



Top **7** Things

Every **Greek Muslim** Must Know

Iman Kouvalis



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7. One Big Family: *How to Cope*

Sometimes it can be all too overwhelming.



Everything is moving so fast, your faith is high and you feel like you want to conquer the world.

You might very well experience what is known as ***culture shock***. Well, it's natural when you have entered into a family of *1.5 billion* people from all over the globe and into the multitudes of cultures and races.

I know when I first converted to Islam, I converted through studying Islamic books so when I started to fully interact with the Muslim community, **I noticed a huge gap between what Islam says and what Muslims do.**

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

"None of you can truly be said to believe until he wants for his brother what he wants for himself."

[Bukhari]

To make it even more confusing, every culture had their own way of doing things!

I later realized that Islam, although it's very simple and clear on the surface, it is so much deeper when you trod further into the rulings.

I guess it has to be if it's going to be a way of life, encompassing everything in your life and everyone else's until the Day of Judgment. It takes into consideration all types of conditions, cultures and people.

Words of Wisdom

The best thing I did was to study further to understand the Qur'an and the Sunnah through our beloved scholars and people of knowledge **so my advice to you is to keep studying and be patient with people of different cultures.**

Do not shun someone because of what you may think is incorrect but study further to see if what that person is doing is *a/so* acceptable.

6. The Secret to Finding Yourself



"Oh my, you've turned into a Turk! Come home pregnant, doing drugs, but nothing – no nothing – can be worse than this!"

If this hasn't already happened to you, it will.

It is inevitable that a family or community member will assume that just because you are a Muslim, for some reason you have automatically transformed into a Turk.

While there is *nothing wrong* with being a Turkish Muslim, we just aren't one.

Balancing Act

Rest assured, you can *still* keep your identity and Greek culture because Islam lets you do that.

Culture and religion are two separate ideas and it's just a matter of explaining this to Greeks who think you've lost your mind and gone over to the other side.

After all, there are Arab Christians, Jewish Arabs, Indian Hindus and Indian Muslims, so why can't there be Greek Orthodox and Greek Muslims?

" ... and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another.

Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has piety. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

[Qur'an 49:13]

Although there are many aspects of the culture that you can keep like the food and language, there are some other aspects that definitely need to be thrown out the window.

This would include things like associating partners with Allah, icons, saints and things of this nature.

Oh yeah, I forgot to mention you probably won't be attending many Greek weddings or parties anymore and you most definitely won't be kissing strangers of the opposite gender when you greet them!

5. Ottomans: *It's Not What You Think*



This is, perhaps, one of the most *distorted* aspects of Islamic history.

What a Muslim would consider a full, just Islamic state from 1299-1923CE spanning three continents at one point, Greek children all over the country have been notoriously taught that it was *400 years of slavery!*

In fact, Greek Muslim communities have been complaining for decades that their government-legislated textbooks described Ottoman conquerors as 'uncivilized barbarians who brutalised their Greek subjects'.

Quite the opposite!

Do a little research and you will find that the Ottoman sultans were very tolerant of other faiths, the *dhimmis*.

The *Real* Facts

They were just and fair to them and under the jizyah system, gave them military protection as well as left them to take care of their own internal administration.

"Verily you shall conquer Constantinople. What a wonderful leader will her leader be, and what a wonderful army will that army be!"

[Bukhari & others]

One clear proof of this is of the eloquent words of Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih who was famous for conquering Constantinople and fulfilling the prophecy of the Prophet (ﷺ) that the Muslims would one day conquer this city.

Not only did he declare himself as the protector of the Greek Orthodox church and the Arch Bishop, in the treaty of 1463 between the Ottoman Sultan and the Christians of Bosnia, he said,

Let nobody bother or disturb those who are mentioned, not their churches. Let them dwell in peace in my empire and let those who have become refugees be and safe. Let them return and let them settle down their monasteries without fear in all the countries of my empire.

4. Rethinking Marriage Options



With Greek Muslims being a minority spread vastly throughout the earth, it can be very difficult to find a potential suitor that not only is from the same culture, but from the same country who is also compatible to you.

