

Sylvia Chan-Malik Celebrates Her Very Own Islam

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Sylvia Chan-Malik is a Rutgers professor and a convert, it appears, to Ahmadiyya Islam. Last year [she welcomed](#) the spiritual head of the Ahmadis, who came to the U.S. to open new Ahmadi mosques and meet with members of the Ahmadi community.

As the Ahmadiyya community in the US prepares to receive its caliph, or spiritual leader, from the UK, a spotlight is being shed on Ahmadi Muslims, who make up one of the fastest-growing denominations in the world.

On 15 October, Mirza Masroor Ahmad will visit the US for the fourth time, inaugurating mosques in various states, giving a keynote speech and meeting with members of the 20,000-strong Ahmadiyya community.

For some Muslims, Ahmadis are heretics, who idolise their caliph, and they believe the community's founder, Mirza

Ghulam Ahmad, is a false prophet. But Ahmadiyya Islam is one of the oldest faiths in the US, a fact lost on many who see Islam as having existed in the country for a few decades at most.

Ahmadiyya Islam is “one of the oldest faiths in the US”? The earliest recorded sighting of Ahmadis in the United States was in about 1920; surely this makes Ahmadiyya Islam “one of the youngest faiths” in the U.S. – younger than Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, younger than orthodox Islam, too. This is one more example of the Muslim desire to backdate the presence of Islam, so as to give it a stronger claim to having been, as Barack Obama famously claimed, “always a part of America’s story.” It makes Islam seem more American-as-apple-pie-ish, and less a recent foreign import. It helps make it acceptable.

That’s a misconception Sylvia Chan-Malik is seeking to change – while also shining a light on the lives of Muslim women in the US, beginning with those from the Ahmaddiya community.

“This is not a new phenomenon,” says Chan-Malik, 44, a scholar of American and women and gender studies at Rutgers University, referring to Islam. “This did not just happen after 9/11. Muslims haven’t been practising their religion for the past ten years in this country. It’s something that’s a legacy, that’s very much a part of who we are as a nation.”

Actually there were hardly any Muslims in this country whom anyone noticed before the first mosque was built, in 1929, in Ross, North Dakota. And there were still very few who did so after that mosque was built. There were immigrants from the Middle East, in the first half of the 20th century, but they were almost all Christians – either Armenian survivors of the Turkish massacres or Lebanese Maronites – who were glad to escape the insecurities and dangers of life in a Muslim polity. The major influx of Muslims into the U.S. did not

begin until the 1970s. And even today, Muslims make up only 1% of the American population and, if we were to exclude the quite unorthodox Black Muslims from the count, even fewer than that 1%.

This is the backdrop for Chan-Malik's first book, Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam, which focuses on the lives of Muslim women of color in the US.

In the first chapter, she tells the story of a black working-class woman who immigrated to Chicago [presumably, from the South] named Florence Watts. Through the teachings of Mufti Muhammad Sadiq and the Ahmadiyya movement, she converted to Islam in 1922 and became known as Sister Zeineb.

Chan-Malik says Zeineb's embrace of Islam freed her from the boundaries imposed on her by racial and gender politics in the US and made her a member of a global community of believers.

She writes: "Through Ahmadiyya Islam, Black women [like Sister Zeineb] in 1920s Chicago found 'safe harbors' – spaces of kinship-shared spiritual desires and of respite from racial and gendered harm – in which they could protect and nurture their bodies minds and souls."

Trying to make sense of this is not easy, but one thing stands out: Chan-Malik never mentions that Ahmadiyya Islam, the Islam of Sister Zeineb and of Chan-Malik herself, is not regarded by most Muslims as real Islam. For the Ahmadis believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, and not Muhammad, is the last prophet, and the promised Mahdi to boot. There is another difference, too: Ahmadiyya Islam downplays the significance of Jihad through violence. It's a kinder, gentler form of Islam. Unfortunately, very few Muslims believe it is an acceptable version of the faith. And only 1% of the world's Muslims are Ahmadiis.

