Worldviews
Mr. Myers

Ethics: Islamic Morality

**In their own words:**

“Islam as a comprehensive way of life encompasses a complete moral system that is an important aspect of its world-view. We live in an age where good and evil are often looked at as relative concepts. Islam however, holds that moral positions are not relative, and instead, defines a universal standard by which actions may be deemed moral or immoral.

Islam’s moral system is striking in that it not only defines morality, but also guides the human race in how to achieve it, at both an individual as well as a collective level.

**Basic Principles in Islamic Morality**

The Islamic moral system stems from its primary creed of belief in One God as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Islam considers the human race to be a part of God’s creation, and as His subjects.

From an Islamic perspective, the purpose of human life is to worship God, by leading this worldly life in harmony with the Divine Will, and thereby achieve peace in this world, and everlasting success in the life of the hereafter. Muslims look to the Glorious Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet as their moral guides.

The Glorious Qur’an says:

“It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces Towards east or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing.” [Al-Qur’an 2:177]”
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**Specific moral guidelines:**

1. **Worship only God:** Take not with Allah another object of worship; or thou (O man!) wilt sit in disgrace and destitution. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:22](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.022))
2. **Be kind, honourable and humble to one's parents:** Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:23](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.023)) And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:24](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.024))
3. **Be neither miserly nor wasteful in one's expenditure:** And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:26](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.026)) Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is to his Lord (himself) ungrateful. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:27](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.027)) And even if thou hast to turn away from them in pursuit of the Mercy from thy Lord which thou dost expect, yet speak to them a word of easy kindness. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:28](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.028)) Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:29](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.029))
4. **Do not engage in 'mercy killings' for fear of starvation:** Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:31](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.031))
5. **Do not commit adultery:** Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils). ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:32](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.032))
6. **Do not kill unjustly:** Nor take life – which Allah has made sacred – except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (to demand qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law). ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:33](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.033))
7. **Care for orphaned children:** Come not nigh to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength...([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:34](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.034))
8. **Keep one's promises:** ...fulfill (every) engagement [i.e. promise/covenant], for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:34](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.034))
9. **Be honest and fair in one's interactions:** Give full measure when ye measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:35](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.035))
10. **Do not be arrogant in one's claims or beliefs:** And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:36](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.036)) Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height. ([Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [17:37](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/017-qmt.php#017.037))

**Significant differences between the ethics of Christianity and Islam:**

1. Islam teaches that men are good by their own power; Christians teach that men are good by God’s power
2. Christianity emphasizes the attitude and motives of a person more than Islam
3. Islam leaves more room for the use of violence
4. Islam allows polygamy (multiple wives)
5. Islam has more dietary laws than Christianity (no pork, alcohol)
6. Muslims feel an obligation to coerce all people to live according to Islamic ethics