

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
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21380 - Ruling on a Muslim man marrying a non-Muslim woman and vice versa

the question

I have some questions about Islam, could you explain them for me? Is it permissible for someone who follows Islam to marry someone who does not follow Islam without that person converting to Islam after marriage?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is permissible for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman if she is Christian or Jewish, but it is not permissible for him to marry a non-Muslim woman who follows any religion other than these two. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Made lawful to you this day are At-Tayyibaat [all kinds of Halaal (lawful) foods, which Allaah has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables and fruits)]. The food (slaughtered cattle, eatable animals) of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is lawful to you and yours is lawful to them. (Lawful to you in marriage) are chaste women from the believers and chaste women from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) before your time when you have given their due Mahr (bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage), desiring chastity (i.e. taking them in legal wedlock) not committing illegal sexual intercourse, nor taking them as girlfriends”

[al-Maa'idah 5:4]

Imam al-Tabari said in his commentary on this verse:

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“chaste women from the believers and chaste women from those who were given the Scripture” means, free woman among those whom have been given the Scripture, namely the Jews and Christians who believe in what is in the Tawraat (Torah) and Injeel (Gospel) from among the people who came before you, O believers in Muhammad, whether from among the Arabs or other people; you are permitted to marry them “when you have given their due Mahr (bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage)” which means, if you give to those whom you marry of your (Muslims’) chaste women and their (Jews’ and Christians’) chaste women their mahrs or dowries.”

(Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 6/104)

But it is not permissible for a Muslim man to marry a Magian (Zoroastrian) woman or a communist woman or an idol-worshipping woman, etc.

The evidence for that is the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And do not marry Al-Mushrikaat (idolatresses) till they believe (worship Allaah Alone). And indeed a slave woman who believes is better than a (free) Mushrikah (idolatress), even though she pleases you”

[al-Baqarah 2:221]

A mushrikah is an idol-worshipping woman who worships stones, whether from among the Arabs or others.

It is not permissible for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim from any other religion, whether from among the Jews or Christians, or any other kaafir religion. It is not permissible for her to marry a Jew, a Christian, a Magian, a communist, an idol-worshipper, etc.

The evidence for that is the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

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“And give not (your daughters) in marriage to Al-Mushrikoon till they believe (in Allaah Alone) and verily, a believing slave is better than a (free) Mushrik (idolater), even though he pleases you. Those (Al-Mushrikoon) invite you to the Fire, but Allaah invites (you) to Paradise and forgiveness by His Leave, and makes His Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) clear to mankind that they may remember”

[al-Baqarah 2:221]

Imam al-Tabari said:

What is said concerning the interpretation of the words “And give not (your daughters) in marriage to Al-Mushrikoon till they believe (in Allaah Alone) and verily, a believing slave is better than a (free) Mushrik (idolater), even though he pleases you” is that what Allaah meant by that is that Allaah has forbidden the believing women from marrying to a mushrik, no matter what kind of shirk he believes in. So, O believers, do not give your daughters in marriage to them, for that is forbidden to you. For you to give them in marriage to a believing slave who believes in Allaah and His Messenger and that which he brought from Allaah is better for you than to give them in marriage to a free mushrik even if he is of noble descent and honourable origins, even if you like his descent and background...

It was narrated that Qutaadah and al-Zuhri said, concerning the phrase “And give not (your daughters) in marriage to Al-Mushrikoon”, It is not permissible for you to give them in marriage to a Jew or a Christian or a mushrik who is not a follower of your religion. (Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 2/379).