

Living as Husband and Wife Without Marriage

It is well known that in Islam: a man and a woman cannot live together without marriage. A valid marriage has to meet certain requirements such as *ishhar* (announcement), the payment of the dower, the consent of both parties, the permission of the *wali* (woman's guardian), and the presence of witnesses.

Sheikh Ahmad Kutty, a senior lecturer and Islamic scholar at the Islamic Institute of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, states: In Islam, it is not permissible for a man and woman to live together as if they were husband and wife without marriage. This is fornication pure and simple. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“What is *halal* is clear and what is *haram* (forbidden) is clear.”** Since marriage in Islam is not a secret affair between man and woman but a social contract, one cannot form a secret liaison and call it by the name of marriage. In order for marriage to be recognized as valid it must fulfill the following minimum requirements: The Marriage must be expressed in clear and unequivocal terms signifying the full of consent of both male and female either in words or writing; it should be witnessed by two reliable Muslim witnesses; and it should also be publicized. If the above conditions are not fulfilled, the a man and a woman cannot be considered as husband and wife.