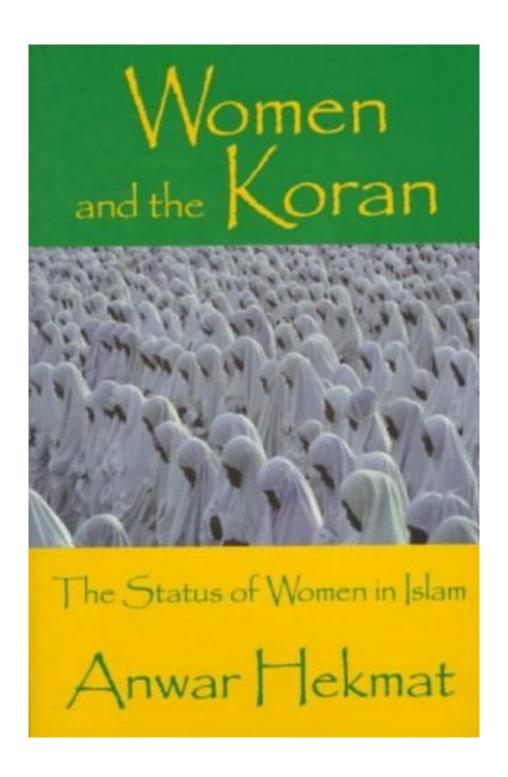


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Review

The Koran tells us that "Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other." In Women and the Koran: The Status of Women in Islam, Anwar Hekmat tells us of the brutality inflicted on women in the Islam religion in the name of God. Hekmat clearly outlines all the basic rights given to men through Mohammed and The Koran, which include: the right to multiple wives and concubines; the right to beat and rape one's wife if she refuses to submit to sex; the right to terminate a marriage at any time without legal process; the right to all children and property from the marriage if divorced; the right to bring one's wife to court for suspected adultery; and, if she is found guilty, the right to bury her in the ground up to her waist and stone here to death (as was done in at least four cases in Iran in the last seven years). These same rights do not extend to women in regards to their husbands. Hekmat argues that the Muslim religion created by Mohammed is a barbaric tradition, created more to bring glory to God. His argument is compelling. Hekmat paints a picture of Mohammed as a cruel dictator who orchestrated horrific purges on his enemies, and captured many of the women to be used as wives (of which he had 15) or concubines for his own pleasure. Mohammed is also depicted with insatiable sexual appetites that knew little boundaries, including that of age. His favorite wife was nine when they married, and he brought her toys to the bed on their wedding night. Much of the Islamic religion, claims Hekmat, is clever propaganda simply created to allow Mohammed to do as he pleased. Indeed, Hekmat argues as strongly against the entire Islamic religion as he does against the disparity against women. The book is well researched and clearly organized, and while the language becomes awkward in spots, it is still a good read. His thesis is that the Muslim religion's treatment of women should be re-thought and quickly. This book helps remind us that equality is a matter of perspective, and lends itself to shaping your perception of women's equality in the eyes of religion in a whole new way. -- From Independent Publisher

About the Author

Anwar Hekmat, a distinguished scholar, was brought up in Muslim Europe.

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From arranged marriages of female children to religious laws that dictate what women can learn, how they must dress, where they may be seen in public, and with whom they may associate, virtually every aspect of their lives being controlled by an entrenched patriarchy, Hekmat insists that the Koran and those who live under its rule must re-examine this dangerous religious text and place it under the microscope of critical intelligence.

In powerful chapters devoted to pre-Islamic deities; Muhammad's lust for women; polygamy, concubinage, and slavery; severe punishment laws; female seclusion; wife beating; and divorce, Hekmat explains how Arab tribal society degenerated from a polytheistic, pre-Islamic culture in which women enjoyed positions of relative prestige, honor, and equality to one in which men dominate and women are little more than chattel.

