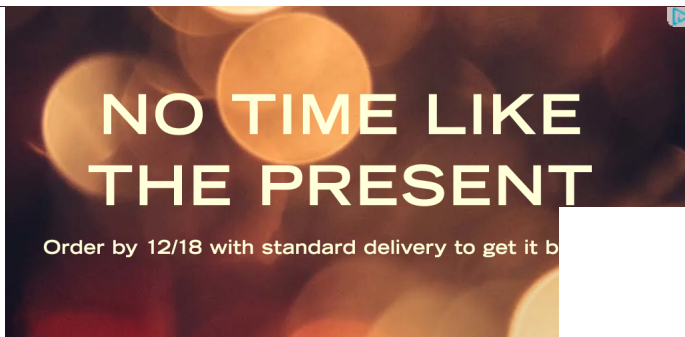
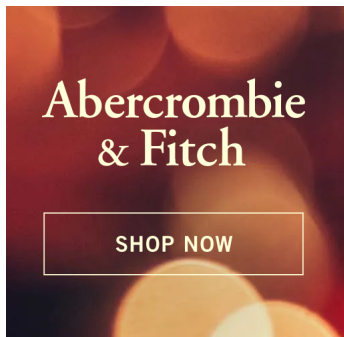


/ WHAT'S HOT /

Israel Says Military Offensive In Crowded Southern Gaza Will Be 'No Less Strength' Than In The North

Father Of Palestinian Boy Slain Outside Chicago Files Wrongful Death Lawsuit

Liz Cheney: A Republican House Majority in 2025 Is a 'Threat' To The U.S.



THE BLOG [SCRIPTURE STUDY](#) [ISLAM](#) [ISLAMIC HISTORY](#)

Selling Children Is Against Islam

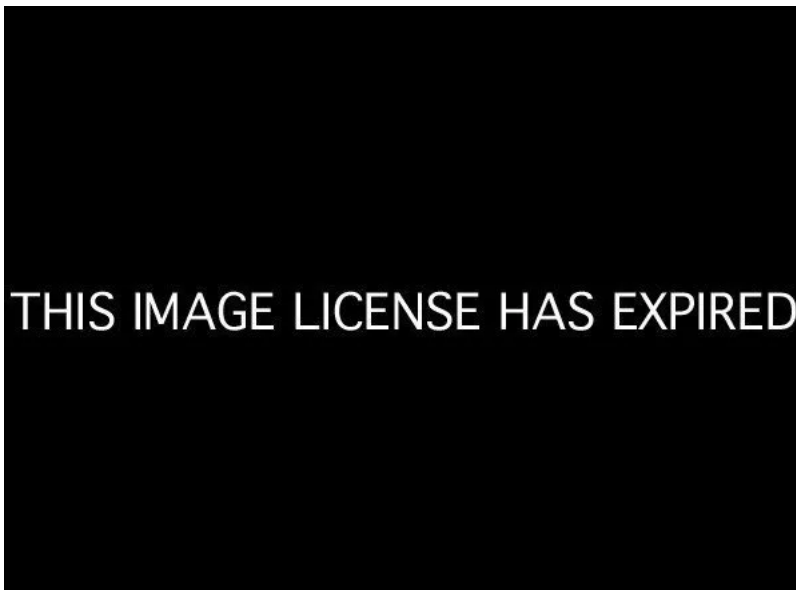
It is time for lay-leaders, clerics and religious judges who flagrantly contradict the Quran to be by-passed as irrelevant and pariahs of our society. They should instead be forced to answer: Why are they defending an oppressive pre-Islamic culture?

By Ani Zonneveld, Contributor

Founder, president Muslims for Progressive Values

Jan 25, 2013, 10:53 AM EST
Updated Mar 27, 2013

This post was published on the now-closed HuffPost Contributor platform. Contributors control their own work and posted freely to our site. If you need to flag this entry as abusive, [send us an email](#).



