



A BIBLICAL VIEW ON

Sharia Law



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Sharia Law



Sharia law is once again in the news. Back in 2010, Sharia law was in the news because Oklahoma approved a law that would amend the state constitution to prevent the consideration of Sharia law in state courts. However, a federal judge declared the law was unconstitutional.

This time the focus is on the state of Texas because of a desire by Muslim leaders in Collin County to build a 40-acre EPIC City project. The East Plano Islamic Center and the developers have received lots of attention and at least five investigations from state officials. The project would include a new mosque, more than 1,000 single and multi-family homes, a Muslim faith-based school, senior housing, an outreach center, commercial developments, sports facilities, and a community college.

Governor Greg Abbott posted on X that, “The proposed EPIC compound in Collin Co. has serious legal issues. A dozen state agencies are investigating it, the Attorney General will look into it, and legislators are considering laws to restrict it, as well as laws to prevent foreign adversaries from

buying land in Texas.”

On one side are the developers and a Texas representative (Salman Bhojani, who is the first Muslim elected official in Texas history) who say this is a violation of religious freedom and evidence of anti-Muslim hysteria. On the other side are Collin County residents including a retired police lieutenant (Douglas Deaton, who testified that an Islamic enclave is already operational and has been for almost 12 years).

It is worth taking a moment to understand what Sharia law is. This is important no matter what happens in this Texas community or in others with increasing Muslim communities. American law isn't going to be challenged by Sharia law, but we can discuss what has been happening in the Middle East and some European

countries as a cautionary tale.

What is Sharia Law?

A foundational practice of Islam is the implementation of sharia into the legal structure. Sharia is a system of divine law, belief, or practice that is based upon Muslim legal interpretation. It applies to economics, politics, and society.

Sometimes the world has been able to see how extreme the interpretation of sharia can be. Muslims have been put to death when they have been accused of adultery or homosexuality. They have been put to death for leaving the religion of Islam. And these are not isolated examples.

Christians are persecuted in Muslim countries. Each year, the organization Open Doors publishes its World Watch List that identifies

where Christians are persecuted. Over the last few years, nine of the top ten countries that practice extreme persecution of Christians are Muslim countries.

Treating Jews and Christians differently under sharia law is justified in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an talks about "people of the book." Sura 9:29 says, "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Prophet, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

Muhammad made a distinction between infidels, who were pagans and polytheists, and the "people of the book," who had received revelations from the

prophets (Moses, Jesus). The latter group is protected in one sense because they have received these revelations. But they are also guilty because (according to Islam) they have distorted these teachings and rejected the teaching of Muhammad. Although this status was originally given only to the “people of the book,” it was later extended to other religions (Sikhs, Zoroastrians, etc.).

Because of their guilt, Islamic teaching stipulates that Jews and Christians may live in a Muslim country, but not as equals to other Muslims. Usually this means that they may not participate in the government. They may practice their religion, but with many restrictions. For example, they were not allowed to have any external manifestations of worship (procession with the cross, ringing bells).

These restrictions are another part of the verse that requires the dhimmis must “feel themselves subdued.” In the past this has meant: (1) that they could not prevent a fellow Christian from converting to Islam, (2) that they could not erect a cross on their church building, and (3) that they must dress in a certain way that would identify them as Jews or Christians.

Finally, they must pay the jizya, which is the poll tax required from every dhimmi. In earlier times, this was a major source of income for the Muslim government from dhimmi who paid both the personal tax and the land tax.

The Qur'an teaches (Sura 2:256) that “there is no compulsion in religion.” But is that really so? It depends upon your definition of

compulsion. A closer look at Islamic law demonstrates a veiled threat that many believe is tantamount to compulsion. For example, Muhammad instructed his followers to invite non-Muslims to accept Islam before waging war against them. If they refused, warfare or second-class status would follow. They would be inferiors in the Muslim social order and pay the jizya as required in Sura 9:29. If they pay it, they may live, but if they refuse to pay it, warfare will ensue.

