making marriage work]

## STRESS & LIFE TRANSITIONS

Marital life is clearly called a 'most demanding training ground of faith' and one not a bed of roses, but with plenty of thorns in it. These days, living in the modern world puts unprecedented strains on relationships.

You can group these things based on where they originate from and their form:

### I. Basic and internal stressors (personality and compatibility)

If two people in a marriage have different morals or personalities, it will be stressful from the start:

- **Incompatibility and Differing Goals** If a man and a woman have radically different interests, tastes, pastimes, and types of friends, their marriage may soon come under a lot of strain. When they have different outlooks in life, views, values, or behaviours, they will inevitably disagree on a regular basis.
- **Spiritual Misalignment:** If a couple doesn't have a shared attitude to their religion or religious affiliations (such as madhabs). then they are bound to have a different understanding about how to practise. These differences can get worse over time and lead to discord and friction in their marriage. Moral or religious abuse is when someone forces another to follow their religion in a way that makes them feel bad.
- **Any kind of abuse**, including insults, threats, calling someone names, and other forms of physical and psychological abuse, can irreparably damage relationships. If someone treats their partner badly, even if it's just through facial expressions or something more direct, the marriage will be impacted.

- **Ego (Nafs):** The "biggest problem of all is the lower and selfish desires of the nafs (ego), which can make sacrifices painful or impossible. When one partner tries to control the other or sees their mate as property, it can only lead to ill treatment against their partner in the long run.
- **Unresolved Conflict and Resentment:** Arguments and little tremors and the occasional earthquake between spouses are normal, but problems that haven't been solved, especially going to bed upset, can erode the marriage. A lot of unmet needs can cause resentment and frustration, which will inevitably surface if left untreated.

## II. Not Talking to Each Other

Another factor that puts a lot of stress on marriage is the lack of healthy communication. Here are some of the points to consider:

- **Misunderstanding and Loneliness:** Many couples enter counselling complaining about feeling misunderstood, unappreciated, or unloved. When a "communication gap" occurs, the natural consequence is for spouses to feel disconnected and ultimately lonely. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **Not Listening:** A relationship calls for **sympathetic listening** with a view to understanding the other person's thoughts, feelings, and desires. Good listeners must listen for feelings, asking themselves, "What emotion is my spouse experiencing?" [The five love languages - Chapman]. If you stop listening, you stop loving. Loneliness sets in when couples lead parallel lives because they no longer feel connected. The goal is to avoid the buildup of frustration, resentment, anger, and pain that can destroy a relationship over time.
- **Husbands' Silence:** Men's silence at home is a disappointment to women. A man refraining from expressing negative thoughts may be *overestimating* the power of his words to hurt his wife, when, ironically, she is more likely to be hurt by his silence. [You just don't understand - Murphy]
- If a wife modifies the phrase "Whatever you think" to "Whatever you want," what the husband often hears is, "I'm not going to tell you how to make me happy. You just must figure it out. Good luck". This makes his job harder, as husbands often need to know what wives want to feel successful. [The Empowered Wife Laura Doyle]
- Historically, Chinese commentators discouraged a wife from confiding in her husband or telling him about her day. A good wife was expected not to bother her husband with news of her own activities and feelings but to treat him "like a guest," no matter how long they had been married [History of marriage - Coontz]

### III. Things that cause stress at work and with money

Money problems can cause a lot of stress and trouble:

- **Being cheap** Another form of financial abuse arises when a man has enough money but is stingy. We have seen many cases where the husband enjoys eating at nice restaurants, buying expensive clothes, and driving a nice car but deprives his wife of the same standard of living, or even of basic needs.
- . When the wife of Abu Sufyan, Hind, complained to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that her husband was miserly and not taking care of the family's needs, he advised her: "Take for your needs what is just and reasonable" from his money without him knowing [Bukhari] [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **Financial Control/Abuse:** Abusing money means not giving the wife access to money or putting her down for being financially dependent. The husband might believe that money is strictly male domain and refuse to let his wife make choices, which can cause cracks in their relationship.
- **Debt and Spending Too Much** Irresponsible spending, such as spending on luxuries before taking care of basic needs, is problematic. Couples struggle when one or both spouses engage in irresponsible spending habits
- **Work/Life Imbalance** Modern couples work significantly more hours, with one source stating that today's couples work an average of one thousand hours more each year than people did thirty years ago. This leads to less time for talking, relaxing, eating, and even sleeping. [The seven principles of making marriage work - Gottman]

