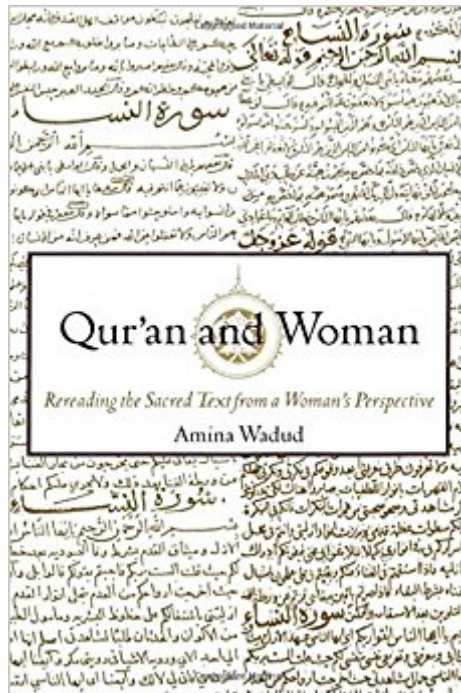


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Qur'an And Woman: Rereading The Sacred Text From A Woman's Perspective



Synopsis

Fourteen centuries of Islamic thought have produced a legacy of interpretive readings of the Qu'ran written almost entirely by men. Now, with *Qu'ran and Woman*, Amina Wadud provides a first interpretive reading by a woman, a reading which validates the female voice in the Qu'ran and brings it out of the shadows. Muslim progressives have long argued that it is not the religion but patriarchal interpretation and implementation of the Qu'ran that have kept women oppressed. For many, the way to reform is the reexamination and reinterpretation of religious texts. *Qu'ran and Woman* contributes a gender inclusive reading to one of the most fundamental disciplines in Islamic thought, Qu'ranic exegesis. Wadud breaks down specific texts and key words which have been used to limit women's public and private role, even to justify violence toward Muslim women, revealing that their original meaning and context defy such interpretations. What her analysis clarifies is the lack of gender bias, precedence, or prejudice in the essential language of the Qur'an. Despite much Qu'ranic evidence about the significance of women, gender reform in Muslim society has been stubbornly resisted. Wadud's reading of the Qu'ran confirms women's equality and constitutes legitimate grounds for contesting the unequal treatment that women have experienced historically and continue to experience legally in Muslim communities. The Qu'ran does not prescribe one timeless and unchanging social structure for men and women, Wadud argues lucidly, affirming that the Qu'ran holds greater possibilities for guiding human society to a more fulfilling and productive mutual collaboration between men and women than as yet attained by Muslims or non-Muslims.

Book Information

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 2nd ed. edition (June 10, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195128362

ISBN-13: 978-0195128369

Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 0.5 x 5.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â See all reviewsÂ (42 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #203,156 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 inÂ Books > Religion &

Spirituality > Islam > Women in Islam #68 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Quran

#1630 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies

Customer Reviews

I give this book 5 stars because as I was reading it I wished every Muslim woman (and man) would read it. The book is written by a professor of Islamic studies who (as she writes in the preface)" approached this research as if my life depended on the understandings I gained from studying the Quran". The book is aimed at proving the equality of men and women in the religion of Islam by going to the source: the Qur'an. It challenges the false concepts held by many Muslims (concepts that do not reflect Quran and Islam) such as: "men are superior to women", "men are in charge of women", "men are natural leaders", "men rule the family and should get obedience from women", "women should not leave the house unless it is necessary", "woman's voice is taboo", etc. The author breaks down specific verses and key words that have been used to oppress and limit women, to show that their real meaning defies such oppression and limitation. The book covers many aspects of equality manifested in the story of creation and the events in the Garden, the Quranic view of woman in the world with discussion of distinctive female characters in the Quran, the Hereafter including companions in the Hereafter e.g. "the virgins of paradise". The book also discusses controversies around the rights and roles of women and the relationship between men and women: male authority: polygamy, marital disharmony, divorce, inheritance, women as witness, etc. I think the author should have discussed two other important topics: veiling and segregation. Although the book is only 118 pages, and is well organized into chapters and subtitles, it was a little difficult to get through: the writing style is somewhat academic, some concepts I think needed more elaboration to be clear, and I had to open my dictionary several times.

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