

“Islam for Christians”

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“Islamic Sects; Islam and the West; Women in Islam”

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Christian Practice and Ethics: How Christians Know What to Do

1. Bible Teaching
2. Church tradition
 - ▶ What we've done in the past
3. Teachings/ Writings of Church Leaders

Muslim Practice and Ethics: Four Sources

1. Qur'an

2. *Hadith*

- ▶ Equal in authority to Qur'an as long as the chain of transmission (*isnad*) is secure

3. Legal reasoning of scholars (based on the Qur'an and *hadith*)

4. Community consensus (*'ijma*)

- ▶ Can also refer to consensus of scholars

Legal Reasoning

- ▶ Legal Scholar - Recognized as expert in Muslim thought and practice
- ▶ Usually trained in Saudi Arabia or Egypt
- ▶ Distinct role from that of Imam (mosque leader)

Legal Opinion - *Fatwa*

- ▶ Scholar rules about a matter of Muslim practice
- ▶ Muslims usually consider rulings to be advisory, *not* necessarily binding
- ▶ Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America (amjaonline.org) serves Western Muslims

Fatwa - Ear Piercing (AMJAonline.org)

Question:

Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullaahi Ta'aala Wa Barakatuh. Help me by answering my question. I would like to take your opinion, is there anything wrong with me piercing my ear twice. This is to decorate myself only and nothing else. I am a Muhajabah (veiled woman) in front of foreigners. Benefit us, may Allaah benefit you. Thank you, Wassalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullaahi Ta'aala Wa Barakatuh.

Answer:

In the name of Allaah, the Benevolent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allaah, and peace and blessings be upon the messenger of Allaah, upon his family, companions, and those loyal to him. There is no harm on the woman piercing her ear to hang an earring in it. As for that being one hole (i.e. piercing) or two, this is a matter of social norms, and so it changes with the customs and tastes of the environment. The default is that she can do what is customarily accepted in her culture and is not to mimic the unchaste women that sway in every direction with regards to these matters. And Allaah, the Most High, knows best

Fatwa - Teddy Bears (AMJAonline.org)

Question:

Assalamu Alaykum. I have learned that statues in the house are impermissible and that the angels don't enter. Are teddy bears that are constructed from cotton and stitching as children's toys impermissible also considering I heard that whatever has a shadow is impermissible and teddy bears have shadows?

Wassalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullaahi Wa Barakatuh.

Answer:

In the Name of Allaah, the Benevolent, the Merciful All praise belongs to Allaah, and may peace and blessings be upon the messenger of Allaah, and upon his family, companions, and those allied with him. The matter of children's toys is flexible, for our mother A'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, use to have girls (dolls) as toys, and that was approved of by the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Al-Bukhari narrates on behalf of A'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, that she said: 'I use to play with girls (dolls) at the prophet's (house), peace and blessings be upon him, and I had friends that played with me. When the messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings be upon him, would enter they would shy from him, and he would send them to me to play.' Abu Dawud & An-Nasaa'i report another narration from A'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, that she said: 'The messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings be upon him, returned from Tabuk or Khaybar, and mentioned the hadeeth of his removal of the curtain that she had drawn on her door. She said: So he uncovered one side of the curtain to find dolls belonging to A'ishah. He said: 'What are these oh A'ishah?' She said: 'My dolls.' She said: He saw amongst them a horse tied that had two wings, so he said: 'What is this?' She replied: 'A horse' He said: 'A horse that has two wings?' She said: 'Didn't you hear that Sulayman use to have horses with wings?' So the prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed.' And all praise is due to Allaah for his leniency and seeking ease for this nation. And Allaah, the Most High, knows best.

Church Authority: How do Christians Know What We are Supposed to Do?

- ▶ Catholics (also Anglican/ Episcopal):
Hierarchical Authority
 - ▶ Chain of leaders going back to the disciples have a special relationship with God
- ▶ Presbyterians: Church Elders lead by committee
- ▶ Quakers/ Friends: Strict Democracy

Authority in Islam

- ▶ **Sunni Islam - Tendency toward strict democracy (all are equal)**
 - ▶ Some Muslims have more knowledge, but everyone can understand and do God's will
- ▶ **Shi'a Islam - Tendency toward hierarchy**
 - ▶ Some recognized leaders can speak for God

Authority in Islam

- ▶ Sunni Islam - Look to the practice of the community
 - ▶ *Fatwas* are advisory, not necessarily binding
- ▶ Shi'a Islam - Look to the rulings of scholars
 - ▶ *Fatwas* tend to be more binding

Sunnis and Shi'a

- ▶ **Sunni Islam - 90% of Muslims worldwide**
 - ▶ Most mosques in the USA, and all mosques in Hampton Roads, are Sunni
- ▶ **Shi'a Islam - Less than 10% of Muslims worldwide**
 - ▶ Normally get along well with Sunnis
 - ▶ Highest concentrations in Iraq and Iran
 - ▶ Large populations in Pakistan, Syria, and Lebanon

Christian Mysticism

- ▶ Seek God on a spiritual level
- ▶ Search for unity with Christ

Christian Mysticism

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,⁵ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

Sufism - Islamic Mysticism

- ▶ Stress Spirituality above Practice
- ▶ Both Sunnis and Shi'a may be Sufi
- ▶ Engage in practices designed to connect our minds with the mind of God

Sufism - Islamic Mysticism

- ▶ Properly done with a Spiritual Guide (*sheikh*)
- ▶ Three Goals
 - ▶ Perfect Knowledge of God
 - ▶ Perfect Love of God
 - ▶ Perfect destruction of the Human Ego

Sufism - General

- ▶ Aspects of Sufism are popular worldwide
 - ▶ At least half of all Muslims practice some kind of sufism
- ▶ Issues with Sufism are similar to issues with Christian Pentecostalism
 - ▶ Sheiks may overstress spirituality (and understress other Muslims teaching)
 - ▶ Allegiance to sheiks may injure the community

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