



Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire: Bedouin Women Negotiating Tribal and State Patriarchies¹

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Questions to the text:

What are the challenges / difficulties young Bedouin women face in case they pursue higher education?

Which roles do tribal patriarchies, social institutions, and Israeli politics play?

How do the women cope with the particular challenges? To what respect do they use conformity as a tactic for change?

How do the women signify "modernity" and "tradition," what does the article mean by locating the women in-between both, a dialectic that leads to mutual forms of reinvention?

Further links:

The Center for Bedouin Studies and development, Newsletter:

<http://web.bgu.ac.il/NR/rdonlyres/24B57B4F-C2FE-4C6B-9596-74CAB74F5B9D/32056/Newsletter2008.pdf>

Survey of Female Bedouin Graduates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Beer-Sheva, Israel:

<http://web.bgu.ac.il/NR/rdonlyres/718C7DB8-8BD6-47CD-9C2A-16E824166341/94907/elsanaenglish.pdf>

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Kassem's Master's thesis, titled „Developing New Leadership Among Bedouin Women in a Changing World,“ 2000, explores how Bedouin women deal with the challenges facing them in the pursuit of higher education and how they mediate tribal and institutional patriarchy.

Fatma Kassem completed her PhD in the Department of Behavioral Science at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. In her research, which stemmed from her deep interest in gender studies, she uses women's life stories to analyze how ordinary urban Palestinian women remember historical events.

Based on this research, a book is forthcoming (February 2011) from Zed Publishers: *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memories*. Also, she conducted a study sponsored by the Center for Strategic and Policy Studies (School of Public Policy, The Hebrew University). This study analyzes women's images in history textbooks in Jordan to explore the ways in which the sacred triangle of *Allah*, *al-Mlik*, and *al-Watan* (God-Religion, the King-Regime and Nationa-



lism) reproduce the gender-power relations in society and keep women subordinated to men.

Kassem has both academic and practical training in conflict resolutions. Together with Professor Dan Bar On of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, she has been a co-facilitator and lecturer of a group of Jewish and Palestinian Israeli students at the University called "Co-existence Through Life Story Narrative." She has also served as facilitator and coordinator for the project "Two Conflicts, Four Countries" which involved university history teachers from Turkey, Greece, Palestine and Israel. Between the years 2005-2007 she co-directed and co-facilitated a group of Muslim, Christians and Jewish women in Jerusalem called "Jerusalem Women as Catalysts for Peace." Currently, she is writing a book based on the analysis of women's life stories who participated in two years project in Jerusalem.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, she was a fellow in the program "Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe" at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

Kassem herself is married and the mother of five children. She is the eldest of ten siblings and was the first woman in her Upper Galilee village to attend high school and college.

