

What is spirituality for Muslim women?

In March 2018 in Lebanon's Bakaa Valley I met a woman named Zaide. She is a Syrian refugee, with five children ranging in age from 21 to 3. Her husband was disabled in an accident in Saudi Arabia, where he lost an eye and the use of one leg. When their home in Aleppo was destroyed, the family fled to Lebanon. Now they live in a former chicken shed. Zaide digs potatoes to support the family during the season when there are potatoes.

She also attends the local Baptist church, wearing her *hijab*. The church has helped her with food. In the small group where the church has placed her, the leader challenges members to memorize Bible verses. And Zaide does.

"What verses?" I asked.

"Your word I have hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119," she said. And her face broke out in a smile. Then she continued: "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! 1 Corinthians 15." She proceeded to explain. "Jesus died for us. Jesus died for everybody. The cross is the center of everything. I want to learn as much as I can so I can take it all back when I return to Syria."

Meanwhile, when Zaide's son was married recently, she hired a *sheikh* to come to the chicken house and solemnize the marriage.

Her neighbors tell her, "Be careful! You may be in danger of following two religions." But she says, "Why shouldn't I go to church? That's where I find comfort."

What missiological categories fit Zaide? She is an ordinary Syrian woman faced with big challenges. Though not overly spiritual, she has spiritual longings, which Jesus and his people have met. If "every man is an exception," as Kierkegaard wrote, certainly every Muslim woman is an exception, too. Zaide is one Muslim woman, but there are many others, all different. In this paper we will explore the spirituality of these women in three categories:

Social Spirituality

Signs-and-wonders Spirituality

Studied Spirituality

These will be framed by two overarching assumptions. First, women's religion includes holistic and relational dimensions. Because most women bear children, cultures orient women toward some degree of competency in domestic and relational skills. Though some women do not bear children, and though childrearing is only part of a mother's life, nevertheless this motherly

potential affects societies' general expectations for women. Nurturance, vulnerability, interdependence, multitasking, and storytelling are characteristics that may develop in such contexts. Women's religion, then, is not primarily cerebral, theoretical, or abstract. It must apply to the cries and celebrations and hungers and pains and betrayals and successes of the people with whom they live.

Second, Muslim women earnestly desire to live in a moral and godly society. A Gallup Poll surveying 22 countries, covering 90% of the world's Muslim women, underlines this assertion (Abdo and McGahed 2006). Even though women may deplore some of the restrictions of *Sharia* law, still the majority of the women polled preferred to live under *Sharia*, because the crucial priority is to live in a moral and godly society. The benefits outweigh the detriments. Muslim women's religion is not just instrumental—gaining answers to prayers—but endows them with honor and dignity as creatures of God, accountable to make choices that honor God, *khalifas* responsible for taking care of his world. However dim this vision may be at times, it remains present.

SOCIAL SPIRITUALITY

Most Muslim women don't spend a lot of time thinking about God. This is true of human beings everywhere. By and large, Muslim women are preoccupied with thinking about their duties. They think about the people with whom they are in close relationships—family, friends, neighbors, workmates, fellow members of women's solidarity groups. They think about coming events, and the fun and pleasure that may ensue. They think about professional and business concerns. They worry about dangers and disasters.

They oscillate between conventional performance of rituals, participation in events, and verbal affirmation of beliefs, on one hand, and, on the other hand, spurts of intense pursuit of supernatural help during crises. This erratic attention is criticized by other women who pursue "studied spirituality," most of whom were raised in homes characterized by "social spirituality." The more serious practitioners complain about the nominal nature of their kinswomen's faith. Such women, they allege, are preoccupied with the things of this world. Their ritual participation is mostly just social custom.

Yet, while most women may not think about God extensively as they focus on basic responsibilities and relationships, nevertheless their daily lives are more than drudgery or robot-like performance. In particular, for women in the home, their ordinary routines may be enriched by poetry. Many domestic tasks are repeated regularly. When performing such familiar physical work, it is not uncommon for people to sing or hum. In Pakistan, for example, women sing while they grind grain and also while they spin thread. The songs they sing are religious (Purewal and Kalra 2010).

