

# My Name is Ahlima



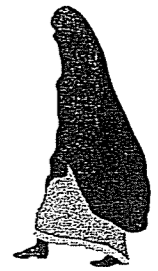
My name is Ahlima, and I live in Saudi Arabia. I am proud and happy to be a Muslim woman and want to explain to you why. Much is said in the West about mistreatment of women in Arab societies but I believe this criticism is unfair and one-sided. I would like to tell you what my life is like so that you can draw your own conclusions.

I am from a loving and caring family most would consider middle class. We live in the city of Riyadh, my nation's capital, which I believe looks much like cities around the world. Perhaps two differences Westerners would notice are that women here do not drive cars and they wear abayah. An abayah is a loose-fitting black cloth that covers a woman from head to toe. I like wearing the abayah since it is very comfortable, and I am protected from blowing sand. The veil especially protects my eyes. I have seen pictures of women in the West and find their dress to be horribly immodest. I would never want to show parts of my body the way Western women do because I don't think women that do that can be respected. Tight clothing would also cause great discomfort, particularly when kneeling for prayers. I think Western women must freeze dressing like that in their cold climate!

Women here are well respected and have many opportunities. I attended college and lived in a dormitory. Now I am 20 years old and am soon to be married. As Islam prescribes, my parents selected my husband. Ali is 35 and my parents tell me that he is a good man. He is an engineer and will be able to provide well for me and for my children. While I have the right of refusal, I am pleased with my parents' choice. According to the Qur'an, the role of the husband is to protect his wife and the role of the wife is to obey her husband. I am happy to obey because I know I will be cared for. My intended has already sent me a gold necklace for my dowry.



# Women and Islam



**Directions:** In "My Name is Ahlima" the young woman tells what she thinks about the treatment of women in Saudi Arabia, but she also tells what she thinks about the West. Use information from Ahlima's personal narrative to answer the questions.

What does Ahlima think about the treatment of women in her country? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do YOU think about what Ahlima told you? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does Ahlima think about the treatment of women in the West? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do YOU think about what Ahlima told you? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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