

## How Does *Islam* Determine What Is 'Islamic'?

Posted By [Raymond Ibrahim](#) On October 15, 2014 @ 10:07 pm In [Uncategorized](#) | [5 Comments](#)

What relationship does the *Islamic State*, ISIS, have to *Islam*? [Almost every Western politician answers](#) <sup>[1]</sup>: "Absolutely nothing." President Obama adamantly stated in a televised address that the *Islamic State* "is not Islamic."

So how does one determine what is, and is not, Islamic? The traditional process — the Islamic answer — is as follows:

What do the core texts and scriptures of Islam say about the thing in question? Does the Koran, believed by Muslims to contain the literal commands of Allah, call for or justify it? Do the *hadith* and *sira* texts — which purport to record the sayings and deeds of Allah's prophet, whom the Koran (e.g., 33:21) exhorts Muslims to emulate in all ways — call for or justify it?

If any ambiguity still remains, the next inquiry is: what is the consensus (*ijma'*) of the Islamic world's leading authorities concerning it? Here, one most often turns to the *tafsirs*, or exegeses of Islam's most learned men — the *ulema* — and considers their conclusions.

Muhammad himself reportedly said that "my *umma* [Islamic nation] will never be in agreement over an error."

For example, the Koran commands believers to uphold prayers; accordingly, all are agreed that Muslims need to pray. But the Koran does not specify how many times. In the *hadith* and *sira*, however, Muhammad makes clear that believers should pray five times. And the *ulema*, having considered all these texts, are agreed that Muslims are to pray five times a day.

Thus, it is most certainly *Islamic* for Muslims to pray five times a day.

But while both Western politicians and Islamic apologists readily accept such methodology to determining what is Islamic — prayer is in the Koran, Muhammad clarified its implementation in the *hadith*, and the *ulema* are agreed to it — whenever the question deals with anything that makes Islam "look bad," to Western sensibilities, then the aforementioned standard approach to ascertaining what is Islamic is wholly ignored.

Let us consider some of the most extreme acts committed by the *Islamic State* — beheadings, crucifixions, enslavements, sexual predations, massacres, and the persecution of religious minorities — and put them to the test. Let us see if they fill the same criteria for being Islamic, especially in the context of jihad, which has its own set of rules.

### Beheadings

The *Islamic State* beheads "infidels" — including women and children. This aspect of the *Islamic State* has provoked horror around the world. Is it Islamic?

The Koran calls for the beheading of Islam's enemies, especially in the context of war, or jihad:

"When you encounter infidels on the battlefield, strike off their heads until you have crushed them completely" (47:4). Another verse states: "I will cast terror into the hearts of infidels — so strike off their heads and strike off all of their fingertips [i.e., mutilate them]" (8:12).

As for the other criteria — the example of the prophet, and the consensus of the *umma* — Timothy Furnish, author of the 2005 essay "[Beheading in the Name of Islam](#)" <sup>[2]</sup>, writes:

The practice of beheading non-Muslim captives extends back to the Prophet himself. Ibn Ishaq (d. 768 C.E.), the earliest biographer of Muhammad, is recorded as saying that the Prophet ordered the execution by decapitation of 700 men of the Jewish Banu Qurayza tribe in Medina for allegedly plotting against him. Islamic leaders from Muhammad's time until today have followed his model. Examples of decapitation, of both the living and the dead, in Islamic

history are myriad.

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For centuries, leading Islamic scholars have interpreted this verse [decapitation verse, 47:4] literally.

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Many recent interpretations remain consistent with those of a millennium ago.

### Crucifixions

The Islamic State has been crucifying regularly; the [mainstream media claims that even al-Qaeda is "shocked"](#) [3] by such behavior. [Koran 5:33](#) [4] asserts:

The penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land.

Accordingly, crucifixions are *common* throughout Islamic history. After Islam's prophet died in 632, many Arabs were accused of apostasy. The first caliph, Abu Bakr, launched a jihad campaign on them and many "apostates" were crucified as an example to the rest. In [Witnesses For Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860](#) [5], crucifixion is listed as one of the many forms by which thousands of Christians were executed by the Muslim Turks.

More dramatically, in her memoir *Ravished Armenia*, Aurora Mardiganian [described](#) [6] seeing — in the early twentieth century in the city of Malatia — 16 girls crucified, vultures eating their corpses:

Each girl had been nailed alive upon her cross, spikes through her feet and hands. ... Only their hair blown by the wind covered their bodies.

Recently, people (including children) have been crucified by self-proclaimed jihadis in the name of Islam in countries as diverse as [the Ivory Coast and Yemen](#) [3].

### Slavery and Rape

What of slavery, especially the [enslavement](#) [7] of [non-Muslim women for sexual purposes](#) [8] which the Islamic State has been engaged in?

From the highest scriptural authority in Islam — the Koran — to the greatest role model for Muslims — prophet Muhammad; from Islamic history to current events, [the sexual enslavement of "infidel" women is a canonical aspect of Islamic civilization](#) [9]. Koran 4:3 permits men to have sex with "[what your right hands possess](#) [10]," a term categorically defined by the *ulema* as "infidel" women captured during the jihad.

The prophet of Islam himself kept and copulated with concubines conquered during the jihad. One captured Jewish woman, Safiya bint Huyay, was "married" to Muhammad right after her father, husband, and brothers were slaughtered by Muslims during a raid. Muhammad took her from among the spoils after hearing about the young woman's beauty. Unsurprisingly, she later [confessed](#) [11]: "Of all men, I hated the prophet the most — for he killed my husband, my brother, and my father," right before "marrying" (or less euphemistically, raping) her.