### IV. Sexual and emotional dissatisfaction

Problems in this area happen a lot, and they often show up as problems that don't seem to be related to each other. They are a barometer of the state of the marriage. See the discussion on the roles after marriage.

### V. Things in the outside world and in ties (health, family, and social) that cause stress

- **In-Laws and Interference:** Failure to maintain healthy relationships with in-laws is explicitly cited as one of the leading causes of divorce in the US among immigrant Muslims. Conflict related to in-laws and extended family was identified as the second most common cause for conflict cited by participants in research on marriage and divorce trends among Muslims in North America. Parental overinvolvement, even when well-intentioned and benign, can have a detrimental effect on the marriage [Before you tie the knot - Magid]. A detailed discussion about in-laws will come later.

- **Health and sickness:** It is unfair to enter a marriage knowing you have a health issue and not share it up front. Many people have a misconception that marriage is a treatment or cure for emotional problems. However, marriage does not solve those problems, and in fact, the mental health issues may get worse, and the marriage may suffer from the beginning. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
- **Childbirth:** During and after pregnancy, women may be less interested in sex, and men may find their wives less attractive due to natural changes like not losing the pregnancy weight immediately. [Before you tie the knot - Magid] The husband may resent how little time his wife seems to have for him, how tired she always is, and how often she is preoccupied with the baby, making him feel cheated because her nurturing is now directed entirely at the child. The birth of the first baby is a major cause of marital dissatisfaction and divorce. Studies show that 67 percent or 70 percent of couples experience a precipitous drop in marital satisfaction in the year after the first baby arrives. [The seven principles of making marriage work - Gottman]
- **Being alone and out of balance with other people:** Socializing should occur within the boundaries of respectful behaviour, and if one partner avoids friends or family, they may push the relationship to the brink. One "red flag" that indicates an underlying marital problem is feeling ashamed or embarrassed to introduce your spouse to colleagues and friends. [Before you tie the knot - Magid] If couples spend more time watching the news or using social media than listening to each other, they become more concerned about their digital friends or world events than their spouse [The five love languages - Chapman].
- **Expectations that are too high:** The euphoric "in-love" experience" is merely an illusion that lasts, on average, two years. [The five love languages - Chapman]. Modern expectations demand that marriage satisfy most of people's needs for intimacy and affection, and all of their needs for sex and self-fulfilment. Sociologists in the 1920s worried that the pursuit of the "pleasure principle" was creating unrealistic expectations that marriage could "furnish individual satisfaction" that outweighed all its traditional burdens [History of marriage - Coontz]



