



Interfaith Marriages in Islam

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What is an Interfaith Marriage?

a marriage that occurs between two individuals with different spiritual or religious backgrounds

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There is no verse in the Holy Quran that bans Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men. Almighty God would have revealed explicit directives if Muslim women were not allowed to marry outside the faith. Unlike Muslim men who are only allowed to marry women from the "People of the Book" [Q 5:5], Muslim women on the other hand are only encouraged to marry a "believer".



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Background

- In the US, 1 in 10 Muslim women are married to a non-Muslim man
- 1 in 6 American Muslim women under 40 are married to a non-Muslim man
- 21% of Muslims in United States live or are married to a partner of a different faith
- In 2001 in the UK, 21,000 interfaith marriages were recorded
- A 2018 global study that looked at 30 different Muslim countries, found that 13.6% of Muslim parents were very comfortable having their daughter marry a man of a different faith
- 21.3% of Muslim parents were very comfortable having their son marry a woman of a different faith
- A 2018 poll found that interfaith marriages are just as common among American Muslims as they are among American Christians

In the absence of any proof that justifies the prohibition of the marriage of Muslim women to the followers of other monotheistic religions, the contemporary scholars justify their attitudes by “the natural weakness” of Muslim women who may go astray under the “bad” influence of their Christian or Jewish husbands. They added that it will adversely affect the children’s education. But the Muslim man is able to dominate his Christian or Jewish wife and protect his children’s and own faith. This generalized idea is not always true and the “strength” or the “weakness” of the religious belief is not associated with the gender but rather with the person’s personality and character.



Asma Lamrabet

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In Practice

- In India, Muslim women can freely marry non-Muslim men
- In Turkey, secular laws allow Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men
- A 2017 Tunisian law allows Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men
- Lebanon recognizes interfaith civil marriages that take place outside of the country

Quran does not expressly forbid Muslim women marrying non-Muslim men and neither prophet has expressly forbidden it. Read the verses again particularly the oft quoted verses 60:10 and 2:221. There is an advisement to marry with whom you are compatible, and whom you can live in harmony with. It is a relational guidance that a believing bondsman is better than a non-believing man and vice-versa for men. The comparison is for one to understand that the social status is not important, but harmony is.

Mike Ghouse

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MPV's Interfaith Marriage Services

- MPV's Marriage Celebrancy Services was formed in 2006 as a way to help couples from diverse backgrounds formalize their vows while incorporating the traditions of Islam
 - We currently have six officiants in our Officiant Network who bring their own unique background and experience to your wedding ceremony
 - More information about our Marriage Services program can be found on our website
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The idea that a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim is a tribal one in which a woman had to adopt the husband's culture, religion and customs. The Quran's mandate for a *nikah* (marriage) contract circumvented this culture and enabled women to define and dictate the terms of her marriage.

The claim by traditional religious authorities that Muslim women in the 21st Century and especially an educated one, is weak in her faith, is the tribal and patriarchy system stubbornly controlling a woman's right to self-determination and happiness.

Ani Zonneveld

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