

# Women and islam

Business



Women and Islam It is essential to a women's equality with man that she be the decision-maker, that her choice be controlling. If you impose restraints, you are disadvantaging her because of her sex. The state controlling a woman would be denying her full autonomy and full equality. I believe the question to all the madness is simply ' why'. Why have women become the oppressed peoples? In a seemingly liberated world, why has women's oppression become acceptable, as if it is an inevitable part of life? Most commonly, this misfortune appears in religiously and sexually conservative societies, such as Yemen or the Congo, both of which are predominantly Islamic countries. If religion is so ' good' and ' holy', why is brutality and injustice against women rationalized in the name of religion? Through studying and contemplation, I have come to the conclusion that this abuse spurred from the confusing, and often contradictory religious texts that are followed so vigorously.

When religious texts candidly lay out one rule, and then state a rule completely opposite the first, how are the religious people supposed to decide the truth behind what they're reading? The tragedies against women occur when the people decide to ignore the emancipating text, and choose to act on the dictatorial text. To put it simply, Islam can be defined as the religious faith of Muslims, based on the words and religious system founded by the prophet Muhammad and taught by the Quran, the basic principle of which is absolute submission to a unique and personal god, Allah. To have submission is to be docile, obedient, and humble. By this definition, it's hard to imagine Islam as the responsible culprit for giving birth to oppression against women. So, I ask myself, where did it all begin? To look back from

the religious perspective, oppression began in Judaism through the Old Testament.

Islam feeds off of Christianity, which feeds off of Judaism, which means all three religions are originally based off the Torah, or the Old Testament. From the supposed beginning of time, our all-loving and fair God imposed discrimination against women, clearly putting males above females. “ A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period... The woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding.

” To put it plainly: a male has always been valued above a female, even before their worth could be determined. I do not believe Islam is the sole oppressor of women, because in fact, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic texts were each an inspiration for oppression. The Quran does explicitly endorse some gender discrimination, such as a woman’s testimony counts only half as much as a man’s and a daughter inherits only half as much as the son, but so does the Torah, (If no proof of the girl’s virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father’s house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. ) and the Bible, (let your wives keep silent in the assemblies, for it has not been permitted for them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as the law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to chatter in the assembly.

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) I believe it would be completely unfair to put the blame on Islam when nothing is ever as simple as black or white, wrong or right. While religion can, without a doubt, be oppressive, there is no denying the liberating and even feministic parts of religion. In many ways, Prophet Muhammad himself could be considered a feminist. The truth is that male religious leaders have had—and still have—an option to interpret holy teachings either to exalt or to subjugate women. So the question is posed: is religion the sole perpetrator behind the coercion of women, or can other factors, such as culture, play a role just as significant? The inappropriate way Islam has been practiced in most Muslim societies for centuries has left millions of Muslim women with battered bodies, minds, and souls, but Muslims sometimes note that such conservative attitudes have little to do with the Quran and arise from culture more than religion... in many places, even religious minorities and irreligious people are often deeply repressive towards women. Female circumcision (better known as Female Genital Mutilation), is an example of a cultural practice that has long predated Islam, or any other monotheistic religion for that matter.

Why then, is FGM so commonly practiced within Islam? I believe this practice acutely ties into Muslim societies that are known for being sexually conservative because of their fierce desire to retain a girl's purity and virginity. In strict Muslim societies, every aspect of a woman is controlled, down to her sexuality or her marital rights. " A Muslim woman must not feel wild, or free, or any of the other emotions and longings I felt... A Muslim girl does not make her own decisions or seek control. She is trained to be docile." Cutting allows for a girls promiscuity to be restrained by extracting

her sexual desire and making intercourse an excruciatingly painful experience. Approximately once every ten seconds, a girl somewhere in the world is pinned down.

Her legs are pulled apart, and a local woman with no medical training pulls out a knife or razor blade and slices off some or all of the girl's genitals. In most cases, there is no anesthetic. To complete this overly brutal procedure, a girl's genitalia are often sewn together, leaving only a small incision in the stitches to allow for menstrual flow. Infibulation, or the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal, is put in place so that a man may not enter the woman's vaginal opening, therefore ensuring the safety of her virginity until her wedding night. Why do the people practicing this process not see it as mutilation the way Westerners do? The key to understanding another way of life is by imagining yourself in someone else's shoes.

