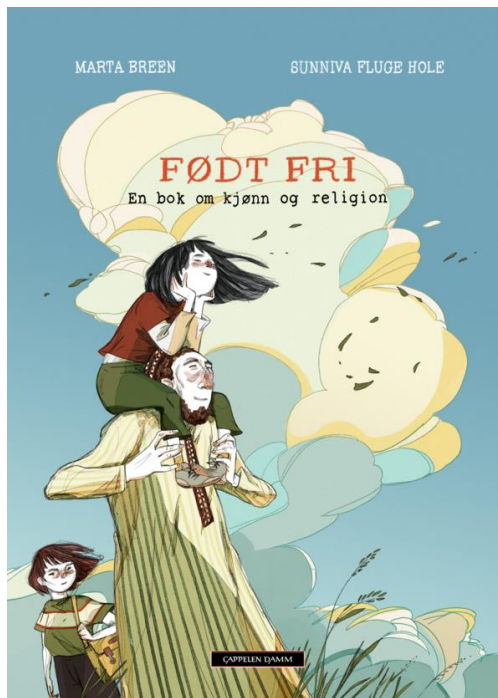


Cappelen Damm

Agency *Autumn 2025*



Born Free

Religious control and women's fight for freedom – an important book for young readers

Born Free is a fascinating and thought-provoking graphic novel about the impact religion has had, and continues to have, on women's freedom. It explores how religious practices have restricted women's rights and shaped their lives across different cultures and societies.

In the wake of the women-led uprising in Iran and the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, religious control over women's lives has become more visible than it has been in decades. Acclaimed feminist and author Marta Breen places these current events in a broader historical and global context, showing how religious fundamentalism continues to threaten women's rights even in Western societies.

Based on thorough research, *Born Free* tackles topics such as forced marriage, education bans, dress codes, and female genital mutilation in a respectful yet direct manner. The book's core message is clear: everyone has the right to decide over their own life, while also respecting freedom of religion, as long as it does not violate basic human rights.

Born Free is a vital book that encourages reflection and conversation about the role of religion in society and the position of women within the world's faiths. Sunniva Fluge Hole's striking illustrations make complex topics accessible for readers aged 12 and up.

The book builds on Marta Breen's international bestsellers [Women in Battle](#) and [The Fall of the Patriarchy](#), sold to 28 and 12 countries respectively.

Born Free

Marta Breen & Sunniva Fluge Hole (ill.)

Marta Breen & Sunniva Fluge Hole (ill.)

Marta Breen (b. 1976) is a writer, journalist and one of Norway's most profiled feminists. She made her debut in 2006 with the book *Girls, Wine and Song*, about Norwegian women through times in Music. She has since established her self as a notable non-fiction author. Her book *Women in Battle* (2018), illustrated by Jenny Jordahl, has been sold to over 20 territories.

Sunniva Fluge Hole is a creative and experienced illustrator and character concept designer, with many years experience within visual storytelling and design.



Born Free: A Book About Gender and Religion
Written by Marta Breen
Illustrated by Sunniva Fluge Hole

Sample translation by Siân Mackie

This translation has received a translation grant from NORLA.

Page 7

Religion and gender

Page 9

Religion has played a central role throughout human history.

Page 11

Religion is still an important part of many people's lives.

Page 12

Those with faith can find comfort and strength in stories about God, and about our place in the world.

For many people, a house of God is a safe place.

You might have a lot of stress and problems –

but in the house of God, those problems no longer feel as pressing.

Page 13

In times gone by, people got answers to most of their questions from the gods.

What was that rumble?

That was the god Thor with his hammer!

Many have turned to religion to find answers to life's big questions.

Why are we here?

What does it all mean?

Is this all there is?

Page 14

How was the world really created?

It was God's work!

Ah...

Page 15

We humans try to find meaning in life, and not least in death.

What really happens after you die?

Then you're reborn. As someone richer!

Or poorer.

Or as a plant...

