

The OPEN MOSQUE

Home of Enlightened, Egalitarian and Erudite Islam



M Policy on Marriage



MARRIAGES AT THE OPEN MOSQUE INTRA-FAITH & INTER-FAITH WEDDINGS

Unlike other Islamic institutions, The Open Mosque maintains its uncompromising fidelity to the Holy Qur'an by publicly conducting **intra-faith** marriages as well as **inter-faith weddings** (*nikahs*). The former takes place amongst Muslims, irrespective of their denominational allegiance or sectarian affiliations. In contrast with others, the Open Mosque does not preclude Muslims from variant theological backgrounds and schools (*madhahib*) or with any schismatic beliefs (Sunni, Shi'ah, Salafi, Ahmadi, Sufi, Tablighi, Wahhabi, etc) from marrying each other. Neither does it pontificate about the validity or the veracity of anyone's personal convictions or his or her individual philosophy. Such religious judgement, contrary to what intolerant Muslim clerics wrongly preach, clearly belongs **exclusively to the Creator** (Q 1:4; 74:11).

The latter type of **interfaith nuptials between Muslims and non-Muslims** is regularly officiated at the Open Mosque, as there is nothing in **the Holy Qur'an –Islam's transcendent text** – that prohibits such matrimonial unions. It is only the highly suspect dictates of a biased Muslim clergy and a sexist priesthood that oppose interfaith marriages or makes conversion by the non-Muslim partner to Islam mandatory. Traditional shaykhs and orthodox imams have no right to manufacture invented 'dogmas' and 'theories' (Q 33:67-68) or for that matter, to forbid genuine interfaith nuptials by shamelessly misinterpreting Islam's sacred scripture to justify their outdated chauvinistic prejudices, peculiar tribal habits and archaic patriarchal bigotry. (Q 6:114).

The Holy Qur'an is explicit that Muslim men are entitled to marry virtuous non-Muslim women (Q 5:5) without them having to convert to Islam. Indeed, the blessed Prophet Muhammad himself – according to authoritative biographical sources – married Maryam al-Qibtiya (Mary, the Copt), a Coptic lady from Egypt, without requiring her to forego her Christianity and to adopt Islam.

In this respect, the Open Mosque firmly follows **indisputable Qur'anic jurisprudence** (16:116) that **whatever** is not expressly prohibited (*haram*) in Islam's divine book is invariably permissible (*halal*). With the sole exception of proscribing weddings with pagans and idolaters, there are no credible scriptural strictures against mixed marriages within the Islamic context. The Open Mosque, therefore proudly, implements the Qur'an's holistic inclusivity in bringing committed betrothed men and women of divergent faiths together in **lawful matrimony**.



While the Qur'anic verse above (5:5) sanctions approved marriage between Muslim men and non-Muslim women, Islam's holy text is **purposely silent** the other way around. **Why?** In 7th century Arabia, a rampant patriarchy and an unfettered primitive sexism rendered it impossible for a Muslim woman to maintain her independence or creed if she married outside the fold of Islam. Today, however, women are no longer subjugated or subservient to male domination. Moreover, aside from two 'extraneous' verses (Q 2:221 & 60:10) that are deliberately misconstrued by retrogressive Muslim priests, there is **no specific Qur'anic dictum** that bans a Muslim woman from marrying a genuinely honourable and monotheistic non-Muslim man (Q 3:199).



“ On the basis of **this incontrovertible theological fact**, the Open Mosque has from its inception, been in the forefront of performing formal *nikahs* between Muslim women and their non-Muslim partners (as well as those between Muslim men and non-Muslim women. ”

Such heterosexual matrimonial unions are subject to in-depth **pre-marital consultations** as well as a **binding legal covenant** (Q 4:21) that emphasizes the explicit terms and conditions of *bona fide* interfaith marriage within Islam. The primary objective of the marriage contract is to permanently sustain and safeguard the religious liberty, the Islamic lifestyle and the personal autonomy of the Muslim spouse without obliging the non-Muslim partner to embrace Islam.

THE OPEN MOSQUE

welcomes forward-looking Muslims as well as discerning non-Muslims to get in touch if they wish to formalise their love and commitment to and with their beloved soul mates through a recognized wedding ceremony at either its premises or any other appropriate venue. This formal ceremonial service fully respects and upholds each person's distinctive religion without requiring that anyone should change his or her creed.

The **intra-Islamic** and **interfaith marriages** undertaken by the Open Mosque replaces the moribund blind imitation of time-bound medieval customs with something that is far more **authentic and relevant** in a truly vibrant, multicultural and globalised world. The Open Mosque's pioneering nuptial ceremony epitomizes its equal dedication to both the letter as well as spirit of the Holy Qur'an.



“ The Open Mosque is here for you to love and marry the person you want to be with ! ”



Come celebrate your formal intra-faith *nikah* or interfaith wedding at South Africa's most egalitarian and enlightened mosque. Arrange a contemporary marriage ceremony that is profoundly pertinent, pluralistic and progressive. Plan a solemn and special occasion, which is combined with unrivalled personal happiness, joyous social festivity and heartfelt family jubilation that will highlight your blissful wedding day. An event that incorporates both cosmopolitan diversity as well as religious tolerance in accordance with the authentic teachings of Islam's divine book (Q 49:13; 30:22; 2:62; 5:69).

Simply email: secretary@theopenmosque.org.za to initiate preliminary communication for your forthcoming wedding / *nikah*.