

2.2.5 Aims of punishment

Reform – the aim is to change the person for the better.

Retribution – to make things fair for the victims of society (getting your own back).

Deterrence – punishments so severe that they stop people from committing crime.

Protection – the aim is to protect society from criminals.

Muslim attitudes to the aims of punishment

Muslim attitudes are based on reform, retribution and deterrence. Hadd punishments should frighten Muslims from breaking the law; should make them pay for what they have done, and will reform offenders – a thief who has lost one hand will not seal again for fear of losing their other hand.

Imprisonment is used as a way to protect others. Paying compensation is seen as a form of retribution.

Muslims have these views on punishment because;

- The Qur'an sets down punishments and is the word of God.
- Whipping and amputation keeps the offender in society and with family, which is believed to make them less likely to reoffend, then those who have been in prison.
- Deterrence requires the punishments to be severe, amputation is more likely to deter, than a six month prison sentence.
- Strict punishments are only issued after intense investigation. Amputation would not be given to someone who stole to feed his family!

2.2.7 Treatment of criminals

There are two different attitudes to treatment of criminals in Islam;

- Muslims living in non-Muslim countries, or Muslim countries who have adopted a legal system similar to non-Muslim countries, believe in both reform and justice. **Muslim Aid** provides mentors to prisoners. They complete an assessment to evaluate the level of support / risk / need, and then an appropriate mentor is assigned. Muslim Aid also supports family and friends of prisoners.
- In countries with Shari'ah law, some Muslims believe that punishment should be according to hadd punishments from the Qur'an.

All Muslims are opposed to the use of torture;

- The Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam in 1990 and the Prophet Muhammad both condemn the use of torture.
- The majority of Muslim countries have signed the United Nations Convention Against Torture; *Each party state shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture.*

2.2.6 Forgiveness

Forgiveness means give up your anger or resentment towards someone who has wronged you. It is very important to Muslims as they believe that Allah is forgiving, and Muhammad was known to forgive others. Muslims also believe that they can ask Allah for forgiveness on Judgement Day, but they have to have forgiven others themselves.

Reconciliation – reconciliation means restoring friendly relationships after a conflict.

Muslims believe in forgiveness and reconciliation because;

- God is compassionate and merciful to sinners, so too should they be. *'But if ye forgive and overlook and cover up their faults, verily God is Oft-forgiving, Most-merciful'.* **Surah 64:14**
- On the Day of Judgement Muslims can ask God's forgiveness, but can they expect it, if they have not forgiven others?
- The Qur'an teaches it and the Qur'an should be followed as it is the word of God.
- Muhammad showed many examples in his life of forgiveness and reconciliation, Muslims should follow the example of Muhammad.
- **Surah 4:110**, *"if anyone does evil or wrongs his own soul, but afterwards seeks God's forgiveness, he will find God Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."*
- **Hadith**, *"Be forgiving and control yourself in the face of provocation: give justice to the person who was unfair and unjust to you."*
- **Surah 2:263**, *"A kind word of forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury"*

2.2.8 The death penalty

Death penalty – most Muslims support the use of the death penalty as the Qur'an and Shari'ah Law allow it and Muhammad used it for **adultery**, **apostasy** and **murder**.

Muslim attitudes and teachings about capital punishment

Islam allows it for murder, adultery and apostasy (a Muslim denying / working against Islam). These crimes should be clearly proven by the law laid down in Shari'ah.

Most Muslims agree because;

- It is set down by God in the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the word of God and to be followed. *Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and the law.* **Surah 6:151.**
- Muhammad permitted capital punishment for the three crimes, Muhammad is the seal of the prophets and his word must be followed.
- Muhammad sentenced murderers to death whilst he was the ruler of Madinah. Muhammad is the final exemplar who should be followed.
- Shari'ah (which Muslims are expected to follow) allows it for the 3 crimes.