In the Western desert of Egypt, women and men sing short folk songs as they go about their tasks (Abu Lughod:1988). These are original songs that follow a standard form. The singers comment metaphorically on current relational realities that carry emotional freight for them.

They draw on connotations from a long and wide corpus of Arab poetry. Whether in Egypt or Pakistan or elsewhere, such poetry lifts women above their duties and connects them with myriad forerunners who have reflected, appreciated, critiqued, lamented, and worshipped.

The most fundamental and far-reaching poetry that structures women's hours is the call to prayer from the mosque. Five times a day, women are reminded that they are more than animals, more than machines, more than producers or consumers. They are God's creation, called to respond and obey him. Even though—with pots boiling and toddlers clamoring—they may skip prayer, the emphasis reverberates in their subconscious minds.

Words of the Quran, recited or read, also may be a soothing liturgy. Of course, this will be more meaningful for those who speak Arabic. However, even those who recognize only a word or two may experience such recitations as affirmations of their inclusion among the people of God. While these various bodies of religious words which wash over women in daily life are not focused ritual, nevertheless they surround women with theological content.

SIGNS-AND-WONDERS SPIRITUALITY

As daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, colleagues, neighbors, and friends, relational obligations are important for Muslim women. Trying to fulfill these obligations, they sometimes come to the end of their resources. Someone is deathly sick. Or a bitter feud rages. Or infertility blights a marriage. Or a second wife looms. Or the family needs discernment about whether they should embark on a new venture. At such points, women will cry out for supernatural help.

But Allah is too high, and the classic Muslim rituals and disciplines are too formal to satisfy these urgent needs. So a woman turns to folk religion, a mixture of spiritism and Islam. She may consult a specialist called a *pir* in South Asia or a *marabout* in West Africa, a man with a veneer of Islam. She may visit a shrine, the tomb of a holy person of the past. She may offer an animal sacrifice. She may attach amulets to persons or places. She may experience significant dreams, and act on their interpretations. She may consult an astrologist to ascertain an auspicious day for an event. Especially when pregnant, she may try to avoid *jinn*s, spiritual beings that may cause harm. Some women know sacred words or magical formulas which they recite. Women are involved in life-cycle ceremonies of family and friends, and these often incorporate animistic elements. *The Unseen Face of Islam* by Bill Musk describes many of these folk Islamic practices. Vivienne Stacey's book *Christ Supreme Over Satan*, first written in Urdu, also is clear and helpful.

Spirit possession may afflict some women. The *zar* ceremonies of Egypt exemplify this. Though exorcism is their formal purpose, they also provide entertainment. Lasting from three to seven nights, they include food and ecstatic dancing, with music provided by bands of lyre and percussion players. These ceremonies constitute a distinctive women's event. Some scholars have explored possible psychological functions of these rituals, such as providing affirmation for an afflicted woman and catharsis for her audience.

In my own interviews with Muslim women who have come to faith in Christ, folk religious practices were mentioned. When Tanzanian Justin Oforo shared the gospel with his fellow-countrywoman Saulati, he first asked her for her story. After she shared this, he pointed out that in her quest to get pregnant she had consulted a holy man and drunk a glass of water into which a paper with a verse of the Quran had been shredded. As Saulati acknowledged that she had trusted in Islamicized magic rather than in Allah, she was convicted of sin. She came to Christ and remained faithful to death.

Latifa of Tunisia was impatient with her mother's folk Islam even before she heard the gospel. Once her mother wanted to send Latifa's clothes with someone who was going on pilgrimage to Mecca, so that the clothes would be blessed. "If God can't bless me here, I don't want a blessing," Latifa had stormed. Another time her mother consulted a fortune teller regarding Latifa's future. Such small strategies to access blessing and insight are not uncommon, but Latifa saw that they were inconsistent with trust in Allah. "You aren't a true Muslim!" Latifa had protested to her mother.