Ahmadis are forbidden to call themselves Muslims in Pakistan, where the most Ahmadis live, can be jailed if they try to do so. In Algeria in 2017, the Minister of Religious Affairs stated that Ahmadis are “not Muslim.” In Bangladesh, Ahmadis have been a persecuted group, targeted for violence, and in some cases murdered. In 2004, all Ahmadi publications were banned. In India, two Muslim universities have declared Ahmadis to be non-Muslims. In Indonesia, a majority of Muslims, according to opinion polls, believe that the Ahmadis should be banned outright, and they have been beaten and murdered. On February 6, 2011, for example, hundreds of mainstream Muslims surrounded an Ahmadiyya household and beat three people to death. Footage of the bludgeoning of their naked bodies – while policemen looked on – was posted on the internet. The mainstream Muslims were proud of their deed, and wanted it to be more widely known. In the Palestinian Authority, Ahmadis have complained of violence, including killing. In Saudi Arabia, Ahmadis are continuously persecuted, tracked down and when found, deported. They are not permitted to enter Mecca. Even in the West, Ahmadis have suffered threats and persecution from Muslims. A few years ago in the U.K., an Ahmadi news agent was stabbed to death by a “real” Muslim.

One wonders if Chan-Malik has any idea how the Ahmadis are treated by other Muslims. Is it ignorance that explains her silence, or is it, rather, that she knows all this but hopes her readers will not?

Since 9/11, there has been an increasing interest in what Islam is and who Muslims are, especially Muslim women, says Chan-Malik, who started her PhD in ethnic studies at UC Berkeley two weeks before the September 11 attacks.

She became involved in activism and organising circles within various Muslim communities around that time, and through that engagement, she started seeing how US racial politics – in particular, the relationships between Asians, Arabs and

African Americans – was playing out within the Muslim community.

Through her research, she became involved with the community itself: she started attending local mosque gatherings and joined women's Quran groups to learn more. Her interest in Islam as a religion grew, and she eventually converted in 2004.

Chan-Malik's parents were Chinese immigrants who settled in California, where she was raised. They were Buddhist, but only culturally, and at one point in high school, she even thought about converting to Christianity, she explained.

The “spiritual search” of Chan-Malik began with a childhood of “cultural Buddhism,” after which she was tempted by Christianity, before ending up submitting to Ahmadiyya Islam.

“As an Asian-American woman, whom very few people in the US would assume is Muslim, I hold the interesting position of being very aware of my own Muslim-ness, while those around me are not,” she says. “Thus, I have been privy to hearing the insults of others regarding Muslims, when those making them were unaware of my identity.”

Shall we take her word for it that she heard only “insults” about Muslims, or could she possibly have heard sober criticism of the ideology of Islam? Outwardly Chinese, and therefore mistaken for a non-Muslim, she has been privy, it seems, only to “insults” offered by our incurably bigoted islamophobic people, who need badly to discover the benign truth about Islam.

Chan-Malik does not wear a headscarf, but in one incident when she did, she was harassed.

She recalls how during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, she was walking to the mosque after parking her car with her two

young daughters, who were aged three and five at the time. She and her daughters were all wearing headscarves since they were going to pray.

In the liberal San Francisco Bay Area, a man rolled down his window, stopped right in front of myself and my children, and screamed in my face: "Get out of here! Go back to where you came from!" and then drove off. I thought, 'Wow, and I only wear a scarf in public a handful of times a year. Imagine what it is like for women who wear it every day.'"

It's amazing how many of these unpleasant incidents by Muslims involve exactly the same scenario. To wit, a man rolling down the window of his car and "screaming in [X's] face," using identical words every time: "Get out of here! go back to where you came from." All these claimed acts of harassment, carbon copies of one another, are grounds for skepticism. Victimization is an important part of the Muslim story. We have had many examples of made-up claims of hijabs being cut or torn off, or of angry words supposedly being hurled at Muslims that CCTV cameras failed to confirm. I'm disinclined to give Chan-Malik the benefit of the doubt. And of course, the driver would have had to lean all the way over to lower the window on the passenger's side, the side next to the sidewalk where Chan-Malik and her two daughters were standing. Could he, sitting in the driver's seat, really have "screamed in her face"? Mebbe.

Over the course of 10 years, Chan-Malik interviewed between 30 to 40 Muslim women for her book, weaving personal stories from the early 20th Century – including those of women belonging to the Ahmadiyya and Nation of Islam movements – until the present day, where women of color practise their religion in a hostile, anti-Muslim environment in the US.