Some Muslims disagree because;

- It is not compulsory in the Qur'an.
- Shari'ah allows the victim's family to accept blood money rather than a death penalty.
- It does not reduce crime, and since some innocent people are convicted it cannot be considered just. **Surah 17:33**, *"Take not life – which God has made sacred – except for just cause."*

2.3.1 The Ten Obligatory Acts

Shi'a Islam teaches that there are Ten Obligatory Acts to show you are a good Shi'a Muslim;

1. **Salah** – ritual prayer performed 5 times a day. There are some differences with Shi'as using a tablet of wood rather than a prayer mat, and combining some of the prayers.
2. **Sawm** – fasting in Ramadan.
3. **Zakah** – paying obligatory charity tax.
4. **Hajj** – annual pilgrimage to Makkah.
5. **Khums** – a special type of zakah, with a 5th of certain income going to charity.
6. **Jihad** – the struggle to be a good Muslim.
7. **Amr-bil-ma'ruf** – always doing which is good, e.g. a Shi'a should never walk past someone in trouble.
8. **Nahi anil Munkar** – always avoiding what is evil.
9. **Tawalla**- loving the relatives of the prophet.
10. **Tabarra** - hating those who hate Allah and his chosen ones.

2.3.2 Shahadah

Shahadah is the **first** of the 5 pillars. It is a declaration of faith. It is the basic statement of Islamic faith and is recited wholeheartedly by followers of the faith. It is a declaration of belief in the oneness of Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) as his prophet. When it is recited a Muslim accepts its message and that they will be committed to Islam and Allah's will their whole lives.

The Shahadah

The Shahadah is the declaration of faith that all Muslims make.

It is the statement that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.

Muslims will recite the Shahadah at important times of their lives, or just during the day to remind themselves of what is important in their lives.

2.3.3 Salah

Salah (prayer) is the second of the 5 pillars. Muslims are obliged to pray five times a day, these prayers are **compulsory**. Friday prayers are the most important prayers for Muslims. Prayers help Muslims to remember God and to follow his will. The set times for these compulsory prayers means that Muslims around the world are **united** in prayer as a global community on a daily basis. It is a highly spiritual act. Allah ordered Muslims to pray at five set times of day.

The prayer sets the rhythm for the day and Muslims try to follow this obligation. This is particularly the case in Muslims countries where the **adhan** (call to prayer) is sets the rhythm for the whole population.

Muslims can pray anywhere, but it is especially good to pray with others in a mosque. Praying together in a **congregation** helps Muslims to realise that all humanity is one, and all are equal in the sight of Allah. Prayers that are made at anytime and anywhere are called **d'ua**. Wherever they are, all Muslims will face the Ka'ba in Makkah when praying (there is a special niche called the **mihrab** in the mosque to show which way to face.

2.3.4 Sawm

Sawm is fasting (going without food) during the month of Ramadan. Ramadan lasts for 90 days and during this period Muslims will abstain from (not have) the following during daylight hours:

- Food or drink
- Smoking
- Sexual activity.

If you are unwell, under the age of 12, elderly or breastfeeding, then you do not need to fast.

By fasting, Muslims are learning self-discipline, obeying God, appreciating what they have, feeling empathy with those who have less and building a sense of community. It is also important because, it is a chance to re-charge their spiritual batteries and carry on their duties to God for the rest of the year, and It strengthens and unites all Muslims.

Sawm is set down in **Surah 2:183 – 185** of the Qur'an; *Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may learn self-restrain for a fixed number of days...*

Muhammad's first Ramadan sawm was in 625CE after Surah 2 was revealed to him.

2.3.5 Zakah and Khums

Zakah (charity) is the third of the 5 pillars. Muslims believe that everything they have has been given by Allah. Muslims are therefore expected to give to those who are in need and not keep all their money themselves. Those in need have a right to share in the wealth of rich people. Every Muslim has a duty to pay zakah and it is regarded as a form of **worship**.

The amount to be paid can vary but is usually **2.5%** of a person's wealth each year.

Farmers must give at least 5% of their crops and a number of animals. Traders give 2.5% of the value of their good. Islamic governments may take the money from Muslims and share it among the needy. In countries where there is no Islamic government the money is usually collected and distributed by the mosque. A Muslim can give zakah directly to another person if they wish.

Zakah is understood to help make society fairer. It is obeying Allah and acknowledging that everything comes from Allah so we should not cling to it.

Muslims also believe that by giving a percentage of their money to the needy they purify the remaining money they have.

2.3.6 Hajj

Hajj (pilgrimage) is the fifth pillar. Once in a lifetime, each Muslim is expected to travel to Makkah (as long as they are fit enough and can afford it).

The hajj reminds Muslims that they are all equal in the eyes of God. This is reflected in the clothes worn. The white sheets remind Muslims that they must be willing to give up everything for Allah and that they are all equal in his eyes.

Hajj lasts for five days and during this time a Muslim is expected to think of Allah constantly. It is a ritual that is designed to promote the bonds of Islamic brotherhood (**Ummah**) by showing that everyone is equal.