Page 16

The major world religions are based on very old scripture and traditions.
Back when the texts were written, men made most of the decisions.
Man is your guardian! You must do as he says!
Thank you, God, for not making me a woman.
Maybe you should try to be reborn as a man?
That's why men are in charge in most religious books.

Page 17

The Bible, the Qur'an and the Tanakh are patriarchal books where man comes before woman.

Page 18

All the major world religions give men more rights than women.
There have often been strict norms and rules for women in marriage.
Do you promise to submit yourself to your husband?
Nope.
Today, these words have been removed from the marriage vows in a number of countries.
Even so, many men still believe they have the right to control women.

Page 19

In all cultures, there are people in power who try to control women's bodies.

Page 20

These religions came about long before medical science.
When the religious texts were written down, we didn't have all the knowledge we have today.
This has contributed to a number of misunderstandings about the female body.
One myth that has done major harm is the notion of a virginal membrane.
In some cultures, it is very important that the woman is a virgin when she gets married.
This means that she has never had sex.
Do we use the word virgin about boys, too?

Page 21

Today, medical experts have proven there is no virginal membrane, as many once thought.
There is no membrane! It should be called a "hymen" instead.
This is an elastic fold of tissue. It can stretch a lot without tearing.
Whether a girl or woman bleeds after having sex for the first time is entirely random.
In fact, it is more common not to bleed.

NO ONE can see – or prove – whether you have had sex or not.

Page 22

In several religions, virgins are held up as the most valuable of all women.
In Ancient Rome, six virgins from esteemed families were chosen to be “Vestals”.
They were tasked with keeping the holy fire burning on the altar in Vesta’s temple.
The Vestals were holy and were worshipped by the townspeople.

Page 23

Any Vestal who broke her promise to remain a virgin was severely punished.
As the Vestal was holy, no one dared touch her. For that reason, she would be buried alive.
The subterranean chamber would be locked from the outside, and the Vestal left to die.

Page 24

Many religious rules are about controlling the sexuality of women.
Some people use religion to justify banning contraception.
No.
Contraception is an umbrella term for methods of preventing pregnancy.
THE PILL/CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS
CONTRACEPTIVE PATCH
CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT
CONTRACEPTIVE INJECTION
HORMONAL INTRAUTERINE DEVICE/COIL
CONDOM

Page 25

Without contraception, women get pregnant again
and again
... and again.
Please...

Page 26

When you have more children than you can afford, your family becomes poor.
Women can get sick and die from having too many children.
That’s why it is best for the entire family that the woman decides for herself how many children
she is going to have.

Page 27

Many prejudices against the female body originate from religious texts. Because Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge, she was punished with menstruation and pain during childbirth.

Adam and Eve were the first two people on Earth, according to the Bible.

In the Bible, there are strict rules for how to behave when you have your period.

When a woman has her period, she is unclean for seven days! Anyone who touches her is unclean until evening!

Anything she lies on is unclean, and anything she sits on is unclean!

The Bible, Leviticus

Go home!

Christianity isn't the only religion to claim that women are unclean when they have their periods.

Many girls are not allowed to go to school, mosque or temple during this time.

Page 28

Every single day, 800 million people all over the world menstruate.

Unfortunately, not everyone speaks openly about periods.

In many cultures, the topic is linked to shame and taboo.

In some Hindu communities in Nepal, it is believed that periods bring misfortune. Girls and women are therefore banished to a menstruation hut as part of a practice called chhaupadi.

This ancient tradition has now been banned but is still practised in some places.

In many countries, pads and tampons are very expensive, and limited access to clean water and toilets causes problems for women. They miss lessons or have to stay home from work when they have their period.

Page 29

Almost half the world's population menstruates for an average of 40 years, so both girls and boys should be taught that periods are normal.

The answer is education.

Malala Yousafzai (b. 1997), Pakistani human rights activist

Page 30

Throughout history, most religious leaders have been men.

Many religious texts state that women should remain silent when out in public.

