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Sustaining the islamic marriage institution in malaysia: Lessons from qur’anic stories (Article)

Binti Mohamad, N.Z.A.<sup>a</sup>, Malek, N.A.<sup>b</sup>, Samsudin, S.<sup>c</sup>, Jani, N.A.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Qur’an and Sunnah Studies, KIRKHS, IIUM, Malaysia  
<sup>b</sup>Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyyah of Laws, International Islamic University, Malaysia  
<sup>c</sup>Department of Qur’an and Sunnah Studies, International Islamic University, Malaysia

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Abstract

Divorce rates are rising in Malaysia and as a consequence, the sacred Islamic marriage institution is directly affected by this phenomenon. It was reported that the number of divorces in 2010 was 28,035 and it increased rapidly to 48,077 as of July 2016. JAKIM has identified ten major causes of divorce in Malaysia which are: irresponsibility, weak Islamic foundation, third party interference, cultural differences, sexual issues, financial crisis, career dilemma, health problems, moral decay and communication obstacles. The Quran contains several narratives on marital relationship, which can serve as examples for married couples. This study critically investigates to what extent these Qur’anic references may guide a married couple’s better understanding of their roles and duties as husband and wife, thus significantly enhancing their quality of marriage. The research proves that marital life is an arena for jihad, which means married couples must strive and make their utmost effort to strengthen their marriage. Virtues such as humility, patience and honesty are prime qualities in a marriage, whereas vices such as irresponsibility, arrogance and infidelity are detriments. The research highlights solutions for almost every cause of divorce as identified by JAKIM, which expects to reduce the divorce rate and sustain the Islamic marriage institution in Malaysia. Finally, it is recommended that JAKIM should consider including the research findings in its post-marital course as it is one of the best platforms to propagate the Qur’anic stories of husbands and wives to Muslim married couples in Malaysia. © 2019, International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

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The findings of the Qur’anic story of Zakariyyā and his wife could benefit married couples in Malaysia, especially in highlighting the importance of patience. Although Zakariyyā could have married another woman to have children, he personally chose to remain in a monogamous marriage and continue praying. Today with the advancement of technology, married couples who opt to stay in monogamous marriage can seek fertility treatments in order to have their own biological children. Underprivileged Malaysian couples can request help from the Tunku Azizah Fertility Foundation (TAFF), which provides financial assistance to obtain fertility treatment in addition to counselling and support services.<sup>72</sup>

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