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**What Do Latter-day Saints and Muslims Have in Common? Part 3**  
***A Christian Evaluation Of Muslims and Latter-day Saints: Beliefs, Values, and Lifestyles***  
By Tal Davis

Recently the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints released online and in booklet form a pamphlet comparing and contrasting their faith with that of the Muslims. (Read the pamphlet titled *Muslims and Latter-day Saints: Beliefs, Values, and Lifestyles*:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/muslims-and-latter-day-saints?lang=eng>).

In this four part series we are examining that LDS publication to survey its statements on Islam and on its own faith. Our goal is to evaluate the accuracy of the statements and to analyze them from a Historic Christian perspective.

In Part One we examined the first four points of the LDS pamphlet: (1) Mutual Respect ; (2) Profession of Faith in God; (3) The Posterity of Abraham; and (4) Prophets. (Read Part One here: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2022/02/what-do-latter-day-saints-and-muslims-have-in-common-part-1-tal-davis/>)

In Part Two, we looked at points five through nine: (5) Jesus Christ; (6) Scriptures; (7) Prayer; (8) Helping Those in Need; and (9) Fasting . (Read Part Two here: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2022/02/what-do-latter-day-saints-and-muslims-have-in-common-part-1-tal-davis-2/>)

In this Part Three, we now analyze points ten through thirteen of the LDS pamphlet: (10) Physical Health; (11) Chastity; and (12) the Role of Women; and (13) Family.

In Part Four we will survey points fourteen through seventeen: (14) Holy Places; (15) Life After Death; (16) Humanity; and (17) Religious Diversity.

Let's now continue our review and analysis.

**(Note on Acronyms - 1) SAW:** Acronym for the Arabic phrase "prayers and peace be upon him," which Muslims use after they say the name of the Prophet Muhammad. **2) AS:** Acronym for the Arabic phrase "upon him be peace," which Muslims use after they say the name of prophets like Abraham.)

**Point Ten: Physical Health**

*Muslims and Latter-day Saints promote physical health and spiritual growth through abstinence from certain foods and substances.*

**Muslims**

*For Muslims, the Qur'an outlines food that is halal (lawful) or haram (unlawful). Among the unlawful foods are pork, pork products, alcohol, and any substance that may alter the body or mind. As such, many Muslims also avoid tobacco. Consuming meat is acceptable if the meat is sacrificed according to scriptural guidelines. For Muslims, these food laws are viewed as a sign of God's care and concern for their well-being.*

**Latter-day Saints**

*For Latter-day Saints, modern-day revelation describes specific health practices and forbidden substances. This health code, referred to as the "Word of Wisdom," encourages a diet of fruits and grains and to use meat sparingly. Latter-day Saints abstain from tobacco, alcohol, tea, coffee, drugs, or other substanc-*

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*es harmful to the body or mind. They believe that obedience to this law brings great blessings of health and increased spiritual knowledge.*

### Analysis

This point begins with the statement that "*Muslims and Latter-day Saints promote physical health and spiritual growth through abstinence from certain foods and substances.*" It is a true statement that both religions require refraining from eating and drinking certain substances. Their reasons for doing so, though, are not necessarily to "*promote physical health and spiritual growth.*"

The Islam paragraph says correctly that Muslims are only to eat food that is considered "*halal (lawful) and avoid those that are haram (unlawful).*" It declares "the unlawful foods are pork, pork products, (and) alcohol." Muslims can only eat meat that "*is sacrificed according to scriptural guidelines.*" These dietary laws are similar to the Jewish prohibitions of foods that are not certified kosher. The prohibition of imbibing alcohol is not true for Jews who traditionally include wine in their religious celebrations. Just how much most Muslims actually adhere to those laws is questionable.

The statement also says Muslims should abstain from "*any substance that may alter the body or mind*" and "*many Muslims also avoid tobacco.*" Those may be the ideals but the reality is something else. The widespread use of tobacco and drugs by Muslims, even in Islamic nations, is well documented. Some countries in the Islamic world have serious problems of abuse of opium, heroin, hashish, and other addictive substances. Many of those countries' economies rely heavily on harvesting drug producing crops.