This is why women have been refused positions in churches, synagogues, temples and mosques.

Today, there are clergywomen in churches all over the world.

In Norway, there are more female than male bishops.

Page 31

Denmark got its first female imam in 2017, and women are increasingly active on boards and in the running of mosques.

Page 32

As early as in the 19th century, women started to interpret the old scriptures in new ways. In the US, religious feminists wrote a more modern version of the Bible. Women's advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton led this work. *God* doesn't require men to rule over women, she claimed. Men misinterpret the Bible!

Page 33

And was God really a man, as He was always depicted? Some started to refer to God as "She".

Page 34

Others protested against women not being allowed to speak in public. One of them was called Táhirih and came from Iran. She belonged to the Bábí faith, which considers woman and men to be equal.

Page 35

Táhirih talked about this wherever she went, even though women were not allowed to give speeches. One day, she took off her veil in front of a group of men at a religious meeting. Am I not your sister? Are you not my brothers? Can you not look upon me as a friend – one of you? This led to her spending several years under house arrest in Teheran. You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women! In 1852, Táhirih was sentenced to death. She was strangled with her own veil and thrown down a well. **Táhirih** (1817–1852), poet from Iran, then known as Persia

Page 36

Many religious environments keep women and men separate. They are not allowed to touch each other or to speak to each other. This is called "purdah". Many call it gender apartheid. Throughout history, there has been apartheid in several countries. This means that there are different laws and rules for people based on their skin colour, language or culture. In these societies, white people have more freedom than black people. In countries and religions with gender apartheid, men have more freedom than women.

Page 37

The different roles of women and men in society are often used to justify strict gender segregation.

The woman takes care of the home and the children, while the man earns money for the family. In this way, we *complement* one another.

In cultures that adhere to traditional gender roles, the man is considered the head of the family. The man obeys God, and the woman obeys the man.

Page 38

In some cultures, a man can have several wives.

Page 39

But a woman cannot have several husbands.

If the marriage is not working, only the man can demand a divorce.

Unfair!

Page 40

The Qur'an does not require women to wear a hijab; that is merely an interpretation. Dictating what women do with their hair is about a patriarchal desire to control women, not about religion.

Shökufe Tadayoni Heiberg (b. 1987), Persian-Danish poet

Page 41

In most cultures, a woman's body is more sexualised than a man's, and girls and women often have stricter dress codes.

HEADSCARF

CHADOR

BURKA

HIJAB

SHEITEL (Wig)

MITPACHAT

NIQAB

In large parts of the world, women have to cover parts of their hair or body.

Some of them want to follow these rules, while others are forced.

Page 42

Men can generally wear what they want.

Page 43

In most countries, a woman can be arrested for dressing just like a man.

Page 44–45

HONOUR
SHAME

Page 46

In some cultures, women aren't allowed to go out without a male family member.
This is called having a "guardian".
The rules protect women from harm. And they protect the family's honour.
Honour? What does that mean?

Page 47

Concepts such as "shame" and "honour" are often used to make people follow religious norms and rules.

Page 48

Honour means different things for women and men:
For a man, honour can be showing courage, having strength and being wealthy.
And having control of his family.
For a woman, honour is often linked to chastity.
In other words, remaining a virgin until she is married.
The family's honour is compromised if the girls don't follow the rules.
There are often stricter rules for daughters than their brothers.
Everything they do is watched by family members, neighbours and others in the community.
When family or people close to a person control them through pressure, threats or coercion, this is called "negative social control".

Page 49

Honour culture also affects boys and men.
All over the world, boys are taught to hide their feelings and to always show strength.
A boy might be tasked with looking after his sister.
She can look after herself!

Page 50

Those who defy religious or social expectations are shamed.

Page 51

Shame is the opposite of honour, and the entire family can be shamed if the daughter or son breaks the rules.

What will people think?

What if it makes her less attractive to a potential husband?

