



In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Islam or Secularism

What is secularism?

Is Islam compatible with secularism? This question is very important in the present context, particularly in 21st century.

Secularism is defined in the Webster dictionary as: "A system of doctrines and practices that rejects any form of religious faith and worship" or "The belief that religion and ecclesiastical affairs should not enter into the function of the state especially into public education".

Where the Oxford English Dictionary defines "secular," the uses of the word that suggest that the secular is "non-sacred" in character arise as recently as the mid-nineteenth century. [1.] The term, as we now have it, originated in the mid 19th Century in the works of Holyoake and his fellow atheists. It is in works such as his that the current usage is adopted in which the "secular" is viewed as free from religion.

There is no doubt that secularism contradicts Islam in every aspect. They are two different paths that never meet;

1. The strict separation of the state from religious institutions.
2. That people of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law.

Choosing one means rejecting the other. One of the most common misconceptions about secularism is that it is viewed as anti-religious when it really is 'religion neutral'. It protects the rights of Muslims in a non-Muslim society and it protects rights of non-Muslims in a Muslim society. Secularism is simply a framework for ensuring equality throughout democratic society – in politics, education, the law and elsewhere, for believers and non-believers alike.

Secularism cannot survive without democracy and democracy cannot survive without secularism.

Democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people (basically means man-made law and government which ruled by the people).

Democracy is a form of government in which all eligible citizens have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. Democracy allows eligible citizens to participate equally—either directly or through elected representatives—in the proposal, development, and creation of laws. It encompasses social, economic and cultural conditions that enable the free and equal practice of political self-determination. The term originates from the Greek δημοκρατία (*dēmokratía*) "rule of the people",[2.] which was coined from δῆμος (*dēmos*) "people" and κράτος (*kratos*) "power" or "rule".

You may be surprised to know that while most secularists are atheists, some secularists are actually believers in a faith. Some of the examples of Secularists support: [3.]

- The complete separation of religious institutions and state.
- The abolition of any special privileges granted to religious organisations.
- The abolition of any special protection granted to faith groups.
- No religion should be taught as fact and no religion described as superior to another.
- The abolition of "blasphemy" laws.
- Secularists support the protection of individual believers, but not the protection of their beliefs.
- Secularists believe that the law should not prevent criticism that hurts religious feelings.

Hence, you will now decide for yourselves, if Islam is compatible or not with secularism? From the information and points given below.

Firstly, [4.] what is Islam?

Islam means [4.] submission, safety and peace. Islam means submitting oneself to the rules of Allah, and in return Allah will guarantee safety from the Hellfire and peace in this world and in Heaven. Islam is also a social model that relates to how people interact and live together. Establishing society according to the model of Islam is called *iqamatu-deen*. *Iqamatu-deen* is a obligatory (fard) responsibility for all Muslims. Allah sent his Messenger Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) with the responsibility of *iqamatu-deen*. In the Qur'an Allah says:

"Allah sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion (of Islam) to make it dominant over all religions"... [Sûrah Taubah 9:33]

The Rules (Shari`ah) of Allah (God) is compulsory and has laws and regulations that cannot be changed.

Point 1- Secularism makes lawful what Allah has made unlawful. Some examples:-

- Secularism makes adultery lawful if the male and the female are consenting adults.
- As for Riba (interest on money), it is the basis of all financial transactions in secular economies. On the contrary, Allah says:

"O ye who believe! Fear Allah and give up what remains of your demand for usury (Riba) if ye are indeed believers. If ye do it not, take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger: But if ye turn back, Ye shall have your capital sums; Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly." [Qur'an, Sûrah Al Baqarah 2:278-279]

- As for alcohol, all secular systems allow the consumption of alcohol and make selling it a lawful business.
- As for gambling, secular system allows it a lawful business. On the contrary, Allah says:

"O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination - of Satan's handiwork; Eschew such (abomination), That ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: Will ye not then abstain?" [Qur'an, Sûrah Al Ma'idah 5:90-91]

Second point - Secularism is clear unbelief/disbelief.

Secularism is based on separating religion from all the affairs of this life and hence, it rules by law and regulations other than Allah's laws. Hence, secularism rejects Allah's rules with no exception and prefers regulations other than Allah's and His Messenger's. In fact, many secularists claim that Allah's laws might have been suitable for the time they were revealed but are now outdated.

As a result, most of the laws governing the daily affairs of life in the countries ruled by secular systems contradict Islam. Allah says:

"Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days Of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?" [Qur'an, Sûrah Al Ma'idah 5:50]

Belief in Allah can never go with the acceptance of other than His rulings in one's heart. Allah says:

"It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the Prophets who bowed (as in Islam) to

Allah's Will, by the Rabbis and the Doctors of Law: For to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto: Therefore fear not men, but fear Me, and sell not My Signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (No better than) Unbelievers." [Qur'an, Sûrah Al Ma'idah 5:44]

From the above, the status of secularism and its relation to Islam are clear. But the ignorance about the Islamic truth is still dominating the Muslim's mind. Most secular systems repeat slogans like **"no religion in politics and no politics in religion"** or **"religion is for Allah, and the state is for the people."** Such sayings portray their view of Islam as a religion to be regarded as a private matter and practiced in the masjid (place of worship) and home only, and that it should not be allowed to rule life outside the masjid.

Furthermore, they try to deceive people with democratic slogans like **"personal freedom"** and **"people governing people."** That means that people come first and no place is made for the ruling of Allah.

This is why secular systems have no **legality** and **authority**, this is why secularism is clear **unbelief/disbelief (Kufr leading to Shirk** (associating other deities with Allah)) in Islam. This is all based on people's knowledge and their intention, because every **action** is based on **intention**. Allah says:

"Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed". [Qur'an, Sûrah Al-Nisa 4:48]

From the above verse of the Qur'an, clearly states that anyone associating partners with Allah, then he is destined to Hell forever because Allah will not forgive him for this major sin. He forgives, whomsoever He pleases, sins other than this. **The question then arises, why Muslims and Muslim countries are reforming to secular modernisation?**

Nineteenth century origin when colonial powers began to impose secular laws in Islamic countries i.e. the laws which were not basically derived from Shari`ah. The colonial countries posed a great challenge to Islam in the colonised countries through their technological/military supremacy. The leaders and intellectuals in these countries were overwhelmed by the supremacy of the West and began to advocate secular modernisation. Also many of the religious leaders and intellectuals were either hypocrites/lacking knowledge or were love with this materialistic world (duniya). Many reform movements thus were born in Islamic countries. At present, Information revolution also is a tide which cannot be stopped

and this revolution is creating deep impact on every aspect of life. Muslim countries cannot remain apart from this.

If one trusts, obeys, and follows the guidance and commands of Allah and His Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), one can be assured of never ever being misled; but if one believes, obeys and follows any other guidance, other than that of Allah and His Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), one can be assured of being led astray.

Whatever written of Truth and benefit is only due to Allah's Assistance and Guidance, and whatever of error is of me alone. Allah Alone Knows Best and He is the Only Source of Strength.

Endnotes / Source:

1. The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., "secular," "secularism," and "secularity." All uses suggesting a meaning of "secular" that denotes an absence of connection with *religion* post-date George Jacob Holyoake, *The Principles of Secularism Briefly Explained* (London: Holyoake & Co., 1859).

2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>

3. Last updated 27-10-2009 <http://bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/atheism/types/secularism.shtml>

4. <http://muftisaeed.org.uk/children-n-women/TeachingYIslam.html>

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