

Islam and Sharia Law

Islam is a religion centred on the **Quran** and the teaching of **Muhammad**. Islam teaches that the creation of everything in the universe was brought into being by God's command as expressed by the wording, "Be, and it is," and that the purpose of existence is to worship God. He is viewed as a personal god and there are no intermediaries, such as clergy, to contact God. The Islamic creed requires belief in six articles: God, angels, revelation, prophets, the Day of Resurrection, and the divine predestination.

An Image of the Quran



Adherents of Islam, called Muslims, number approximately 1.9 billion globally and are the world's second-largest religious population after Christians. Muslims believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed many times through earlier prophets, the most important being Adam (believed to be the first man), Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims consider the Quran to be the verbatim word of God and the unaltered, final revelation.

The religion of Islam originated in Mecca about 610 CE. Muslims believe this is when Muhammad began receiving revelation. By the time of his death, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam. There are two major Islamic denominations: Sunni (85-90%) and Shia (10-15%). Sunni-Shia differences arose from disagreements over the succession to Muhammad and over the years this has led to countless wars due to those disagreements – similar to the Catholic and Protestant Christian religions. The Jews (Hebrews) with their Judaism religion also share the same God with the Christians and the Muslims.

Muhammad (570 – 8 June 632 CE) was an Arab religious, social, and political leader and the founder of Islam. According to Islamic doctrine, he was a prophet divinely inspired to preach and confirm the monotheistic teachings of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets. He is believed to be the Seal of the Prophets within Islam, with the Quran as well as his teachings and practices forming the basis of Islamic religious belief.

The Islam's Sharia law is cast from the words of Muhammad, called "*hadith*," his actions, called "*sunnah*," and the book of Quran, which he dictated. The Sharia law itself cannot be altered but its interpretation, called "*fiqh*," by

muftis (Islamic jurists) is given some latitude. As a legal system, Sharia Law regulates public behaviour, private behaviour, and even private beliefs. Sharia law also prioritises punishment over rehabilitation and favours corporal and capital punishments over incarceration: -

- Theft is punishable by amputation of the hands.
- Criticising or denying any part of the **Quran** is punishable by death.
- Criticising Muhammad or denying that he is a prophet is punishable by death.
- Criticising or denying Allah is punishable by death.
- A Muslim who becomes a non-Muslim is punishable by death.
- A non-Muslim who leads a Muslim away from Islam is punishable by death.
- A non-Muslim man who marries a Muslim woman is punishable by death.
- A woman or girl who has been raped cannot testify in court against her rapist(s).
- Testimonies of 4 male witnesses are required to prove rape of a female.
- A woman or girl who alleges rape without producing 4 male witnesses is guilty of adultery.
- A woman or girl found guilty of adultery is punishable by death.
- A male convicted of rape can have his conviction dismissed by marrying his victim.
- Muslim men have sexual rights to any woman/girl not wearing the Hijab.
- A woman can have 1 husband, who can have up to 4 wives; Muhammad can have more.
- A man can marry an infant girl and consummate the marriage when she is 9 years old.
- Girls' clitoris should be cut (Muhammad's words, *Book 41, Kitab Al-Adab, Hadith 5251*).
- A man can beat his wife for insubordination.
- A man can unilaterally divorce his wife; a wife needs her husband's consent to divorce.
- A divorced wife loses custody of all children over 6 years of age or when they exceed it.
- A woman's testimony in court, allowed in property cases, carries ½ the weight of a man's.
- A female heir inherits half of what a male heir inherits.
- A woman cannot speak alone to a man who is not her husband or relative.
- Meat to eat must come from animals that have been sacrificed to Allah - i.e., be "Halal."
- Muslims should engage in Taqiyya and lie to non-Muslims to advance Islam.

I am in the fortunate position that I am not affiliated or follow any religion. Having studied religion in my teens, and when Christian religion was fashionable, I abandoned it, but kept the morality as best I could. Later in life, I was astonished to read that Karl Marx had similar views to mine. It was Karl Marx in his views on organised religion who stated, *"religion is the opium of the masses and all this superstition is of course, designed to make you feel better about the chaos of the world and the fear of death, while remaining in service to an organisation that directly benefits from your financial contributions."* In my research of the Quran, I liked Mohammad's statement, *"he is viewed as a personal*

god and there are no intermediaries, such as clergy, to contact God.” No wonder the Christian religions are at odds with Muslim Islam and the Quran.

I often take a walk around my fields at night, and when the night sky is clear, I gaze up at the stars and in my mind, there is a spiritual connection to the universe, it's a feeling of tranquillity, a state of peace. Who needs religion when the earth has so much beauty and wildlife to behold. *“Death smiles at us all, but all a man can do is smile back”* is a quote by the Roman Emperor and philosopher, Marcus Aurelius. The quote suggests that death is inevitable and that one should face it with courage and a smile.

As I said to my mother as she neared death and questioned what her life had been for, *“it is simply life mother, no more, no less. As surely as birth is part of life, so is death.”* I relate to the conclusion on death by the philosopher Socrates, *“death is either a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or there is a change and the soul migrates to another world; indeed, death is welcomed if I can then converse with my family and my friends who have passed on; but if it is anything like a sleep in which there is no disturbances by dreams; anyone would agree that it is a pleasant state of being.”*

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