

## Women and girls

### I am a girl . . .

(Poem by a girl child, part of the Pakistan Girl Child Project)

My father does not love me;  
Perhaps he does, but he doesn't express it.  
My brother is younger than me,  
But, because he is a boy,  
He is the apple of my father's eye.

When my father comes home from work in the evening,  
"My son, my son, my son!" is all he has to say.  
Every word of my brother is like the order of a king.  
He is my father's identity, my father's future.  
It is my brother's doll's wedding tomorrow.  
But my doll is still at home, alone and friendless.

No matter if my brother misses school,  
No matter if he makes fun of me,  
No matter if he raises his hand at me,  
No matter if he breaks something.

But if I make even a small mistake,  
My father immediately scolds me:  
"You are 17 and still so useless!!  
Perhaps you may get some sense when you are an old woman!"

My father says: "She does not belong to us,  
She is a daughter, a shadow who is with us for a fleeting time only."  
My mother says that when I go to sleep at night,  
And wander carelessly in the wonderful world of dreams,

My father comes and fondles my head  
Smiling softly to himself.

How I wish that one such day I wake up  
To see and feel my father's love.

## **Women**

*Federico Mayor*

Woman

You brought with you

A new song.

But we did not let you

Speak out

Although yours

Is the voice of half the earth.

Woman,

Your eyes

Saw the world

Another way.

But we did not want

To know the meaning

And warmth

Of your vision.

Woman,

You carried under your skin

Of all colors

The seed

Of the future,

The light  
Which could illuminate  
Different paths  
Rebellious  
Yet peaceful ways,  
Woman-bridge  
Woman-bond  
Woman-root  
And fruit of love  
And tenderness.

Woman,  
Your hands outstretched  
And your open arms  
Enfold the immensity  
Of refuge  
And of comfort.  
But we have not understood  
The strength of your embrace  
Nor the cry of your silence  
And we carry on  
With neither compass  
Nor relief.

Woman,  
With no other master  
But yourself,  
Live from now on  
Equal and free,  
Now as companion  
Sharing

The same dream FOREVER.

**If only our Prophets were Women**

*Cecil Rajendra*

*(For Zainah Anwar & SIS)*

If only our Prophets were Women  
the History of our World  
would have been so very different.

Abraham, Moses  
Muhammad, Jesus —  
good men, all of them  
who preached Peace  
Love & Universal Brotherhood.  
But MEN, nonetheless

Still, it must be admitted  
(Message of Love, aside)  
men who boldly flaunted  
a strong feminine side  
in choice of kaftan & coiffure...  
Not by chance opting in favour  
of soft sandals over jackboots;  
billowing ankle-length dresses over armour suits & khaki shorts;  
& long flowing tresses over crewcuts.

Yet, despite their best intentions  
our prophets' entire experience

of the Milk of Human Goodness  
was culled wholly from infancy;  
unlike their mothers & sisters  
none of them suckled a baby;  
all, ALL were Takers not Givers.

Likewise, their unforgiving followers  
— men, for the most part—  
who chose to ignore the soft  
warm message of the heart  
& focus more on the hard  
macho precepts of their Masters.

Abdicating Love for the Sword  
to spread the Word of God;  
preferring summary execution  
(of enemy, infidel & Saracen)  
to gentle persuasion  
& the art of subtle seduction.

If only our prophets were women  
consider how the history/herstory  
of war would have been written  
Instead of being fought  
years on end in trenches,  
the First World War  
would have been slugged  
to a standstill in minutes  
between a broad Scottish lass  
& a buxom Bavarian fraulein  
in a mud-wrestling rink

somewhere on the Maginot Line.

In the Second World War,  
would we ever have found  
a woman willing to dump  
that atom bomb on Hiroshima?  
And not only because of their  
legendary fear of flying,  
but can anyone sane imagine  
any lady, dropping from height,  
A-Baby nicknamed 'Little Boy'?

