Katherine Carter

September 28th, 2023

**The Position of Modern Women affected by Traditional Abrahamic Religions: Marriage, Divorce, and Fertility**

# **Thesis**

Women’s position in society is determined by rules, norms, and morals; These are influenced by the dominating religion in communities. The Abrahamic religions are heavily dominate in modern society, especially since globalization. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all connected through their creation, leading them to have similar beliefs despite obvious differences. With that in mind, these religions have caused women to face oppression in their communities especially surrounding the beliefs around marriage, divorce, and fertility.

# **Rational**

The issue of oppression is constantly being addressed in different ways, but as the causes of oppression are integrated into the laws and base of society it is near impossible to make change. For a recent example, the reversal of Roe v. Wade was influenced by Christian Evangelicals in the right. Another example would be the changes, especially with women’s rights, currently occurring in Afghanistan as fundamentalist ideals are imposed by the Taliban. To understand how their beliefs became so extreme, one must be able to look at doctrine and the religious leaders. The first part of this project is related to women and gender studies, as researching the oppression of the modern woman in different societies, but it is heavily intertwined with religious studies as one needs to examine doctrine. Lastly, history is involved in the form of examining the history of these religions, especially important religious figures.

# **Resources**

The most important sources are of course the religious documents. For the examination of Christianity, there is the Bible and Apocrypha. With Islam there is the Qur’an and other religious texts, but they are looked at with less importance because of the belief that they have been changed over time. In Judaism, there is the Talmud, Torah ('the Teachings'), Nevi’im ('the Prophets') and Ketuvim ('the Writings'). There are also theologians throughout history who have important texts that influence the modern presentations of these religions; These important people include Popes – especially those who have been declared saints, Martin Luther, Calvin, Rabbis – especially those in the transition into Rabbinical Judaism and during diasporas, and important Imams and Caliphs. Lastly, one must look at modern feminist theologians. During this research process there will be a focus on post-industrial women so the most important theological works to read will be 1910 or later, especially after the publishing of the feminist manifesto in the 50s. Another source is a book edited by Dr. Debra Meyers, which has a series of essays that involve women and religion- specifically Christianity. There are a few works included in my bibliography, but I have yet to include the religious texts as there needs to be an analysis of what versions would be best for this project.

# **Organization**

The organization of this work is vital as there should be an emphasis on continued compare and contrast rather that separate examinations. Once again, the many similarities in these religions should be looked at. First there will be a discussion about the position of women in the West and in different religious communities. Next, the concept of a marriage contracts and vows will be covered; After which, the standing of women in marriage will be discussed as well as beliefs around fertility. Lastly, divorce shall be discoursed. The conclusion will follow with final closing thoughts and recaps of the concepts covered.

1. Introduction
2. Introduce problem and concepts
3. Thesis
4. Discuss Importance
5. Socioeconomic position of women
6. Statistics
7. Social rules
8. Laws
9. Entrance to marriage
10. Marriage contracts
11. Vows
12. Child marriage
13. Living marriage
14. Role of women in marriage
15. Fertility and blame
16. Divorce
17. Religious law
18. Social implications

f. Conclusion

i. Restate Thesis

ii. Summarize arguments

1. State importance
2. Possible expansions

# **Bibliography**

Gage, Matilda Joslyn. *Woman, Church & State the original exposé of male collaboration against the female sex*. Project Gutenberg, 2014.

Harrison, Victoria S. “Modern Women, Traditional Abrahamic Religions and Interpreting Sacred Texts.” *Feminist Theology* 15, no. 2 (2007): 145–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735007072020.

Malhotra, Charu, “Women in World Religions : Feminist Perspectives.” *Indian Anthropologist* 32, no. 1/2 (2002): 97–104. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41919912.

Plaskow, Judith. *Standing again at sinai: Judaism from a feminist perspective*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.

Warraq, Ibn, Hirsi Ayaan Ali, and El Zineb Rhazoui. *Why I am not a Muslim*. New York: Momus and Warraq Publishers, LLC, 2020.

Zarean, Mansoureh, and Khadijeh Barzegar. “Marriage in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.” *Religious Inquiries* 5, no. 9 (June 2016): 67–80.