Laila of North Africa came to Christ as a teenager, and grew through Bible study, prayer, occasional fellowship with a few believers, and the experience of God's presence. Her parents arranged her marriage. She moved in with her in-laws who lived in a four-story building, one family per floor. They cooked and ate together. "Now I hardly have privacy to read the Bible or pray," she confessed to her Christian friends.

She did not get pregnant. Two years passed. Eventually, against Laila's will, her mother-in-law took her to a shrine. Here Laila offered a chicken to the saint of the shrine, and asked for a baby. When she got home, she got pregnant. But she was also in bondage to make a sacrifice to the saint annually for the rest of her life.

When believers visited her, she sometimes wanted to talk about the Lord, and sometimes did not, because she heard a voice telling her not to listen. Although she prayed in the name of Jesus and claimed the blood of Jesus, sometimes she would tell Christians, 'Don't talk to me about the Lord today. I can't stand to hear it.'

Later she miscarried the baby. She has never gotten pregnant again.

Laila's, Latifa's, and Saulati's stories show how women get involved in "signs and wonders" spirituality. Immersed in relationships, women often feel a need for help beyond themselves. But prayer is not always possible. Not when they are menstruating, which is approximately one-sixth of the time during their fertile years. Allah will not hear them then. After I noted this in passing in an article, a *mejlis* group in an American men's prison wrote to me and asked, "Why would a woman want to pray when she is menstruating?" The answer: People need to be able to access supernatural help at all times. That is why women turn to folk Islam.

Some magical practices sometimes can point to the gospel. Take recitation of Quranic passages. This may be done in a rote way so as to attain magical power. Yet if the content of

the recitation describes God accurately, it may focus a woman's mind on God and lead her to pursue him more. For example, when the Nobel-prizewinning Pakistani schoolgirl Malala was shot and close to death, her mother prayed, barely sleeping. She recited the Surah of the Haj, the chapter about pilgrimage "over and over again the same twelve verses (Yousafzai 2013:58-70) about the all-powerfulness of God. She told my father she felt I would live, but he could not see how" (260). Later, when Malala was being operated on, her father made all sorts of bargains with God. But her mother interrupted him. "God is not a miser. He will give me back my daughter as she was," she said. She then prayed with the Quran in her hand, standing facing the wall and reciting verses over and over for hours (254).

Malala's own rote recitations were in pursuit of beneficent power. "At night I used to pray a lot. The Taliban think we are not Muslims but we are. We believe in God more than they do and we trust him to protect us. I used to say the *Ayat al-Kursi*, the Verse of the Throne from the second surah of the Quran, the chapter of the Cow. This is a very special verse and we believe that if you say it three times at night your home will be safe from *shaytin* or devils. When you say it five times your street will be safe, and seven times will protect the whole area. So I'd say it seven times or even more. Then I'd pray to God, 'Bless us. First our father and family, then our street, then our whole *Mohalla*, then all Swat.' Then I'd say, 'No, all Muslims.' Then, 'No, not just Muslims, bless all human beings'" (237).

Dreams and visions, like Quranic recitations, are part of the folk Islam repertoire which may point to the gospel. A typical dream interpretation also is reported by Malala. Her math teacher dreamed that Malala came to school with her leg badly burned. The teacher was almost hysterical. She begged Malala's father to give some cooked rice to the poor "as we believe that if you give rice, even ants and birds will eat the bits that drop to the floor and will pray for us. My father gave money instead and (the teacher) was distraught, saying that wasn't the same" (236).

Mission records are rich in stories of Muslims whose dreams have led them to Christ. Among my own interview subjects, Dee is a Turk who came to Christ with her husband. As a new believer, she was taking time each day to read the Bible so as to ascertain whether it was really true. One night she had a dream. She found herself in a sewer, propelled by the sewage. She scrambled for a handhold but instead just pushed herself further down. Then a big hand picked her up and set her on clean dry ground. She looked up and saw a glorious throne, and on the throne was Jesus. He said, "I've brought you out of a filthy place. Now what are you going to do?" She said, "I will read the Bible, and I will teach the Bible." In her church, and with women's groups and international students, that is what she has done.