Women would have converted  
the Crusades to Masquerades  
(complete with funny hats  
silver-masks & sequins);  
the Seven Years' War  
into a seven-year-itch.  
The Battle of the Bulge  
into a Baffle of Boobs  
& resolved the War of Roses  
....with roses!

Can anyone sober picture  
even for a single second:  
Mary Magdalene hoisting a rifle?  
Ibu Fatimah with an AK-47?  
or, Mother Theresa with a bazooka?

If only our prophets were women  
the Herstory of our World

would have been so different  
for starters, we would have been  
bequeathed Universal Motherhood  
not bloody Brotherhood or Martyrhood.  
If only ALL our Prophets were Women.

### **The Cut**

*Maryam Sheikh Abdi*

I was only six years old  
when they led me to the bush, to my slaughterhouse.  
Too young to know what it all entailed,  
I walked lazily towards the waiting women.

Deep within me was the desire to be cut,  
as pain was my destiny:  
it is the burden of femininity,  
so I was told.  
Still, I was scared to death . . .  
but I was not to raise an alarm.

The women talked in low tones,  
each trying to do her tasks the best.  
There was the torso holder  
she had to be strong to hold you down.  
Legs and hands each had their own woman,  
who needed to know her task  
lest you free yourself and flee for life.

The cutting began with the eldest girl  
and on went the list.

Known to be timid, I was the last among the six.

I shivered and shook all over;

butterflies beat madly in my stomach.

I wanted to vomit, the waiting was long,

the expectation of pain too sharp,

but I had to wait my turn.

My heart pounded, my ears blocked;

the only sound I understood

was the wails from the girls,

for that was my destiny as well.

Finally it was my turn, and one of the women

winked at me:

Come here, girl, she said, smiling unkindly.

You won't be the first nor the last,

but you have only this once to prove you are brave!

She stripped me naked. I got goose pimples.

A cold wind blew, and it sent warning signs

all over me. I choked, and my head

went round in circles as I was led.

Obediently, I sat between the legs of the woman

who would hold my upper abdomen,

and each of the other four women grasped my legs and hands.

I was stretched apart and each limb firmly held.

And under the shade of a tree . . .

The cutter begun her work . . .

the pain . . . is so vivid to this day,

decades after it was done.

God, it was awful!

I cried and wailed until I could cry no more.  
My voice grew hoarse, and the cries could not come out,  
I wriggled as the excruciating pain ate into my tender flesh.  
Hold her down! cried the cursed cutter,  
and the biggest female jumbo sat on my chest.  
I could not breathe, but there was nobody  
to listen to me.  
Then my cries died down, and everything was dark.  
As I drifted, I could hear the women laughing,  
joking at my cowardice

It must have been hours later when I woke up  
to the most horrendous reality.  
The agonizing pain was unbearable!  
It was eating into me, every inch of my girlish body was aching.  
The women kept exchanging glances  
and talked loudly of how I would go down in history,  
to be such a coward, until I fainted in the process.  
Allahu Akbar! they exclaimed as they criticized me.

I looked down at myself and got a slap across my face.  
Don't look, you coward, came the cutter's words;  
then she ordered the women to pour hot sand on my cut genitals.  
My precious blood gushed out and foamed.  
Open up, snarled the jumbo woman, as she poured the sand on me.  
Nothing they did eased the pain.

Ha! How will you give birth? taunted the one with the smile.  
I was shaking and biting my lower lip.  
I kept moving front, back, and sideways as I writhed in pain.  
This one will just shame me! cried the cutter.

Look how far she has moved, how will she heal?  
My sister was embarrassed, but I could see pain in her eyes . . .  
maybe she was recalling her own ordeal.  
She pulled me back quickly to the shed.

The blood oozed and flowed. Scavenger birds  
were moving in circles and perching on nearby trees.  
Ish ish, the women shooed the birds.  
All this time the pain kept coming in waves,  
each wave more pronounced than the one before it.