The LDS section cites the traditional Mormon health code known as

"the Word of Wisdom." That law, as interpreted by the church leadership, positively "*encourages a diet of fruits and grains and to use meat sparingly.*" It also negatively commands LDS people to "*abstain from tobacco, alcohol, tea, coffee, drugs, or other substances harmful to the body or mind.*" Indeed, most LDS members who are committed to the faith follow those proscriptions. One reason they do so is because if they fail to follow the rules they may be in jeopardy of losing their Temple Recommend. Also, to what extent the prohibition of caffeine is to be taken is debated among LDS people. For example, some Mormons have no qualms about drinking caffeinated soft drinks. (From *The Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 89: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89?lang=eng>)

It is our position that the principles of Islam and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for eating healthy diets and avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are commendable. However, both cases are based on unwarranted degrees of religious legalism. That is to say, their adherents obey these dietary laws not because of their health concerns, though that may be a side benefit, but because they believe if they fail to keep the standards it will affect their standing before God and endanger their situation for life-after death.

Christians, of course, are encouraged to avoid unhealthy habits and substances, but those have no bearing on our relationship with God or on our salvation. Our relationship with God and our ultimate salvation is determined only by His grace and our personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Eph. 2:8-9). As we grow in our faith, making wise decisions about our health should be evident. This ethical principle is based, not on legalistic interdictions, but on the New Testament teaching that our bodies are tem-

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ples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

### Point Eleven: Chastity

*Muslims and Latter-day Saints believe that God delights in purity and chastity.*

*Muslims and Latter-day Saints believe that the body is a sacred home for the spirit and that their thoughts, words, and deeds should be pure. Members of both faiths believe in obeying God's laws and following strict codes of conduct related to sexual relations. In both faiths, sexual relations are acceptable only between a lawfully married man and woman. Chastity before marriage and fidelity to one's spouse after marriage is a commandment in both religions.*

### Analysis

Unlike most of the other statements in the LDS pamphlet, this one presents both faiths' positions in a single paragraph. It asserts that "*Muslims and Latter-day Saints believe that God delights in purity and chastity.*" In general, that is true for most present day Muslims and Latter-day Saints in North America. However, we must look at it in historical context. Both Islam and the LDS have histories of questionable sexual ethics. The inevitable question is what is really meant by "*obeying God's laws and following strict codes of conduct related to sexual relations.*" What they regard as "God's laws" have not historically corresponded to Biblical standards.

Actually, Islam still allows for men to have up to four wives at a time. Muhammad himself is known to have had as many as fourteen wives (one of whom was only seven years old). Thus, most wealthy men in that faith will have multiple spouses in Islamic countries where it is legal. Also, divorce is acceptable and easy for a man who wants to take a new wife or wives.

Similarly, the early history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is replete with the common practice of polygamy by its leaders and members. Church founder, Joseph Smith, Jr., is believed to have been sealed (formally married) to as many as thirty-four women. This concept of "plural Marriage" was canonized in 1843 in *The Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132, and was openly practiced among Mormons in Utah and surrounding regions for decades.

Section 132 was never de-canonized or removed from *The Doctrine and Covenants* and still remains in the current edition. However, increasing legal and social pressures were applied to the church in the late 19th century by the U.S. government. Consequently, polygamy was formally suspended in 1890 by then LDS President Wilford Woodruff's "Manifesto" proclamation. Today, polygamy, and all extra-marital sexual relations, are strictly prohibited by the LDS. Violations may result in excommunication from the church. Nonetheless, polygamy is still surreptitiously practiced by some Mormon sects in the western U.S.

### Point Twelve: The Role of Women

*Muslims and Latter-day Saints value women and their essential role in society and in the home.*

#### Muslims

*Islam views men and women in equal and complementary roles (see Qur'an 3:195), with women as the primary figures in the home and men in the outside world. Muslim women also play prominent roles in public life. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encouraged education: each Muslim woman is under a moral and religious obligation to seek knowledge, develop her intellect, broaden her outlook, cultivate her talents, and utilize her potential to the benefit of her soul and her society.*

## **Latter-day Saints**

*The ultimate aim in Latter-day Saint theology is exaltation, or eternal family life with God. Creating strong, loving family relationships is a priority for both women and men (see "The Family: A Proclamation to the World"). Motherhood is a holy calling to nurture God's children. Women and men work as equal partners in the family, the Church, and the community. Latter-day Saint women are encouraged to gain education and develop their talents. They also belong to Relief Society, a global community of compassion and service.*

## **Analysis**

The Islamic statement concerning the status of women can only be regarded as overstated at best and a complete falsehood at worst. Historically women in Islam have had a drastically subservient place in the family, religion, and society. This is most obvious in many predominantly Muslim countries. We have already discussed that men in Islam may have up to four wives at a time. They may divorce a wife at any time. Women, however, are only allowed one husband (who is often pre-selected by their family) and cannot choose to divorce him. In many Muslim societies women are forced to wear prescribed clothing, are not allowed to drive automobiles, and are not educated beyond basic levels. Granted some Islamic nations have opened up women's rights in recent decades, but, in general, their status in Islam remains second rate and unequal.

