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BODILY AUTONOMY IN ISLAM


WOMEN IN ISLAM SERIES



MUSLIMS FOR
PROGRESSIVE VALUES

bodily autonomy

*the power an individual has to
make choices about their own
bodies without facing external
coercion or violence.*



What does Bodily Autonomy Consist of?

1

Equitable access to legally enshrined abortion rights.

2

Ability to universally make significant decisions regarding one's body.

3

Equitable access to family planning services and contraception.

4

Ability to make informed choices about medical treatment.

5

Access to comprehensive sexual health education.

6

Ability to chose whether or not to have children.



Why is bodily autonomy important in Islam?

Bodily autonomy is mandated in Islam through the Islamic concept of *ijtihad*, which calls on Muslims to practice independent reasoning when it comes to decision making. The freedom to make decisions can only be practiced if one is free from coercion and can exercise their free will. This freedom to choose is vital for practicing Muslims because Muslims can only take personal responsibility for decisions they make of their own free will, free of coercion, for God to fairly judge them. When you take away a person's right to make autonomous decisions, you take away their right to fair judgement from God.



Bodily Autonomy in Islam

LĀ IKRĀHA FĪ AL-DĪN

The Islamic principle enshrined in Qur'an 2:256 "there is no compulsion in religion" that endows all individuals with the right to make their own decisions and choices, free from coercion of any kind, but especially from religious coercion. This freedom affords all Muslims with the right to make choices of their own free will, including decisions around their bodily and reproductive autonomy.



Bodily Autonomy in Islam

HURMA


An ancient Arabic term that signifies the sacred inviolability, (their right to be respected and not attacked) of the human body. *Hurma* extends to the physical, social, and emotional safety of all individuals, living and dead. It also protects the honor of these individuals. A violation of an individual's bodily autonomy, whether it be sexual assault, domestic violence, sexual abuse, harassment, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, or any other violation of an individual's reproductive rights, constitutes a grave violation of an individual's *hurma*.



Bodily Autonomy in Islam

KARAMAH AL-INSAN

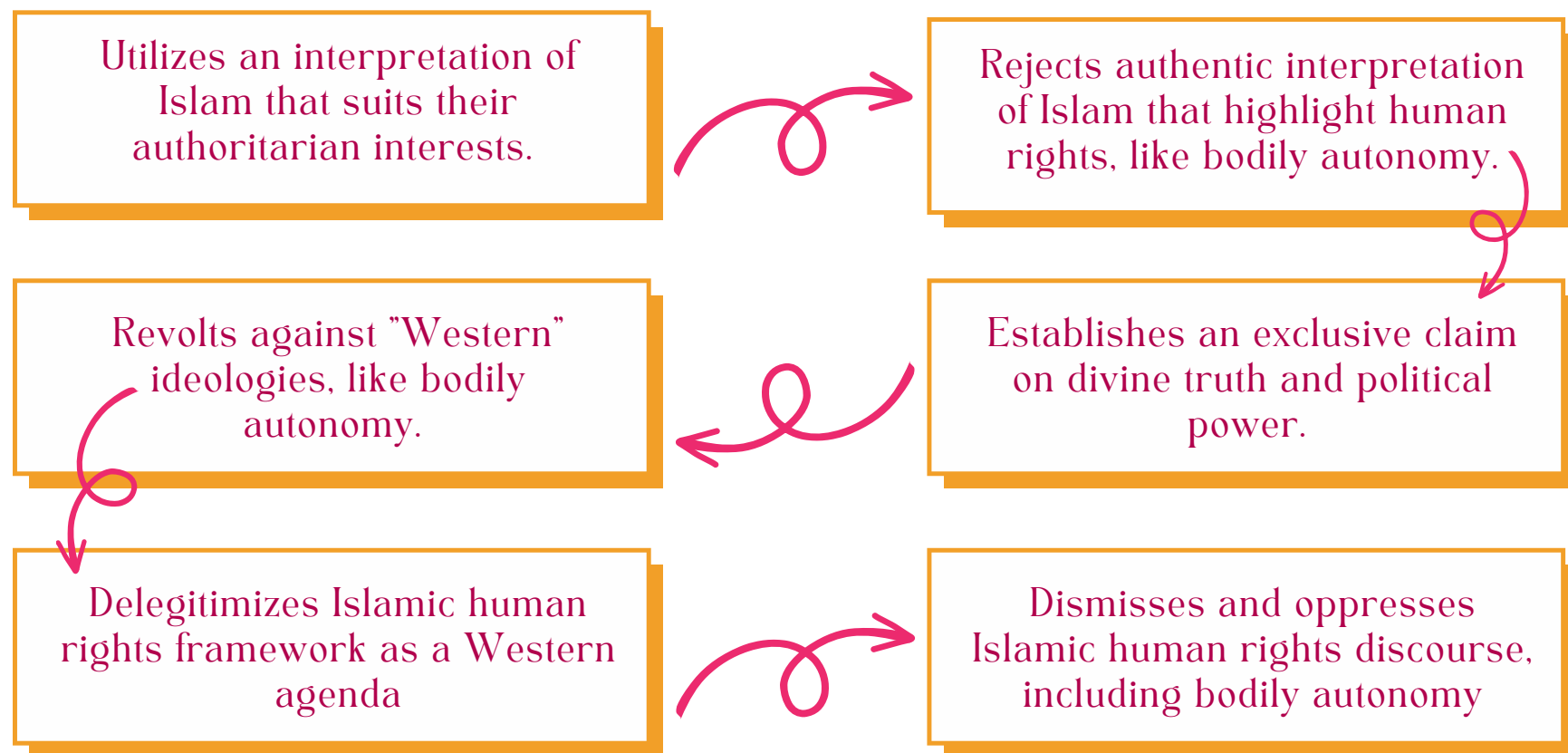
The Quranic concept of human dignity, as referenced in Qur'an 17:70, which affirms that God has "dignified the children of Adam" and afforded dignity as the right of every person, regardless of their identity, as we are all children of Adam. This dignity is also extended to an individual's body, which is considered to be a divine miracle that people are tasked with caring for. In being afforded a body, God commands the individual to maintain dignity over their body, by preserving and caring for it as they see fit.



If bodily autonomy is so important in Islam, why are Muslim women constantly denied this autonomy?

When the Qur'an was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the teachings sought to reform the ways of the Ancient Arabs, whose misogynist and patriarchal tribal values consistently undermined the human rights of women, girls, and people they enslaved, including their right to bodily autonomy. However, because Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) lived just 23 years after the first Quranic revelation, the patriarchal ways that he had sought to do away it eventually reasserted themselves after his death. These patriarchal ways, strengthened by citations of Hadith, many *da'if* (weak) or *mawdu'* (forged), resurged in the decades after the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and have since helped to solidify the denial of a woman's bodily autonomy as "Islamic" tradition.

The manipulation of bodily autonomy by Political Islam





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