

83424 - Is Marriage Predestined in Islam?

the question

Has Allah decreed for everyone whom they will marry? Do sin and obedience play any role in changing the divine decree?

I like a girl who is religiously committed and of good character, but she doesn't like me. Is it permissible for me to pray to Allah to make her like me and to make her my wife in the future?

Summary of answer

In Islam, marriage is a part of the divine decree, yet Muslims must strive to make righteous decisions. While Allah knows who will be your spouse from eternity, your free will plays a role in the path taken to marriage. By upholding religious principles, making sound choices, and relying on the guidance of Allah, Muslims can hope to achieve a blessed and happy marriage in accordance with divine will.

Detailed answer

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Understanding Divine Decree in Islam

The [divine decree](#) means that Allah has decreed all things from eternity, and He knows that they will happen at the times that are known to Him, in specific ways as He has written and willed. They will happen as He has decreed them and created them.

Belief in the [divine decree](#) is one of the pillars of faith without which a person's faith is not valid, and belief in the divine decree is not valid unless the Muslim believes in the four principles of

the divine decree which are:

- Belief that Allah knows all things in general and in details from eternity, and not even an atom is hidden from Him in heaven or on earth.
- Belief that Allah wrote all that in Al-Lawh Al-Mahfudh, fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.
- Belief in the effective will of Allah and His all-encompassing power. **Nothing happens in this universe, good or bad, except by His will, may He be Glorified.**
- Belief that everything is created by Allah; He is the Creator of all things and the Creator of their attributes and actions.

These details will explain to you that Allah has decreed from eternity who will be your family, **who will be your wife**, and who will be your children. Everything that has happened and will happen in the universe is decreed by Allah. Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have created all things with Qadar (Divine Preordainment of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees -Al-Lawh Al-Mahfudh).” [Al-Qamar 54:49]

Human Free Will and the Role of Personal Effort

This does not mean that a person has no will in this world, or that a person should not strive to apply the means of attaining happiness and soundness. Allah has created a means to reach every objective. Whoever wants to have a child has to get married. Whoever wants to be happy in the Hereafter has to strive hard for it, and follow the path of guidance. Whoever wants wealth has to work hard.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Know that everyone will be guided to do that for which he was created. Whoever is meant to be one of the people of happiness will be guided to do the deeds of the people of happiness, and whoever is meant to be one of the people of doom will be guided to do the deeds of the people of doom.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah does not tell anyone the details of what will happen to him, good or bad. Hence everyone has to strive to bring goodness to himself and ward off harm from himself. It is not wise to travel a path that leads to the opposite of what he wants and then say, “I will never get anything but that which has been decreed for me.”

No one should sit in his house and then say: “I will never get any provision but that which has been decreed for me.” No one should eat rotten food and then say: “Nothing will happen to me but that which Allah has decreed for me.” These are things which if anyone does them or says them, he would be regarded as insane and he is indeed insane.

With regard to marriage in particular, the Muslim knows that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged marriage to one [who is religiously committed](#). This means that he should look for and seek out one who is religiously committed.

No wise man would say “I will never try to do that” because if he is offered a woman who is insane or ugly or old or of bad character, he would never accept her as a wife. He will never say that he will marry the first woman he sees or the first woman who is offered to him. This supports what we have said, that he will turn away from some women and will think about others and will hesitate about some of them, and so on.

If, after looking, thinking, consulting others and praying [Istikharah](#), he chooses a woman who is suitable for him, he will know that what Allah decrees happens and what He does not decree does not happen, so he should hope that his Lord will guide him and decree for him that which is best for him and dearest to Allah. Then if it happens, and his Lord decrees that he be given it or it be withheld, and whether it is in accordance with his desires or not, he has to think positively of his Lord and realize that Allah does not decree anything for His grateful, patient, believing slave but that which is good.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for all his affairs are good and this does not apply to anyone except the believer. If something good happens to him he is grateful, and that is good for him, and if

something bad happens to him he is patient, and that is good for him.” (Narrated by Muslim, 2999)

The Impact of Obedience and Sin on Divine Decree

With regard to the effect of obedience and sin on changing the divine decree, you know that that which is in Al-Lawh Al-Mahfudh can never be changed. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.” (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 2516 and he classed it as authentic from the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him))

As for the pages which are in the hands of the angels, Allah may command His angels to change it because of an act of worship that a Muslim does or because of a sin that he commits, but in the end it will not be anything other than that which was decreed from eternity. This is indicated by the verse in which Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Allah blots out what He wills and confirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother of the Book (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfudh)} [Ar-Ra`d 13:39]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) urged us to do some acts of worship which have an effect of increasing a person’s lifespan, such as upholding ties of kinship, and he said that Du`a can repel the divine decree. What this means is that Allah knew from the beginning that His slave So and so would do this act of worship, so He decreed for him a long life or a blessed provision, and au contraire a person may commit a sin because of which he is deprived of provision, and Allah knew that and decreed it from eternity and decreed it according to His knowledge. Allah does not compel anyone to obey Him or disobey Him.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) summed this up in one Hadith:

It was narrated that Thawban said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Nothing increases one’s lifespan except righteousness and nothing repels the divine decree except Du`a, and a man may be deprived of provision by a sin that he commits.”

