

“The Judge” Film Screening and Panel Discussion

Date: November 13, 2019

Location: Hillman Hall, 60 at Washington University in St. Louis

David Warren:

Good evening everyone, and thank you all for joining us for this event tonight that is cosponsored by the department of Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Studies and the Danforth Center on Religion and Politics. I'm Dr. David Warren, a postdoctoral research associate here at WashU. Before I begin, I'd like to thank my colleagues in the Danforth Center and JINES, particularly Sandy Jones and Steven Scordiese for assisting with the coordination of the event and helping to make it possible. Tonight, it really is my great pleasure to welcome you for this special screening of the new documentary “The Judge,” which follows the journey of Kholoud Al-Faqih, the first female judge appointed to a Sh'aaria court anywhere in the Middle East—or, indeed, actually the first woman to be appointed to any religious court in the region, because Jews and Christians have their own religious courts as well. The Judge was first screened at the Toronto Film Festival, and is directed by Erika Cohn, who I'm very pleased to say will be joining us for the panel discussion following the screening. So, just to give you all a quick rundown of how the evening will work; we'll watch the film together now, and immediately afterwards we'll have a panel discussion with Erika and my colleagues Profs. Tazeen Ali and Nancy Reynolds, for about 45 minutes with plenty of opportunity for discussion, reflection, and questions. That will then bring the formal part of the evening to a close, but I hope all of you can stay afterwards for some light refreshment and further conversation outside as well. So, with that, I hope you enjoy it.

[film screening]

I am very pleased to welcome Erika Cohn, the wonderful director of the film we have just had the pleasure of viewing. So, Erika is an award-winning director and producer who was named by Variety as one of the 2017's top ten documentary filmmakers. In addition to the judge, other films Erika has directed and produced include a 2015 Emmy-award winning film, “In Football We Trust,” which explores the unique faith and culture that drives young Pacific Islander men to join the NFL. Among Erika's other activities, Erika is a US ambassadorial film scholar to Israel/Palestine, and in 2013 Erika founded Idlewild Films, which to date has released three feature-length documentaries and numerous other audiovisual content.

Also on the panel tonight is Tazeen Ali, who is an assistant professor at the Danforth Center on religion and politics; Tazeen is a scholar of Islam and gender, and her current research focuses on female religious authority, primarily in the United States.

Also with us this evening is Prof. Nancy Reynolds. Nancy is a historian of the modern Middle East, and among her publications Nancy has written extensively on 20th century Egypt. Her most recent book is titled, "A City Consumed: Urban Commerce, the Cairo Fire, and the Politics of Decolonization in Egypt."

So, just to get things started, I'd just like to invite Erika to speak for a few minutes to get some insights into the film and how it came to be, and afterwards Tazeen and Nancy will speak as well, to draw out some key themes.

Erika Cohn:

Thank you for having me. It's very lovely to see all of you, and I'm very excited to hear all of your responses to the film. It's been a wild journey over the past couple of years since we released *The Judge* at the Toronto International Film Festival, and Judge Kholoud was there and very much enjoyed the world premier of the film as well. Fast-forward, or actually rewind, to 2012 when we started this film, I had received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to teach film in Israel/Palestine and to continue some of my post-graduate research in Islamic feminism. One day, a dear friend and colleague invited me to this Islamic reform meeting that was happening at the Palestinian authority headquarters in Adamallah. I walked into this room being very conscious of the fact that I was one of the only women in the room, and I was seated at a table full of men with *tarboushes*, the hats that the judges and the sheiks wear, and all of a sudden Judge Kholoud walked in. She had this truly unbelievable, remarkable presence that radiated throughout the room, and I kept finding myself being drawn into what she was saying as she talked about how Palestine's legal challenges disproportionately affect women, and how can you create uniformity and law when there is no uniformity in Palestine as a country that is spread out, divided, and occupied. So after this meeting, at this point I didn't know she was the first woman judge to be appointed to any of the religious courts in the Middle East. So I introduced myself, I said, "Judge Kholoud, I just found myself being really drawn to what you were saying, and I wanted to introduce myself." She said, "Well, what do you do?" and I said, "I'm a filmmaker." She said, "Interesting. Why don't you come to my courtroom?" I would say, maybe this whole time, Judge Kholoud had her own plan, but the moment I walked into her courtroom was the moment I knew that this needed to be a film. Here she was—part judge, part marital therapist, part lawyer, as you see on the screen—and she's adjudicating somewhere between 40 to 60 cases a day. The efficiency, and the command of the room—I was blown away. And I also felt like the cases she was saying are not so dissimilar to the cases we see in the U.S. in our family courts. So at the end of the day, I said, "Judge Kholoud, your personal story is amazing, I found what you do in court really captivating, and I think your story could provide a more nuanced understanding of Shaaria for Western audiences, in addition to Middle Eastern and Muslim audiences, and also challenge rapidly increasing global Islamophobia." She said, "Well, I've been waiting for someone to come along." I think for Judge Kholoud, for her why she wanted to do this film is really to, in addition to the reasons I mentioned, she really wanted to inspire young women and girls around the world to pursue leadership