The LDS paragraph focuses on the place of women in the home and family. It does correctly say "*Latter-day Saint women are encouraged to gain education and develop their talents.*" Nonetheless, the LDS clearly sees a woman's primary role as being a wife and mother. The statement "*The ultimate aim in Latter-day Saint theology is exaltation, or eternal family life with God*" reflects that church's belief that marriages are eternal, that the family unit extends beyond death, and marriage is essential for "exaltation." "Exaltation," in Mormon parlance, refers to the eternal progression of a man and woman after death, as husband and wife, to eventually become a god and goddess who will populate and rule their own world. These Mormon doctrines of eternal marriage and exaltation have absolutely no biblical foundations (see Point Thirteen below and Point Fifteen, "Life After Death," in Part 4).

In the church organization, only men are qualified to hold its two priesthoods: the lesser Aaronic Priesthood, usually bestowed on boys at age eleven, and the higher Melchizedek Priesthood, received by young men at age eighteen. In any case, whether held by men or women, these Mormon priesthoods are totally un-Biblical.

## **Point Thirteen: Family**

*Muslims and Latter-day Saints believe that the family is the fundamental unit of society and an essential source of joy.*

*Both Muslims and Latter-day Saints believe that marriage is a sacred covenant before God. Husbands and wives should work together in providing for their children, teaching righteousness, and showing love. Children have a duty to respect, honor, and love their parents and other family members. The home should be a place of unity and safety.*

## **Muslims**

*Muslims believe parents are responsible for raising God-fearing children. Family members, if righteous, can be together in Paradise after the resurrection. Maintaining strong family ties is an obligation, from which one derives happiness: "Our Lord! Grant us that our spouses and our offspring be a joy to our eyes" (Qur'an 25:74; see also 3:110).*

## **Latter-day Saints**

*Latter-day Saints believe the family is central to God's plan of salvation for all human beings. Family relationships can continue beyond the grave. Covenants made in holy temples unite families for eternity. "Children are an heritage of the Lord," a source of joy in this life and in the world to come (Psalm 127:3-5).*

## **Analysis**

This point opens with a general statement that both Islam and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints highly value the family unit, both for their faiths but also for the overall benefit of society. They both affirm "*that marriage is a sacred covenant before God.*" Christians, of course, agree with those principles.



Nonetheless, the Islamic statement, "*Family members, if righteous, can be together in Paradise after the resurrection*" is vague. Does that mean they will remain married in Paradise (the Muslim concept of heaven)? We have never heard that said before. Anyway, salvation for Muslims is never a guaranteed fact. It is only if "*Allah wills,*" meaning they can never be sure of their spiritual standing.

We already commented on the eternal nature of Mormon marriages. The statement accurately reports that "*Latter-day Saints believe the family is central to God's plan of salvation for all human beings.*" Only by being sealed in marriage in a LDS temple, conducted by an authorized holder of the Priesthood, does a man and woman have the assurance of being together forever and gaining exaltation.

The Bible teaches that marriage is a very important element in the earthly life of a Christian. However, it never indicates that marriage is essential for eternal life. That is entirely dependent on one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Bible also does not teach that the earthly family unit or marriages will extend into the afterlife. Jesus made this clear when answering a trick question by the Sadducees:

*"On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, Moses said, "If a man dies having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up children for his brother." Now there were seven brothers among us; and the first married and died, and having no children, he left his wife to his brother. It was the same also with the second brother, and the third, down to the seventh. Last of all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her in marriage.' But Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, since you do not understand the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.'"* (Matthew 22:24-30 NASB)

This concludes Part Three of this four installment analysis of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' booklet comparing Islamic beliefs to those of that church. In the next and final installment we will survey points fourteen through seventeen: (14) Holy Places; (15) Life After Death; (16) Humanity; and (17) Religious Diversity.

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