

## Can Islam be reformed?

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*(Editor's Note: Downloaded from <http://www.faithfreedom.org/Articles/sina31119.htm> - NB. This document is no longer available at its original location. It is reprinted here to get you thinking. Ali Sina is considered as a radical reformist. A more up-to-date reflection of his views on Islam may be found on his web site ([alisina.org](http://alisina.org).)*

When the US Secretary of State Colin Powel said that Islam is not incompatible with democracy, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hamid Reza Asefi, mocked him and said, "**US officials' comments on Islam clearly prove they do know nothing about Islam and Muslims.**"

If Asefi has said only one word of truth in his entire life, this is it.

Today the questions that everyone asks are whether or not Islam can be reformed, and whether or not it can accommodate democracy.

A friend of mine wrote: "Pentateuch is very similar to the Quran: same intolerance, same draconian laws, etc. yet the great part of the Jews finally rejected the literal interpretation of their holy scriptures and proved they could evolve."

Also, Christianity has allowed for change; The Church of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was as repressive as the Talibans and the Wahhabis. Yet Reformation took place, nonetheless. And even the Catholic Church is finally opening up.

Can't then we extrapolate that the same could happen to Islam?

No. The idea that since Christianity and Judaism reformed then Islam can also be reformed is untenable. Islam is not comparable to Christianity, Judaism or any other religion.

Christianity is essentially a religion of the heart. It were statements such as "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" and "My kingdom is not of this world" that allowed the Christians to keep their faith while permitting secular governments to evolve independent of the Church. A Christian does not feel any contradiction or dichotomy by living with secular laws and practicing his religious beliefs. One can be a Christian in his heart and secular in politics. Therefore reform in Christianity did not mean renouncing faith.

There are very few Jews who believe that the Pentateuch is actually the word of God. In all the five books attributed to Moses, he is referred to in the third person. Then the book of Deuteronomy ends by giving an obituary about Moses and how his tomb has been lost. This allows the Jews to be open about their interpretation of the Bible because it is clear, at least to the thinking majority of them, that the Bible is not the textual word of God but was written by humans, who were allegedly inspired, yet fallible nonetheless.

**Comment [JLP1]:** Maybe the Jews would use the phrase "the Deuteronomy" but I know Christians wouldn't.

Also, living in Diaspora for 2000 years with no temporal authority has forced the Jews to learn how to adapt their Jewish laws (Halakhah) to the exigencies of the non-Jewish world, which allows them now to create a secular state in a country built through religious imperatives.

**Comment [JLP2]:** I have no idea what this (Diaspora) is, or really even what this paragraph is talking about.

However, reforming Islam is not something that a Muslim would ever consider. Those who ask such question are always the non-Muslims. For a Muslim this question is pointless. The thought of reform would not even pass the mind of a Muslim. He would tell you that the problem with the Islamic world is in its inadequate interpretation of the Sharia and not in the Sharia itself.

Quran is considered to be the verbatim words of God. The verse "***This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion***" 5:3 reverberates in the ears of every Muslim. It leaves no room for interpretations and reformations. How can anyone improve or change something that is perfect?

History shows that all attempts to reform Islam have failed. The Sufis tried to interpret the Quran esoterically and mystically. The Mu'tazelis went as far as to suggest that if there is a contradiction between the revelation and reason, the latter should prevail. Some modern day Islamists such as Ali Shariati and Soroush have tried to use Islam as a political tool to bring Islamic world out of the dark ages and into the modern world. However all these attempts have failed, and Islam is now in the darkest phase of its existence. As a matter of fact, every time Islam is taken into equation, even nominally, for a social change, the result is catastrophic because the gravitational pull of the Quran towards fundamentalism quashes every other consideration. The Quran cannot be interpreted or reformed. The will of God cannot be surpassed by the will of people because of convenience and expediency. Any minor deviation from the Quran is considered to be a direct challenge to its authority and would invalidate the entire faith.

### **Islam is considered to be a "complete way of life"**

This concept is eloquently explained on the Islamic web site [Islamonline.net](http://Islamonline.net).

"Islam is not a religion in the common, distorted meaning of the word, confining its scope only to the private life of man. By saying that it is a complete way of life, we mean that it caters for all the fields of human existence. In fact, Islam provides guidance for all walks of life – individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international.

The Quran <sup>[JLP3]</sup> enjoins Man to enter the fold of Islam without any reservation and to follow God's guidance in all fields of life."

**Comment [JLP3]:** Be consistent. Either write "Quran" everywhere, or write it with an apostrophe, but don't do both.

In Islam, politics and faith are intertwined. The separation of the two would mean the end of faith. In criticism of Christianity the above site continues: .

"Religion asks us to separate things of God from those of Caesar. Such a judicial separation between the two means the degrading of both the secular and the sacred... That religion is worth little, if the conscience of its followers is not disturbed when war clouds are hanging over us all and industrial conflicts are threatening social peace. Religion has weakened Man's social conscience and moral sensitivity, by separating the things of God from those of Caesar."

