

Islamic women

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



Islamic Women... Is There an End to their sufferings? The question proposed in the title is basically a direct response after going through Geraldine Brooks' essay "Nine Parts of Desire; The Hidden World of Islamic Women" in its second chapter. Geraldine poses several ideas and personal experiences in which she tries to understand the mystery of the perpetuating repressive and barbaric practices (genital mutilation, infibulations, hysterectomy, and honor killings) that have nothing to do with Koranic teachings.

She starts her essay in a detailed description of a gruesome and shocking scene of a hysterectomy procedure that took place under poor and unequipped conditions (Brooks 33). Many women that were subjected to such practices ended up dead. For such manner, Dr. Abrehet Gebrekidan, a gynecologist, offered the Eritreans help since her skills will ensure their survival (Brooks 34). Furthermore, the Kuran refused the existence of the dreadful genital mutilation procedures, but the women were not educated enough to read it (Brooks 35).

And despite the consequences of such procedures, they believed that such procedures were to safeguard the girls' chastity where the honor of the fathers and brothers depended on (Brooks 37). As for men, they believed that these operations are equivalent to their honors, therefore they must repress women sexualities by turning off their pleasure sites otherwise they will end up as prostitutes (Brooks 35). The prophet Muhammad, who is the ideal person of all Muslims, believed that women should enjoy sexual intercourse with their husbands. And that it is forbidden to take away women desires (Brooks 39).

According to Muslims, specifically Shiite, adultery “sigheh or muta” is acceptable and sanctioned by a cleric where the couple are together mainly for having sex and providing money (Brooks 43). Brooks also mentions the idea of honor killings that were and still adopted in some Islamic tribes. They believe that fathers and brothers have the right to kill their own daughters or sisters when suspecting that they are having sexual intercourse without marriage (Brooks 49). Brooks obviously mentions that the Kuran (Islam) is not a mean of oppression to women, but then why are there so many women oppressed?

All this leads to my personal stand towards such an essential and critical issue. I agree with Geraldine Brooks that Islamic women should strive against such unfair practices and beliefs, and to free themselves from the power of ruled Islamic men for they are suffering from severe consequences. Islamic women should articulate spokeswomen to put an end to their miseries where they can maintain physical, social, and emotional stability. Imagine you were one of the African women who were subjected to such horrifying operation, how would you feel? Frightened, disgusted, hopeless, and worthless.

Genital mutilation is a result of delusions of men where they think that their honor will be preserved and maintained through such operations. It is devastating what they do to such women. Their clitoris is cut off in an unprofessional way with poor and unclean equipment which led them to suffer from a lot of pain during sexual intercourse. Moreover, such women used to bleed to death during such operations or if not during the operation then later by suffering from severe infections and debilitating anemia

(Brooks 34). To prove such point, Brooks reflected the real life experience of a woman that had her clitoris cut off when she was eight.

After getting married, she was subjected to pain every time she had sex with her husband. And giving birth to her last fifth child ended her life (Brooks 33). Women are suffering from physical malfunctions and even death for something they are born with. Is it fair for men to have their honors preserved at the expense of losing so many innocent women? Isn't there another way? According to the Kuran in Islam, and the hadith of the prophet Mohammad, women have the complete right to enjoy sex and satisfy their pleasures with their husbands.

Men and women are equal when it comes to sex; however they should be married as the Sharia (Law) of Islam states (Brooks 39). The Islamic religion did not mention about hysterectomy and did not approve of it as a way to reflect man's honor. The prophet Muhammad considered sex to be not only a mean to have children but an enjoyable and pleasurable relation between the couple, and he himself enjoyed it with all his wives (Brooks 41). Moreover, some people might think that the citizens in Saudi Arabia are always confused about sex since they're women are covered with a veil.

However, these people talk about sex all the time and it is not a shy topic for them. For example, Brooks knew a couple in Saudi Arabia that fell in love over the phone and agreed to instantly marry. When Brooks was invited to their home, she was surprised that women there talk about sex all the time and it is a mean for pleasure (Brooks 40). This ensures and proves that women who are having sex while married and enjoying it, is socially and

religiously acceptable. But despite that, people are ignoring such issues and girls that did not even reach the age of ten don't have a choice.

They are just taught that it is important for them to undergo hysterectomy for the sake of their families. The horrors of these operations keep haunting them throughout their lives until they are long gone. One by one, all these women are being killed for the sake of their spouses believing that it is the right choice. It is so ironic to me that women get married to die instead of living happily ever after. Women are definitely imprisoned by the power of men. Till now, the sufferings of women that I've explained are because of men's demands and authorities.

To be more precise, here comes the notion of so-called "honor killing". To men, and especially Islamic men, honor is extremely important to them and the family in their own society. It is so important that they would kill their own flesh and blood for the sake of preserving their honors. In her essay, Brooks mentions the example of the nineteen years old girl that was found tied up in a burned-out car. She was murdered by her own father because the girl was pregnant and unmarried (Brooks 51). The poor little girl had an affair probably with her loved one, and for that she faced her miserable destiny.

Isn't it all cleared out now? All these crimes, inhumane acts, and the never ending miseries of women are the result of the demands and satisfaction of the ruling men. Therefore, gynecologists revealed a new modern way for such girls to protect themselves for death by undergoing a procedure called hymenoplasty, also known as hymen reconstruction surgery. Lebanon is one of the Arab countries that adopted such procedure (Hankir 387). In Lebanon,

the majority of people find having sex before marriage a taboo and a sin. To them, virginity of a girl is something so sacred and it determines her honor.

Therefore, a girl must remain virgin until she gets married otherwise no man will accept her, and it will cause a lot of problems in her family (Hankir 387). For example, a twenty five-year-old Diana wants to get her hymen reconstructed because she is afraid of losing the one she wants to marry, and she can't risk having her family find out. Obviously, the man she loves doesn't accept her as a non virgin (Hankir 387). But the generation now a days is very much different than the generation of our parents and their parents. Sexuality, and especially in Lebanon, has become something normal between two couples.

Many teenagers are having sex since their beliefs and mentalities are more up to date and westernized. Also, they can always resort to hymenoplasty as a solution for their " sins". I believe that this procedure is somehow helpful in certain cases. For example, when a girl gets raped, she can undergo hymenoplasty to cover up for something she had nothing to do with. If she didn't, many boys will refuse to marry her, and she will be judged wrongly all her life. Genital mutilation is definitely not a substitution for honor killing and vice versa. Both highlight and reflect crimes, inhumanity, and barbarity.

Can't we all just build a society where it is banned from men controlling women and having the right to kill their daughters? A society where women are as much powerful as men and are not afraid to hide their reality with a plastic surgery? Also, there should exist an acceptable punishment for those girls far away from ending their lives since God only is responsible for such duty. To sum up, we live in the Arab world where man was and is still

dominant over women. Men tend to control the lives of women as they want to as if they are nothing more than slaves.

Honor killing, genital mutilation, and no education are all part of the plan of men. Women are just for satisfying the pleasure of men, and giving birth. Men fear the idea of educating women since they will become as powerful as men and seek to free and protect themselves from the captivation of men. And this leads me to my final stand. Women are capable of living a much more healthy and happy life by strengthening their will and educating themselves. They should not tolerate the demands of men for they bring nothing but miseries and severe consequences on their lives.