“ Everybody has to change together, or you will never be able to marry your daughter. My mother put me in braces, and I bled and I cried for two years, and an African woman could have come over and said: ‘ How can you do this to your daughter?’ And my mother would have said, ‘ I saved from my little salary to straighten my daughter's teeth, so she can get married. How dare you say I am cruel?’ Likewise, Westerners view cutting as cruel, when really it is a practice put in place to ensure the daughter will one day be married off, or to be prevented from being called a kintirleey, she with the long clitoris. Before we as outsiders can help to enforce change in the treatment of women, we must first understand why such things occur. For his day, Muhammad was ‘ progressive on gender issues ‘ and is often prided on his <https://assignbuster.com/women-islam/>

laws on equal treatment, inclusive to women. More astounding than his respect for women, was one of his wives Aisha, the only one of all his wives to still have her virginity intact until marriage.

Whether it be solely for her spit-fire spirit, or for her first-hand experience with the ‘ perils of a society that treated a woman as a fragile chalice of honor, ‘ Aisha was not a woman to be messed with. Even after Muhammad’s passing, she continued to carry on his prophecies and denying incorrect interpretations of his passages. However, because of her lowly status of a woman, all but 174 of her 2, 210 hadith were discarded . She rejected statements such as the ineffectiveness of prayer if a woman is near, or the uncleanliness of menstruating. Perhaps her revolutionary attitude occurred in the wrong period, for her name is rarely spoken of. Unfortunately, Islam has seemingly gone backwards in terms on feminism since the 7th Century when Muhammad first introduced his prophecies.

Now, brutalities such as honor killings, veilings or coverings, rape, sex trafficking and prostitution are all too common. Perhaps it’s humanities growing desire for control and power that causes us to act in such a shameful way. But whatever the reason, there is no argument against why the world needs to finally being to stand up for all of humankind, and yes, that does include women too. My overall encounter with religion has not been the most positive of experiences, but regardless, I can still see why people turn to religion. Personally, however, I find religion to almost always be oppressive, not only towards women, but men and women alike. Being told to conform to a certain set of rules without being allowed to question or challenge them would drive me to insanity, just as it drove Ayaan to insanity.

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“ Something inside me always resisted the moral values behind Sister Aziza’s lectures: a small spark of independence. Perhaps it was a reaction to the stark gap between the behavior demanded by the Holy Writings and the realities of actual daily life, with all its twists and turns. Even as a child, I could never comprehend the downright unfairness of the rules, especially for women. How could a just God—a God so just that almost every page of the Quran praises His fairness—desire that women be treated so unfairly? When the ma’alim told us that a woman’s testimony is worth half of a man’s, I think, Why? If God was merciful, why did He demand that His creatures be hanged in public? If He was compassionate, why did unbelievers have to go to Hell? If Allah was almighty and powerful, why didn’t He just make believers out of the unbelievers and have them all go to Paradise? ” Non-Muslim and Muslim women can often relate to one another when they think back on the oppressive passages each of religions preaches. Even a woman who does not follow a specific religion is still influenced by the holy books the people around her study.

When religions such as Christianity or Islam become so popular, they start to be intertwined with the cultural aspects of the society, which initially will affect everyone. In conclusion, yes, religion is the problem. I can only image how liberated the world would be if only we could convince ourselves to drift away from the harsh demands of religion and just be one as a people. In the words of John Lennon, “ Imagine there’s no heaven; It’s easy if you try; No hell below us; above us only sky; Imagine all the people; Living for today... Imagine there’s no countries; It isn’t hard to do; Nothing to kill or die for; And no religion too; Imagine all the people; Living life in peace...” If we can all

learn to put our differences aside and for just a moment ignore the fact that each of our beliefs systems are a little bit different, or we forget that there is such thing as gender difference, I believe that would be the moment that all war would cease, and peace would overcome us.