

Women in religion research paper examples

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam the roles of women have varied in their limitations and privileges, over the centuries, and have contributed to many changes in practice and worship. Introduction:

The role of women differs substantially in the three main monotheistic religions of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. However there are some similarities in these religions on the women front although Islam is by far the more repressive. With Judaism, women were initially relegated to the role of domesticity and child bearing and although there have been some perceptible changes in the way women have participated in religious services over the years.

Judaism is a very old religion based on the Jewish laws. The Jews are considered to be the chosen people. Moses was commanded by God to lead His chosen people, the Jews, out of the slavery of Egypt and into the promised land. God gave Moses His ten commandments on Mount Sinai to help His people along the way. It took Moses forty years to lead his people to freedom. Moses never saw the promised land. He died before he arrived there.

Christianity and Judaism are very similar religions as regards their beliefs. Both of them believe in one God who always was, always is and always will be. They believe that God is powerful yet just and forgiving. They both believe in heaven (the place where the people who have led a good life go to after they die) and hell (the place where the people who have led a bad life go to after they die). They both believe in an after-life and that life goes on after we die. They both believe in the Old Testament – the scriptures. So what are the main differences between Christianity and Judaism?

The most important difference between the two religions is that while Christians believe in Jesus Christ as being the Son of God – the Messiah and Saviour, the Jews believe that Jesus was a messenger – a prophet. They do not believe that He was the Son of God. In fact, the Jews do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God who came to live among his followers and who died for them so that they would be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus sacrificed His life for us so that He would open the doors of heaven enabling His followers to go to heaven. The Jews, on the other hand, do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God or that He died to compensate for our sins. To them, Jesus was just a man, a messenger of God, who spread the word of God and who explained God's message to us.

Jesus was a Jew. He was brought up to go to the synagogue and pray and to keep holy the Sabbath day. Judaism originated around 1300 BC whereas Christianity was born around the time that Jesus started preaching i. e. 30 AD. Most of the rules and beliefs of the two religions are similar since they both originated from the same basic religion.

Moses founded Judaism and Jesus founded Christianity. However, Jesus followed Moses' teachings until He started His own religion. Another difference between the two religions is that for Christians the Sabbath day is Sunday while for Jews the Sabbath day is Saturday. However, both religious groups obey the commandment 'Keep Holy the Sabbath Day' which is one of the commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Both religions believe in the Old Testament. Christians believe in the Bible –

which comprises of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Jews believe in the Tanakh – which covers solely the Old Testament. This is because the New Testament is written about Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and His teachings and miracles. Since Jews do not believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, then they do not believe in the New Testament.

The head of the Catholic Church is the pope who was anointed head of the church by Jesus Christ. Peter was the first pope and was chosen by Jesus Christ when He told Peter: “ You are my rock and upon this rock I shall build my church”. Rabbis advise the Jewish followers.

It is strange to note that confrontational problems continue to dominate the Middle East at such a level when the main philosophy of each religion is that of redemption and compassion. Christianity which has often been militant where Islam is concerned has actually been at cross purposes many a time with what Judaism represents. The philosophy of Judaism continues to be based on compassion and empathy although the coming of the Messiah still appears to be something which the Jews cannot come to terms with. Women seem to take a less militant stance on the issue of Jerusalem but their voice is far less heard in Judaism and Islam. Basically all three religions share a common purpose and it is important to note that although Islam calls for the retaking of Jerusalem, the Christians have also abused their position there for several centuries. Islam has consistently called for the conquering of Jerusalem at all costs as this is a holy city and the place where the prophet Muhammed had his base.

Monotheism as a philosophy should arguable increase the possibility of religions to c-operate better and this is certainly the case with Judaism, Islam

and Christianity. Naturally enough, each has a different outlook on redemption and perhaps the philosophy of Islam that all warriors go to Paradise could be seen as the biggest stumbling block to a proper reconciliation between religions. However the philosophy of redemption and forgiveness as practiced by Judaism and Christianity should also hold sway over militarism which is potentially damaging and harmful to future relations.

Women and Christianity Christianity undoubtedly had an incredible effect on Jerusalem especially after its establishment as the religion of the Roman Empire after 333 AD. The architectural style of the city began changing overnight as several new churches and other buildings began being erected, particularly in the Eastern part of the city. The creation of groves, gardens, pools and other oasis like architectural features continued dominating the city while the Jewish influence was shunned and kept away. In fact according to accounts from the Bordeaux pilgrims, we can observe that Christianity brought about a considerable change to the lifestyle and practice of the great city. Obviously not everything changed overnight but by at least 800 AD, Jerusalem could have said to be a thoroughly Christianized city.

According to Katz, the Christians were heavily engaged in the construction of a Christianized city in the heart of Jerusalem, particularly where the Temple Mount was concerned. Viewing Jews as traitors to Christ was also another important facet to erasing any trace of Jewish customs and religion in this centre and in fact, the Jews were seen as outcasts in their own city – in all accounts a rather believable aspect. To sum up, Christianity had an incredible influence on Jerusalem in the centuries after Constantine right to the very end of the Muslim conquest.