## The 7 Principles of Making Marriage Work

Principle	Focus and Core Concept
<b>Enhance Your Love Maps</b>	This involves making ample cognitive room for one's partner by storing detailed, up-to-date information about their life, hopes, worries, and dreams. Possessing detailed love maps provides the necessary emotional "fortitude" to weather stress and conflict.
<b>Nurture Your Fondness and Admiration</b>	This principle focuses on maintaining a fundamental belief that one's spouse is worthy of honour and respect. Fondness and admiration serve as a powerful "antidote to contempt" (one of the "Four Horsemen") and are a critical buffer against negativity. If this system is still functioning, the marriage is considered salvageable.
<b>Turn toward Each Other Instead of Away</b>	This involves responding positively to a partner's "bids" for attention, affection, humour, or support during everyday life. Consistently turning toward, each other builds an "emotional bank account" of goodwill, which is the key to sustaining long-lasting romance and emotional connection.
<b>Let Your Partner Influence You</b>	These mandates sharing power and decision-making, particularly emphasizing that a husband's willingness to accept influence from his wife is crucial for marital stability. Resistance to influence (often expressed through the "Four Horsemen") has an 81 percent chance of leading to self-destruction.
<b>Solve Your Solvable Problems</b>	This applies specifically to conflicts that are situational and revolve around a particular dilemma, rather than perpetual, deep-seated issues. The strategy involves adopting good manners, such as using a softened startup when raising issues, employing repair attempts to de-escalate tension, mutual soothing, and finding compromise.
<b>Overcome Gridlock</b>	This principle addresses perpetual problems, which comprise 69 % of all marital conflicts and cannot be permanently solved. The goal is to move from "gridlock to dialogue" by uncovering and respecting the hidden personal dreams (hopes, aspirations, and wishes) that fuel the conflict.
<b>Create Shared Meaning</b>	This ultimate principle goes beyond conflict management to encourage the creation of an inner life together, a culture rich with mutual goals, symbols, and rituals that define what it means to be a family. This shared meaning enriches the relationship and makes managing conflict less intense.



## LOVE LANGUAGES

Most of the time, we show love in the way we want to be loved. One that your partner may speak is very different. Realising this changes everything. People say that emotional love is a basic need that needs to be shown in a way that the other person can understand and feel.

### I. What emotional love is and why it's important

Psychologists say that emotional love is a basic psychological need that is different from material happiness or the short-lived feeling of being "in love."

- **Basic Human Need:** People need to feel loved, which is one of their most basic emotional wants. They say that all kids need love and care to be mentally healthy and become responsible adults. This urge lasts even after you become an adult and get married. It's not good for the mind to be alone without love.
- **The Emotional Love Tank:** Love is seen as an 'emotional tank' that needs to be filled. Anyone, of any age, will do well and feel safe when this tank is full. People may act out, pull away, say mean things, or be critical when they don't feel loved. This mental love tank needs to stay full for a marriage to work, just like the oil level in a car needs to stay at the right level.
- **Things vs. Love:** Things like a house or a car can't replace love. People who are full of love feel safe, have a strong sense of self-worth, and know that they matter. All these basic needs are met by love.

### II. What "Real Love" Is Not Like "Falling in Love"

It's important to understand the difference between "falling in love" and "real love."

- **The "In-Love" Experience:** Some say this mood is obsessive and makes them happy. It's not planned; it comes naturally. It temporarily fulfils the mental need for love by making you feel close and selfless. George Bernard Shaw described marriage as an institution that brings together two people "under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most delusive, and most transient of passions. They are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition continuously until death do them part." Shaw's comment was amusing when he wrote it at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it still makes us smile today, because it pokes fun at the unrealistic expectations that spring from a dearly held cultural ideal, that marriage should be based on intense, profound love and a couple should maintain their ardour until death do them part. But for thousands of years the joke would have fallen flat. [History of Marriage - Coontz].
- **Short-lived and easy to guess:** Once the in-love experience has run its natural course (usually two years or less), we all descend from the clouds and plant our feet on earth again. We return to the real world of human choice where individual desires and differences assert themselves, causing the illusion of intimacy to evaporate. [The five love languages - Chapman].

- **The Change to Real Love:** The most basic emotional need is to be genuinely loved by someone who chooses to love you, based on reason and choice, not instinct. [The five love languages - Chapman].

### III. The Five Love Languages' main idea

The main idea is that different people show and understand love in different ways, so you need to learn your partner's 'love language.' The most important thing that marriage advice doesn't consider is that everyone loves in their own unique way. A spouse can tell someone they love them, but if that person doesn't understand, the word won't get through, and the love tank will stay empty.

