



Written by [James Heiser](#) on November 15, 2010

UK's Islam Channel Censured for Guests Advocating Marital Rape

The recent decision by voters in Oklahoma to ban Islamic Sharia law from the courtrooms of their state has already been met with a legal challenge and a federal restraining order, setting in motion a court battle which will necessarily involve a protracted discussion of the role of Sharia law in the life of Muslims.

Given the legal expectation in the United States of the separation of church and state, many Americans do not realize the scope of Sharia law in the life of Muslims. As one convert from Islam, Rev. Elijah Abraham, recently explained in [an interview for The New American](#), Sharia law is drawn directly from the life of Mohammed. In Abraham's words, when it comes to determining the highest authority for a Muslim,



You've got the Koran, and under it is the Hadith, which are the Islamic traditions of Mohammed's deeds and sayings. The Islamic Sharia law really comes out from within the schools of thought of the Hadith to interpret what the Koran says. The Koran is a little vague on certain issues, and Mohammed elaborated a lot on what the Koran says, and as a result you've got different schools of thought of what the Islamic law is. So Sharia law dictates every aspect of the typical Muslim's life: how you wash your hands, how you eat, how you sleep, how you have sex with your wife, etc. It's a mess.

While Americans await the fate of Oklahoma's [Question 755](#) — the motion adopted by voters which would ban international law and Sharia law — the people of Great Britain can view the implications of Sharia law on their television screens as easily as tuning to the [Islam Channel](#). [According to the channel's website](#), proselytizing for Islam and regaining "lapsed" Muslims are goals central to the network's mission:

With headquarters in Central London, Islam Channel provides alternative news, current affairs and entertainment programming from an Islamic perspective. Since its launch in 2004 Islam Channel has developed into a platform for ingenious and practical television complementing the definition of good programming.

Broadcast in English, Islam Channel aims for its programming to appeal to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Ultimately conveying Islam in its true form to curious non-Muslims and to further educate Muslims.

Islam Channel's fresh, contemporary approach to spreading the message of the Qu'ran has resulted in many viewers reverting to Islam, consequently establishing itself as the leading, free-



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to-air, English language, Islamic-focused satellite channel available globally.

According a [story](#) carried by the *Guardian* last March, the Islam Channel has proven to be extremely influential within the growing Muslim portion of British society:

For the last seven years, since its launch in 2004, the London-based Islam Channel has been hugely influential in the British Muslim community, where it has played a pivotal role in the development of a British Islam. Every night, thousands of British Muslims, many of them young, tune into the channel to watch programmes dealing with news, current affairs and religion from a distinctly Islamic angle.

However, the Islam Channel's portrayal of a life in conformity to Sharia law has brought a challenge from the government agency charged with overseeing regulation of the television networks. [As reported in a CNN story](#):

Britain's Islam Channel broke broadcasting regulations by condoning marital rape, encouraging violence against women, and promoting an anti-Israel, pro-Hamas line, the country's broadcast regulator Ofcom ruled Monday.

One violation came during an advice program in which a female caller asked if a woman could hit her husband back if he was beating her. The host, as part of his answer, said the most a husband could do was hit her with a stick the size of a pen "just to make her feel that you are not happy with her."

The same host said in another program that for a woman to wear perfume when praying in a mosque made her a prostitute in the eyes of the Prophet Mohammed.

Another violation took place in a discussion about an Afghan law that, critics say, allows men to rape their wives.

"To refuse relations would harm a marriage," a guest on the program said.

The notion that taking an "anti-Israel line" could actually run afoul of a nation's broadcasting regulation might seem to many Americans like a significant restriction of freedom of political expression. At the same time, given the advances in the English-speaking world protecting women from domestic violence, the presentation of an Islamic code which does not uphold the same range of protections is no doubt shocking to many viewers. [According to the Guardian](#), the broadcast which Ofcom ruled condoned marital rape involved the network host Nazreen Nawaz, who declared:

And really the idea that a woman cannot refuse her husband's relations this is not strange to a Muslim because it is part of maintaining that strong marriage. But it shouldn't be such a big problem where the man feels he has to force himself upon the woman.

Lest it be imagined that such controversial comments were an isolated event, Nazreen Nawaz has drawn attention before for her extreme views regarding the role of women under Sharia law. Nawaz's comments on the show "Muslimah Dilemma" [drew attention last year](#), as she appeared to object to the entire notion of a Western "idea of liberty":

... But like you say, this issue of wholesale adoption of the democratic way of life, where parliament legislates, we can see this is at odds with the idea of wanting the shari`ah to legislate. We can see this idea contradicts itself. As to, in terms of what kind of values Muslim women do respect, other values, this idea of being able to vote, this idea of being able to be employed in society, have a certain amount of political rights. I think these are the things. What they see as



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being detrimental of adoption is I would say certain liberal values. Like the survey said that the thing that they least admired was the moral decay of society. Promiscuity, pornography and so on. I think living in the West we see some of the fruits of this idea of liberty and this idea of freedom, where people are free to have any relationship they want to. I believe that it's caused a lot of problems in the social structure, you have adultery, you have problems of teenage pregnancies.

Apparently public stonings cut down on the recidivism rate for adultery and teen pregnancy.

[Responding to the Ofcom report](#), the Islam Channel maintains that it “does not condone or encourage violence towards women under any circumstances” and that it “does not condone or encourage marital rape.” Nevertheless, as the *Guardian* observed, “Ofcom considered that the presenter at the time was clear that some form of physical punishment towards a woman was acceptable, in contrast to the channel’s formal position.” It is clear the both the United Kingdom and the United States have much to learn about the implications of the deeply held convictions of a growing Muslim minority in their midst.

Photo: On April 15, 2009 Afghan Shiite women carrying banners march against a new conservative marriage law in Kabul, that appeared to have legalized marital rape: AP Images



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