In ancient Christianity women sought deeper meanings in texts although there were the cases of Mary and Eve who were seen as towers of strength with regards to women. Indeed some of the earliest followers of Jesus were actually women, these included Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cleofa and several others. Some were also at his side as he went about his ministry and this also meant that they were important to him. Indeed women were actually the first witnesses of Christ's Resurrection bringing the authenticity of this event much more to the fore. The Gospel of Mary is also an important part of the so called Apocryphal texts which are occasionally overlooked by authentic Bible scholars. The Acts of thecla are also quite similar to these gospels and have been known to arouse considerable interest in how women feature in early Christianity. And initially the Apostle Paul initially was against women participating in practices and worship. Thecla however followed Paul and also baptizes herself. Women were also at the forefront of early Christianity and suffered greatly, some actually suffering the ultimate punishment of martyrdom. The importance of Mary as an icon as well as the cult of women saints such as Joan of Arc, Maria Goretti and St Catherine cannot be disputed as important parts of Christian historiography. However due to the consistently dominant male presence in the Christian religion, women have been challenged and their leadership roles have very often been erased. There have also been several attempts to remove women from Christian history but these continue to be important in religious practise especially through Religious Orders. Women and Judaism

The Middle Ages were times which had their own intrinsic problems and which were essentially full of turmoil and wars. Obviously the Jewish religion

was in a sense grossly persecuted in Europe and this brought about the diaspora from several places to other countries with the eventual settling in the city of Jerusalem for a period until this was conquered by the Turks. Medieval Judaism was characterised by a deep focus on orthodox practices which were essentially very much part and parcel of daily life. The Rabbi was a truly important part of all life in the Jewish sense and everything actually revolved around him.

In the Modena biography, Cohen espouses in great detail on what constituted a Rabbi's life in this regard and this makes for highly interesting reading in every respect. He goes into great detail regarding the practices and procedures which made up most of the Rabbi's life and which focused especially on why the Rabbi had to feel as the head of society. Obviously there were some particular foibles which pertained exclusively to the Jewish faith and which ultimately demonstrated that God still remained very much the focus of Jewish life.

In fact, the city of Jerusalem had its beginnings well before the 10th and 12th centuries BC. Discoveries which were unearthed by several archeologists in the 1920's indicate houses with iron beams and superstructures which were quite advanced for their time. The early Jewish influence can be seen in these buildings which continue to astonish to this day for their avante garde prowess and rather impressive strength. In fact, buildings continue to be built in this manner as time progressed while the architectural style culminated in the Great Temple which was a miracle of architecture but which was unfortunately destroyed by the Romans in the infamous sack of 70 AD.

The Torah which recounts the history of Jewish faith is crucially important for our further understanding of Judaism. The Torah actually begins with the story of Adam and Eve where Eve is already given a hugely important role as a woman. In fact the relationship between a man and a woman in Judaism has always been somewhat fraught with difficulty although women have different modesty laws when compared to men. In fact according to Jewish rules, women and men follow a different set of laws for their spiritual growth. There have always been important figures in the Jewish religion such as Queen Esther and the role of women during slavery in Egypt was undoubtedly of some importance. These remained extremely empowered and were always hopeful of salvation. However women's involvement in churches was very limited in the early stages of Judaism and continued restricted up till recently. In fact some parts of the churches were out of bounds for women. This began changing when women were allowed to participate and even lead the worship in churches. However for a long time it was only men who were allowed to hold positions of power in the Church. This has changed quite drastically of late principally due to the fact that women are now even allowed to wear a Jewish garment while their participation is continually more important and has had a great impact on modern worship practises.

According to the Jews, Jesus the Prophet was born as naturally as a normal person is born. Christians, on the other hand, believe that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin, Mary. His mother Mary, it is believed by the Christians, was a virgin when Jesus was conceived and born. She was not married and had no physical relationship with a man. She then married Joseph and they

brought Jesus up as their son although both of them were fully aware who He was and that He was the Son of God.

Christians believe that Judaism is a legitimate religion which is very similar to their own and yet varies because they think that it is an incomplete picture. Jews believe that Christianity is a false interpretation of Judaism. Christians pray in churches and Jews pray in synagogues or temples. Christians actively follow the sacraments throughout their lives and also follow the Ten Commandments while Jews follow the mitzvot (the Ten Commandments) only.

Women in Islam

Of course, the other monotheistic religion which held sway over Jerusalem for a number of centuries was Islam. Jerusalem is seen as a holy place by Muslims due to the fact that it is seen as the city blessed by Allah and it is also seen as an important city in the sense that one must make a pilgrimage at one time in his/her life to it. There are also several areas which are deemed to be of historically significant importance inside the city including the area known as Al Quds where the solitary nature of prayer and meditation is important. Obviously Jerusalem was heavily rebuilt during Muslim times with a number of mosques and other similar buildings sprouting up all over the place, most of them sublime examples of architecture and great beauty. The Muslims also introduced customs such as fasting and burial which were seen as a crucial part of their religion here and they attached great significance to the area where the Second Mosque was built. This magnificent structure which was unfortunately destroyed in the Crusades could be said to be the most spectacular contribution that Islam

made to the city of Jerusalem. Several legends on the Al Quds area abound and although it is difficult to identify them today, they are undoubtedly some of the most important topographical parts of Jerusalem as a city of the Prophet.

Islam is thus a religion where the Quran or the Koran plays a hugely prominent part. Although some may see the current situation of women as being regressive, it was nothing like what it was in the earlier parts of history when women in Arabian countries were seen as something less than animals and were simply used to breed. Muhammed and his writings in the Koran granted women a substantial number of rights although the problem is that these have remained largely the same and have not developed at all in almost 1500 years. Although there is an element of feminism in Islam, the limitations of women are quite ingrained and they are deeply restricted especially in what they wear and cannot wear. Islam is also replete with characteristics and rituals which can pertain to each gender in particular. However women can also lead in prayer and participate whilst marriage practices are also quite gender based with the man obviously being given substantial pride of place in everything. The use of the Hijab for women which practically covers every part of their body is also an important aspect of the way women are perceived by Islam.

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