

Middle Eastern Politics – some relevant religious texts

On women

Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because God has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Qur'an 4.34

Prophet, enjoin your wives, your daughter, and the wives of true believers to draw their veils close round them. That is more proper, so that they may be recognized and not be molested. Qur'an 33:59

Blessed are the believers...who restrain their carnal desires (except with their wives and slave-girls, for these are lawful to them: transgressors are those who lust after others than these)... Qur'an 23.1-7

You may marry other women who seem good to you: two, three, or four of them. But if you fear that you cannot maintain equality among them, marry one only or any slave-girls you may own. Qur'an 4.3 [Mohammed tells us that he himself is exempt from this limitation.]

Women shall with justice have rights similar to those exercised against them, although men have a status above women. God is mighty and wise. Qur'an 2.228

A male shall inherit twice as much as a female. Qur'an 4.11

Suppose a man marries a woman, but after going in to her, he dislikes her and makes up charges against her, slandering her by saying, 'I married this woman; but when I lay with her, I did not find evidence of her virginity.' The father of the young woman and her mother shall then submit the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city...If, however, this charge is true, that evidence of the young woman's virginity was not found, then they shall bring the young woman out to the entrance of her father's house and the men of her town shall stone her to death. Torah: Deuteronomy. 22.13-21

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head...For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of

woman...Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. New Testament: 1 Corinthians 11.3-16

As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. NT: 1 Cor. 14.33-35

Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, and modesty. NT: 1 Timothy 2.9-15

On warfare

Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love the aggressors. Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed...Fight against them [the unbelievers] until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme. But if they desist, fight none except the evil-doers. Qur'an 2.190-192

Fighting is obligatory for you, much as you dislike it. Qur'an 2.216

God has given those that fight with their goods and their persons a higher rank than those who stay at home. God has promised all a good reward; but far richer is the recompense of those who fight for Him: ranks of His own bestowal, forgiveness, and mercy. Qur'an 4.95

Make war on [the unbelievers] until idolatry shall cease and God's religion shall reign supreme. Qur'an 8.39

If [the unbelievers] incline to peace, make peace with them, and put your trust in God. Qur'an 8.61

God does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who have neither made war on your religion nor driven you from your homes. God loves the equitable. But He forbids you to make friends with those who have fought against you on account of your religion and driven you from your homes or abetted others to drive you out. Those that make friends with them are wrongdoers. Qur'an 60.8-9

Torah: Numbers, chapter 34. [This describes the land that God promised to Moses and the Israelites. It covers roughly contemporary Israel including Gaza and the West Bank, extending somewhat further south and north. Various admonitions are given throughout the Torah that the promised land must be taken by wars of conquest upon the indigenous populations, particularly the Canaanites. Failure to engage in these wars of conquest is said to result in severe punishment.]

But as for the towns of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance [i.e. Palestine], you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.
Torah: Dt. 20.16-17

Samuel said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will punish the Amalekites for opposing the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. Torah: 1 Samuel 15.1-3

[Jesus said:] You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. NT: Matthew 5:38-41

On punishment

As for the man or woman who is guilty of theft, cut off their hands to punish them for their crimes. That is the punishment enjoined by God. Qur’an 5.38

The adulterer and adulteress shall each be given a hundred lashes. Qur’an 24.2

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them. Torah: Leviticus 20.13

If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death. Torah: Lev. 20.10

[See NT: John ch. 8 for Jesus’ commentary on the above command. This contains the famous response, “Let him who is without sin throw the first stone” (by way of killing an adulteress in accordance with Lev. 20:10).]

In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? NT: 1 Cor. 6:7

On slavery

[Mohammed seems to have regarded slavery as a matter of course, especially female domestic slaves who were often sold as concubines. (Mohammed himself seems to have had a great deal of interest in female slaves.) Nonetheless, manumission was regarded as a virtuous act among Muslims because of the following text:]

As for those of your slaves who wish to buy their liberty, free them if you find in them any promise and bestow on them a part of the riches which God has given you. Qur’an 24.33

When you buy a male Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, but in the seventh he shall go out a free person, without debt...When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. Torah: Exodus 21.2, 7

As for the male and female slaves whom you may have, it from the nations around you that you may acquire male and female slaves. You may also acquire them from among the aliens residing with you, and from their families that are with you, who have been born in your land; and they may be your property. You may keep them as a possession for your children after you, for them to inherit as property. Torah: Leviticus 25.44-46

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. NT: Ephesians 6.5-6

On religion

If the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] accept the true faith and keep from evil, We will pardon them their sins and admit them to the gardens of delight. If they observe the Torah and the Gospel and what is revealed to them from their Lord, they shall enjoy abundance from above and beneath...Believers, Jews, Sabaeans and Christians—whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does what is right—shall have nothing to fear or regret. Qur'an 5.65-66

Unbelievers are those that say: 'God is the Messiah, the son of Mary.'...unbelievers are those that say: 'God is one of three.' Qur'an 5.73

He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will surely be among the losers. Qur'an 3.83

There shall be no compulsion in religion. Qur'an 2.256