

## Speaking out for those silenced

SALENA DE LA CRUZ  
Opinion Editor

In the shadows of Afghanistan women cower, victims of the terrible attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Their oppression didn't begin there nor will it end in the shadows as long as the Taliban forces dreams from their minds and their lives from this earth.

The Taliban have been forcing the Afghanistan women to beg, borrow and steal for their livelihood and their children. They must depend on a man for their survival. Those who have no male counterpart to look after them find themselves in the streets, eyes cast down, hands outstretched, hoping and praying for a kind stranger to ease their pain.

Everyday, in Afghanistan, women suffer untold amounts of pain and degradation just for being a woman. They have children they care for who are on the verge of death for the lack of medical treatment and food. Revolutionary Association of the Afghanistan Women (RAWA) have tried helping with aid, but their lack of funds and volunteers gives little relief to the many effected.

Reporter Saira Shah did an undercover report of the life underneath the burqa, which is the veil Afghan women are forced to wear, called *Inside Afghanistan: Behind the Veil*, aired on *BBC News*, June 27, 2001, and found that the life be-

hind the veil was no life at all.

According to Shah, there was a woman sitting in a cab with her, who was violently ill and could not remove her veil for fear of arrest. If she were to trip and fall and her ankles were shown as a result, she risked arrest.

The way I see it, by going under cover, Shah may have been restricted too much, but thanks to her others can see the truth.

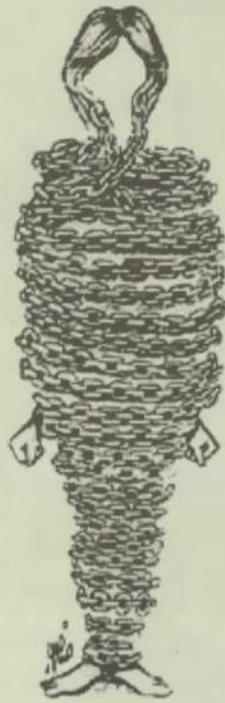
RAWA volunteers risk their lives everyday as representatives for women and show the Taliban that their spirit cannot be crushed. The Taliban can take their televisions, their right to look pretty and their right to take care of their children, but they will NEVER break their spirit. For they are women, they are humans and their voice can be silenced, but their resolve will NEVER falter.

Join me and be the voice for the women who cannot speak out, the voice for those who have been silenced but still persevere.

For more information send e-mails to [rawa@rawa.org](mailto:rawa@rawa.org) or send donations to:

Donation for Refugees  
The Afghan Women's Mission  
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PMB165  
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Questions or comments about this article or others, e-mail me at [cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us](mailto:cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us).



Graphic provided from RAWA's website.

## Their rules, their religion

DAN MERYS  
Staff Writer

The treatment of Muslim women in Islamic regions over the past 2000 years has raised quite a storm, because of the perception that they are treated as second-class citizens.

As Westerners we cannot claim to know what's best for a people who have lived in a religious system for thousands of years. The view is that women are only of elevated status in the west and that as time goes on they are gaining more and more rights while women in the Islamic world are treated as second-class citizens.

The *Shari'ah* (Divine Law) of Islam stipulates that women must dress a certain way. It also states the acceptable behavior for members of both sexes, promoting privacy for females and prohibiting loose intermingling between males and females. Islamic law believes this promotes modesty, decency, chastity and most important, respect, love and worship of Allah. A Muslim woman's clothing is called a *hijab* and it must cover the entire woman's body with a few exceptions based on the Qu'ran's verse. "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts from sin... and draw their headcovers over their necks and bosoms and not reveal their adornment except to their [husbands and relatives...] O you Believers, in order that you

may attain success." [An-Nur, 24:31]

The point has been made that Islamic women should be free to practice their religion without needing to wear the *hijab*, but the *hijab* is a part of their religion. Should Christians be made to remove pictures of a crucified Jesus because it shows a man dying, nailed to a cross? No. It's as much a part of Christianity as the *hijab* is a part of Islam.

We have based our reactions and feelings toward the treatment of women in the Islamic religion on our experience in our own culture. Very few of us know the mindset of a Muslim woman and whether or not they live in a constant state of fear. The Islamic religion, like most religions, is centered around the worship of its deity, and anything that interferes with that is to be cast aside, including a woman who has dishonored her family, and in turn dishonored Allah. While the Qu'ran states that one must love one's fellow man, it also states that anything that is an affront to Allah is to be removed from one's life.

For thousands of years the Islamic religion has flourished, and though Westerners may find some of the things that occur in that culture contemptible, we cannot be so arrogant as to force them to change their religious practices simply because we don't approve.

# What are your views on the treatment of Afghanistan women?



Jennifer Boyd

"I think they're shunned and not allowed to be how they want to be."



Mike Lukenovich

"I think it's wrong because they're not treated equal. They're just as human as we are."

Photos and quotes compiled by Liesl Muggli and Maggie Jirasek



Taylor Johnson

"It's their religion so I don't think it's that bad."



Ken Ketchum

"I hate to say it. I don't know what the actual views are. As for the Taliban's treatment it's not good. The treatment can be better over all."

VOICE OFF!



19600 S. Molalla Ave. Oregon City, Oregon 97045  
(503) 657-6958 ext 2309  
[cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us](mailto:cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us)

Editor-in-Chief: Maggie Jirasek (x2447)  
Opinion Editor/Production Coordinator: Salena De La Cruz  
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