Al-Busayri (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Misbah Az-Zujajah (no. 33)

I asked our Shaykh Abu Al-Fadl Al-`Iraqi (may Allah have mercy on him) about this Hadith and he said: This is a hasan Hadith. (End quote)

It was also classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Ibn Majah.

It was narrated from Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever would like his Rizq (provision) to be increased and his life to be extended, should uphold the ties of kinship.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 5640 and Muslim, 2557)

At-Tabarani narrated with his chain on narration from Abu `Uthman An-Nahdi, that `Umar ibn Al-Khattab said when he was circumambulating the Ka`bah and weeping: “O Allah, if You have decreed that I should be doomed or commit sin, then erase it, for You erase whatever You will, and You confirm (whatever You will), and with You is the Mother of the Book, so make it happiness and forgiveness.”

The Successor, Abu Wa'il Shaiq ibn Salamah, often used to supplicate with these words: “O Allah, if You have decreed that we be doomed, then erase it and decree that we be blessed. If You have decreed that we be blessed, then confirm it for us, for You erase whatever You will and You confirm (whatever You will), and with You is the Mother of the Book.” (End quote from Tafsir At-Tabari, 7/398)

Seeking a Righteous Partner and Avoiding Forbidden Acts

Your love for a girl who is of good character and religiously committed means that you must beware of falling into anything that is forbidden in Shari`ah, such as corresponding with her, speaking to her or being alone with her. We do not advise you to pray to Allah to make her like you, rather we advise you to pray that Allah will bless you with a righteous wife.

If you see a woman to whom the description of a righteous woman applies, then go ahead and propose marriage to her. There is no need to specify a particular woman who may reciprocate your love and then you may both do something that is contrary to Shari`ah but it may not be easy for you to get married. Asking Allah to help you to find a righteous wife is better for you, in our opinion.

To be honest with you, we think that forming an attachment to that girl is a sign of idleness. What we mean is that you are not keeping yourself busy with important things, so the devil is filling your heart with things that will harm you and affect your religious commitment, or things that go against your best interests.

Ibn Al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that Ibn `A'ishah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I said to a doctor who was highly proficient: What is love? He said: The occupation of an empty heart. (End quote from Dhamm Al-Hawa, 290)

But tell me, by Allah, are you seriously looking for a suitable wife right now?

If you are serious about it, would you really go ahead and get married now?

If you are serious about getting married now, are your circumstances suited for that?

It was narrated that Muhammad ibn Maslamah said: I proposed marriage to a woman, then I hid and waited to see her until I saw her among some date palm trees that belonged to her. It was said to him: Do you do such a thing when you are a companion of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)? He said, "When Allah causes a man to propose to a woman, there is nothing wrong with him looking at her." (Narrated by Ibn Majah, 1864; classed as authentic by Al-Albani)

Look at how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made permission to look conditional upon the intent to marry.

The scholars said: This is an exception to the prohibition on looking at a non-Mahram woman. Hence it is only justified in cases of necessity when it is hoped that the marriage will go ahead.

Ibn Al-Qattan (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If the one who is proposing marriage to a woman knows that she will not marry him, and that her guardian will not agree to it, then it is not permissible for him to look at her, even if he has already asked her family for her hand in marriage, because looking is only permitted so that it might be a cause of the marriage going ahead. If he is sure that it will not happen, then the basic principle that looking is not allowed remains in effect. (End quote from An-Nadhar fi Ahkam An-Nadhar, 391)

It is well known that wanting to get married on the part of one who cannot afford it or whose circumstances do not permit it at the present time is a kind of fooling about and wasting time, which distracts the heart from useful things, and may even cause harm.

When you are serious, then seek the help of Allah and ask Him to guide you. If she remains as she is, and you have prayed [Istikharah](#) asking your Lord for guidance, then go ahead and propose to her. Otherwise, there are many other women like her, so seek one who is religiously committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust!

We ask Allah to guide you to that which will please Him, and to help you to do that which He loves and which pleases Him, and to bless you with a righteous wife and good offspring.

And Allah knows best.