In the future, lifelike sex robots will almost undoubtedly make simulated sex a reality for everyone who can afford it. Simulated sex is still sex, one of the most highly-regulated parts of human behavior, and over the next few years, religious scholars will have to grapple with the questionable morality of performing intimate acts with inanimate objects. Turns out, scholars from one religion have already made a judgment.

A paper released by the Foundation for Responsible Robotics on Wednesday cited work in 2014 by a pair of Islamic scholars in Malaysia which determined that yes, owning or using a sex robot would be illegal under their interpretation of Shariah law, the rules governing the strictest version of the Islamic faith. But just because Christian or Jewish theologians haven't weighed in doesn't mean those faiths will be any more receptive to the notion of tasting a synthetic human's carnal delights.

In the paper, the FRR noted that after aggregating several studies asking heterosexual men whether or not they would purchase a sex robot, an unspecified
number of respondents said they would shun an artificial partner on religious grounds. This was interesting, the FRR pointed out, because the study's authors could find very little theological work that discussed sex robots. The only example was a 2014 paper published by two robotics specialists and Islamic scholars at the International Islamic University of Malaysia. The authors, Yusuff Jelili Amuda and Ismaila B. Tijani, conclude that “having intercourse with robot is [an] unethical, immoral, uncultured, slap to the marriage institution,” and should be punished in much of the same way as adultery, with lashes or even being stoned to death.

It’s worth noting that Shariah law’s extremist interpretation of Islam is far from the norm, just as extremist interpretations of Christianity that forbid everything from contraception to the celebration of birthdays are not representative of the entire Christian population. But it’s unlikely that even more moderate religious sects would be down with the sex-bots.

A 2015 Christian Post article posed the question “Is it Ok to Have Sex with a Robot?” consulting several theologians and Christian pastors. “Sex with a robot is far from the purpose/intent of God’s design for sex in the first place,” Craig Gross, the founder of XXXChurch.com, a religious website that provides spiritual help to people with a porn or sex addiction, told CP.

Other religious scholars thought that copulating with a robot could be a form of idolatry.

“When we go against God’s intentions for us by making idols of sexbots, we offer them the worship that takes place in the sexual experience,” Christopher Benek,
associate pastor and Ph.D. student focusing on theology and technology in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, told CP. “When we do this we not only rob God of God's glory, but we dehumanize ourselves in the process."

Basically, the Christian and Islamic judgments of sex robots don't seem that different. While sex robots may be able to provide real value through human-like companionship (https://www.inverse.com/article/23667-realdoll-sex-robots-dolls-functioning-genitalia-ai-abyss-creations) in the future, they'll mostly likely still be a taboo for many religions who are committed to heterosexual, procreation-focused sexual norms, instead of embracing the act for the pleasure and happiness it can provide, no matter who's having it.

Media via Realbotix