roles in their communities despite whatever cultural norms or traditions might exist, and also to use this as a platform to educate Muslim men and women about women's rights in Islam.

Tazeen Ali:

Thank you so much, Erika, for being here and for this important film. I think women's roles within the Islamic legal tradition is such an interesting topic in its own right in terms of how religious traditions change over time and evolve; but this topic has also occupied the attention of a broader American public for the better part of the last two decades, where the general perception is Islam and Shaaria specifically, unequivocally oppresses women. So, Kholoud's story here, as a strong, charismatic, instantly likeable Muslim woman fighting for gender justice within the Shaaria is not a story that we typically here in the US. I think the climate of Islamophobia, as you just alluded to, makes her story even more compelling and even more timely. And it makes her persona as this pioneer and role model so important. But in many ways her story is also really powerful because of the ways in which it fits into a broader history of women's varied relationships with the Islamic legal tradition—not necessarily as a pioneer or an exception, but as part of a longer tradition of women being involved in authoritative legal roles. This is something I wanted to briefly contextualize; there have been a lot of fluctuations in terms of women's religious authority throughout Islamic history, and one consistent role that they've played is the role of *hadith* transmitter. *Hadith* are sayings of Mohammad that have crucial legal import in terms of generating Islamic legal norms, and *hadith* transmitters have historically played a very critical role in passing down collections of *hadith* across generations. So, the factor that really determined whether or not a woman could occupy an authoritative role was her social standing and status, so, for example, the wives of the Prophet Muhammad and his female contemporaries were viewed as undisputed legal authorities based on their Islamic knowledge. Importantly, early Islamic biographers characterized these women as strong and assertive, very active in the legal sphere—much like we see Kholoud portrayed in the film. And then there's a period where we see this sharp decline in female authority figures in the period following the prophet's death—that had to do with the field of *hadith* transmission being more specialized and requiring extensive travel that the prevailing cultural norms that limited women's mobility precluded them from having that formal training. But then we get to this other period, by the end of the 10th century, where we see this resurgence of women in authoritative roles, particularly ones from elite backgrounds; the daughters of scholars who receive these advanced educations, they would have their own students, and their legal opinions would be sought after. Then they would go on to be the wives of other scholars, and you see the consolidation of a Sunni elite, these families of legal experts. Then there's also cases in the 19th and 20th centuries of women in various positions of legal authority in Iran and Iraq. I raise that here to say that the general concept of Muslim women in positions of legal authority within the Shaaria is not born out of a contemporary moment, nor has it always been tied to a specific set of conservative or progressive values. This is just a way to think about a way that

Kholoud's story in Palestine is continuous with Islamic history, and also really novel in its particular context, and to help us think about frameworks through which to interpret these stories of really singular figures and their individual characteristics and to reflect on the ways that this might draw our attention away from broader social trends and long-term factors that also might contribute to or hinder their success.

Nancy Reynolds:

Thanks you all for coming, I really appreciate the opportunity to be part of this. I also want to say, Erika, thank you, that was a beautifully rendered film; clearly you are well-practiced at this art, and it's really fun to watch. I have a lot of things I want to talk about with the film; it's raised a lot of interesting issues for me about the filmmaking and the shooting and reenactments that go on—it's a lot, but I only got three minutes to talk. A lot of you know me, so that's hard for me. I just was going to go into one particular set of questions, which for me is the Shaaria court as a place of subject for the film. As you heard, I teach 20th century Middle Eastern history, I work on Egypt, and in fact, historians think a lot about Shaaria courts because they provide a lot of really interesting things historically. The film has a lot going on about women's rights, and we should definitely talk about that, but in terms of the Shaaria court as a space, there are really interesting transformations that you allude to that go on in the course of the 19th century and the 20th century about the way that the scope of that court jurisdiction changes. The way that the courts become only really a space for dealing with personal status law or family law, and this is one of the trade-offs that happens as some of these new nationalist, post-colonial governments are becoming increasingly secularized. They limit the scope of what becomes Islam in public into these really specific spaces of Shaaria court. So there are interesting transformations that happen around that, and the way that law is reconfigured, so as a legal practice that is much more plural—as you probably know, there are multiple kinds of schools of law that have Shaaria courts. You might have—she talks about being a Hanafi judge, but there are other ways people would shop around for different rulings, different advice that they would get from different courts. The courts are places that are, in fact, as referred to in the film, there is evidence from the Ottoman period that Christians and Jews did go to Muslim courts to have rulings that they might take back into their own communities, or to get other opinions. So they're quite interesting spaces that depend mostly on oral testimony, and think about evidence and witness testimony in ways that are very different than what happens in the 20th century as this pretty big field of legal practices becomes codified into a code of law—and it becomes much more text-based, evidence becomes more documentary. A lot of the things you see going on in the court about looking in a book and finding rules and applying the rules—these are processes that are actually undergoing a lot of change in this period. As a historian, there is a really important way in which Shaaria courts also figure in teaching women's history—which I'm doing right now, I have another class that many of you took with me in the spring about law, in which we look at the Shaaria court records as one of the primary sources for women's experiences, documenting them over time and

preserving them. Because it turns out, women of all classes went to the courts all the time, as we saw in the film. They're visible to us with a certain kind of agency through these court records. It's interesting to me, and the film raises this over and over again, does she give a different kind of justice because she's a woman? It's an interesting question. If we had had these records from the 19th century from courts that were adjudicated by women, would we have a different record of women's experiences? I think that's an interesting counter-factual question to raise. I will say that the timing of this film is really convenient for me, in that I'm teaching a film-based class on women in revolution; a number of you are here with us, and we just watched a film for yesterday's class called *Divorce, Iranian-Style*, which is another version of this story, but instead of taking the pioneering women as the figure of the film, the film is based in the court itself. You have cases that come before the judge, and there's a lot of mediation going on. It's interesting for me to think about what it means to focus the film on a particular person rather than a particular space—although your film does a little bit of both, even though the title suggests it's going to be all about her, it sounds like she's a very powerful personality, and you do a pretty good job of actually pushing the story away from her whenever you can. Not that she's not likeable, it just raises interesting questions for us on how we understand change and agency in the past or the present. The other film that we've been watching recently is another one you might know which is also based on the question of weddings and marriages; it's called "Rana's Wedding," and it's also filmed in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. It has a very different way of dealing with Palestine's fragmented sovereignty and the Israeli occupation, so I'm also curious to think a little bit about what that means. There's some references here, there's some filming of the separation barrier of the wall, ways space is cut up by the Israelis, the occupation in the West Bank, and there's a reference to checkpoints. That doesn't come up in the film as much as it could have been. So I'm interested to raise that as a set of questions as well. I'm really interested to hear what people in the audience have to say, but I'm not moderating.

Warren:

Thank you to all of you, so we'll just open the conversation to questions from the audience now. If you can take this microphone we can start passing it around. Just to get started, I wondered, Erika, if you could just talk a little more in hindsight about what was maybe for you the most significant or difficult choice you had to make as a director while you were creating this film.

Cohn:

There are so many challenges I could talk about, and difficult decisions we needed to make. I'll talk about a few of them, because it's hard to pinpoint just one. One of my favorite scenes in the film was one of Judge Kholoud and her best friend Judge Ismahaan, who was the second judge to be appointed. The two of them were together at Ismahaan's house, with their kids, discussing the need for Shaaria to modernize. How to adapt to Facebook, dating online, DNA—and how to address