SHAFILEA AHMED

JUANITA

NADIA

FADIME ŞAHINDAL 1975–2022

SARAH

AMINA

MARIA

FATHIMA

In the worst cases, some people kill their own family members to restore the family's honour.

Page 53

So *shame* and *honour* are only used to control us?

Page 55

The Iranian regime has guns and bullets, but they are scared of our hair.

Masih Alinejad (b. 1976), journalist and political activist from Iran

Page 56

In the autumn of 2022, there were major protests in Iran.

WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM!

Women protested the hierocracy by burning their hijabs or cutting off their hair.

A hijab is a Muslim head covering for women. The word comes from the Arabic verb *hajaba*, which means hide or conceal.

The Iranian revolt made the news all over the world.

#woman.life.freedom #mahsaamini #freedomforall #womanlifefreedom #jin.jiyan.azadi

Thousands of protestors were arrested by the authorities. Many were also mistreated and killed.

Page 57

The protests started after the death of a young Kurdish woman called Jina Mahsa Amini.

She was arrested and mistreated by the Iranian morality police.

Iran's morality police is part of the country's police force. They monitor the population and make sure they dress according to the religious laws.

Jina had worn her veil "incorrectly".

She fell into a coma and died a few days later at the hospital. She was only 22.

Page 59

The laws in Iran haven't always been so strict.
In the 1970s, a wave of feminism spread across large parts of the world.
Women demanded the same rights as men – in all areas of life.

Page 60

The fight for women's rights also reached Iran, and in 1963, women were given the right to vote. Several laws were adopted that gave women more freedom. Many started to study and work.
Did you have a nice day at school, my girl?
Yes, it was great. Gotta run, though. Can't be late to the protest.
Are you coming, Dad?
At the same time, there was great dissatisfaction with the country's authoritarian king, or the shah, as he was called in Iran.

Page 61

Under his rule, there were big differences between the poor and the rich.
There was neither freedom of expression nor political freedom.
1979
In the end, people got so tired of the shah that there was a revolution.
The shah was thrown out of the country.
But the revolution was soon hijacked by Ayatollah Khomeini.
He seized power in Iran and introduced political Islam.
This is called the Islamic Revolution.

Page 62

After this, all laws and rules were governed by ancient scripture in the Qur'an.
People had even less freedom under the new government, and women in particular lost their rights.
All girls over the age of nine were forced to wear a veil. Anyone who broke this law could be punished with 74 lashes.
Many protested the new laws, but these protests were soon squelched.
Opponents of the new hierarchy were arrested.
In prison, many people were mistreated and tortured. Or sentenced to death.
Some managed to flee the country.
Iran is still an Islamic dictatorship.

Page 63

The 1979 revolution in Iran wasn't an Islamic revolution, it was a revolution of men against women.

Shirin Ebadi (b. 1947), Iranian lawyer and Nobel laureate

Page 64

Cultures and religions make people see the world through different eyes.

Some parts of the world favour individualism.

In these places, there is a focus on the individual's freedom to make their own decisions.

Page 65

In other cultures, the collective is stronger than the individual.

A collective is a group of people, such as a family, a village or a religious community. The idea here is that the collective is more important than individual desires.

Both individualism and collectivism have good and bad sides.

Page 66

Many people cling to strict rules from the culture they grew up in, even if they live in a country with greater freedom.

Page 67

Belonging to two or more cultures can be confusing.

Which ideals are the right ones to pursue?

Page 68

A lot of people belong to a religion without it affecting their lives very much.

You might follow some rules, but not all of them.

Page 69

You might go to church or mosque during festive periods, but rarely otherwise.

Many people are Muslims but don't observe Ramadan, pray or fast.

Some Muslim women wear veils, while others don't.

Page 70

Unfortunately, many people find that their culture or religion isn't respected.

Page 71

Some people think that all girls who wear a hijab are oppressed.
Has your father forced you to wear that?
Will you be married off soon?
Are you bald under there?