The women stood us up but warned us not to move our legs apart.  
They scrubbed the bloody sand off our thighs and small buttocks,  
then sat us back down.  
A hole was dug,  
malma, the stick herb, was pounded;  
The ropes for tying our legs were ready.  
Charcoal was brought and put in the hole,  
where there was dried donkey waste and many herbs—these were the cutter's  
paraphernalia.

The herbs were placed on the charcoal,  
and we were ordered to sit on the hole.  
As I sat with smoke rising around me,  
I could hear the blood dropping on the charcoal,  
and more smoke rose.  
The pain was somehow dwindling but I felt weak  
and nauseated.  
Maybe she is losing blood? my sister asked worriedly.  
No, no. It will stop once I place the herbs, cried the cutter impatiently.

The malmal was pasted where my severed vaginal lips had been,  
and then I was tied from my thighs to my toes  
with very strong ropes from camel hide.  
A long stick was brought and the women took turns  
showing us how to walk, sit, and stand.  
They told us not to bend or move apart our legs?  
This will make you heal faster, they said,  
but it was meant to seal up that place.

The drop of the first urine,  
more burning than the aftermath of the razor,  
passed slowly, bit by bit,  
one drop after another,  
while lying on my side.  
There was no washing, no drying,  
and the burning kept on for hours later.  
But there was no stool . . .  
at least, I don't remember.

For the next month this was my routine.  
There was no feeding on anything with oil,  
or anything with vegetables or meat.  
Only milk and ugali formed my daily ration.  
I was given only sips of water:  
This avoids "wetting" the wound and delaying healing, they said.

We would stay in the bush the whole day.  
The journey from the bush back home began around four and ended sometimes at seven.  
All this time we had to face the heat  
and bare-footedly slide towards home . . .  
with no water, of course.

We were not to bend if a thorn stuck us,  
never to call for help loudly  
as this would “open” us up and the cutter  
would be called again.  
Everything was about scary dos and don’ts.

I stayed on with the other five  
for the next four weeks. None of us bathed;  
lice developed between the ropes and our skin,  
biting and itching the whole day and night.  
There was no way to remove them,  
at least not until we healed.

The river was only a kilometer away.  
Every morning the breeze carried the sweet scent of its waters to us,  
making our thirst more real.

The day the cutter was called back  
each of us shivered and prayed silently,  
each hoping we had healed and there would be no cutting again.  
Thank God we were all done  
except one unlucky girl  
who had to undergo it all again,  
and took months to heal.

Our heads were shaved clean.  
The ropes untied, lice dropped at last.  
We were showered and oiled,  
but most important was the drinking of water.  
I drank until my stomach was full,  
but the mouth and throat yearned for more.

It was over.

All over my thighs were marks from the ropes,

dotted with patches from the lice wounds.

Now I was to look after myself,

to ensure that everything remained intact

until the day I married.

### **Abandoned Woman**

*SipakV*

"What man would stay?"

No, but he is the one who left

Wouldn't he leave

You are an abandoned woman

Shaming us

Shaming our family

Look at your hair

Look at your face

Look at your cooking

Look at your unkept house

What man would stay?

I did my best

I cut my hair, straightened it

I put perfumed cream on my face

I tried my best cooking every day

I straightened the house

But Ikoto and Ikala

Wanted love and care

He did not even notice

He came home late every night

Drunk on women and alcohol

Dumb with rage

Because our life sucks

Our kids misbehave

His wife is ugly

And he wants to beat up his loss

Erase it on my face and body

Erase it every night with no luck

Last time the neighborhood committee came

And gave me advice

You are a woman

Resign yourself

Tough it out until the end

When the sky comes crashing down on you

And the Reverend Father came by

Remember Victoire Rasoamanarivo he said

But I am not looking for happiness in the next world

But peace for Ikoto and Ikala is what I seek

You came today mother and said

He is my lot

Violence my destiny

Prison my fate

Because where am I to go

Jobless woman

So mother let me

Look at your hair

Look at your face

Look at your cooking

Look at your unkempt house

What man would stay?