Khalid bin Walid — the "[Sword of Allah](#) [12]" and hero for all aspiring jihadis — raped another woman renowned for her beauty, Layla, on the battlefield, right after he severed her "apostate" husband's head, lit it on fire, and cooked his dinner on it.

### Massacres

What of [wide-scale massacres](#) [13]? In [this video](#) [14], the Islamic State appears to be herding, humiliating, and marching off hundreds of male hostages (the number often given is 1,400) to their trenches, where Islamic State members proceed to shoot them in the head — all while the black flag of Islam waves.

The prophet himself ordered merciless massacres of "infidels." After the battle of Badr, where Muhammad and the first Muslims prevailed over their enemies, Muhammad ordered the execution of a number of hostages. When one of the hostages, 'Uqba, implored Muhammad to spare him by asking: "But who will look

after my children, O Muhammad?”, the prophet responded: “[Hell](#) [15].”

More famously, Muhammad ordered the execution of approximately 700 Jewish men from the Banu Qurayza tribe. According to the *sira* account, after the Jewish tribe surrendered to his siege, Muhammad had all the men marched off to where ditches were dug and promptly executed by beheading — just like the Islamic State marched off and executed its victims near trenches [in the video](#) [14].

### Dhimmitude

The Islamic State is even responsible for resurrecting a distinctly Islamic institution that was banned in the 19th century thanks to the intervention of colonial powers: “dhimmitude.” Establishing dhimmitude is the practice of exacting tribute (*jizya*) from conquered Christians and Jews and subjecting them to live as third-class citizens. They must embrace a host of debilitating and humiliating measures: no building or repairing churches, no ringing church bells or worshiping loudly, no displaying crosses, no burying their dead near Muslims, etc.

These measures are also derived from the core texts of Islam. Koran 9:29 calls on Muslims to fight the “People of the Book” (interpreted as Christians and Jews) “until they pay the *jizya* with willing submission and feel themselves subdued.” And the [Conditions of Omar](#) [16] — named after one of the “righteous caliphs” — explains how they are to “feel themselves subdued,” which is exactly what the Islamic State decreed.

Past and present *ulema* are [confirmed](#) [17] that Koran 9:29 and the *Conditions of Omar* mean what they plainly say. Thus, according to Saudi Sheikh Marzouk Salem al-Ghamdi, speaking during a Friday mosque sermon:

If the infidels live among the Muslims, in accordance with the conditions set out by the Prophet — there is nothing wrong with it provided they pay Jizya to the Islamic treasury. Other conditions [reference to *Conditions of Omar*] are ... that they do not renovate a church or a monastery, do not rebuild ones that were destroyed ... that they rise when a Muslim wishes to sit ... do not show the cross, do not ring church bells, do not raise their voices during prayer ... If they violate these conditions, they have no protection.

It is false to say, as President Obama does, that the Islamic State “is not Islamic.” Indeed, even in the most savage of details — including triumphing over the mutilated corpses of “infidels” and laughing while posing with their decapitated heads — the [Islamic State finds support in the Koran and stories of the prophet](#) [18].

It is dishonest to accept the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence — is “X” part of the Koran, *hadith*, *sira*, and does it have consensus among the *ulema*? — only to reject this same methodology whenever “X” makes Islam look “bad.” In the context of jihad, all that the Islamic State is doing — beheadings, crucifixions, massacres, enslavements, and subjugation of religious minorities — is Islamic.

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[1] Almost every Western politician answers: <http://www.frontpagemag.com/2014/robert-spencer/the-islamic-state-has-nothing-to-do-with-islam/>

[2] Beheading in the Name of Islam: <http://www.meforum.org/713/beheading-in-the-name-of-islam>

[3] mainstream media claims that even al-Qaeda is “shocked”:

<http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/christians-crucified-again-for-refusing-islam/>

[4] Koran 5:33: <http://quran.com/5/33>

[5] *Witnesses For Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860*:

<http://www.amazon.com/Witnesses-Christ-Christian-Neomartyrs-1437-1860/dp/0881411965>

[6] described: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/crucifixion-in-islam-christians-ascend-their-golgotha/>

[7] enslavement: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/syria-captive-women-herded-and-sold-in-slave-markets/>

[8] non-Muslim women for sexual purposes: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/islamic-state-rape-just-another-form-of-warfare/>

[9] the sexual enslavement of “infidel” women is a canonical aspect of Islamic civilization:

<http://www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/new-fatwa-permits-rape-of-non-sunni-women-in->

**syria/**

[10] what your right hands possess: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/are-slave-girls-in-islam-equivalent-to-animals/>

[11] confessed: [http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display\\_hbook.php?bk\\_no=197&pid=125747&hid=65](http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=197&pid=125747&hid=65)

[12] Sword of Allah: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/allahs-sword-of-terror/>

[13] wide-scale massacres: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/largest-massacre-of-christians-in-syria-ignored/>

[14] this video: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/graphic-video-islamic-terrorists-executing-civilians/>

[15] Hell: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uqba\\_ibn\\_Abu\\_Mu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uqba_ibn_Abu_Mu)

[16] *Conditions of Omar*: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/western-ignorance-of-the-conditions-of-omar/>

[17] confirmed: <http://www.raymondibrahim.com/from-the-arab-world/egypts-new-government-promotes-anti-christian-measures/>

[18] Islamic State finds support in the Koran and stories of the prophet:

<http://www.raymondibrahim.com/islam/beheading-infidels-how-allah-heals-the-hearts-of-believers/>