The hajj makes Muslims feel the real importance of life here on earth and the afterlife, by stripping away all markers of social status, wealth and pride. In the hajj all are truly equal.

Unfortunately, many people have died on hajj as a result of the large crowds and confusion over the instructions given. Also, those with money, or dignitaries have been able to receive preferential treatment whilst on hajj.

Whilst on hajj Muslims will walk around the Ka'ba 7 times repeating **Tawaf** prayers. Pilgrims will run between the hills of **Safa** and **Marwa** to represent Hagar's search for water for her son Ismail. They will also visit the **Zamzam** well where a spring came up for Ismail. In **Mina** pilgrims go to the **plain of Arafat** (many believe that the next time they will be there will be on Judgement Day). In **Muzdalifah** pilgrims collect small stones to later throw at the three pillars at Jamarat called the Devil Stones.

At the end of hajj all Muslims celebrate **Eid ul-Adha** which reminds Muslims of Ibrahim's obedience when he was told by Allah to sacrifice his son. Muslims may sacrifice a goat or lamb in remembrance, or pay for the equivalent amount of meat to be shared with the needy.

2.3.7 Jihad

What is jihad?

It means 'to strive, to apply oneself, to struggle, to persevere'. . 'Listen not to the unbelievers, but strive [some Muslims use the word 'fight'] against them' **Surah 25:52**. These clear show that it is striving with oneself that is the issue. The problem is with what is God's cause. This has led to the ideas of greater and lesser jihad.

Greater jihad is the struggle to make oneself the perfect Muslim, whether living in a Muslim society or not;

- It is a struggle to perform all the 5 pillars.
- It is a struggle to follow Shari'ah.
- It is a struggle to discover and follow the example of Muhammad.
- It is a struggle to be pleasing to Allah.

Once greater jihad is complete Muslims can work on **lesser jihad**, removing evil from society. Muslims scholars teach that Muslim societies should be the first target for lesser jihad.

Some Muslims believe that lesser jihad is actually a **Holy War** against non-Muslims and they often call themselves jihadi. They believe that they are following the example of Muhammad who fought against Makkah. They also believe that those who die in a Holy War will go straight to heaven; *Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord* **Surah 3:169**.

2.3.8 Celebrations and commemorations

At the end of hajj all Muslims celebrate **Eid ul-Adha** which reminds Muslims of Ibrahim's obedience when he was told by Allah to sacrifice his son. Muslims may sacrifice a goat or lamb in remembrance, or pay for the equivalent amount of meat to be shared with the needy.

Eid ul-Fitr

This festival was started by Muhammad and comes at the end of **Ramadan**. It means the festival of breaking of the fast. It marks the end of the month of Ramadan. Muslims don't just mark the end of fasting they also thank God for the strength and help he has given them to fast for the month. They also give thanks to God for providing guidance and wisdom in the Qur'an. The first revelation of the Qur'an was made during the month of Ramadan (Laylat al-Qadr).

It may be celebrated for 1, 2 or 3 days. Muslims get together in mosques or large outdoor spaces to say special prayers. There is a focus on **forgiveness** and Muslims are reminded to forget any arguments they have had during the year. They are encouraged to focus on helping the poor.

Everyone wears their best or new clothes and homes are usually decorated. Special foods are eaten and cards and presents are exchanged.

In the UK it is not recognised as a national public holiday, some may have a day off work or school to attend prayers and enjoy the festival.

2.4.1 Attitudes towards peace

Peace – the **absence of war and conflict**, but also a feeling of **calmness and happiness**.

Islam, a religion of peace

Islam comes from the word *aslama*, which means to submit to the will of God. It also comes from *salaam*, which means peace. A greeting ‘*salaam alaykum*’ means ‘May peace be with you’. The Qur’an makes it clear that Islam is a religion of peace, *O You who believe! Enter into peace [Islam] wholeheartedly; and follow not the footsteps of the Evil One Surah 2:208*. Since the increase in terror attack, post 9/11, Muslims have been keen to show Islam as a religion on peace. Mahathir bin Mohamad (Former Prime Minister of Malaysia) said, ‘...people who call themselves ‘Muslims’ kill despite the injunction of their religion against killing especially of innocent people.’

It is important because;

- Muslims get inner peace by submitting to the will of Allah.
- Inner peace allows Muslims to encourage peaceful relationships with others.
- The Qur’an teaches that Islam is the House of peace.
- Islam teaches that true peace both within, and between people, comes from accepting Islam.

