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Mut'ah Captivity: Gender-Discriminatory Norms in Marriage-like Relationships among Danish Shi'i Women

Mut'ah is a temporary contract wherein the partners, a man and a woman, engage in an oral or written agreement for a relationship that suspends gender-segregating norms. These time-bound contracts vary in duration and include bridal gifts bestowed by the male party of the contract to the female. Due to their gender, women cannot annul mut'ah contracts, in which they may be held emotionally captive against their will. This implies that women experience mut'ah as a complex interplay between reproductions of Shi'i jurisprudence, contextual norms such as female sexuality, liberation, and equality, and psychological violence, coercion, and emotional captivity in unwanted relationships. All of this occurs within a discursive framework where the productions of divine intentions are articulated and discussed. The study reveals that the contracts are entered into on gender-discriminatory terms. The women in the study demonstrate how religious authority is negotiated, discussed, and, notably, how gender becomes a recurring issue for contextual productions of Shi'i womanhood and experiences of divine intentions.



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Tessie Bundgaard Jorgensen, Ph.D., obtained her doctoral degree in Applied Phenomenology and Islamic Psychology from the University of Copenhagen. She holds an M.Phil. in Philosophy of Ethics from al-Mustafa, Qom, and a Cand.Mag. in Islamic Studies from the University of Copenhagen. Currently, she is dedicated to the study of Shi'i studies in a Scandinavian context. Jorgensen's recent research delves into nuanced aspects of the Shi'i communities in Denmark. Specifically, her work explores the reception of authority among Danish Shi'ites, articulations of Shi'i identity, Danish translations of Shi'i works, and the attitudes and approaches to marriage among Shi'i women. These inquiries are approached with an anthropological and phenomenological perspective, highlighting her commitment to interdisciplinary methodologies.