Consider her narrative: first, the "insults" she hears about Muslims from those who don't realize she is a Muslim; second,

the driver who, she claims, screams at her and her two young daughters; third, the assertion that there is “a hostile, anti-Muslim environment” in the U.S. But there is no such “hostile anti-Muslim environment” in this country. The major media, television and newspapers, go out of their way to denounce “Islamophobia” and to carry inspiring stories about Muslims in America. Social media – Google, Twitter, and Facebook – go out of their way to block anything they deem to be anti-Muslim. School curricula in many places now include sanitized versions of Islam that are imposed on our children. Any parent who objects to this indoctrination becomes the object of public scorn. It is not Islam or Muslims that must endure a hostile environment, but those careful islamocritics who refuse to be silenced and who, therefore, are condemned for non-existent “hate speech.”

In her book, Chan-Malik particularly pays attention to black Muslim women who left their mark on Islam in the US.

‘Before the 1960s, almost all Muslim women in the US were black, she found. Those women include Sister Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X and a voice for black empowerment; Dakota Staton, a jazz singer; and black Muslim women in early 1920s Chicago like Sister Zeineb.

She also addresses the ways in which white feminists have perpetrated the trope of the “poor Muslim woman” and how freeing her from her supposed subjugation became part of the rationale behind the US “War on Terror” She says this trope, rooted in colonial logic, is epitomized by the headscarf; the idea that Muslim women are made to submit, and that Islam as a framework and ideology is imposed upon them.

Not the least crazy of her crazy remarks is the notion that “part of the rationale behind the US ‘War on Terror’” was to free Muslim women from their “supposed subjugation.” I have gone through as many sites containing justifications for that

war as I could find; not one mentions the need to “free Muslim women” from subjugation. Perhaps Chan-Malik can refer us to a speech or article where this rationale is claimed. And who are those “white women” who have “perpetrated the trope” (English prose is not Chan-Malik’s strong suit) of the “poor Muslim woman”? So there’s no reason at all to feel sympathy for the status and treatment of Muslim women? Haven’t the strongest denunciations of the wretched condition of many Muslim women and girls come not from American “white woman” (apparently a very bad thing to be, for white women are “rooted in colonial logic”), but from such people as the Iranian Shirin Ebadi, the Pakistani Malala Yousafzai, and especially from Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Somali ex-Muslim who worked for years with Somali women in the Netherlands, heard their pitiable stories of mistreatment, and became the most articulate and implacable opponent of misogynistic Islam.

“What Muslim women need and want more than anything is respect for their own choices,” she explains.

“Any woman I know who wears the headscarf is choosing to do so. I know far more stories of women whose families are telling them to take the scarf off because it’s dangerous to wear it in this political environment. And the women are saying no because it’s such an important part of my identity.”

Chan-Malik apparently has failed to register all the stories of girls who were punished, even killed, by male relatives for failing to wear the hijab. There are the girls beaten by male relatives until the police stepped in, as [here](#). There are those who are killed – 91% of the honor killings are by Muslims, who in Muslim countries receive very light punishments – as was Aqsa Parvez, strangled to death by her own father and brother [when they found out](#) she had not been wearing the hijab. And these are the cases we know about only because they take place in the West. What happens to

disobedient girls in Saudi Arabia, in Iran, in Afghanistan, in Egypt?

How many girls and women wear the hijab or other cover, not because they are “choosing” freely to do so, but because they are dutifully following what their male relatives require, or because of the pressure from the circumambient Muslim society? The women in Iran who have been sentenced to prison for daring to remove their hijabs clearly had not chosen to wear them – they chose, at great personal cost, not to wear them. There are many more such cases, of girls and women not “choosing,” but being forced to cover, and punished severely, by their male relatives, if they did not. In Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan it is obligatory for women to cover with the niqab, chador, and burka, respectively. In other Muslim countries, the hijab may be enough, but it is still required, sometimes in a legal sense, and always because the pressure from male relatives and society is simply impossible to withstand. Has Chan-Malik lived or traveled in, or even visited, Muslim countries to discover for herself that wearing cover is seldom a matter of free choice, as she seems to think? In misogynistic Islam, women must do as their menfolk demand.