custody issues when oftentimes women are working outside of the home, in Palestine in particular even more so than the men. So how to address custody within that framework. That scene was unbelievable, and it was really, really hard to cut that, and it was a really difficult decision to make. Ultimately, it didn't fit anywhere within the film, but maybe a DVD extra. I think Palestine as a character in this film was a very conscious choice for me, and it took a long time to figure out how to do that. I wanted to transport viewers into a world that many of us may never have access to, and Palestine I wanted to portray in a way that you won't be able to experience unless you're there. So how to create this warm, inviting, multisensory experience with Palestine? We did that by going around and creating a soundscape of insect noises, and honking, and dust, and wind, and really created a unique soundscape so you could hear what it's like in Palestine and in different towns and in different calls to prayer. And then through color correction, through the warmth and the inviting nature you get in Palestine. And then also I wanted to show Palestine in a way many of us have not seen through drone aerials. So how do you put a drone up in occupied Palestine? That's a tough question. But we figured out a way to do that; but we're very aware of the challenges, in that you can't have a drone anywhere near a separation wall, a checkpoint, within certain roads, there are pop-up checkpoints at any time, so this would clearly get shot down. So the only place we could really shoot was in villages or major Arab cities. And we were aware that people might come running out of their homes concerned about what kind of surveillance was going on, because typically those are the drones that Palestinians are exposed to; but instead, people came running out of their homes with cake and coffee and said, "Thank you so much for showing the world a Palestine that they don't get access to."

Audience:

Thank you very much for showing the film. I was curious what government agencies you actually had to interface with through the process of making this film. Were you working primarily with the PLO, or did you work with the Israelis at all? Could you maybe talk a little about what that process is like?

Cohn:

The only time that we interacted with Israelis was in getting the footage out and getting into Palestine, which was difficult, and another story in itself. In terms of access, although Judge Kholoud opened the doors to her home and to her court with open arms, we had to get permission from each Khadil Khoudah, or Chief Justice, each time a new one was appointed. So, Shaaft al-Sihr was very excited about this film and very supportive; Shef Yousif, not so much. And Dr. Habesh, I had to wait two weeks literally camped outside his office door before he would see me; I waited and waited and waited for that meeting, and finally he was probably just getting sick of me being in the waiting room, and he allowed me to come in for a meeting, and I told him why I wanted to make the film, and he finally agreed. So, each time it was a challenge in being able to move freely about the courts; and then once we were in

the courts, as you can see, it's a small room. There's not freedom of mobility in terms of camera, and also you're dealing with really sensitive issues. So every time someone would come in, I would briefly introduce the film and ask if it would be okay to film their case; a lot of times people said yes, and a lot of times people said no, or they said you can film hands, feet, objects, or you can film my voice but please alter it or change my name. So then the challenge became how do you create these angels, and create drama, in a court case that you can't actually film? So that's where the recreations came in, how to visualize those moments where there was a murderer in Kholoud's courtroom, or there were sensitive cases where we weren't able to depict the people who were in that case at that time.

Audience:

Thanks. I had a question about you potentially facing any pressure or making the decision to show this conversation happening within the Shaaria context and not against it. The issue of advancing or modernization or finding rights happening from people inside of the system, and not how we so often see criticism of the system from the outside.

Cohn:

That was really an important point for me, to show this from people working on the inside. A little personal information about me—I grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, which is predominantly Mormon as a non-Mormon, someone who came from an interfaith background, part Jewish, part Christian, and because of the predominant patriarchy at that time in Salt Lake City and the pressure to identify with one particular faith, I really felt like feminism within a religious construct wasn't possible. That later drew me to my interest in Islamic feminism, and really digging through history books and finding women who had been left out of the conversation and had been part of the founding of various religions; given the time that we're in, I think it's most important to shift our attention to Islamic feminism and really pinpoint the amazing women who have been left out of the conversation of the founding of religion. So I wanted Kholoud's voice to be front and center in that process. For her—I once asked Kholoud, mostly because my team members were really curious about this question, I said, "Judge Kholoud, do you consider yourself a feminist?" She said, "Of course." I said, "Do you ever find yourself at odds with the Shaaria?" And she said, "No, the problem is not with the Shaaria, it's with the interpretation, or rather the misinterpretation of the Shaaria, and we have to work within the system to make change." You see that kind of revolutionary change in the women's groups where she talks about women having the right to kick men out of the house too. I also did want to show that perspective, though, through Hanana Sharawi, who says, "This is a place that men have dominated, but at the same time, if women are at the forefront of leading these courts, then I'm okay with it."

Warren:

Yes, I just wanted to pick up on that theme really quickly, and ask you, Tazeen—the theme of honor and honor killing comes up in the film in a very significant way, so could you talk a little bit for us about how that factors into the study of gender and Islam?