You might find that marrying a Muslim from another culture might be more practical (or even desirable to you) but with this option, make sure you know what you are getting into from the beginning.

Inter-Cultural Marriage Dos and Don't's

Inter-cultural marriages can either be blissful or challenging as with any marriage.

When people get into conflict about money, gender responsibilities, lifestyle, parenting or in-laws, they tend to go back to the default and in this case that is their own cultural practices.

While there is nothing wrong with that, if your spouse is expecting you to follow a certain 'rule' in his culture and your 'rule' is opposite, one of you will be compromising.

Bottom line:

Communicate about this before marriage.

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the **difference of your languages and colours.**

Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge."

[Qur'an 30:22]

Inter-Religious Marriages

We shouldn't forget one more option for men: inter-religious marriages.

While there are pros and cons to this, my own observation is that the *cons weigh heavier*.

Marrying a Christian or a Jew will make it harder for you to raise your children as Muslims and in some cases will make it very hard for you to cope with some of their day-to-day rituals like mixing, partying etc.

However, I don't want to blow it off completely.

I know of a select few cases where the wife converted to Islam after marriage by studying Islam.

This might be a good solution, especially for those who live in a country where the vast majority is not Muslim.

3. We Civilized the World, or Did We?



Although many Greeks would claim to monopolize the ownership of the word, 'civilization', we have to be fair and note that it was the Muslims who preserved, modified, corrected, added to and contributed to civilization and humanity.

When Europe was down under in the Dark Ages, it was (mostly non-Arab) Muslim scholars who were applying this knowledge and advancing in it in many fields including:

- literature
- mathematics
- medicine
- geography
- architecture
- engineering
- chemistry

" A Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), who recites to you the Verses of Allah containing clear explanations, that He may take out, those who believe and do righteous good deeds **from the darkness (of polytheism and disbelief) to the light (of Monotheism and true Faith)...."**

[Qur'an 65:11]

Prince Charles Defends Islam

Even Prince Charles, Heir to the British Monarchy stated:

"If there is much misunderstanding in the West about the nature of Islam, there is also much ignorance about the debt our own culture and civilization owe to the Islamic world... The medieval Islamic world, from central Asia to the shores of

the Atlantic, was a world where scholars and men of learning flourished..."

When you come to think of it, in the end, who *really* did civilize the world?

Of course, it was all of the prophets of Allah including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Prophet Muhammad (peace be on them all).

They all came with one message from Allah that would take us out ***"from the darkness to the light"***.

2. Dealing with Family: *Character is the Dough of Life*



If *you* have changed, *your family* hasn't.

I made that mistake when I first converted to Islam to somehow transfer my euphoria unto them but it backfired.

Just because you now see evil in mixing, dating, clubs, drinking, etc., that doesn't mean your family does.

People will only have strength to stop these societal ills when they have faith in their heart.

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. **And that you be dutiful to your parents.** If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor."

[Qur'an 17:23]

It took some years to figure this out but the best way to deal with family is through your character, not admonitions.

A Muslim strives to have the best of character. Taking the analogy of bread, character is the dough and knowledge is only the salt.

Believe it or not, years down the road, your parents might even comment that your life has changed for the better when they see how respectful you are!

Do Not Say 'Uff'

Of the most important character traits is to be **very kind to your parents without any slight sign of disrespect.**

This might seem alien to us as Greek Muslims (*No shouting? Come on.*) but your parents will notice your effort!

There are some rulings that could affect your relationship with your non-Muslim family that you should read up on like inheritance, burials and making dua for them.

It might sound depriving not to be able to ask Allah to forgive your parents but remember that the best person to walk on the face of this earth, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), also had parents who were disbelievers.

We are allowed to ask Allah to guide them to the straight path.

1. You Are Not Alone: *Connecting with Rethinkers of Life*



You are now part of the first dynamic online global Greek Muslim community!

Finally, you have a place to *connect* with other Greek Muslims around the world, have access to the most updated news that relates to you, to find *balance* between Islam and culture and to *download resources* in Greek and English for you and your non-Muslim family members and community.

Take a minute to visit our forum at www.greeksrethink.com/forum and connect with people just like you around the globe immediately.

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