Chan-Malik said she hopes her book will teach young Muslim women about the history of their compatriots in the US, and allow them to learn about black Muslim women, whom she says served as the inspiration throughout history for what it means to be Muslim in the US.

“They engaged Islam as a way to address and critique their status,” she says, adding they also used their religion “as a critique of the US state and politics-as-usual.”

Muslim women’s leadership role within their communities continues today, as seen through the record number of Arab and Muslim American women running for public office.

“Muslim women’s leadership role within their [Muslim] communities”? What is she talking about? Muslim women have always suffered from their inferior status in Islam. A woman’s testimony is worth only half that of a man, and the reason given by Muhammad himself in the hadith, is “because of the deficiency in her intelligence.” Daughters inherit half that of sons. A Muslim male can practice polygyny, with up to four wives, while a Muslim wife can have only one husband. A husband can divorce his wife simply by uttering the triple-talaq, without needing to give a reason, while a Muslim wife can obtain a divorce, according to Muslim law, only if she returns the mahr, the money given to a bride by the groom or the groom’s father, and offers a reason for the divorce deemed acceptable by Muslim clerics. And has Chan-Malik forgotten that in the Qur’an (4:34), men are given explicit license to “beat” disobedient wives?

She seems to think that because, for the first time, two Muslim women will be elected to Congress from safe Democratic districts, that this means such women will “continue” (!) their leadership role, the one they have had in the past. But women have never have played a “leadership role” in Islam. And having two Muslims congresswomen is not going to mean that women will be taking “leadership roles” in a single mosque, madrasa, or Muslim association. In this country, and the world, Islam is not noticeably more female-friendly than it has been for 1400 misogynistic years.

Chan-Malik claims that Muslim women have “served as the inspiration throughout history” for “what it means to be a Muslim in the U.S.” What can she be talking about? “Throughout history”? That sounds like a long time, but it’s quite a brief history indeed. The first mosque wasn’t built in the U.S. until 1929, in Ross, North Dakota. And what “inspiration” could Muslim women, given their inferior status (which Chan-Malik never mentions), possibly have provided to Muslim men? Can she adduce even one example of Muslim men who found

“inspiration” from the example of Muslim women?

There are 1.6 billion Muslims. Could Chan-Malik hazard a guess as to how many Muslim women have been allowed to serve as imams? Perhaps a hundred, or two, at most, around the world. More women, of course, have become scholars of Islam, with most of those in Europe and Indonesia. But that is not the same thing as being a cleric. And how many mosques allow men and women to pray together, side by side, as if they were equals? There is one in California. There is another one in Berlin. These mosques are so unusual that they have been the subject of breathless articles by reporters eager to proclaim that a new day is dawning in Islam. But that new day seems never to arrive. The Berlin mosque has existed for several years. The founder of the mosque, Seyran Ates, has been presented as the wave of the future in many [admiring articles](#). Yet her congregation still consists of only a few dozen men and women, who can fit into one small room lent her by a Lutheran church.

Muslim women like Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, who emerged from their respective primaries victorious, will almost certainly become the first Muslim women in Congress come January.

The key word here is “like,” which is used to suggest that there are others. But there are no others “like” these two women. There are only these two who, because they ran in safely Democratic districts, became members of the House of Representatives. That doesn’t seem quite as impressive a showing of political strength as Chan-Malik would like us to believe. There are three Muslims in this Congress: Omar, Tlaib, and one male Muslim, Andre Carson. That’s a grand total of three Muslims out of 435 members of the House, or slightly less than 1%, while Muslims in the United States constitute 1% of the population. What new day is dawning, what “leadership roles” are women now taking in the Muslim community because

these two are in the House?

The religion and culture of Islam have always been intertwined with race in the US, and thus Islam's very existence as a non-white, non-Christian religion is a challenge to the dominant whiteness of society, Chan-Malik says.

"That's really relevant for young Muslim women today under a Trump presidency, where Muslim and Islam are talked about in such negative ways."