Everyone speaks these five languages:

1. **Affirmation:** Saying nice things about someone, like compliments, thanks, and positive words.
2. **Quality Time:** Giving someone your full attention. This means having good talks (caring conversations with each other without interruptions) and doing good things together.
3. **Giving gifts:** Gifts are physical memories that your partner was thinking of you and show that you love them. Being there or being yourself is also a gift in this case.
4. **Acts of Service:** Being willing to do things you know your partner would like you to do, like light housework or errands.
5. **Physical Touch:** Handholding, kissing, hugging, and having sex are all ways to show love through touch.

**Personalisation and dialects:** These five languages have different forms called dialects. For instance, focused attention, good discussion, and good tasks are all parts of Quality Time. It's very important to speak the partner's language.

### IV. How learning a language and speaking it work together

To have long-lasting emotional love, a pair must work hard to understand and use the other person's first language, even if it seems strange.

**Why it's important to know who you are:** It's very important to figure out what your main love language is. There are three things you can do to help:

- (1) notice what makes your partner angry (often their words).
- (2) notice what they want (which can be seen as persistent asking)
- (3) notice how they regularly show love for you.

## IN-LAWS & EXTENDED FAMILY

Marriage is recognized as the "only way to get in-laws," and since the dawn of civilization, "getting in-laws has been one of marriage's most important functions". [History of Marriage - Coontz]. The in-laws are like a 'social safety net' for a Muslim marriage. Lack of healthy relationships with in-laws can be one of the leading causes of divorce in the US among immigrant Muslims.

### I. Family Preparation and Selection

Parents and extended family play a role in choosing a spouse:

- **Safety Net and Support:** To make sure everyone is safe, it's "very important to include parents as much as possible and as early as possible" in the decision-making process. The pair is "vulnerable" and can't get help when things go wrong because their parents aren't involved.
- **Parental Input:** Family members "will continue to play a significant role in the lives of the couple," so think about what they have to say. Getting parental support is helpful. Shari'ah says that forcing someone to get married is wrong, so the adult child must make the choice.
- **Cultural Screening:** fit: Parents may want their children to marry someone from the same culture as them because sharing views and language makes things easier and more comfortable.
- **Proactive Investigation** Parents can look into potential mates to see if they are compatible and if they have "character flaws, abuse, etc." The family or wali does the background checks.

### II. Problems with in-laws

When people get married, their in-laws can be a source of worry, especially for immigrant and cross-cultural families:

1. **Conflict as a Major Issue:** In North American Muslim marriage and divorce trends, conflict between in-laws and extended family was the second most common cause of marital conflict. Frustration and resentment can arise if expectations regarding interaction are not "communicated clearly and directly". Sometimes, when a spouse has complaints about the partner's parents, the partner defends the parents first, which makes the complaining spouse feel "alienated, invalidated, and will eventually develop resentment" [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
2. **Cultural and Generational Gaps:** Many immigrant parents may have looked forward to their children marrying someone from their 'own culture, who speaks their own language, and who is familiar with all the cultural traditions that are part of their heritage'. Children raised in the US, including second- or third-generation Muslims, may be "ready to marry across cultures and races," which can be "hard for many immigrant parents to accept" [Before you tie the knot - Magid]