This all means that peace should be central to a Muslims life. Muslims should always look for the amicable solution, and be non-confrontational. Some Muslims do choose to ignore the teachings, and there is some debate as to whether these people are indeed Muslim.

2.4.2 Peacemaking

Muslim teachings about peacemaking

The Qur’an recommends that it’s followers be peacemakers. It recommends making peace, rather than beginning disputes and fights, *Repel evil with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate! Surah 41:34-35*. Muslims should find a balance and seek justice as a way of making peace, *Fear God and keep straight the relations between yourselves. Surah 8:1*.

The importance of justice, forgiveness and reconciliation in peacemaking

If a society and it’s laws are unjust, people will not obey them, it can lead to civil unrest, for example the civil rights movement in America. If the laws are not just, then people may start a civil war like in Syria, where Sunni Muslims believe that the legal system favours the Shi’a Muslims.

Muslims believe in forgiveness and reconciliation because;

- God is compassionate and merciful to sinners, so too should they be.
- On the Day of Judgement Muslims can ask God’s forgiveness, but can they expect it, if they have not forgiven others?
- The Qur’an teaches it and the Qur’an should be followed as it is the word of God.
- Muhammad showed many examples in his life of forgiveness and reconciliation, Muslims should follow the example of Muhammad.

Muslims should not forgive those working against Islam, or those who dent Muslim principles.

2.4.3 Attitudes to conflict

There are many causes of conflict, such as **greed, politics, history and culture** and **religion**.

Muslim responses to the causes of war

Most Muslims believe that if war is just Muslims must fight in it. The Qur’an says that they must fight if they are attacked, and Muhammad (as a great example) fought in self-defence. However, Muslims must be clear about the causes of war, and cannot be involved in the following types of conflict;

- A war to take resources from others.
- Forcing another country to become Muslims.
- To change political leadership or ideology.
- To change the culture of a country.

Muslims must be wary of war as Muhammad said, ‘War is a deception’.

Atheist and Humanist responses to the causes of war

Most believe that to end religion would be to end wars. They believe that religions are false and not based on reason or scientific evidence. They try to be peacemakers by showing Muslims that they cannot prove the Qur’an is the word of God, and that the religion is false.

Humanists also believe in making the United Nations stronger and a more peacemaking force, so as to avoid wars. Many Humanists are pacifists and would not fight in wars. Many atheists agree with Humanists, but some would agree with reasons to fight in Just War.

Situation ethics and war

This can be applied by Muslims and Humanists to the causes of war. They will look at the causes and effects of war, and work out what would bring about the most loving outcome. If the most loving outcome is to fight, then that is what they would do, if it is to not fight, then that is what they do, but each war is looked at on its own merits.

2.4.4 Pacifism

Pacifism – the belief that fighting, violence and war is **always** wrong

Muslims and pacifism

The Qur’an encourages Muslims to ‘struggle in the way of Islam’; pacifism is not a concept in Islam. The word *jihad* means struggle, but is often used to mean ‘holy war’. However, there are 2 forms of *jihad* – lesser and greater. Greater means a personal struggle, whilst lesser is struggle with outside forces.

Based on the story of Moses and Aaron there is a tradition of passive resistance in Islam. In Surah 5:28 the brothers refused to fight the Israelites who rebelled against God. During the Arab Spring in 2011 many democratic movements were based on passive resistance, and protesting against the lack of democracy in a non-violent way. The demonstrations in Egypt’s Tahrir Square in Cairo, against President Mubarak were an example of this, even though the government forces used violence against the protestors. Protests in Syria and Libya began with passive resistance, but are now full scale civil wars. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was a famous Muslim pacifist, who was friends with Gandhi and campaigned peacefully against British rule in the hope of creating a united India (rather than the independent states of Pakistan and Bangladesh being created, which is what happened).

2.4.5 Just War theory

Just War is a theory that **War is sometimes acceptable**. The most common form of the theory comes from St Thomas Aquinas in Christianity, but Islam had its own version prior to this. In order for a war to be 'Just' it has to meet certain criteria, such as;

Worthy cause – such as self-defence or defending innocents.

Authority – Must be declared by the government or leaders (religious).

Resort – it must be the last resort; peaceful methods have been tried.

Innocents – Innocents must not be targeted.

Success – there must be a reasonable chance of success.

2.4.6 Holy War

A **Holy War** is fought for a **religious goal**, be authorised by a **religious leader** and/or promise a **spiritual reward**.