Latifa is a Tunisian who was in a Bible study group. One day the group leaders invited her to the beach, where they told her they would have a Christian communion service. They asked her to read the familiar passage from 1 Corinthians 11 which is read often at this holy supper. As Latifa read aloud, she experienced a vision. The beach disappeared. Time stopped. Latifa was transported to the upper room, and found herself in the presence of Jesus. Suddenly she felt very dirty. She wanted to run away. Then she heard Jesus say, "Eat. I didn't come for you to

run away, but for you to come close to me.” Latifa came, and eventually became a vibrant pillar of the fledging but growing church where she has now worshipped for 30 years.

Beyond Quranic recitations and dreams, other folk religious elements may provide bridges for the gospel. Julia Colgate went to visit her Indonesian neighbor who had just given birth. By the baby’s head was a little sack, which contained a pair of scissors along with garlic and the dried umbilical cord. This amulet is to protect the baby from evil powers.

“You do not take these precautions with your newborns, do you?” a woman asked Julia. “No,” Julia answered. “Actually we believe that the sacrificial blood which *Isa al-Masih* shed is all that is needed for our protection from harm.” Adding just a few more sentences, she explained how Christ’s death defeated demonic powers (2000:34-35).

Beyond building bridges, where there has been involvement with occult powers through folk religion, some cleansing ceremonies may be essential. Consider this example recorded by Vivienne Stacey in Pakistan (1986:88-89):

One nominal Christian woman came to Christ and found new life. She started to share her faith in the institution where she works. She also set about ridding her house of charms and pictures connected with idolatrous worship. After removing all offending objects, she whitewashed her home. She then invited a group of believing Christians to have a service in her house. She wanted a service of cleansing, and prayer for herself, her husband, children and extended family. The believers were not sure how God would lead them. They taught by heart a verse from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 60: “You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise” (v.18). Sometimes she had been in danger from satanic influences and so they encouraged her from 1 John 5:18-20 and Psalm 105:12-15. A Muslim neighbor was present. She is now studying the Bible. Others listened to the service.

After praying for the cleansing of the room, the group praised God, teaching the five small children how to respond when Christ is described. The leader said: “Jesus Christ is King” and all present replied: “Praise be to him” and then the leader said: “Jesus Christ is Lord” and the reply by the whole group was “Praise be to him.” Other declarations were made followed by the same response. In the courtyard after prayer for cleansing the leader said: “God is great” and the group responded “Praise be to him” and then the leader said: “God is our Father” and the group said: “Praise be to him” and so on. On the roof after praying for cleansing the leader said “The Holy Spirit guides” and the group answered: “Praise be to him.” Then the leader said: “The Holy Spirit is divine” and the group responded: “Praise be to him” and so on.

Many in the neighborhood could not fail to hear these declarations and praises. Before this happening and even more so since, the woman of the house has had the opportunity to talk about her living faith with her neighbors of all communities. The

power of God is being seen in a transformed life and gradually God is changing the home. Instead of fear there is praise.

STUDIED SPIRITUALITY

A woman theologian and preacher who lived in Basra in the late sixth century, Rabia al Adawiya emphasized love for God, in contrast to her contemporaries who emphasized fear of judgment. "Rabia was austere in her lifestyle but joyful in her communion with God" (Denny 1985:250). Representative of her perspective are many recorded sayings, such as this (*ibid.*):

O Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed and kings have shut their doors, and every lover is alone with his beloved, and here am I alone with Thee.

There are women today who follow in the steps of Rabia, seriously studying the Quran, hadiths, and *Sharia*. Interviews with five such Syrian women are recorded in Elizabeth Buergener's Ph.D. dissertation, "Becoming a True Muslim: Syrian Women's Journeys to Devoutness" (2013). Buergener engaged in participant observation in Syria from 2006 to 2011. For part of that time she attended classes in religion at Damascus University. She was by no means the only woman in those classes. In 2006, the university's Sharia College had 7,603 students, of whom 3,337 were women.