Ali:

Sure. You know, I actually really appreciated the way in which this film really shows women's voices representing violence against women. Because so often, the concept of honor killing in the US context is basically a label used to explain IPV in the Muslim context as a unique form of domestic violence because there's political expedience here in terms of the trope of the subjugated Muslim woman, has been successfully mobilized to execute US militaristic agendas abroad. So this politically charged context I think often leaves scholars and activists who work on gender issues in a Muslim context in this really precarious position, and so I'm really appreciative of the way it's handled in the film of letting women speak for themselves. It's such a precarious position for scholars and activists who work on these issues because their work is always at risk of being coopted by the militaristic, imperialist agenda that can and does bring further violence to Muslim women in the Middle East. So this has been this ongoing challenge of how to engage in gender justice without further fueling anti-Muslim sentiment, and as you so clearly point out, one of the goals of this film was to address this rising phenomenon of global Islamophobia. So at the same time, to dismiss the discourse of honor killing and shame as always *only* imperialist sensationalism is to undermine the activist work, and the work that we see here in the women portrayed in the film, who themselves use this language and understand the discourses of honor and shame to be relevant as a subcategory of patriarchal control and power over women, that leads to these horrific cases of murder and other forms of domestic violence. So the conversation regarding honor killing would look really different in the US if it was not treated as a foreign issue that just happens elsewhere to brown women that is somehow distinct from intimate partner violence in the US. As you point out earlier in your remarks, a lot of these cases have these universal themes of what happens in family courts in the US, so I think what's important for us as scholars and students and consumers of media and film is to understand the broader geopolitical context in which ideas of women and Islam are circulating, and to think critically and ask questions about how and when the terms of honor killing get used, who gets to speak about them, and to what ends.

Cohn:

I also want to say something about that. We use the term honor killings in quotes because it is actually not what it is, and Vema, the lawyer in the film, clearly states it's murder, but they try to use this honor crime defense, but ultimately they get sent immediately to the criminal courts, and then it's up to the victim or the survivor to go through the Shaaria court to be able to get compensation or to be able to get some sort of legal familial resolution.

Audience:

largely unintelligible

Cohn:

So the question was about how as a woman and as a Jewish woman or someone with a Jewish last name, what kind of challenges did you face? Honestly, I think being a woman in this context worked to my advantage, because when I approached the Chief Justice and asked for access, I think I was completely underestimated. I think oftentimes women around the world are underestimated, so in some ways this woman with a tiny camera hanging out in the back of a courtroom is really not very threatening. Had I been someone else with a large crew and a fancy camera, perhaps it would have been different. In terms of my last name, it didn't change anything. I speak Arabic, and in terms of differences of opinions, probably the most interesting interview was with Hosa Medin, and in there was that Tahrir, the marriage officiant who was her professor, she came with me to the interview, and Tahrir and Kholoud argued before this; Kholoud was saying, "Don't change anything about yourself, Erika, go in there and be yourself," and Tahrir was saying, "I think you might want to change a couple of things and be a little..." So they had this interesting conversation; anyways, I went there, and my job is not to debate Hosa Medin. He has a platform, he's a very well-respected professor, and I wanted to better understand where he was coming from and what informed his thought. After the interview was over we definitely debated, though.

Audience:

So, in the film, you highlight the scholar who's providing some form of legal or Shaaria refutation to the presence of women as judges; but we also see from the actual court system that the presence of women in courts, I don't know if it's implied that there's some form of bias against them or if they're actually saying that it is because of the test scores—basically, the question is, do you see in other countries, is it likewise a strong legal refutation, or a refutation from the legal scholars within the other Middle Eastern countries, or is it also more of a systemic prevention of entrance or lowering of the position of the female judge like when we saw that she was given just paperwork to do?

Cohn:

So, I'll take this in different parts. In terms of Palestine, it's actually interesting because Ghaza is under the Malaki Islamic school of thought, which does not believe women can be judges within the courts, and so because of Palestine's complex history and cocktail of laws, as Kholoud describes it, it's really difficult to create this uniformity of law and justice. Other Islamic school of thoughts have different interpretations on whether women can be judges and in what context. It's

interesting, because in Malaysian Shaaria courts women aren't allowed to adjudicate divorce, but they are allowed to adjudicate everything else. It varies from situation to situation. In Kholoud's situation, both Chief Justices have used every opportunity, every possibility of wrongdoing by Kholoud to retaliate; now, in response to the film, Dr. al-Habbash is not pleased that he could have been a bigger character, and some other people could have been bigger characters, so he has really used any opportunity to retaliate against Kholoud, and has moved her to different courts and made things very difficult for her, banned her from speaking to the press at times and prevented her from going to different screenings. So it's been a very challenging situation; I don't think that part is unique to Palestine, I think that is very universal. Women's leadership is highly contested; it's not just Kholoud's colleagues or some scholars; you look at people on the street who have differing opinions about whether women should be judges or not, and what was interesting is that was the same conversation in Palestine that we were having here in the US that we were having during the Hilary Clinton campaign.

