

EXPLORATIONS IN

Women,
Rights,
AND
Religions

Edited by Morny Joy

Explorations in Women, Rights, and Religions

Published by Equinox Publishing Ltd.

UK: Office 415, The Workstation, 15 Paternoster Row, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 2BX

USA: 150 Enterprise Drive, Bristol, CT 06010

www.equinoxpub.com

Chapters 1, 3, 5, 7, 9-11, and also parts of the Introduction and of Chapter 12 were first published in Volume 36.2 of the journal *Religious Studies and Theology*

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First published in book form 2020

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13 978 1 78179 838 6 (hardback)
978 1 78179 839 3 (paperback)
978 1 78179 840 9 (ePDF)

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Joy, Momy, editor.

Title: Explorations in women, rights, and religions / edited by Momy Joy.
Description: Sheffield, South Yorkshire ; Bristol, CT : Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary:

"The application of women's rights to the religions of the world have prompted highly contentious debates. This volume explores the many intricate issues raised in such interactions. The chapters in this volume are authored by women scholars of religion from diverse regions of the world, representing a plurality of religions, including indigenous religions. To enrich this already complex undertaking, four philosophers and legal scholars have also contributed. Their chapters help to clarify present challenges and envision innovative possibilities. The volume identifies archaic attitudes involving exclusionary regulations and controversial gender-specific practices. More contemporary impasses, such as individualism, so prevalent in western rights debates, and the unitary model of human rights, where "one size fits all," as promulgated in the west, are also appraised. Current constructive moves, especially expanding the notion of rights to involve relationships, are acknowledged. A primary concern of this volume is that of fostering future such collaborations of women advocates of gender justice"--
Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019021255 (print) | LCCN 2019981579 (ebook) | ISBN 9781781798386 (hardback) | ISBN 9781781798393 (paperback) | ISBN 9781781798409 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Women and religion. | Women--Religious aspects. | Feminism--Religious aspects. | Women's rights--Religious aspects.

Classification: LCC BL458 .E97 2020 (print) | LCC BL458 (ebook) | DDC 200.82--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019021255>

Typeset by  EQUINOX PUBLISHING AND TYPESETTING

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The Reconstruction of Muslim Women's Property Rights in the Twenty-first Century

Sri Zaleha Kamaruddin was the fifth Rector at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (2011–2018), the first woman to hold this position. She is both a lawyer and an academic, having earned her PhD in Comparative Laws at University College, London. An expert on Family Law, she was appointed as a member of the National Women Advisory Council. She holds a number of other prestigious appointments. Since 2017 she has been Judge of the Sharī'ah Court of Appeal of Terengganu, a position she will hold until 2020. Her contribution to this volume addresses the position of women and her concern to help them achieve economic empowerment so as to thwart discrimination and exploitation.

Introduction

In the quest towards empowering women, different societies have introduced phenomenal reforms over the centuries but there still exist significant limitations in certain communities across the world. The Muslim world has been a focal point for most human rights activists.¹ The general perception persists regarding equal access and opportunities for women in their pursuit of property rights. The frequently headlined point of ratio two to one in the Muslim inheritance share of men and women has been overstretched without any meaningful consideration to how women access other property rights through legitimate means provided under the Islamic law as well as other seemingly Sharī'ah-compliant provisions in

1. Human rights are rights that belong to an individual or group of individuals as a consequence of being human. Once an individual happens to be a member of humankind, human rights are demands and claims that he can make on the society. However, it is generally perceived that the women folk have been deprived of such values in many respects simply by virtue of being women. As such, the idea of personal autonomy of women's property rights have become a significant means of curtailing "the oppression of individual women within the family unit where women's human rights are frequently violated through domestic violence, restrictions on access to resources and in matters of [...] property rights." See Fox (1998, 5).

Women's Rights in World Religions highlights the many intricate issues raised in the extremely contentious debates that arise with the introduction of women's rights to the religions of the world.

The chapters in this volume are authored by women scholars of religion from diverse regions of the world, representing a plurality of religions, including indigenous religions. To enrich this already complex undertaking, four philosophers and legal scholars have also been invited. Their chapters help to clarify present challenges and envision further innovative possibilities. The volume identifies dated attitudes involving exclusionary regulations and controversial gender-specific practices. More contemporary impasses, such as individualism, so prevalent in western rights debates, and the unitary model of human rights, where "one size fits all," as promulgated in the west, are also appraised. Current constructive moves, especially expanding the notion of rights to involve relationships, are acknowledged. A primary concern of this volume is that of fostering similar such collaborations of women advocates of gender justice.

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Cover design
Mark Lee / hisandhers.design



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