All the women whom Elizabeth interviewed participated in women's religious study groups. Some took university degrees in Sharia Studies. Most of them taught groups of women, whether in small groups or in classes with more than 100 students. In general, these women felt a responsibility to pass on what they had learned. Sauda, for example, is a recognized *da'iya*, or religious teacher, who has taught large classes for decades, and now sometimes teaches the daughters and granddaughters of her former students. Like several other women, before Sauda agreed to marry her prospective husband, she extracted a promise from him that he would not hinder her teaching.

These women's motivations for learning religion include:

- Desire to obey God so as to measure up to his requirements
- Desire to atone for sin
- Desire to be pure
- Desire to experience the love of God
- Desire to live so that society as a whole is blessed

Besides rational study, these women also regularly engage in *dhikr*. The devotional repetitions help them concentrate on God. After years of study and worship, they testify to practicing the presence of God:

Farida: "I learned to love God. Now I talk to him at any time, not just during prayer."

Zaynab: "Sometimes I feel my heart say on its own, 'Allah, Allah!', and I feel such delight."

Aisha: "I am not done with changing my life yet, but I am trying to make it little by little more conformed to religion."

(Similarly, a Central Asian worker reports a friend saying, "God is the source of happiness, rest and calm. When I pray, I feel relaxation in my spirit as well as my body," and another friend saying, "Sometimes I feel that He is directly inside my heart and spirit. When I say God's name, I feel my heart beat" (Adam 2016).

A *dhikr* session usually begins in silent concentration. Some women may rock back and forth, some may murmur, most will use prayer beads to count repetitions of their recitations. One woman may recite aloud, and others may join in. Another may sing softly, and again others may sing along. Then there may be silence. On the other hand, some *dhikr* sessions are noisier, and women will stand, sway, and walk in a circle.

Near the beginning of a session, worshippers may speak of taking refuge in God as they invoke his name. They also name the dangers from which they take refuge—uncertain health, job, relationships, or politics, and spiritual forces and the evil eye. As well, they ask for forgiveness from God: "I take refuge in You from the evil I have done, and I come to You in Your grace to me, and I come to you in my sin, so forgive me, for there is no one who forgives sins except You" (Dale Feb 2018). The phrase "God forgive!" (*istaghfir Allah*) is heard frequently. "There is no god but You, praise You. I was among the wrong-doers, and you are the most Merciful of the merciful" (*ibid.*).

God is not the only focus. Muhammad, too, is remembered, and the petitioners call down blessings on him.

Du'a', or personal prayer, concludes a *dhikr* session. As one leader said, "The person has asked forgiveness from God, and is clean and pure from inside, and, God willing, the petition will more likely be answered" (*ibid.*). Dale describes a session she attended: "The petitions are more specific, praying for Muslims throughout the world, or for 'our sisters' in places where there is conflict or oppression. At the end, all recite the *Fatiha* quietly together, and a number of the women wipe their palms over their faces, bringing the blessing of the recitation back on themselves" (*ibid.*).

Purity requirements limit women's participation in the preceptual rites of *salah* prayers and the annual Fast, but *dhikr* is always possible, according to Dale. In this way God is always accessible. For women, then, this is a tremendously important ritual.

The Syrian women studied by Buergener are affected to some degree by local Sufi orders, the Qubaysiyyat and the Naqshbandiyya, and also by the Grand Mufti of Syria who actively promoted girls' religious education from the 1970s onward. "You have to be knowledgeable for your children and your society," he advised women. The interviewees in this study dress modestly, with various degrees of covering. This is for the good of society, because men are

very easily drawn to sinful thoughts. The interviewees do not believe women should interpret Scripture, because women are too emotional. They favor some segregation of the sexes, and do not exert leadership in mixed settings.