Sharia Law and Apostates

It is difficult for a Muslim to leave the faith of Islam. A Muslim is considered part of a larger community of Muslim believers.

When a Muslim decides to leave the faith, there are repercussions in the family and community.

The family is embarrassed and will even lose respect within the Muslim community. The mosque feels it has failed in its duty and lost a member to ignorance and idolatry.

The Qur'an teaches that an apostate Muslim faces the wrath of Allah (Sura 47:25-28). Sharia law in many countries treats apostasy as the unforgivable sin and therefore punishable by death.

Many Muslim countries have laws against apostasy. Islam teaches that once you are a Muslim, you are always a Muslim. Leaving the Muslim faith can have harsh consequences, including death.

Sharia Law and Women

There is great confusion about the status of women within Islam. While it is true that many Muslims

do respect and honor women, it is not true that those ideas can be found in the Qur'an. Here are just a few passages that illustrate the way women are to be treated.

- According to the Qur'an, women are considered inferior to men: "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other" (Sura 4:34).
- The Qur'an restricts a woman's testimony in court. Her testimony is worth half as much as that of a man (Sura 2:282).
- The Qur'an teaches that a son's inheritance should be twice that of a daughter's: "Allah thus directs you as regards your children's inheritance; to the male, a portion equal to that of two females" (Sura 4:11).
- Islam sanctions polygamy (with up to four wives) as well as sex

with slave women: “If we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one, or a captive that your hand possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice”(Sura 4:3).

- Wives are subject to their husbands. If wives are disloyal or disobedient, the Qur'an sets forth their punishment. The husband is first to admonish them, then not sleep with them, and third to beat them lightly. Essentially, wives are subject to the control of their husbands (Sura 2:223; 4:34). The veiling and seclusion of women has been part of the Muslim culture since the beginnings of Islam. In the Qur'an, Muhammad commands his wives and daughters to draw veils around

them. This has been applied to all Muslim women. The veil would allow them to be recognized but not molested (Sura 33:59).

The Qur'an teaches that women must "lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof: that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers" (Sura 24:31).

In some Muslim countries, women cannot drive, nor can they leave their home without being accompanied by a male family member. Human rights groups report that women in Saudi Arabia who are not accompanied by a man who is either their husband or a close relative, can be arrested for pros-

titution or other moral offenses.

Sharia Law and the Constitution

Sharia law is very different in many respects from the laws established through the U.S. Constitution and the laws established through English common law. To prevent sharia law from being implemented in America, a number of state legislatures have bans on sharia law. Voters in other states have approved a ban that has been struck down by a federal appeals court.

Although opponents argue that these sharia law bans are unnecessary, various studies have found significant cases of sharia law being allowed in U.S. courts. One report with the title, "Shariah Law and the American State Courts" found significant cases of sharia law in U.S. courts just from their small sample of appellate pub-

lished cases. When they looked at state courts, they found additional cases in the trial courts and more in the appellate courts. A few judges are making decisions deferring to sharia law even when those decisions conflict with the U.S. Constitution and the various state constitutions.

How should we respond to the increased use of sharia law in America? One simple way to explain your concern to legislators, family, friends, and neighbors is to remember the numbers 1-8-14. These three numbers stand for the three amendments to the U.S. Constitution that contradict the use of sharia law.

The First Amendment says that there should be no establishment of religion. Sharia law is based on one religion's interpretation

of rights. The First Amendment prohibits the establishment of any national religion (including Islam).

The Eighth Amendment prohibits “cruel and unusual punishment.” Most Americans would consider the penalties handed down under sharia law to be cruel and unusual.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees each citizen equal protection under the Constitution. Sharia law does not treat men and women equally, nor does it treat Muslims and non-Muslims equally. This also violates the Constitution.

It is easy to see why we don’t need sharia law in America.



Additional Resources

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