3. **Financial Pressure:** The son-in-law may feel 'inadequate and undermined' if he must meet the financial demands of his wife's family. Dads can give their girls money and gifts, but they should be careful not to make their husbands feel bad about themselves. Sometimes the man's parents will expect him to spend all of his free time with them, take the parents on all the couple's vacations, or give them so much financial help that the couple may be suffering. If a husband sends money to his parents, the amount should not impact the well-being of his wife and children [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
4. **Interference and Control:** Historically, 'in-law intrigues' were a major cause of tremendous turmoil and frequent violence in marital alliances and inheritance disputes among ruling families. [History of marriage - Coontz] Parents may play an abusive role by putting "too much pressure on the married couple". If parents are unhappy with the choice, they may "create so many problems" for the unwanted spouse that this person feels pushed out of the marriage. In some situations, a husband's parents may unfairly "blame the daughter-in-law for taking the son away" because he spends less time with them after marriage. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
5. **Caretaking Expectations:** Marriage was the only way to get in-laws, and caring for elders was one of the social functions organized by marriage. Shift to Independence: In contemporary Western societies, the notion that one should bring an aging parent into the home rather than putting them in an institution was considered a sign of an 'old-fashioned mom' who was likely neglecting her husband and children, leading to a marked drop in couples sharing homes with parents between 1900 and 1950. This modern unprecedented independence of the married couple from their relatives and in-laws has been cited as a critical factor in the crisis of modern marriage. [History of marriage - Coontz] In some cultures, there is an expectation that the daughter-in-law is not just a family member but a servant to the in-laws. If the family lives together, she may be expected to submit to the mother-in-law's rules regarding the kitchen or household management. In some scenarios, a wife may be "married primarily to become a caretaker for the husband's parents". This can create difficult situations, particularly if the parents have health or emotional issues that make them difficult to deal with. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
6. **Language Barriers:** Language barriers can severely impact relationships with in-laws. If a family speaks a different language or dialect that the spouse does not understand, expectations and connection are lost. This leads to frustration and resentment on both sides, as the spouse feels unable to participate. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]

### III. Taking care of relationships and duties

New couples are given advice on how to handle their extended families:

1. **Setting and Talking About Boundaries:** The biological adult child should be proactive in establishing communication, helping to build relationships, and setting boundaries. Parents and their children share a strong bond and a long history that provides a secure base and can withstand the adjustments required as new family members are integrated. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
2. **Consultation and Priority:** When your spouse has complaints about your parents, it is important to listen and try to understand your spouse perspective. Before defending your parents, try letting your spouse know what makes sense to you about the situation by putting yourself in the other's shoes. Remember that your spouse does not know your parents or have the same long history that you do. Once you are able to empathize, you will notice that your spouse may be able to hear your perspective or interpretation of your parents' behaviour. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
3. **Fairness:** A marriage can be drained very quickly if one spouse is constantly hearing complaints from both sides. If you are the spouse with the complaints, think carefully about what you really need to share or complain about. Remember that your spouse cannot control his or her parent's behaviours, and that no matter what, parents are parents and must be treated with respect and compassion. [Before you tie the knot - Magid] A wise woman will not create a situation in which her husband feels stuck between her and his parents.
4. **Co-Residence (Extended Family Living):**  
Parents of a new daughter or son-in-law shouldn't have the same power over them as they do over their own children. The couple should have their own relationship and room. If the husband's parents need care, it is primarily his job; the wife can play a supporting role but should not be expected to carry the burden alone [Before you tie the knot - Magid]
5. **Mediation:** If asked, parents can help settle a fight. As parents rarely stay impartial, however, it is usually best to talk to a professional counsellor or a neutral third party.

## WHEN MARRIAGE BREAKS

Islamically, there is no stigma or shame attached to divorce. It is presented as a legitimate option when couples are unable to live together *on a footing of kindness and equity (maruf)*. [Before you tie the knot - Magid]

In the larger context of Muslim Marriage: Success, Conduct, and Fiqh (Jurisprudence), divorce means breaking the holy bond (meethaq ghaleeth) and is seen as the worst thing that can happen to a marriage.

### I. The Seriousness and Current State of Divorce in Fiqh

It comes in a hadith that divorce is the worst legal action possible in the eyes of Allah, the Most Glorious and Most High. [Abu Dawud]

Divorce is only allowed in Islam when there is "great reluctance", and the problems can't be fixed. It is not the first option. You should never just be "throwing your weight around or proving your manhood."

In some Christian traditions, divorce is seen as a sin. The Catholic theory is that marriage law should recognize, embody and hold fast to, a moral or religious ideal, unmodified by consideration of the needs and moral condition of the community to which the law applies. This may be termed the idealistic theory [The divorce problem - Willcox]. But in Islam, that's not the case despite it been seen as a very concerning matter. The seriousness comes from the idea that "the family is the foundation of Islamic society. Usually, it's not good to rush into getting divorced.