Page 72

There are many different reasons why a woman might wear a hijab.
For some, it's about religious beliefs,
while others want to be like their mothers,
or *unlike* their mothers.
Some want to show that they belong to a group, and others want to express their individuality.
Some want to protest superficial values, while others want to follow the fashion.
The most important thing is that you have the right to decide for yourself.

Page 73

The right to freedom of religion is part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
This is supposed to apply to everyone in the world, regardless of outlook.
Some people nevertheless think that their religion is best and try to get others to convert.
Some convert of their own free will.
Christian faiths often spread their religious message in poor countries through aid work.

Page 74

Sometimes, people are forced to convert.
In the Middle Ages, Christian crusaders participated in holy war to conquer land from Muslims
and fight enemies of the papacy.
The crusaders pillaged and killed people with different beliefs.
Forced conversion has inversely affected indigenous people around the world, and societies
that practise natural religions.
Norway was also Christianised through coercion and violence.
Entire cultures have disappeared because of this.

Page 75

Culture does not make people. People make culture.
And we can change the cultures we live in.
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (b. 1977), Nigerian author

Page 76

Many believers don't belong to one of the major religions.
There are thousands of smaller religions and religious communities.
Some worship things other than gods.
Sometimes, a group of people break away from a religion and start their own.

Page 77

These often have a charismatic leader who claims to be in direct contact with God.
Oh!
Ah!
GOD
Hi, there!
These religious groups are called sects.
The sects make their own laws and rules that all members have to follow.
Everyone has to shave their head!
No one can cut their hair!
Card games are forbidden!
Birthdays must not be celebrated!
We must live as they did in the 19th century!
Some sects don't want contact with the rest of society. Members are often forbidden from leaving the sect.

Page 78

Language, culture and religion have evolved in different directions around the world.
People don't understand each other's customs and don't respect each other's beliefs.
ZIONIST!
RACIST!
ANTISEMITE!
FUNDAMENTALIST!
HEDONIST!
This often leads to unrest and conflicts.
Religion has contributed to a number of conflicts and wars.

Page 79

Some leaders and faiths defend their god through terror and violence.
In August 2021, the Taliban once again seized control of Afghanistan.
The Taliban is a religious group with a very strict and antiquated interpretation of Islam.
This is called fundamentalism.

Page 80

According to the Taliban, people who break the religious laws can be punished with death. Some are stoned to death.

When the Taliban took over in Afghanistan, one of the things they decided was that girls over the age of 11 would no longer go to school.

Women are not allowed to go out without a male guardian, and many have to wear a burka when out in public.

A burka is a full-coverage women's garment with a mesh screen over the eyes.

Page 81

Afghan women are also not allowed to decide who they marry, and many are married off as children.

The Taliban think that art and music is "haram". This means that it is forbidden.

Therefore, people are not allowed to paint, sing, play instruments, dance or... have fun.

Page 82

Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan was 10 years old when the Taliban seized power in her hometown in the Swat Valley in 2007.

They destroyed and burnt down the girls' schools in the area.

Malala started to write a blog about her life. In this, she criticised the Taliban regime and argued for girls' right to go to school. The blog was published online without any mention of her name.

Even so, the Taliban found out who was behind it.

One October day in 2012, Malala was on the bus. She was on her way home from a girls' school located outside of the Taliban area.

Which of you is Malala?

Malala was shot in the head.

Page 83

She is a Western-minded girl. She always speaks against us.

We will target anyone who speaks against the Taliban.

She was flown to England to undergo surgery there.

Luckily, the operation went well.

Now the whole world knows her story.

The United Kingdom gave her a residence permit. After she was discharged from hospital in January 2013, she started attending a school in Birmingham.

The extremists have shown what frightens them most – a girl with a book.

In 2014, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as the youngest-ever winner.

Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani human rights activist

Page 84

All over the world, there are people who have escaped strict religious regimes.