## **The stone & the woman**

*Dr Carole R Fontaine*

How is a stone

Different from a woman?

Just the right size,

One makes death;

Woman,

Made to give life,

Cruelly dies.

Her age? No matter.

Her crime? Look at her:

Defence against a rapist?

Peddler of her flesh?

Just choose the crime

That looks the best

As index of social morality,

And pile up the stones

Of brutality.

Not too big:

She will die too soon.

Not too small:

She must bleed and swoon

From the pain

All gather to see.

O, Defenders of Morality!

You soil the Qu'ran

With impunity,  
So eager to make your world  
Safe from sin,  
You re-enact it again and again.

\*In the Islamic Republic of Iran, stones used for public executions must be neither too large, nor too small; proper stoning requires that the stone must be just the right size in order to cause serious pain and injury without killing the victim too rapidly.

### **Twisted ballerina**

*Jayne Sachs*

Little girl  
Little twisted ballerina  
Little steps  
Little twisted ballerina pirouettes  
across the floor  
to the window where her  
daddy watches from the corner of his eye  
and her uncle watches her thighs

Little girl  
Little twisted ballerina  
Dance

Well her mom's at work down at the hospital today  
and her daddy decides to cash his paycheck today  
and her uncle says "Sure, I'll watch your ballerina... dance."  
Well she's heard those words before  
She's seen that look before  
She's smelled his breath before

She's felt his weight on her before  
This ballerina  
And when her daddy leaves  
and when they're alone he's says  
"I just bought a ticket to your show."

Little girl  
Little twisted ballerina  
Dance

Dance dance dance dance  
Got to dance got to dance got to dance got to dance got to dance got to dance  
Dance

And she dances out the bedroom  
And she dances down the hall  
And she dances down the steps  
And out the front door  
And she goes up to the clouds  
that's where she find her stage  
And she does the dance that's twice her age

How did he get here?  
Who let him in up here?  
Who let him in down there?  
I was dancing here  
I was dancing here

Little girl  
Little twisted ballerina  
Little steps

Little twisted ballerina pirouettes

Little twisted ballerina pirouettes

Genocide of women in Hinduism

Sita Agarwal

“In memory of my late sister, who died as a result of the inherently anti-woman religion of barbarian Hinduism.”

### **Introduction**

I dedicate this book to my late younger sister, who was murdered as a result of a dowry-related incident while in full blossom of youth. Like most sisters, we were very close to one another, and her early death had a deep impact on me. This tragedy inspired me with the will to join the Indian feminist movement, and to eventually write this book. I hope that this work may save the lives of some of my Indian sisters and help reduce the suffering of Indian womankind. The reason for writing this book is purely humanitarian, so I have made this book available in the public domain. The more widely this book is read, the more innocent lives shall be saved. Please distribute it freely, and help save Indian women. Thank you in advance for your efforts.

After my sister's death, I joined the Indian feminist movement. I read the usual feminist literature, took part in the usual demonstrations in support of women's rights, and attended the usual women's rights conventions. However, it soon dawned on me that the movement was quite hollow, and, despite several decades of existence, had failed miserably in its objectives. At the time I write this book, in June 1999, the status of women in India has sunk to its lowest ebb. After 50 years of Independence, cases of female infanticide, sati, dowry-related murders and crimes against women are on the increase, and in many cases are at their highest levels seen since the birth of the Indian Republic. I soon realized that the reason is that Indian feminism has not tackled the core of the evil, but has only squabbled about superficial aspects of the problem. Western feminism was merely transplanted onto the subcontinent, and like many plants, had been unable to thrive in its new environment. It is only by tackling the root of the problem that this plant can grow. I hope that this book shall enlighten all Indian women as to the true reasons for the abject state of subjugation we are in.