### II. Reasons to Get a Divorce (When You Need One)

Divorce is only a good idea when problems can't be solved, and the family's physical or mental health is at risk.

- **Exhaustion of Avenues:** As the saying goes, all avenues have been exhausted" and the couple still cannot resolve their problem or tolerate being together. So, they can get a divorce.
- **Unfit Behaviour:** If a pair can't "keep [the marriage] within the limits set by Allah, they can get a divorce, which is also called khul'.
- **Abuse and Oppression:** If someone is being abused, they might need to think about leaving the relationship to feel safe and at peace again. Making people feel like they should stay together instead of getting a divorce, especially if there is abuse or big relationship problems, can have catastrophic effects on individuals.

### III. The Process of Last Resort (Fiqh of Divorce)

In order to give the pair the best chance of getting back together, the divorce process is very formalised and must follow Islamic law to the letter.

#### 1. Not making rash statements or threats

- **The Legal Weight of Words:** One of three types of comments are taken seriously, no matter how seriously or in jest they are said. Marriage and termination are the other two. Being angry doesn't mean the breakup isn't legal.
- Taking the term "divorce" out of your vocabulary, you need to completely remove the word "divorce" from your work language. Threats of divorce aren't taken seriously in some countries, but they can make people afraid to be with their partner.
- **Anger Management:** As the saying goes, divorce is usually given in anger and not over a cup of tea. If you want to avoid divorce, you should learn how to control your anger.

#### 2. The Suggested Way (Single Revocable Talāq)

The Prophet ﷺ said that a speedy, one-time breakup would give them time to calm down:

- One is enough: "One divorce will work for you for sure; it's strong enough."
- Divorce that can be undone (Talāq Raj'i): If the husband wants to end the changeable divorce during the waiting time (idda), which is three full menstrual cycles, he can say so or do something private. At this point, they stay in the same house together and don't get married. This gives them time to work things out.
- Irrevocable Divorce (Talāq Bā'in): If someone uses bad language or figurative language and gets a divorce, it can't be undone without a new marriage contract (nikāh) and the wife's approval, even if it happens during the 'idda period.

#### 3. The Risk of the Third Divorce (No Going Back)

- **Three is Three:** Most Sunni experts, including those from all four major schools, agree that three divorces given at the same time are the same thing. There is no going back after this breakup.
- **Not allowed to get married again:** After the third divorce, the woman will be legally split from her husband and cannot marry him again unless she gets married to someone else, consummates the marriage, and then gets divorced by that new husband (halāla).
  - **Abuse of Discretion:** Men who file all three divorces at once, as if only three will work and that any less won't, are abusing the power that has been given to them and making a big mistake that can have devastating consequences."



## IV. How a Wife Can Get a Divorce

If the husband is being stubborn, the wife can legally end the marriage, so she won't be stuck in a bad circumstance.

- **Wife Initiated Divorce:** There is also a process called "khul'" that a woman can go through to start a divorce. In this, she decides to give back her marriage gift (mahr) or another amount of money in exchange for a divorce that can't be changed.
- **Husband Refusing:** It is normal for a husband to flat out refuse to divorce their wives or to use the threat of divorce to punish or torture the wife.
- **Going to court:** If khul' can't be worked out between the two parties, the wife can go to a Shari'ah court or an arbitration panel to get help. It is unethical and prohibitively disliked (makruh tahrimi) for the husband to take any money in exchange for the divorce if he is the one who is causing problems and making the wife unhappy.

## V. How People Act After Divorce and Stigma

The way people should act during and after a divorce is in line with the Islamic idea that people should separate with respect and kindness, which goes against harmful social norms.