Audience:

Hello. I also found film quite interesting, and I have a question regarding the impact on the society. We have seen in the film that 80% of the divorce fights were signed up by women, if I remember correctly, and in connection to that the film also kind of discussed a bit, or introduced this theme of experience that seems to be also an important thing in court—when a woman is acting as a judge in front of women and the judge Kholoud is acting as an advisor outside the court. So, I was wondering how can a female judge maybe kind of update the concept of gender in the society, what do you think about that, is there this power in court of the law when you have a female judge?

Cohn:

I think in Kholoud's case, she first was a lawyer working with survivors of domestic violence and felt like she could best catalyze change by becoming a judge in the Shaaria courts, and she actually started announcing that she was going to become the first female judge in Shaaria courts many years before she actually did. That was her goal. That was her mission. One of the things that she understood in working with survivors of domestic violence was that there was no place for women to come forward with the most intimate details of their lives, or even for children to come forward with the most intimate details of their lives, and talk about abuse and challenges. She felt like her presence would help change that. And it actually has, dramatically; we've seen statistics go up for a number of cases that are brought by women in Palestine to the Shaaria courts before Judge Kholoud and her colleagues and after. In addition to that, I think it's crucial that this is not just Kholoud, it's not just judges in the Shaaria courts; it is crucial to have leadership that is representative of the population they are supposed to serve. And until the leadership or judges reflects that population, there can't be justice; it's just not possible. I also want to say one more thing about the marriage contract, because we

really focused on the marriage contract a lot in this film, because that's one of the ways that Judge Kholoud really felt that she could create more opportunities for women to know their rights and to guarantee that women will have rights moving forward. The marriage contract is pretty interesting, because you can say where you want to live, the kind of lifestyle you'd like to have, how many kids you'd like to have, how far in education you'd like to go, whether it's going to be a monogamous or polygamous relationship; you can decide all of these things upfront, and in a lot of ways that provides more protection for women in the long run.

Reynolds:

I would say one thing about that. This has been a really important initiative in a number of places in the Middle East about making marriage contracts a lot easier to work with, so providing check-boxes; the Egyptians and others have had these campaigns so that you didn't have to have the knowledge to write the conditions in there. So it's a really important tool, and it's great to hear that there have been these outcomes. It's also interesting, and I felt like you lingered here about this in the film, just the presence of having access to that doesn't mean necessarily that social change will follow. It's clear in those moments when the couple comes in holding hands and the registrar asks them, "Are you going to put any conditions in the marriage contract?" and they're both sort of like, "Oh, no, we're all fine, this is a lovely new moment we're stepping into." So, we think about what really is the power circulating and how has the power to speak and negotiate on behalf of themselves or their family members, and it is a much more complicated process to disentangle. So that was something I appreciated in the film; I don't know if that was deliberate, but it's a complex process of change.

Audience:

Hi, so I was sort of wondering about—there was a moment in the film where they were talking about the way that young women are educated on their faith. They said they were learning about the devil and there was a picture of a woman, and I imagine that it's very hard, that women have to have a different interpretation of their faith to sort of be able to work and hold jobs. How would that affect young girls growing up who might feel ashamed that if they were to—it almost seems sometimes like women don't think that it's their religion too, because if they have to have a different interpretation to have equal rights, I can see a lot of internal conflict happening there, and young girls feeling like it's not their right. So how can the education and the implementation of that teaching better affect women and young girls growing up.

Cohn:

I feel like this is a really universal question that spans across all faiths, and all cultures. I'll speak about this from a personal perspective; I think it's not religion, it's patriarchy, and when you are shown imagery of women as subordinates, you are

shown imagery of women as creating trouble or being a problem, that's incredibly difficult to overcome, and I think that's one of the huge barriers we have across cultures, across faiths. One of the most important ways we can solve that is by having positive role models that look like us who are challenging those norms—cultural norms, traditions—and who can really be there as mentors or as figures that we can see and look to.

Warren:

Well, thank you, if there's no more questions for this forum, I will bring the formal part of the evening to a close. But there is food out in the corridor, so we can continue the conversation and have some refreshment. Big thank you to Erika and Tazeen and Nancy.

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