By contrast, there are Muslim women in other settings who do actively seek to persuade men. In Indonesia there is a large women's association more than 100 years old which is named after the Prophet Muhammed's wife, Aisha. "Islam and Women in Indonesia: Hierarchy and the Empowerment of Women in a Muslim Society" by Siti Syamsiyatun, a devout female professor at the Islamic University of Yogyakarta, describes Aisha's recent efforts. These concern education for women, jobs, marriage and family issues, and leadership in society and in religious institutions.

Concerning marriage, Aisha would like to see changes regarding the legal age for marriage, polygamy, contraception, divorce, and interfaith marriages. Since the Prophet married a very young girl, Aisha cannot directly oppose young brides. Instead, Aisha advocates girls' education, since this has been found to delay marriage. Similarly, since the Quran supports polygamy, Aisha cannot oppose it. Instead, Aisha teaches about what makes a happy family. This results in an emphasis on monogamy. In these ways, religiously active women can stay true to their heritage, while also seeking to persuade men and women toward healthy and godly lifestyles in the modern world.

Beyond Indonesia, women in other countries may choose to model spiritual leadership in mixed settings. There are women in Saudi Arabia who subscribe to total body covering, even of hands and feet, to legitimate their right to argue for greater opportunities in work and education. "They claim erudition in Quran and hadith as a means of advancing feminist interests...Through their ability to refer to Quran and hadith, they can engage in dialogue with conservative men, drawing on examples of independent women from the life of the Prophet as their models" (Doumato 1999:576). Similarly, Hamas women "modestly attired in hijab, answered *sura* for *sura* the men's pronouncements about what was or was not proper Islamic behavior. The women had...the authority of their dress but also their education." (Fernea 2000:190).

Women everywhere tend to see concrete physical needs—runny noses, children languishing without shoes or schooling, husbands and sons without jobs, gardens without rain. In Christian missions, women from the beginning have been involved in schooling and clinics as well as evangelism and discipling. Theology without service to human needs is not a woman's way. Similarly, many Muslim women have joined forces to improve economic or social conditions. Consider Masoumeh Ebtekar, head of the Department of the Environment in Iran, who was a 2006 United Nations Laureate, having received the Champion of Earth award. She has helped establish thousands of women's groups which work to protect the environment. On International Women's Day in 2015 she gave a speech highlighting women's major role in this area.

When I spoke to a large group of Sundanese women in Indonesia, I reminded them of Eve, or Siti Hawa, and her, called along with Adam to be a *khalifa* and take care of God's earth. "That is

our call,” I said. “To worship God, to take care of God’s earth, to take care of our neighborhoods.” They were pleased, and nodded and smiled. Muslims have a theological basis on which to work for the flourishing of the earth and for justice and righteousness in society. Informed Muslim women tap into that.

“I love my God,” says Malala, the Nobel-prizewinning Pakistani teenager who advocates for girls’ education. “I thank my Allah. I talk to him all day. He is the greatest. By giving me this height to reach people, he has given me great responsibilities. Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country—this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world” (Yousafzai 2013:230).

PERSONS, NOT SUBJECTS

Muslim women’s religious thought and action must be taken seriously and treated respectfully. That is one application of anthropologist Laila Abu-Lughod’s book *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* She is not objecting to evangelism as much as to humanitarian work. She deplores the stereotyping of Muslim women as passive. For example, she sees stereotyping in what she calls “pulp non-fiction” books like *Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Such books select negative data so as to cultivate “sexual titillation and moral horror...a gendered Orientalism...with subjects known only by deficits...with the remedies known in advance by others” (Abu-Lughod 2013: 88, 223).

But Muslim women do not need or want pity, Abu-Lughod advises. So outsiders should not be quick to interfere. “Rather than clicking on a website to donate \$10, or flying to distant lands to bring school supplies to girls, and certainly before calling in military troops, we should take time to listen”(202). If we do this, we will see that Muslim women are not primarily victims. In many areas of life they are active decision-makers who demonstrate competency and creativity.