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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

You must counter the facts

By Genevieve Kineke

Those who disparage this book say that to criticise Islam is blasphemous -- that doesn't counter the facts that the author offered about the origins of this religion. Those who repeat the claim that Islam freed women, likewise, didn't counter his facts that show that the cultures previous to Islam offered more freedom for women, and the adoption of this religion inhibited those freedoms. Some say that women are equal to men in Islam, which ignores the suras that the author provides which contradicts the claim. Most importantly, some attack the book by showing the depravity of the West -- that is a non sequitor.

The question is: Is Islam true? Did God/Allah reveal himself to Mohammed? The author clearly shows that the foundations of the faith were a conglomerate of Judeao-Christian ideas mixed with the cultural and religious antecedents of the area. More damning, the author shows how Islam unfolded conveniently to support the private aims of the prophet, even contradicting itself from one sura to the next, and implicating "Allah" in deceit and depravity.

If Islam is a sham, which the author convincingly reveals, then how people interpret today is irrelevant. How can any culture found its precepts on a book that is not divinely inspired? Surely the West has its problems, but hiding from them by keeping women under lock and key is barbaric. All civilisation will prosper when men and women each pursue virtue and responsible behaviour, respect each other and share their collaborative gifts with society.

3 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

recommend w/ reservations

By N. Stepro

Interesting, but I question the scholarship to a degree. It is difficult to find an unbiased reflection on women, on Islam, and esp. on the Prophet and the wars of conquest. This is no exception, but I would agree that the pre-Islamic civ. appears to have had more freedoms for women- a public life, dress that expressed individuality, etc. still the man had ownership of his family and could kill unwanted children. ie, like most things- change makes some things better, some things worse. More freedoms doesn't necessarily translate into more rights.

I don't doubt as victors write the history, tribal genocides were carried out but are whitewashed as in all sacred religious history (note judeo-xtn OT wars of the Israelites against those living in land 'God gave to them') Its simply difficult to find texts that can examine M. & Islam without either vilifying or treating as sacred- a believer who can call the Prophet a human who made mistakes.

19 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Appalling, but accurate.

By A Customer

The movie critic Michael Medved once described himself as a "glorified sewer inspector," and that is surely what Anwar Hekmat (not Helmat, despite what it says above) is. Anyone who undertakes to explore Muhammad's marriage to a 9-year-old girl, his copulation with her in a room filled with her dolls, his marriage to at least 11 (and possibly as many as 20) other women, and his other activities relating to women also has spent some time in the historical sewer.

This book details the entire repressive sexual regime of the traditional Muslim societies, including Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., and Pakistan. (The author didn't get to describe the barabarians currently in control

of Afghanistan, because they were not yet in power when the book was finished in 1996.) It's astounding, yet accurate: I know an American woman who went to visit a sheik in Iraq in the 1980s and was followed around by pebble-throwing boys because she wasn't wearing the traditional Muslim covering. No one disciplined the boys, because it was she who was in the "wrong": she had dared to show her female head in public!

Marrying 9-year-olds, it seems, became a tradition with the caliphs (heads of Islam) after Muhammad, and the author shows that child brides are still favored in much of the Muslim world today. It must be okay, because the "Prophet" did it!

The most useful part of this book, perhaps, is the extensive treatment of the historical background of the sections of the Koran and the hadiths dealing with women. While Islam says they came to Muhammad from God (whom Muslims, following pagan Arabs before Muhammad's day, call "Allah"), it seems that many are direct copies of provisions of Babylonian, Assyrian, and other Middle Eastern law with which Muhammad was familiar.

It was only Muhammad, though, who invented the idea that it was acceptable for his warriors to take as many of the women they captured in war as sex slaves as they wanted to. His exploits in this regard were truly stunning -- and the civil war in Sudan still features the taking of (in this case, Christian and animist) sex slaves today!

If you don't think Islam is a gutter religion, an evil imposition from the bedouins of 7th-century Arabia, read this book. It'll show you the truth. [I also recommend reading the Koran and Ibn Warraq's _Why I Am Not A Muslim_, which both provide plenty of evidence that God has nothing to do with Islam and that the Iranians' treatment of women today is consistent with Muslim governments' behavior ever since Muhammad -- if Iran isn't actually more lenient!]

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