As for Islam, it totally denounces this concept of religion and clearly states that its objectives are purification of the soul **and the reform and reconstruction of the society.** "

The Quran says in [Surah 57, verse 25](#):

*We verily sent Our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the scripture and the balance [i.e. the authority to establish justice], that mankind may observe justice and the right measure...*

Then in [Surah 12, verse 40](#):

**The command is for none but Allah; He has commanded that you obey none but Him; that is the right path.**

Also, in Surah [22, verse 41](#):

[Muslims are] those who if **We give them power in the land**, establish [the system of] *salat* (prayers and worship) and *zakat* (poor due) and enjoin virtue and forbid vice and evil."

"Thus, even a cursory study of the teachings of Islam shows that it is an all-embracing way of life and does not leave out any field of human existence to become a playground for satanic forces."

This is true. A Muslim is supposed to get religious instructions about everything. Topics that the foqaha, "the doctors of the law", study for years to master even include which foot to use to enter the toilet, which direction to face, which foot to put weight on during defecation, and how many rocks to use for self-cleansing purposes. The foqaha guide the ummah who would not lift a finger without consulting them.

Addressing the problem of Sharia for a Muslim is considered heresy. The so-called moderate Muslims do not propose to scrap or change the Sharia. So, what would a moderate Muslim say about the law of stoning? He would deny that this is an Islamic law and he would challenge you to find such a thing in the Quran. He is right! Stoning does not exist in the Quran. But it exists in the Sunnah, and the Sunnah (Muhammad's own examples) is the major source of Sharia law.

In Islam, if there is no specific reference to a law, the Judaic law should apply. Stoning the adulterers is a law prescribed in Deuteronomy 22:23, and the prophet practiced stoning of adulterers as per various hadiths. ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#))

**A**s the Imam of IslamOnline.net rightly states, Islam is not a religion at all. Islam is politics. Islam's only objective is to reclaim the Earth for Allah and establish the rule of Sharia. You take away that objective and Islam as a whole becomes meaningless. It simply loses its raison d'être. While Christ wanted to conquer the hearts of the people, Muhammad could care less about people's hearts. He was interested in conquering cities and establishing the dominion of Islam in the name of God.

The very word Islam means submission. The first duty of a Muslim is to strive (make Jihad) and render the world submissive to Allah and his messenger.

Ironically, the word peace in Islam, also derived from the same root SLM does not mean mutual and harmonious coexistence of two equal and sovereign people. It means suppressing the non-Muslims and making them submissive to the rule and dominance of Islam. Islam does not recognize the legitimacy of any non-Islamic government, especially over the Muslims.

"Yea, to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; [24:42](#) and, "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him" [3:85](#). Muslims are pressed to "fight them [the infidels] on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere" [8:39](#),"

It must be noted that "tumult and oppression" means resistance to the advance of Islam. Justice and peace can only prevail when Islam becomes dominant and other religions are subdued and their followers are reduced to tributaries to the coffers of the Islamic state. They must "pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued". [9:29](#).

**I** strongly disagree with those who compare Islam of today with the Christianity of the Middle Ages and claim that since Christianity eventually was reformed, Islam can also reform.

The proponents of reform have a very weak position to defend. Daniel Pipes is one such scholar who believes, at least ostensibly, that Islam can be reformed. [The weakness of his](#)

[position is picked up by his opponents who rightly say](#), "Dr. Pipes seems to contradict himself. First he says that there is nothing in Islam that contradicts democracy and then insists that Sharia is antidemocratic."

Muslims are supposed to give their highest allegiance to Islam, not to their country and not even to their family. The scope is not as much to convert the world into Islam but to dominate the world and to establish the law of Sharia.

As a matter of fact, when a Muslim army invaded a country, they did not accept the conversion of the conquered right away. This would have deprived them of the booty and to excise the Jizyah tax, which was the main incentive of the Muslims to attack in the first place. The conquered people were left to practice their religion for centuries providing the wealth for the Islamic empire and finance the Islamic army to continue with their conquests. As the following hadith shows, the Muslims would provide "protection" for the people of other religions, i.e. would not kill them, under the condition that they pay the jizyah which as Umar said was fixed by Allah as **stipends for Muslims.**

[Sunnan Abu Dawud Book 19, Number 2955:](#)

"According to the saying of the Prophet (peace\_be\_upon\_him): Allah has placed truth upon Umar's tongue and heart. **He fixed stipends for Muslims**, and provided protection for the people of other religions by **levying jizyah (poll-tax) on them**, deducting no fifth from it, nor taking it as booty.

Therefore when Muslims say that Islam is a tolerant religion, which allows the non-Muslims to keep their faith and practice their religion, in a sense they are telling the truth. However, that freedom has a catch and that is to accept the status of dhimmitude, become subservient to Muslims and "*pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued*"

According to Muslim scholars, the verse [9:23](#) of the Quran that instructs the Muslims not to take the infidels as their awlia (protectors, custodians, rulers) implies that Muslims should not accept the rule and the governance of non-Muslims. Hence they are required to overthrow the non-Islamic governments, whenever they are able to and wherever they reside to establish Islamic governments. Until then, that country is considered to be Dar al Harb (House of war). When the governance of the country is turned over to the Muslims, that country becomes Dar al Islam (House of Islam) and Sharia becomes the law of the land. This does not mean that everyone will be forced to convert to Islam. It means that everyone becomes subject to Sharia and those who are not believers will be classified as dhimmis, who will have to pay Jizyah and support the Ummah financially.