Chan-Malik herself is the one attempting to present Islam as "a non-white, non-Christian religion." Of course it's "non-Christian." But do we think of Muslims, as she claims, as "non-white"? It's her way of suggesting that anti-Muslim feeling is also an expression of racism. But the Syrians and Lebanese who founded the first mosques in the U.S. were certainly white. Many Arabs would certainly qualify as white. The intelligent opposition to Islam is not an example of "racism," as apologists for the faith keep claiming. It is, rather, based on three things: first, a knowledge of the ideology of Islam, that is, the texts and teachings of the faith; second, the observable behavior of Muslims around the world today; third, familiarity with the 1,400-year history of Jihad carried out against Unbelievers.

There is "racism" connected to Islam, but it's not what Chan-Malik has in mind. Rather, despite its universalist appeal, Islam contains enough examples of anti-black racism in the statements about, and by, Muhammad and his companions. In the hadith, the "whiteness" of the Apostle of Allah is constantly stressed: he is described as having a white thigh (Sahih Bukhari 1.367), white armpit (Sahih Bukhari 2.141), and is a white man (Sahih Bukhari 1.63, 2.122, 4.744). He has a rosy color (Sahih Bukhari 4.747 and 748). Muhammad is also reported as saying that whites will go to Paradise while blacks will go

to Hell.

Narrated Abu Darda:

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Allah created Adam when He had to create him and He struck his right shoulder and there emitted from it white offspring as if they were white ants. He struck his left shoulder and there emitted from it THE BLACK OFFSPRINGS as if they were charcoal. He then said (to those who had been emitted) from the right (shoulder): For Paradise and I do not mind. [theses are the "white offspring"] Then He said to those (who had been emitted) from his left shoulder: They are for Hell and I do not mind. [these are the black offspring.]

There is a famous hadith expressing horror at the thought that anyone could think Muhammad might be black: Ahmad ibn Abi Sulayman, the companion of Sahnun, said, **"Anyone who says that the Prophet was black SHOULD BE KILLED."** Calling the Prophet black was, obviously, for his Arab followers to insult him terribly.

As to Muhammad, he said the ruler is to be obeyed even if he were a black man:

"Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah's Apostle said, 'You should listen to and obey, your ruler even if he was an Ethiopian (black) slave whose head looks like a raisin.'"

Many of the most outstanding Arab writers expressed views worse than anything David Duke has dared:

Nasir al-Din Tusi, a famous Muslim scholar said of blacks: **"The ape is more capable of being trained than the black man."**

Ibn Khaldun, an early Muslim thinker, writes that blacks are "only humans who are closer to dumb animals than to rational beings." He also wrote that "blacks are characterized by levity and excitability and great emotionalism," adding that

“they are every where described as stupid.”

Ibn Sina (Avicenna 980–1037), one of the most famous and influential philosophers/scientists in early Islam, described blacks as “people who are by their very nature slaves.” He wrote: “All African women are prostitutes, and the whole race of African men are abeed (slave) stock.” **He equated black people with “rats plaguing the earth.”**

Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadhani offered this description of black people, “....the zanj (the blacks) are overdone until they are burned, so that the child comes out between black, murky, malodorous, stinking, and crinkly-haired, with uneven limbs, deficient minds, and depraved passions...”

That’s only a sample of the astoundingly racist remarks made by celebrated Arab writers, historians, and scientists. I have the distinct feeling that Chan-Malik is unfamiliar with all this – with the Qur’anic verses, the hadith stories, and the remarks by celebrated Arabs that mandate or promote or parrot the most anti-black of sentiments. She might look into, or even study, the early revolt in Iraq by black slaves who were treated so cruelly by their Arab owners that they finally rose in revolt. This “*zanj*” rebellion in southern Iraq, that lasted from 869 to 883, ended in the blacks being crushed, with estimates of those killed ranging from 500,000 to 2,500,000. Modern scholars have characterized the conflict as being “one of the bloodiest and most destructive rebellions which the history of Western Asia records.” Those who survived were re-enslaved, and treated with as much cruelty as before.

