

# Apostasy

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Islam has a core defect that needs to be corrected. Historically, the penalty for apostasy is death, and few modern leaders of Islam have renounced this doctrine to embrace our modern values of freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, and freedom of religion. Further information about this may be found in the Wikipedia article [Apostasy in Islam](#) and Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Koran* (2003, p. 141).

As a result of the death penalty for apostasy, an American born into Islam is like a person born into slavery: they may dream about freedom, but few will have the courage to risk embracing that freedom because to take that step is to place yourself at risk of being ostracized by Muslims and, worse, of being hunted down and murdered by some violence-prone Muslim man who — filled with the fury of Allah's righteous indignation — seeks to wreak Allah's vengeance on the apostate.

Accordingly, a Muslim apostate keeps a low profile. In a Muslim country, they won't utter a word about their apostasy, keeping it a closely guarded secret. Even in the United States, if a Muslim apostate dares to write about defects in Islam, usually they will use a pseudonym and will take great care to keep their identity and their home address private.

A notable example of such a person is ibn Warraq, who, for years, refused to show his face in public. Other notable apostates include Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Nonie Darwish (not her real name). These people live in constant fear of their lives because of their apostasy. When any of these people speaks publicly, elaborate security arrangements are taken to protect them due to the death threats against them from angry Muslims.

**Freedom from retribution for apostasy.** To address this threat to personal freedom, I drafted a constitutional amendment in order to establish a crucial right that I envision will henceforth become foundational to civilization: freedom from retribution for apostasy.

The amendment is presented in the abridged version of my book, and it appears in section 6.3 on culture, under the topic of Islam. I explain how the amendment can be used to foster the maturation of Islam by enlightened Muslims. Such Muslims seek to bring their religion out of the dark ages of its traditional medieval mentality.

This sorry mentality is one that Christianity itself succumbed to starting at the Council of Nicaea under the Roman emperor Constantine, in 325, when Christians who refused to burn their Arian books were placed under the sentence of death. This took place in spite of the fact that, unlike Islam, the origin of Christianity was not in warfare and violent coercion, but in compassion and sacrificial love.

It is sobering to realize that the era of religious freedom is a mere 200 years old, having been established in 1791, with the ratification of amendment 1 of the United States constitution. The religion of Islam must be matured to embrace our modern values of freedom and equality. I believe that the proposed amendment will provide enlightened Muslims the leverage they need to bring their religion to this maturity.