Their dream has been to live in a democracy where they can say and think what they like. Democracy means representative government. This is a form of government where the citizens of a country can affect policy through elections. Everyone can say what they think is right and wrong. This is called freedom of expression. In Norway, freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Page 85

Many people who have been oppressed are angry at religion and all its rules. Some demonstrate this by discarding their hijab or burning the Qur'an.

Page 86

NEWS

Others write critical books about religion or draw religious caricatures. These actions can lead to believers feeling hurt or angry. Being disparaging of religion is sometimes called blasphemy. In several religious states, this is forbidden.

PAGE 87

BLASPHEMY!

In a country with freedom of expression, religion can be criticised just as freely as all other areas of society. And those who disagree can express this, too. Although you may dislike what is being said or written, you must respect differences of opinion.

Page 88

God cannot profess innocence in the face of injustice, tyranny, oppression and bad deeds. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot, as the word of God, be a cause of human injustice. The injustice to which Muslim women are subjected cannot originate with God.

Dr Riffat Hassan (b. 1943), Pakistani-American theologian

Page 89

FREE NARGES MOHAMMADI!
I DON'T NEED A GUARDIAN!
MY UTERUS, MY CHOICE!
CHURCH STATE

Page 90

Today, it is common to protest against religious societies that oppress women.
In 2016, five million Indian women formed one long chain. They were protesting the exclusion of women from some Hindu temples.
More inclusive religious communities are emerging all over the world.
Several mosques now have female imams who lead prayer.
Imam means “one who leads the way”.
There is no verse in the Qur’an that says women cannot lead prayer.
Amina Wadud
The American professor Amina Wadud was the first female imam to lead a gender-neutral Friday prayer. This happened in New York in 2005.
The Turkish imam Seyran Ateş founded a feminist mosque in Berlin in 2017 where homosexual Muslims are also welcome.

Page 91

Islam needs a sexual revolution!
Seyran Ateş
Danish Sherin Khankan was the first female imam in the Nordic region.
What all religious feminists have in common is that they interpret the texts differently to male leaders.
Sherin Khankan

Page 92

Many people think the words in religious texts come directly from God. They therefore consider the book to be holy.
Religious texts are complicated. It is not always easy to know what is meant.
It says here that you must cover your hair!
It says nothing of the sort!
Islamic texts have to be interpreted, just like all other religious texts. Some interpret them conservatively, others more modernly.
According to the Qur’an, you can’t force anyone to get married or wear a veil.
“There is no compulsion in religion”
Qur’an, Al-Baqara 256
Muslim feminists claim that the Qur’an is committed to equity – including between women and men.

Page 93

Many equate Islam and oppression.
But it is men who want to control women who have hijacked the beautiful message of the religion.
Sarah Deishad (b. 1990), Swedish-Kurdish author and activist

Page 94

ADAM AND EVE, NOT ADAM AND STEVE!

HOMO PROPAGANDA!

Many people think it goes against God's word to be lesbian or gay, which is why it is forbidden in many parts of the world.

But it wasn't always this way.

In ancient Greek religion, male gods had sex with men.

The Indian god Shiva is two-gendered.

Even within Islam, there have been periods of relaxed attitudes to homosexuality.

Page 95

Today, there are many religious communities and religions that accept homosexual relationships, even though it is forbidden in more than 70 countries.

There are now queer religious communities all over the world.

They are fighting for interpretation of the scripture based on the times we live in.

ISLAM TEACHES US TO TREAT OTHER PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY..

No one is born haram!

In their opinion, if you really believe in God or Allah, there is no such thing as a "miscreation".

Everything is the will of God!

Page 99

Another world is not only possible – she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.

Arundhati Roy (b. 1961), Indian author

Page 100

The major world religions have many similarities, and they all have different versions of what is referred to as

THE GOLDEN RULE

You should treat other people with love and care.

This is also called the "reciprocity rule" or the "love thy neighbour commandment".

Love your neighbour as yourself.

Leviticus 19:18

That which is hateful to you, do not do to another.

Talmud, Shabbat 31a

Deal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly.