### **Real reason for oppression of Indian women**

Everyone has heard the Brahmin male propaganda that the customs of sati, dowry, female infanticide and all other social suppression of women in India is the result of `social

degeneration', 'corruption', or still worse, 'foreign Christian or Muslim influence'. This is all one big lie designed to fool women. The reasons are far more deep-rooted, and are fully the result of Brahmin male conspiracies.

The real reason for the sad state of Indian women is the continuation of the Vedic and Vaishnava religions, collectively referred to as Brahminism or 'astika' Hinduism. These religions clearly and unambiguously justify and prescribe the crushing of women to the status of sub-humans. Rather than being due to some kind of 'corruption', the ghastly practices of sati, female infanticide, dowry and related acts are actually enforced by Vedic and Hindu scriptures. Although this may sound like some Christian or Muslim propaganda, it is not. I have backed up my research with quotations from Vedic and Vaishnava scriptures, and have shown that these religions, and nothing else, are the main culprits behind the most anti-woman system the world has ever seen. Far from being 'enlightened' and 'progressive', Brahmanism is in fact the very fountain of the evils of sati, female infanticide, devadasism and dowry.

### **Future of the women's movement**

The result of my research is far-reaching. Instead of wasting time attacking trivialities, the Hindu religion itself must be attacked by Indian feminism. If Indian women are to become free, it is this faith that must be tackled, and nothing else. No other religion, not even Islam or Christianity, burns its women, or slaughters one-tenth of all women each generation except Hinduism. Indeed, Brahminism is nothing but the legitimized genocide of women. In this book I have performed calculations showing how Brahminist men, and not Communists or Nazis, have been responsible for the greatest genocide (namely that of women) in the history of the world. The worst holocaust in human history was not that of the Jews or Africans, but was that inflicted on women by Brahmins. A significant part of this holocaust occurred in India during thousands of years of Brahmanic tyranny. Even in the modern era, Brahmin-enforced laws lead to the deaths of more people each decade than Hitler killed during the entire Second World War. To stop this ongoing holocaust, Indian women must unite with all those who oppose Hinduism, for an enemy's enemy is a friend. Indian feminism must unite with Islamism, Communism, Sudra Nationalism and Christianity in order to fight a form of savagery known as Hinduism. By necessity this strategy shall have to vary according to region. In South and Central India, Sudra Nationalism promises to uplift Dravidian, Dalit and Adivasi women on a healthy platform of anti-Brahmanism. This pan-Negroist philosophy is thus a natural ally of Indian feminism. In North India, the allied Islamist ideologies of pan-Islamism and Mughalstanism have proven a potent force for women's liberation, witness the Mughal emperors' restrictions on Sati and female infanticide. Indian feminism should hence ally itself with these movements. Communism has helped women in West Bengal and Kerala, and is another natural ally for Indian feminism. Hence, by means of judicious realpolitik, the status of Indian women can be bettered.

**No copyright**

Since I have written this work for humanitarian purpose, I hereby make it free of any copyright. You may freely distribute this book, in part or in whole, via any means you desire, whether by internet, www, email, newsgroup, usenet, or any electronic means. You can also print out this book and translate it, and distribute it in pamphlet form.

### **Help Indian women**

Please help Indian women. By distributing chapters of this book via the internet or as pamphlets, you shall be saving innocent lives. Each person can do his little towards this noble cause. By taking a little time to post this to a newsgroup, by hosting this book at your internet site or by adding a link to this book from your page, you shall be doing service towards a valiant movement. This doesn't cost any money; it just takes a little effort. Please help, and prevent further young and beautiful Indian women such as my sister from premature death at the hands of Brahmin tyrants. Help end the genocide of women in India.

Thank You,

Sita Agarwal

### **I am a woman**

*Somia Sadiq*

I am a woman, and I will stop by,  
To crush you to dust, to drown your pride.