- **Separation with Kindness:** The contract says the couple must either stay together on good terms or part ways with kindness.
- **Parting Gift (Mut'a):** According to Islamic law, the husband should give the divorced woman a gift of pleasure (mut'a), which could be anything from a new outfit to ease some of the feelings of estrangement.
- **Eliminating Stigma,** it is okay for people to get a divorce if they can't get back together. In Islam, there is no stigma or shame attached to divorce. People still think of divorce as a social stigma in many places, which makes them want to stay together even more. This could lead to bad things, and women who are divorced are often seen as damaged goods.
- **Parental Pressure** The main reason parents tell their kids to get a divorce is that they don't understand Islamic beliefs, not because the kids don't understand them. The husband doesn't have to leave his wife just because his parents want him to, unless his father is very fair, like Umar (ra).
- **Bad for Kids:** Getting a divorce has "far-reaching effects," and when kids are involved, it's often said to feel like "a thousand knives thrown at one's heart." Their kids are more likely to get divorced as adults if their parents got split. Those who have children should "think very carefully about whether they really have tried everything" to keep their marriage together.



## SUPPLICATIONS & CLOSING

“O Allah, put between us love and mercy.  
Fill our home with tranquillity.  
Make us garments for each other  
protectors, comforters, companions  
and a means to Your pleasure.”

May Allah bless your future, your marriage, your home, and your heart.

## Cases to study

### CASE STUDY 1 “He Comes Home Silent, She Wants to Talk”

#### Scenario

Ahmed comes home tired after work. He sits quietly on the sofa.  
Zainab asks, “What’s wrong, talk to me.”  
He replies, “Nothing, I’m fine.”  
She feels ignored. He feels pressured.

#### What Goes Wrong

- She seeks connection
- He seeks decompression
- Both feel misunderstood

#### Analysis

Women talk to connect.  
Men talk when ready or when they have a solution.

Islamically:

- gentleness
- patience
- respectful timing

#### Model Solution

**She:** “Take your time, I’m here when you’re ready.”

**Later he says:** “I had a stressful day. Thank you for giving me space.”

Mutual respect builds trust.

**Reflection Question:**

Which one are you more like in this scenario?

**CASE STUDY 2 “The Cooking Comment”**

**Scenario**

During dinner:

Hamza says, “The rice is a bit undercooked today.”

Aisha responds, “So you think I’m a bad wife? You don’t appreciate anything.”

**What Goes Wrong**

- Simple feedback becomes a personal attack
- He feels confused
- She feels criticised as a person

**Analysis**

Criticism often masks sensitivity.

Men are direct; women hear emotional tone.

**Model Solution**

**Him:** “I love your cooking. Today the rice is slightly firm, that’s all. I appreciate everything you do.”

**Her:** “Okay, I understand. Thank you for saying it kindly.”

**Reflection Question:**

How do you handle feedback?

## **CASE STUDY 3 “Phone Use After Marriage”**

### **Scenario**

Fatimah notices that Yusuf uses his phone late at night.  
She feels emotionally abandoned.  
He says, “It’s work emails.”  
She thinks he doesn’t care.

### **What Goes Wrong**

- No boundaries
- Silent assumptions
- Emotional needs unmet

### **Analysis**

Islam emphasises *haqq* (rights) and *‘ishrah bil ma‘roof* (kind companionship).

### **Model Solution**

Set an agreement:

- No phones after 10 PM
- A nightly 10-minute check-in

This creates connection.

### **Reflection:**

What boundaries do YOU need in marriage?

## **CASE STUDY 4 “Financial Transparency”**

### **Scenario**

Sara finds out Bilal took a £400 loan from a friend and didn't tell her.

She feels betrayed.

He says, “It's my money, why do I need to tell you?”

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Trust breach
- No shared financial plan
- Misaligned expectations

### **Analysis**

Financial secrecy damages security.

### **Model Solution**

**Him:** “You're right. We need transparency.”

Create:

- monthly budget
- shared goals
- emergency fund

### **Reflection:**

How comfortable are you discussing finances?

