

"I expected married life to be different and more fun, not like still being a girl where society looks at what I wear and what I say. I thought, 'I'll be freer.' Marriage is inevitable in this society. One cannot stay unmarried. My cousin wanted to marry me and I had a number of proposals from other men, so I just wanted to get married to finish with it and to have peace of mind." (Sana Al-Khayyat, *Honour and Shame: Women in Modern Iraq*, pp. 74 - 75)

"The laws regulating marriage and divorce in Arab societies are in fact one of the legal remnants of feudalism and the patriarchal system where the woman becomes like a piece of land owned by the man, who is permitted to do as he wishes, to exploit her, to beat her, to sell her at any time via divorce, or to buy over her head, a second, third, or fourth wife. As regards the rights of the wife, they consist of equality of treatment with the other wives of her husband. Whether it is possible for a man to give the same treatment, care and affection to an old wife as he gives to a young one, or to a semi-used one as he gives to a new one, is of course another question which is further complicated by the fact that he is the sole judge of his own behaviour." (The Hidden Face of Eve, p. 202)

"He doesn't let me learn to drive. I'd find it very useful. If I want to buy something he doesn't agree and says it's not important. If his parents or anyone else said it was worth buying, he would. This makes me hate him. With me, he's very mean. He forgets to buy me a present on my birthday and says he has provided me with a house and furniture — this is my present. He's never bought me a personal present in my entire life with him. He says I have my own salary. He tries to get his hands on my salary but I don't let him. My mother gave me a birthday party and he said I was spoilt, that these things are rubbish. He criticizes what I wear or what make-up I put on. When I sit I shouldn't cross my legs and when I enter a room I shouldn't say 'hello', but 'good evening'. I feel time is going so slowly. Four months with him seem like twenty years. He says, 'I want children but if they cry take them to the other room.' I can't bear it." (Sana Al-Khayyat, *Honour and Shame: Women in Modern Iraq*, p.115)

"Early marriage is one way to ensure that a wife is 'protected', or placed firmly under male control; that she is submissive to her husband and works hard for her in-laws' household; that the children she bears are 'legitimate', and that bonds of affection between cou-

ples do not undermine the family unit." (*Innocenti Digest*, p. 6)

"Marriage negotiation is just like a plan for a building. You have to realistically assess your resources and think in every little detail that is important for your comfort and the safety of the flat. If parents conduct a good and smart marriage negotiation for their children, it is most unlikely that the marriage would end in disaster." (Homa Hoodfar, *Shifting Boundaries in Marriage and Divorce in Muslim Communities*, p.128)

"Silence prevails, not only on the topic of the feminine body but also, more generally, on everything that touches upon intimate relations, which are constantly shifting between dream and reality, between love and hate ... Why do my tears fall when my neighbor is beaten up/ Why do I feel personally humiliated? The pain she experiences in her life affects me for many reasons. The life of such a woman is like a magnifying glass which reflects back to me an exaggerated image of my own condition. Obtaining the respect of others is a constant struggle for women. The enslavement of other women sets limits to my own blossoming ... But above all, her life reminds me of another woman's suffering, to which I was for a long time a spectator - that of my mother ... (Evelyne Accad, *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies*, p. 41)

"Despite Traditionalist attempts to contain women's awareness, the process which was begun to construct women's social identity is now irreversible. Today, both secular and Islamist women reject the institutionalized inequalities and demand a dynamic and adapted reading of Islam. Although seculars do not have access to the political sphere, vocal Islamist women, increasingly backed by civil society, are determined to implement conscious change through involvement in politics. The Islamic state has thus no other choice but to accommodate the participatory aspirations of moderate and modernist women whose partaking in politics will undoubtedly implement democratic change in the political system. They are protagonists of a change which encompasses the entire society. Under the present circumstances where political Islam has demonstrated its limits, and the gap between civil society and the state is ever widening, only the opening of religion to modernity can avoid an ultimate rupture." (Azadeh Kian, *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*, Dossier #21, p. 55)