The interest of the Western World in Islam has been heightened recently by the political developments in the Middle East. Not only do these developments affect the economies of the Western World and the daily lives of its population, they also exhibit an unprecedented return to religious Muslim ideology.

In particular, Western women find the massive return of Muslim women to the veil and to religious ideology incomprehensible. After all, the stereotypical views of Islam in the West present it as especially oppressive towards women, the harem being only one shocking example of that oppression.

In this issue a serious attempt is made to bring the concerned reader a balanced mixture of views concerning women in Islam. The contributors are predominantly Arab women who were either raised as Muslims or who have had a first hand familiarity with Islam.

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