# The Changes in Islam over Time

Islam, is a religion with more than 300 million followers. The regions that have the largest number of Muslim followers extends from Africa, to the Atlantic and Pacific, and to parts of Asia and Europe. Currently, Muslims are showing a great interest in studying factors related to the same, so that they can identify ways to incorporate the modern ways without losing the religion (Azra 10). One observant attribute in modern religion is that individuals are beginning to interpret certain outward manifestations of religion in their special ways. However, there exists a set of beliefs that run the whole religion, Islam, which cannot be individualized. While there can be many definitions or beliefs of Islam, the most accurate can only be found in the Koran.

The first instance Islam was reformed was during the Khwarij rebellion that took place in 642 AD. The rebellion was an attempt to bring the caliphate to the original version of Islam and start an endless war on individuals who were considered disloyal or apostate. However, the group had little supporters who faced great opposition and was later overthrown.

The second reformation of Islam took place in 820 AD. The issue that was being addressed at this time involved understanding ideologies crucial to the comprehension of Salafism and Wahabism. Two groups, the Ashari and the Mu’tazila were involved (Ahmed 17). The Ashari believed that the Quran ought to have been followed without consciousness, and that meant adhering to each instruction stipulated. The Mu’tazila, on the other hand, believed that the Quran ought to have been interpreted by way of philosophy, and that the Quran was a way to enhance good deeds and reach enlightenment.

The third schism, which was Salafism and Wahabism also presented some division based on the above ideologies. The Wahabism supported the ideology from the Ashari, although at more extreme terms. While this was good for religion, it also raised some concerns since it was deemed dangerous (Ahmed 20). This behavior can be reflected in the modern day Islam, particularly followed by groups with terrorist motives. The absolute interpretation of the Quran verses had, and has led to the taking up of risky habits.

There have been several concerns based on the beliefs of Muslims; for instance, many believe that the Koran is unchanged. While altering parts of the holy books is greatly discouraged in a number of religions, one cannot conclude that the Biblical books have not experienced change through the hands of authors who have had to paraphrase these books (Esposito 60). The re-writing of the Koran was left in the hands of men, and the minor changes with time, can have caused major changes to the Koran already currently. Therefore, it is easy to find that the beliefs that Muslims held several years back, are not similar to those being held currently.

On a general outlook, Islam showed the greatest changes in areas such as family structure, slavery, the rights of women and social security. According to Muhammad’s rules, several scholars note that actions that were practiced by Pagan Arabs such as exploitation of the poor, murder, false witness, adultery, fornication, female infanticide and theft were wrong (Azra 12). Muhammad insisted that individuals were only answerable to the divine law, and not any customary law. Muhammad influenced religious and social reforms that were related to business, family relations, and religion. The religion had previously supported the superiority of the man. However, the fact that Muhammad condemned female infanticide, helped the Muslim women to rise to their current status.

Another way Muhammad influenced the reformation of Islam was when he helped come up with a new structure of the family and social security. He altered the life of Muslim from nomadic practices to living a settled way of lie, which were factors that led to the creation of a more stable social and religious framework.

Islam also influenced the aspect of slavery. This was achieved in two major ways. The first, was the ban of the enslavement of free individuals except in strictly defined circumstances while the other was presumption of freedom (Esposito 40). Following the rules of the Koran and Muhammad, the Arab slave gained a new status in society. Unfortunately, in the ancient world, this was barely observed.

The last aspect of Islam that changed was marriage. Under the pre-Islamic law, the men were not limited to a certain number for wives. With time, however, the Islamic law restricted polygamy. It also allowed to have more power to decide, and to be accorded the rightful value of her as a woman. This is seen in the current practice, that is, the payment of bride price. The man had to offer, and the woman to accept.

## Conclusion

As seen above, Islam has indeed experienced a myriad of changes. The first, was in the way persons were supposed to practice the religion. While there are still questions on whether the Koran should be followed to the letter. Islam has generally become more liberal now than it was in the past. As also seen, there have been numerous social changes over time such as family structure and social security.

Works Cited

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