

The Muslim Wedding Ceremony

In Islam, marriage is known by the Arabic term, Nikaah, and is considered an agreement between the couple and Allah.

Baraat

The groom arrives accompanied by his immediate family and groomsmen. Music is generally played during this part of the wedding to celebrate the upcoming wedding. The groom remains in another room awaiting the bride's entrance and cannot come outside during the time. Before the groom's entrance into the ballroom, the Imam (officiant) enters the ballroom and awaits the groom's entrance. The groom makes his grand entrance preceded by his groomsmen and his mother, sister(s) and brother(s) and proceeds to the ceremonial table. The Imam commences the ceremony.

Nikaah

The Imam starts the ceremony by explaining the aspects of a Muslim wedding. He then proceeds by calling for 2 credible witnesses and the 'Wakeel' (whom the bride empowers to provide the proposal of the wedding on her behalf). Once the witnesses and the Wakeel has placed themselves beside the ceremonial table, the next part of the Muslim ceremony is to obtain acceptance from the groom for the wedding proposal and this must be asked and accepted 3 times. Once the groom has accepted the proposal 3 times, the Imam will then instruct the witnesses and the Wakeel to bring the bride to the ceremonial table.

The bride will then make her grand entrance into the ballroom, first being preceded by her sisters and then the rest of the bridal party. Next her mother and father Bertram will enter the ballroom leading the pathway for their daughter's entrance. The bride then immediately follows her parent's path, being carried in a 'Haudaj' (carriage) as a princess meeting her prince, with music playing in the background. Once the bride reaches the ceremonial table, her parents escort her out of the Haudaj to the table to continue with the Muslim ceremony.

The Imam will present a reading of the Holy Qu'ran on the meaning of marriage and the couple's responsibility to each other. Bride and groom will then share a single glass of sharbat, followed by the exchanging of rings to symbolize their commitment to one another. The bride, groom and wakeels will then sign a contract consenting to the marriage. The written marriage contract (Agd-Nikah) is then publicly announced.

To complete the nikaah, bride and groom will then rise to give salutations of peace "As-Salamu."

Dua

The Imam at this time will then make a supplication (dua) to God All Mighty to bless the couple and their union. The Imam will also bless those attending the wedding.

Blessing the Groom

The groom receives blessings from the older women from both families and he offers them his salaam (Islamic greeting). The guests pray for the newlyweds.

Walima

After the ceremony and consummation of the marriage, the festivities continue with a Walima, or wedding reception, for family and friends to celebrate the marriage. Often, the Walima is thrown in the groom's hometown and can be much after the actual Nikaah ceremony. The reception includes dancing and a wedding feast of delicious foods and desserts.

Dokhla

The Walima ends with bride's departure with groom. This is known as the Dokhla. This farewell is traditionally an emotional part of the day because it symbolizes the bride leaving her parental home to begin a life with her husband. However, in this case, bride and groom leave as the most happiness couple on the earth, as they have found their soul mate, their destiny that walked beside them, hand in hand.