The nature of Holy War - Religion and war have gone hand in hand throughout history; armies would be blessed before setting out to war, and would often carry religious banners. However, a Holy War must have the following features;

- Fought to achieve a religious goal / Authorised by a religious leader / Promise a spiritual reward to those who fight in it.

Muslim teachings about war and peace - Holy War is known as Harb al-Muqadis (Holy War is part of lesser jihad), and according to the Shari'ah it can be fought to;

- Defend Islam / Strengthen Islam / Protect the freedom of Muslims to practise their faith / Protect Muslims against attack / Put right a wrong.

Islamic lawyers today believe that it can only be called against an aggressor which threatens Islam, and can only be called a Muslim Holy War if;

- It must be a last resort / It must be led by a Muslim authority.
- The soldiers fighting are all Muslim and well versed in the teachings of Islam.
- It has the prospect of success.
- It must minimise suffering as much as possible.
- Innocent civilians (women, children, elderly) must not be attacked.
- It must end as soon as the enemy surrenders.

If these conditions are met then a Muslims must fight in it. This is based on the Qur'an and the example set by Muhammad. However, verses also show that war must be limited in order to be a Just or a Holy War; *Do not kill any child, any woman, or any elder or sick person* **Hadith**. *But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou [also] incline towards peace, and trust in Allah. Surah 8:61.*

2.4.7 WMDs

Weapons of Mass Destruction – WMDs include **nuclear, biological** and **chemical** weapons.

Benefits of WMD - Because they have the potential to destroy the earth, many think that they are the reason there have been no world wars since 1945. Countries with nuclear weapons may hesitate to attack each other due to the repercussions (known as mutually assured destruction (MAD)). Biological and chemical weapons leave a countries infra-structure (roads / buildings) intact, so make it easier for the attacker to invade. Protection can be worn and used by the attacker, making them less at risk from the weapons used.

Problems of WMD - One problem is that they target the innocent. Nuclear weapons threaten world extinction, a war fought between Russia and the USA would almost certainly leave the world uninhabitable. In January 2010 an edition of Scientific America, warned that 100 nuclear detonations in Pakistan / India could lead to a world engulfing thick smoke that would create a kind of Ice Age, and kill billions in a subsequent famine, not to mention the millions killed by the device itself. These 100 weapons represent 1% of nuclear weapons globally! Chemical and biological weapons can kill as many people as a nuclear attack. These weapons cannot always be delivered effectively, and the subsequent effects can only be guessed at. No one knows what will happen if large quantities are released. Once released the weapon is uncontrollable, and could go beyond its original target.

Muslim attitudes to WMD - The rules on Just War in Islam make it hard for Muslims to justify the use of WMD. Islam has strict rules about preventing atrocities such as genocide or rape of women in warfare *For me, I intend to let thee [an unjust murderer] draw on thyself my sin as well as thin, for thou wilt be among the companions of the fire and that is the reward for those who do wrong* **Surah 5:32**. For good Muslims WMD are unusable. Pakistan is the only Muslim country with nuclear weapons, created out of fear of attack from India, but it has never given an Islamic justification for having them. Whereas the spiritual leader of Iran has condemned WMD, *The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its fundamental religious and legal beliefs, would never resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction...In contrast to the propaganda of our enemies, fundamentally we are against any productions of weapons of mass destruction in any form* **Ayatollah Khamenei condemning WMDs in 2015**.

2.4.8 Issues surrounding conflict

Muslim views on violence

Muslims believe in a civilised society, and are against violence, except under legal authority because;

- Islamic society is based on the rule of law and mutual respect, violent people have no respect for others or the law.
- Violence without a just cause is sinful.
- Muslims are all part of the ummah, and using violence is acting against the ummah.
- Muhammad said, in his last sermon, *'Every brother is a brother to every Muslim.'* So Muslims should not be violent.
- Islam teaches Muslims to protect the weak.
- Every human has rights, and one of those is to live free from fear. Violence denies others this right.
- *I advise you ten thing: Do not kill women or children or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing tress. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter sheep or camels, except for food. Do not burn bees and do not scatter them. Do not steal from the body, and do not be cowardly.* **Hadith**

The way the media has portrayed Islam and terrorism has caused issues for ordinary Muslims in their everyday lives. Muslim children have been bullied, there have been racial attacks (especially following a terrorist incident). Most of UK hate crimes were against Muslim women and girls in traditional Islamic dress – most were carried out by white males aged 15-35.