

Islamic Gender Apartheid: Facts, not Islamophobia

Prof. Phyllis Chesler's new book should be renamed "J'Accuse." And that accusation should be aimed at Islamist apartheid as well as at the Western feminists who justify or ignore it.

Rochel Sylvetsky writes in [Islamic Gender Apartheid, Exposing a Veiled War Against Women](#), launched this week: "One can criticize Judaism, the Jewish State, America and apartheid in South Africa, but one cannot criticize Islam."

Just as much courage is required to expose the false world of liberal feminists who ignore real Islamic Gender Apartheid and reserve the "A" word for lies, lies and more lies that condemn Israel.

Chesler is in a unique position, as this selection of her articles on Muslim women, published from 2005 to 2016, shows. She is truly familiar with the topic due to her own personal experience as a college student who married a Muslim fellow student and found herself in purdah in Kabul. That story is told in the book's opening article, powerful because it is recounted from within by someone with a Western, non-Muslim world view. She is also able to write on the different aspects of the topic objectively due to her illustrious academic career and thorough methods of research.

And she is first and foremost a woman who really cares about women the world over and thus cannot help crying out emotionally about what happens to some of the women she describes. Neither could I, nor will the reader.

Chesler's style is, as usual, flowing and immensely readable, and her way with words makes for interesting reading in addition to the interest created by the topic itself.

She deplores the fact that women living in Islamic countries are increasingly covered in burqas – or “body bags” to Chesler, who also criticizes the limits on what they are allowed to do. Nonetheless, she is fair about the dilemma this raises, because after all, there are Muslim women who want to wear burqas and burkinis and who identify with the restrictions imposed on their lives and appearance. How, she asks, leaving the question open, does one differentiate between “free choice and forced choice” without limiting choice on the one hand and abandoning forced women on the other? In Western countries at least, she feels strongly that one cannot take a chance and that these total coverings should be banned.

What Chesler makes abundantly clear, however, is what happens to Muslim women who defy that forced “choice”. The book includes horrendous and documented examples of deprivation and atrocities, one of the hardest to bear the stoning of a 13-year-old and other helpless women for being raped (in Sharia-ruled regimes, rape is seen as the woman’s fault while the men are barely punished, if at all). “A shudder of joy went through the crowd” she quotes from a description of the stoning, evoking the macabre crowds who gathered to witness witch burnings during Europe’s Dark Ages.

Honor killings for speaking to a man or other behavior deemed unacceptable to Islam, genital mutilation as a matter of course, acid thrown on the faces of women who do not succumb – this is the way ordinary women in Islamic countries live. It is all in this book, for Western romantics to see. The well worn mantras about “the peaceful, real Islam” are exposed for what they are, certainly when it comes to women.

Worst of all, many of the women are fanatically cruel to their sisters, just as the men are. Chesler, a world-famous expert on honor killings, quotes women in Khan Yunis, Gaza, who declare that “a woman who makes a mistake deserves to die.”

Palestinian women, she concludes sadly, seem to have

internalized misogyny – and one cannot blame that on Israel.

When women resisted the hijab they were forced into the blazing sun in Gaza and Chesler's irony is cutting: "Free Gaza?" she asks – "From whom?"

The West does not go out of its way to interfere in a sovereign nation's internal activities, nor does the UN, whose purview it is. Chesler, however, demands one standard of human rights for everyone.

A particularly shocking article tells of the pitiful young Afghani boys forced to dance and entice the homosexual acts ostensibly banned by Islam. "Neither UNICEF nor Karzai will rescue them," she writes.

However, as Chesler documents, minding your own business doesn't really work in today's global village. Early on, she predicted the slow but steady acceptance and turning of a blind eye to the misogynist aspects of multiculturalism, now that the world is flooded with Muslim immigrants and refugees. Muslims, as opposed to other religious immigrants with similar practices, bring their customs with them to Europe and the USA, she says, tracing the process country by country in Europe, also exposing Islamization in America. She asks – prophetically, as it turns out – "When will the West wake up and smell the bomb?" adding that "the liberal left, Jews included, does not really believe a war has been declared on the West."

Chesler reminds us that Western women have found that when they are in Islamic countries for whatever reason, Muslim men do not consider them off limits – journalist Lara Logan and other victims' ordeals are brought to show that it is, in fact, quite the other way. America, under Obama, she says, did nothing and actually added fuel to the fire, citing the US sailor who donned a hijab when a US vessel was stopped in the Persian Gulf.

It is in her analysis of the West's reaction to Islam and the hypocrisy of Western feminists that Chesler is at her most incisive. The liberal penchant for blaming the period of colonialism for all the ills of the Islamic world leads to her wry remark that "stoning cannot be blamed on colonialism." She exposes the lengths taken to avoid writing Muslim/Islam – e.g. 'Afghan' atrocities – although no one is fooled anymore by the word-laundering.

She also shows how uncritical postmodern acceptance of other cultures leads to liberal feminist hypocritical refusal to condemn murders of women of color or Muslim women, defining them as internal issues unless perpetrated by whites, and to their subsequently ignoring that all women, including white and Jewish ones, are created equal. Being pro-Israel precludes one's being a feminist today, it seems.

Chesler laments the demise of a feminism that cared about all the world's women. Today's feminists studiously ignore all the discrimination and atrocities of Muslim women described so thoroughly in this book. They do not demonstrate in support of Yazidi women and other non-Muslim female victims in areas conquered by ISIS. Instead, they are occupied with condemnation of Israel's fictional mistreatment of the few Palestinian Arab women under its jurisdiction in Area C of Judea and Samaria (4% of the Arab population in the region) – who never had it so good. The other 96% suffer real discrimination in the Palestinian Authority, but that is considered internal and acceptable.

Conservatives, she concludes, are today's feminists, while liberals have become misogynists. And intersectionality means that the Israeli "occupation" leaves no room on the feminist agenda for the evils of Islamic Gender Apartheid.

Read this book. You owe it to the West and to downtrodden women the world over