All those dreams you took away,  
My life, my soul, you took away  
In the name of honour, in the name of pride,

You consumed my tears, with every stride.  
But I am a woman, and I will stop by,  
To crush you to dust, to drown your pride.  
You took away my right, my right to be free,  
You stole my youth, you raped my innocence,  
You taught me to shush, freeze my tears,  
So I could stay your slave, lost forever,

Lost for the shattering of my bones,  
Lost in the sound of you quenching your thirst,  
A thirst to suppress, a thirst to oppress.

But I am a woman, and I will stop by,  
To crush you to dust, to drown your pride.

How long did you think it'll be?  
Oh you stupid, stupid man!  
I am a woman, fear my power,  
I am the rain, a rain of fire,

I am awake, I will stop by,  
To crush you to dust, to drown your pride.

No longer will I remain a slow silent procession,  
Of suppressed wailings, of quiet agitation.  
The spark of freedom that I tucked away,  
Is now a fire, a storm, a wrath so powerful,  
Fueled by the obsession for emancipation,  
The obsession for freedom, obsession for love,  
Obsession to wipe out the system that breeds you,  
Obsession to eradicate all those like you,  
Who suppress, oppress and antagonize.

Yes, I am a woman, and I will stop by,  
With my comrades, standing as one,  
Red flags in our souls, red dawn in our hearts,  
To crush you to dust, to drown your pride.

**I stand by your ear unseen**

*Sue Silvermaria*

I stand by your ear unseen.

Before the flogging they buried me to my waist in mud

One hundred times and one, they beat me with a cane

Because I was wearing a burqa

the mullah was spared the sight of my blood

When my family took me home I was unconscious

They were forbidden to seek treatment

When I died the next morning no one was surprised.

It was three days after my 18th birthday.

I stand by your ear unseen.

When I was 14 I wanted to be a teacher. I remember laughing with my friends on the way home from school I remember writing poems about the future

daydreaming at the window into velvet sky

Impossible, then, to believe what would come

after the Taliban took our town.

I stand by your ear unseen.

When I was 15 they came. The wide world choked shut

Collapsed to a point of fear, hunger. Constant

My sisters and I ate what brothers left. Little.

They could leave the house for classes, for work

My mother's office job was taken away

When my uncle would accompany her

she took her turn wearing a neighborhood burqa

so she could look for food. She sold our books

I stand by your ear unseen.

Three years. My youngest sister sickened  
My father carried her to the hospital but  
they told him to throw her away. She died at the door  
That's when my anger endangered all of us  
In her name I started a secret school. To read  
to write, five little girls and I risked our lives  
I would do it again. It was a way for ghosts  
to have hands and voices for awhile.

I stand by your ear unseen.  
When another decree was issued,  
that houses with women have all windows painted black,  
we had no funds  
My father was gone, forced into the militia  
My mother had nothing left to sell  
They marched in to bully us  
found the hidden school slates behind my bed  
Hauled to the mullah, I told nothing  
He shut the door and raped me.

I stand by your ears unseen  
Famine and depression make periods scant  
I didn't know about the baby at first  
My aunt had the right herb in a hidden pot on her roof  
She stayed while my baby bled out  
A new decree, forbidden to make sound when we walk,  
caught her when she left.  
She didn't have shoes that were silent  
They beat her on the street until her accompanying son in his panic tried to shield her  
by sacrificing me. The mullah learned everything.

I stand by your ear unseen.  
He announced my offense of having an abortion  
which proved I was promiscuous  
My crimes cloaked his and no one  
could do anything but pray I might survive  
That prayer was not mine. I was ready to depart  
I do not ask for personal mourning.  
Twelve million living women and girls require your outrage  
Lift your veil! Open your ear.

**How would it feel**

*Lydia Brackett*

How would it feel  
To walk down the streets of your country and not be known  
How would it feel  
To be enslaved by your own husband  
To be beaten  
To be raped  
To be tortured to death  
With meaningless cries for help.  
How would it feel  
To be imprisoned from the outside  
Forbidden to work  
To have an education  
Feeling life is not worth living for.  
How would it feel  
To feel unworthy of your own name.