Qur'an, 2:279

Page 101

This is the sum of duty. Do not unto others that which would cause you pain if done to you.
Mahabharata, 5:1517
Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
Udana Varga, 5:18
This means that religion cannot be used as an excuse for harming others.
Or to force you to do something you don't want to.

Page 102

Today, women all over the world are in prison for fighting for their rights.
One of them is Narges Mohammadi from Iran.
All her life she has protested the oppression of Iranian women and minorities.
The authorities sentenced her to 31 years in prison and 154 lashes.
The more they lock us up, the stronger we become.
In 2023, she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her struggle.
She had to send her children to receive the prize.

Page 103

One day, the anthem of the people's triumph on the streets of Iran will resonate worldwide.
Narges Mohammadi (b.1972), Iranian activist

Page 104

In some countries, religion has a strong position and affects most aspects of society.
In other places, religion is less dominant.
In secular societies, state and religion are kept separate.
There, religion is considered a private matter.
In such societies, people can decide for themselves whether they want to be religious.

Page 105

Schools teach about all the world religions – not just one.
Teachers are not allowed to preach. This means that they cannot tell their students what they should believe.
In secular societies, it is also important to ensure that people are able to practise their religion.

Page 106

Today, there are many people who call themselves atheists, who do not believe in any god.
Some also call themselves humanists.
Humanism comes from the Latin word "humanus".

This is a school of thought that puts human beings front and centre – and not an all-powerful creator.

Humanists think the universe and the world are a result of a natural evolution.

We all need to reflect on life and decide for ourselves what makes it meaningful.

They consider it our mission to seek out knowledge and think critically.

Page 107

In some countries, there are alternative ceremonies for people who are not religious.

You can get married, get confirmed and be buried without a religious ceremony.

Today, gay men and lesbians can have church weddings in many countries or become clergy themselves.

A free democracy must have space for all types of people and outlooks.

Page 108

Don't forget:

No religion or tradition can control your life or your body.

Page 109

Or who you can be friends or go out with.

Page 110

You are just as worthy whether you dress like this
or like this

Page 111

or like this.

YOU OWN YOURSELF!

Page 113

Author and illustrator

Marta Breen (b. 1976)

has written a number of books about women's history, music and feminism. She is known for disseminating knowledge in a way that is compelling and easy to understand, and two of her books have received the Norwegian Ministry of Culture's textbook prize for young people. The

graphic novel *Women in Battle*, created in collaboration with illustrator Jenny Jordahl, has been published in 28 countries.

Sunniva Fluge Hole (b. 1994)

has worked as an illustrator since she graduated from Arts University Bournemouth with a BA in animation production in 2017. In 2024, she illustrated two books: *Henrik Ibsen: An Enemy of the People* by Kåre Conradi, and a new version of the classic Norwegian folk story *The Fox's Widow* from Asbjørnsen and Moe.

Page 114–115

Glossary

Abaya: A generic term for various kinds of loose, often robe-like outer garments, most often worn by Muslim women, but sometimes also worn by men. In Saudi Arabia, women must wear an abaya when out in public. The religious police, whose enforcers are referred to as *mutaween*, are responsible for making sure that women wear an abaya.

Apartheid: A political system where the population is split into groups such as white, black and coloured, with the white people at the top of the hierarchy. The word *apartheid* comes from Afrikaans and means “separateness”, and the system was practised in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. During this period, the rights of non-whites were limited in a number of different ways.

Blasphemy: Blasphemy means speaking disparagingly or contemptuously about what some people consider to be holy. It can also refer actions such as burning holy scripture or stepping on a picture of a holy figure. Some people consider any negative or critical remarks about their religion to be blasphemous. Blasphemy is forbidden in some religious states. It was once also forbidden in Norway.

Burka: A full-coverage garment for women that is particularly common in Afghanistan. The burka covers the entire body and has a mesh screen in front of the eyes so that the woman can see without being seen.