This is true in the religious sphere as well. Whether their involvement is social, or immersed in signs and wonders, or studious, Muslim women have a spiritual core, spiritual longings, and sometimes significant spiritual insights. Christian witnesses must take note of these. Often this will call for separate witnesses for women to complement witnesses to men. In Bangladesh, where Muslims have come to Christ in large “people movements,” it was at first assumed by missionaries that believing Bangladeshi men would disciple their households. But generally this did not happen. As one local man explained, men in that region do not habitually talk with their wives about deep or personal matters. That would seem weird. However, when microloans became available to women in those families and they experienced new empowerment, they themselves began to seek out gospel and discipleship information and take ownership of it (Scott 2007).

In sum, Muslim women are spiritual beings, whether their knowledge and practice is superficial, or heavily spiritist, or serious and studied. They want to be respected, not pitied. They want to live in a godly context. Their orientation is holistic, attentive to the concerns of people around them. They feel a need to tap into supernatural power from time to time. They want to pray with some confidence that they are being heard. They desire their dreams to be taken

seriously. They love to hear and recite beautiful Scripture, and to do that in community with other women. There are many challenges and difficulties in communicating the gospel to Muslim women, but, in the words of our Syrian sister, “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdo, Geneve and Dalia Mogahed. “What Muslim Women Want,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 13, 2006, p.A18.

Abu-Lughod, Laila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013.

_____. *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Adam, Ruth. “In Their Own Words: Revealing Their Hearts,” *When Women Speak (blog)* November 22, 2016.

Adeney, Miriam. *Daughters of Islam: Building Bridges with Muslim Women*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

Buergener, Elizabeth. *Becoming a True Muslim: Syrian Women’s Journeys to Devoutness (Dissertation)*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2013.

Colgate, Julia. “Muslim Women and the Occult: Seeing Jesus Set the Captives Free,” *Ministry to Muslim Women: Longing to Call them Sisters*, eds. Fran Love and Jeleta Eckheart. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishers, 2000.

Dale, Moira and Peter Riddell.. *Shifting Allegiances: Networks of Kinship and of Faith—The Women’s Program in a Syrian Mosque*. Melbourne: Australian College of Theology Monograph Series, 2016.

Dale, Moira. “Women in Sufism,” *When Women Speak (blog)* January 17, 2018.

_____. “Remember God,” *When Women Speak (blog)* January 27, 2018.

_____. “Dhikr: In the Heart of Faith,” *When Women Speak (blog)* February 11, 2018.

Denny, Frederick. *An Introduction to Islam*. NY: MacMillan, 1985.

Duomoto, Eleanor Abdella. “Women and Work in Saudi Arabia: How Flexible Are Islamic Margins?” *Middle East Journal* 1999: 536.

Fernea, Elizabeth. "The Challenges for Middle Eastern Women in the 21st Century," *Middle East Journal* 2000: 190.

Kronk, Rick. *Dreams and Visions: Muslims' Miraculous Journey to Jesus*. Pescara, Italy: Destiny Image Europe, 2010.

Musk, Bill. *The Unseen Face of Islam*. UK: Monarch Publications, 1989.

Purewal, Navtez and Virinder Kalra. "Women's Popular Practices as Critique: Vernacular Religion in Indian and Pakistani Punjab," *Women's Studies International Forum*. www.elsevier.com/locate/wsif. March 19, 2010.

Reisacher, Evelyn. *Joyful Witness in the Muslim World*. Baker Books, 2016.

Scott, Karen. *The Influence of Community Development and Micro-Credit Programs on The Status and Role of Rural Bangladeshi Muslim Women: A Paradigm for Discipleship (Dissertation)*. Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, 2007.

Stacey, Vivienne. *Christ Supreme Over Satan: Spiritual Warfare, Folk Religion, and the Occult*. Lahore, Pakistan: Masihi Isha'at Khana, 1986.

Syamsiyatun, Siti. "Islam and Women in Indonesia: Hierarchy and the Empowerment of Women in a Muslim Society," paper delivered at the Collaboration on Religion, Gender, and Ethnic Diversity in Southeast Asia, sponsored by the University of Washington and the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, March 6, 2017.

Yousafzai, Malala and Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala*. NY: Little, Brown, and Co., 2013.