## **CASE STUDY 5 “In-Law Interference”**

### **Scenario**

Hina wants to decorate the home.

His mother says, “No, do it my way.”

Hina feels controlled.

Husband says, “Just listen to my mum, it’s easier.”

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Wife feels unseen
- Husband avoids conflict
- Misplaced loyalty

### **Islamic Analysis**

The husband must protect the wife's emotional rights.

### **Model Solution**

**Husband:** “Mum, we love your opinions, but this is our home. Let Hina choose the décor.”

**Hina:** “Thank you for supporting me.”

### **Reflection:**

How do you expect your spouse to handle in-laws?

## **CASE STUDY 6 “The Silent Treatment”**

### **Scenario**

After an argument, Mariam stops speaking to Ali for two days.

Ali becomes cold and distant.

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Stonewalling
- Emotional punishment
- Building resentment

### **Analysis**

Silence kills marriages faster than arguments.

### **Model Solution**

Agree on a rule:

- Maximum 1-hour cooling period
- Then talk calmly

**Her:** "I needed space. I'm ready to talk."

**Him:** "Thank you. Let's resolve it."

### **Reflection:**

Is your conflict style avoidant, emotional, or direct?

## **CASE STUDY 7 "Different Love Languages"**

### **Scenario**

He buys gifts.

She says, "You never spend time with me."

He feels unappreciated.

She feels unloved.

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Both giving love in the wrong language

### **Analysis**

Giving love ≠ feeling love.

### **Model Solution**

**She:** "I love your gifts. What I really need is quality time."

**Him:** "I didn't realise. Let's plan weekly time together."

### **Reflection:**

What is your primary love language?

## **CASE STUDY 8 “Career vs Marriage Balance”**

### **Scenario**

Amina works long hours as a doctor.  
Her husband feels neglected.  
She feels pressured to choose.

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Competing expectations
- Zero planning
- Lack of empathy

### **Analysis**

Islam encourages fairness and collaboration.

### **Model Solution**

Use the **consultation model (shūrā)**:

- Reorganise schedules
- Create shared calendar
- Allocate time for each other
- Divide responsibilities fairly

### **Reflection:**

What lifestyle are you able/unable to accept in marriage.

## **CASE STUDY 9 “Religious Expectations Mismatch”**

### **Scenario**

He expects Fajr in the masjid daily.  
She struggles with early mornings.  
He interprets it as spiritual weakness.  
She feels judged.

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Unrealistic religious comparison
- Misunderstanding spiritual capacity

### **Islamic Analysis**

Allah does not burden a soul beyond capacity.

### **Model Solution**

**Him:** “We’re on different journeys. I will support you gently.”

**Her:** “I appreciate your encouragement.”

### **Reflection:**

What religious expectations are realistic for you?

## **CASE STUDY 10 “Proposal Phase Attachment”**

### **Scenario**

They get emotionally attached early.

Red flags appear.

They ignore them because feelings are involved.

### **What Goes Wrong**

- Emotions cloud judgement
- Boundaries crossed
- Pressure to continue

### **Analysis**

Attachment before clarity → heartbreak.

### **Model Solution**

- Structured meetings
- Family involvement
- Delayed emotional intimacy
- Clear questions

### **Reflection:**

How do you protect your heart during the selection process?



**QR code for 100 + premarital questions**



**Books Used:**

- Handbook of a healthy Muslim marriage – Abdurahman Mangera
- Initiating and upholding an Islamic marriage – Hedaya Hartford
- Before you tie the knot – Magid and Abugideiri
- The Muslim Marriage guide – Ruqaiyyah Maqsood
- Eight Dates – Gottman
- What makes love last - Gottman
- Men are from Mars and women are from Venus – John Gray
- Sacred Cows – Teller
- You're not listening – Kate Murphy
- Sacred Marriage – Gary Thomas
- Marriage History – Coontz
- The Seven Principles for making a marriage work – Gottman
- The five love languages – Gary Chapman
- The empowered wife – Laura Doyle