Chador: A traditional, full-coverage garment worn by Muslim women, particularly widespread in Iran. The chador is a semicircle of fabric that is wrapped around the head and body, and that covers everything apart from the face. It is held closed at the front using the hands or by tying the ends around the waist.

Conversion: Changing or causing something to change from one form to another. In a religious context, it means leaving one religion for another.

Crusader: The crusaders were Christian soldiers who fought to spread Christianity during the Middle Ages. The first crusaders went to the Middle East to take back the holy lands,

particularly the city of Jerusalem, from their Muslim occupiers. They pillaged and killed people with different beliefs.

Domination techniques: Various methods used to dominate or humiliate others. This can happen in all arenas where people exercise power: in family life, working life, politics and society. After this term was popularised by Norwegian professor Berit Ås in 1979, many women started to understand what happens when they are ignored or ridiculed.

Female genital mutilation: Procedures involving partial or complete removal of the external female sex organs or other damage to women's sex organs without medical grounds. This is also called female circumcision. Female genital mutilation is banned in Norway, and the practice is in violation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Boys and men are also circumcised in some cultures by having their foreskin removed. This is a less radical procedure, but equally controversial. Many people believe it is wrong to perform surgery on healthy bodies.

Feminism: A word originating from the Latin word *femina*, which means "woman". Feminists want to change the imbalance of power between the sexes and work in various ways to give women and men equal rights and opportunities in life.

Hijab: A Muslim head covering for women, also called a veil. The word comes from the Arabic verb *hajaba*, which means to hide or conceal.

Honour culture: This refers to a social system where a person's or a group's actions and reputation are assessed based on their effect on the group's or family's honour. This can entail social control, honour-based violence, and in some cases, forced marriage or female genital mutilation. Honour culture cannot be linked to one specific religion or culture but is a phenomenon that can be found in various societies and groups.

Hymen: An elastic fold of tissue in the vagina. Some people call this the virginal membrane. The hymen can stretch significantly without breaking or bleeding.

Imam: The person who leads prayers in a mosque. The word means "one who leads the way". It is also used as an honorary title for those with a prominent position in the Muslim community.

LGBT: Designation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual people as a group. It has also become common to include intersex and queer people in this group, in which case the acronym becomes LGBTIQ.

Misogyny: Hatred or prejudice towards women and everything consider to be female. In feminist theory, misogyny is considered to be a political ideology, just like racism or antisemitism. The opposite, hatred towards men, is called misandry.

Morality police: Iran's morality police is part of the country's police force. They monitor the population and make sure it dresses in accordance with the religious laws.

Missionary: A missionary works to spread their religious message and tries to get others to convert. Christian organisations have often combined this with aid work in poor countries.

Niqab: A head covering that conceals the entire face apart from the eyes. It is most widespread in parts of the Middle East but can also be found in other places. The use of veils that cover the face is contentious, and in some countries the garment has been banned.

Patriarchy: Historically, this has been described as a cultural expectation that fathers are primarily responsible for the welfare of their families. Most former civilisations were patriarchies. In our time, the word is often used about countries and societies that are very much male-dominated.

Political Islam: Also known as *Islamism*, a political ideology where adherents want Islam to have greater political influence in society. This often means that the society is governed in accordance with Islamic – Sharia – law, and that religion plays a very central role in the state.

Secular state: A state that is neutral with regard to religion and has a clear separation of state and religion. This means that the state does not favour any particular religion, that it protects freedom of religion and that it treats all its citizens equally regardless of their faith. Norway has been an example of a secular state since the Norwegian Constitution changed in 2012 to no longer specify any official state religion.

Sharia: The Islamic law and code for practising Islam. The word *sharia* literally translates as “the path” and was probably linked to the notion of “the righteous path” that God gave humans.

Sheitel: A wig worn by some married Jewish (Hasidic) women to cover their natural hair.

Tanakh: The Jewish name for the Hebrew Bible. This name is derived from the first letters of its three parts: the Torah (Instruction/Law), the Nevi'im (Prophets) and the Ketuvim (Writings).

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