Bahraini Shiite Muslim boy is carried by his mother during the funeral of Habib Ebrahim Abdullah on January 13, 2013 in the village of Malikiyah, south of Manama. Abdullah, 88, died at hospital after developing respiratory complications and his relatives claim that his death is due to the inhalation of poisonous tear gas that riot police used during a protest in October 2012. AFP PHOTO/MOHAMMED AL-SHAIKH (Photo credit should read MOHAMMED AL-SHAIKH/AFP/Getty Images)

developed and developing nations. It is not limited to one race, culture or religion but is a product of poverty and lack of opportunities. More often than not though, it is simply a practice of oppression, dictated by money, call it dowry in Hindu tradition and mehr in Islamic tradition. I, as a Muslim woman, will address forced child marriages from the perspective of Islam, and those occurring in Muslim communities.

The Quran mandates that for a marriage to be legal a few conditions have to be met:

1. The individual needs to be of sound mind, of age.
2. The woman needs to consent to the marriage.
3. The groom has to give the bride a mehr, which in tradition translates to whatever the woman wishes - money, clothing, a book, pots and pans, which she gets to keep, and not for her parents to take.

Despite the preconditions, women and young girls are still married off by force to old men with parents pocketing the dowry to feed the family, or married off to settle a debt. Let's not kid ourselves, this is all about the money. I would take it a step further and call it for what it is, selling your child for money.

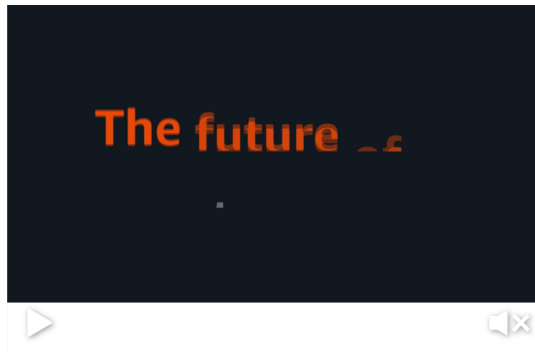
Forced marriages of girls and young women in immigrant communities are also taking place in Western societies like the U.K. and in America. This is not out of financial desperation but out of preventing the daughter into succumbing to "Western decadence" or becoming Americanized. It is ironic that it is the Muslim and non-Muslim citizens of Western societies who are living up to the Islamic values of defending children and women's rights. And in Muslim majority countries, Muslim human rights organizations that fight against child marriages are accused of Western influences.

What is Western about it when the Quran (4:19) clearly states: "You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness"?

What I don't understand is how it is possible that 1,400 years later, Muslims are still ignorant what the Quran states about the protection of children and the rights of women. Why did we allow for a culture that perpetuates misogyny and oppression of women to flourish? Why do we allow the convenient framing of it as "Islamic" by men who can't imagine women as equals and women who sadly buy into this farce?

To the Islamophobes I say: Yes, you will relish this piece as vindication of your twisted understanding of Islam and will completely dismiss the poverty, the cultural perspectives because that is simply too nuanced for your black and white prism, and requires too much thinking capacity.

ADVERTISEMENT



To non-Muslims in the Western societies especially the U.S. government: To be "culturally sensitive" in a multi-cultural society is all good, but not when it upends a child's rights. Yes we should concern ourselves with forced marriages, do what we can to nip this practice, but let's take care of this issue in our own backyard and legislate laws criminalizing forced marriages here in the U.S.

To the Muslims I say: It is time for lay-leaders, clerics and religious judges who flagrantly contradict the Quran to be by-passed as irrelevant and pariahs of our society. They should instead be forced to answer: Why are they defending an oppressive pre-Islamic culture?

Support HuffPost

At HuffPost, we believe that everyone needs high-quality journalism, but we understand that not everyone can afford to pay for expensive news subscriptions. That is why we are committed to providing deeply reported, carefully fact-checked news that is freely accessible to everyone.

Help keep news free for everyone by giving us as little as \$1. Your contribution will go a long way.



RELATED

- SCRIPTURE STUDY
- ISLAM
- ISLAMIC HISTORY
- PROPHET MUHAMMAD
- QURAN



Ani Zonneveld, Contributor
 Founder, president Muslims for Progressive Values



[Suggest a correction](#)