

# The Quran and its Message

The articles on this website may be reproduced freely as long as the following source reference is provided:

Joseph A Islam [www.quransmessage.com](http://www.quransmessage.com)

سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

## NIKAAH AL-MUT'AH - TEMPORARY MARRIAGE

*Joseph A Islam*

---

Copyright © 2009 Joseph A Islam: Article last modified 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011

Nikah al-mut'ah (or commonly known as 'mut'ah) is a temporary marriage contract in which two parties agree to the duration of the marriage at the start of the agreement. The agreement does not have a lower limit. As an example, it can range from 45mins, one night, one month or 10 years. The time is mutually agreed. A form of 'mahr' (gift) is often advanced and in this period, man and woman can resume intimacy and in effect, live as married couples. At the end of the specified period, the Nikaah al-mut'ah is automatically dissolved without the need for divorce.

In the main, this type of marriage is acceptable in Shia Islam and forbidden in Sunni Islam. Both Shia and Sunni agree based on [Islamic secondary sources](#) that this was a practice which was permissible during the Prophet's ministry and among believers. Sunni Muslims believe it later to be abrogated whilst the Shia contest that this practice was outlawed without warrant by a Caliph of Islam. The discussions are often endless between the two sects citing each other's Islamic sources to validate their respective positions.

**Needless to say, that the concept of 'Nikaah al-mut'ah' (temporary marriage) does not exist in the Quran.**

The Quran is replete with edicts which govern full marriage (Nikaah), with guidance to support the marriage institution and systematic instructions to be meticulously followed in case of divorce. Even with respect to 'slaves', full nikaah (wedlock) has been stipulated to avoid fornication or debauchery and with a desire to maintain sincere wedlock (4:24). **Please see related article [1] below.**

### SHIA USE OF THE QURAN TO SUPPORT NIKAAH AL-MUT'AH

The Shia often attempt to invoke the support of verse 4:24 to sanction the practice of 'mut'ah'.

#### 004.024

"Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess. Thus has God ordained (prohibitions) against you: Except for these, all others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with your wealth - **desiring chastity, not lust**, seeing that you derive benefit

from them (**Arabic: is'tamta'tum**), give them their bridal due as an obligation and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed; surely God is Knowing, Wise"



Illustration - Joseph Islam

The Shia assert that the Arabic term '**istamta'tum**' is a reference to 'Nikaah al-mut'ah' (temporary marriage) by making use of [Islamic secondary sources](#) to justify their interpretation. The Quran remains the primary source of interpretation and if the term is studied from within the context of the verse and via the overarching narratives of the Quran, the interpretation advanced by the Shia **simply cannot** be supported.

Reading the verse from within its own context, it is clear that the term 'is'tamta'tum' is a reference to the mutual benefits that both husband and wife derive from each other in wedlock. In this context, the example of a male has been cited as the verse deals primarily with women. However, this mutual beneficial relationship in which partners in wedlock find tranquility (**30:21**) and intimacy (**2:187**) through each other has been well established in other verses of the Quran.

There is nothing in the Arabic term, within the context of verse 4:24 and in the wider context of the Quran to suggest that this is a reference to 'temporary marriage'.

## UNDERSTANDING IS'TAMTA'TUM

Is'tamta'tum is formed from its root 'Mim-Ta-Ayn' and means to benefit, to enjoy for purposes of mutual advantage or to profit from one another. Other uses of this term in the Quran underscore this interpretation.

### 006.128 (Part)

"One day He will gather them all together, (and say): "O you assembly of Jinns! Certainly you have (misled) many of mankind" And their friends amongst mankind will say: "Our Lord! we profited (**Arabic: is'tamta'a**) from each other..."

### 009.069 (Part)

"As in the case of those before you, they were mightier than you in strength, and more abundant in wealth and children. So they enjoyed (**Arabic: fa-is'tamta'u**) their portion and you have enjoyed (**Arabic: fa-is'tamta'tum**) your portion, as did those enjoy (**Arabic: is'tamta'a**) before you..."

There is **no evidence** in the Quran to support the above understanding of the Arabic term 'is'tamta'tum' and when applied to verse 4:24 as 'temporary marriage'.

---

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The concept of temporary marriage is alien to the Quran. Even the verse 4:24 used for support by the Shia, clearly stipulates that marriage should not be undertaken for purposes of lust but rather for sincere and honest wedlock.

Whether a Prophet of God would have allowed such a practice given the inspiration of the Quran that he received from God is difficult to accept. It is far more probable that individuals who wished to practice such lusts quoted the Prophet as an authority which was later compiled as Hadith, centuries after the death of the Prophet. The Quran gives absolutely no indication or warrant for such a practice.

This practice remains nothing but a form of prostitution masked to give it religious sanction.

The root causes for endless debates between the Shia and Sunni on this matter are often due to their reliance on [Islamic secondary sources](#). Adherents of each sect often vehemently argue their case citing selective hadith from the plethora of narratives found within the corpus. The Quran gives these sources no authority for judgment.

### 068:036-38

"What is wrong with you, how do you judge? Or do you have another book which you study? In it, you can find what you wish?"

### Related Articles:

- (1) [Sex with Slave Girls](#)
- (2) [Nikaah - The Contract of Marriage](#)
- (3) [The Quran Stands Alone As Sole Religious Guidance](#)

[Joseph Islam](#)

© 2010 Quransmessage.com All Rights Reserved