Finally, Chan-Malik might acquaint herself with the long history of the Arab trade in black African slaves, that began much earlier, lasted much longer, and was much more extensive, than was the Atlantic slave trade. When we write or speak about slavery in Africa, we usually have in mind that trade conducted by Europeans who never entered the interior of Africa, but instead bought slaves from other African tribes,

almost exclusively on the “Slave Coast” of West Africa. These slaves were brought to the New World in order to work on plantations. The Arab slave trade in Africa was of a different sort. Some were used, as in America, to work in agriculture and raising livestock. But there was another, very important use of African slaves unique to the Arabs. Black African boys were used as eunuchs for harems, and thus it was that the Arabs tended to seize, in the bush very young black males, and castrate them in situ, and then bring those who survived the painful operation, and the journey, by slave coffle and by dhow, to East African ports (Pema and Zanzibar were well-known slave entrepôts), to the slave markets of Arabia, where they were sold. According to Jan Hogedoor, author of “The Hideous Trade,” an economic study of the Arab slave trade in Africa, the mortality rate for the black Africans was about 90% – that is, only 10% survived both the castration and the journey to the slave markets of Islam (Jiddah, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Constantinople). The millions seized by the Arabs over many centuries far exceeded the numbers of those bought by Europeans for the Atlantic Slave Trade. Descriptions of that cruelty may be found in works by such travelers and adventurers as Bruce, Livingstone, Burton, and many others.

There never was, and never could be, a Muslim Wilberforce. Why not? Because Muhammad had slaves. It doesn’t matter if he “treated them well,” as apologists for Islam suggest. He bought, sold, seized, and traded slaves, and because Muhammad is the Model of Conduct, (uswa hasana), the Perfect Man (al-insan al-kamil), his practice, the “sunna” of the Arabs of the seventh-century, can never be declared wrong. And that is why the Arabs most faithful to Islam, the Saudis, feeling fully justified in the practice, refused to abolish slavery, and finally did so only under enormous Western pressure, in 1962, when OPEC had not yet been formed, and Saudi oil revenues not nearly as dramatic.

Chan-Malik is an enthusiastic convert to Islam, or rather, it

seems, to Ahmadiyya Islam. One wonders if she is aware that many Muslims do not regard the Ahmadis as real Muslims. In Pakistan, the Ahmadis are required to identify themselves on all documents as non-Muslims. Punishment for disobeying this is harsh. In Saudi Arabia too, the Ahmadis are not considered to be Muslims., and are not supposed to enter the cities of Mecca and Medina, though some nonetheless manage to get in by presenting themselves as orthodox Muslims. The treatment of the Ahmadis as non-Muslims might just give her pause. A second matter that she needs to think harder about is the status of women in Islam. She should ask herself if she really believes that girls and women wear cover because it is their "free choice," or whether there are tens of millions who are forced to do so because they must, by law, as in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan, or because male relatives or the pressures of a Muslim society force them to conform. There are some who do choose, freely, to wear cover, but that is very different from Chan-Malik's claim that she has never met a single Muslim girl or woman who did not "freely choice" to cover.

Chan-Malik ought to be asking herself what she makes of the fact that in Islam, wives have distinctly fewer rights than husbands, that a daughter inherits half of what a son inherits, that a woman's testimony is worth half that of a man, and she ought to be willing to acknowledge, and discuss, without guile, Muhammad's remark, in the hadith of Bukhari, on the "deficiency of a woman's intelligence." Finally, in bringing up the "racism" that she claims lies behind much of the hostility to Islam, she might ask herself about the existence of anti-black racism in Islam, not just in Qur'anic verses and hadith stories, but in writings of many of the most important Arab historians, sociologists, and scientists. When a follower of Muhammad is reported as saying that anyone who dared to call the Prophet "black" should be killed, when Ibn Khaldun, Avicenna, Ibn Taymiyya, and many of the most influential Arab writers called Africans "dumb animals" and insisted "they are everywhere described as stupid," and that

“the ape is more capable of being trained than the black man,” then a fair-minded observer might conclude that there is a “racism” problem with Islam, all right, but it’s a problem not of racism against Islam (Muslims are not, let’s repeat ad nauseam, a race), but of the racism within Islam. Will Chan-Malik look into this matter, and publicly revise her views? Will she ever acknowledge the extraordinary level of anti-black feeling that has been described by disconcerted visitors to the Arab countries as existing even today?

If she recognizes, and deplores, the misogyny, anti-Infidel violence, and racist history of Islam, then a real discussion is possible. But if she insists on her victimization narrative, and nunc-pro-tunc backdating of Islam’s presence in this country, and outlandish claims made for the “leadership roles” in Islam supposedly being taken by Muslim women, then no such discussion is possible. So be it.

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