



REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE FUND

We are excited to launch the first ever Reproductive Justice Fund at HEART for our community members. After supporting our community for the past decade in navigating the reproductive and sexual health systems, we know that resources are scarce. We need access to these important services in all their forms and often, on an urgent basis.

It is alarming how the state, in particular, continues to underresource and undervalue access to culturally sensitive and comprehensive reproductive and sexual health services, especially for marginalized communities across the United States, including Muslims. As a grassroots organization creating healing and supportive spaces, we rely on our people to build up these resources and continue to fill the gaps so we can grow towards our vision for wellness, strength, and healing.

This is our humble attempt to increase mutual aid and financial assistance for impacted Muslims across the United States, especially in the States where access to reproductive healthcare, specifically, abortion and related services, is being criminalized. With the changing political landscape, we take into account the very horrific attempt by the state to criminalize already marginalized communities, including our own, and can also refer impacted individuals to [legal services](#) as needed.



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To ground us in this work, we look to our comrades in the Reproductive Justice movement, especially organizations led by Black feminist leaders; our esteemed Muslim feminist scholars who have contributed their expertise, time and input on the necessity for such a fund; and the many Muslim physicians and service providers who are on the frontlines of providing critical care to our Muslim community members.

HEART's Definition of Reproductive Justice

We are grateful to Loretta Ross, founder of SisterSong, who turned this concept into a movement. SisterSong (sistersong.net) defines reproductive justice as “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”

We believe this includes examining the multiple intersections that individuals cross every day that can have a profound impact on one's reproductive and sexual health: such as access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care, a living wage job, quality education, freedom from discrimination, violence, and other systems of oppression, and communities that support healing, empowerment, and self-determination.



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As such, reproductive justice includes the basic human right to:

- Be treated like the sacred beings we are (in alignment with the Islamic tenet of hurma or sacred boundaries of each body)
- Make informed decisions about our bodies, safety, health, and wellness (in alignment with the Islamic tenets of khilafah or individual moral agency and self determination, and ridha or choice and consent): aligned with our individual personal, political, and faith values and based on our unique health needs and lived experiences
 - Decide whether, when and how to have children
 - Decide how to parent our children, if we have children
- Access culturally sensitive, affordable and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health resources and services that meet us where we are
- Live, work, pray and/or parent in communities free from gendered and other violence and that sustain and support us, not that oppress or harm us. Being free from gendered violence signifies freedom from various forms of harm, including but not limited to:
 - intimate partner abuse like reproductive coercion;
 - racial, gender and/or socioeconomic discrimination and underresourcing, such as lack of/sufficient health insurance; and
 - systemic oppression such as racial, gendered islamophobic or xenophobic profiling, surveillance, policing, and incarceration - including through abortion criminalization.



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Guiding Principles from our Islamic Tradition

We draw inspiration for this work from the rich values found within our Islamic tradition. The four we are centering for the RJ Fund are Khilafah, Hurma, RIDHA and RAHMA. We provide breakdowns to each of these concepts and frameworks below and how we intend to apply them as we do this critical work.

Khilafah

MORAL AGENCY

Ethical choices we make with our free will, and the accountability that follows

“Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: “I will create a vicegerent on earth.”

Surah Baqarah, verse 30

The Quranic concept of Khilafah can be translated as trusteeship, moral agency or vicegerency. This concept is tied to the idea that each individual and our communities are collectively responsible for creating just and moral social order in harmony with God’s will. We each have free will and with that comes the ability to make choices, and accountability with regards to the choices we make. As “vicegerents” on earth, we are responsible for recognizing injustices and taking care of each other and ourselves. Part of fulfilling our khilafah is to understand the guidance from our primary Islamic texts, various legal positions, and engage our own moral and ethical compasses to make decisions that we believe are ethically and morally sound.



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When applying this guiding principle to the work of advancing reproductive justice, HEART believes that as khalifahs (trustees) on this earth, it is imperative that we address the systemic injustices facing our society and work towards equity as best we can. Scholar and academic Dr. Saddiyah Sheikh argues that in order for Muslim women in particular to fulfill their obligations as khalifahs on this earth, they must “realize their full potential for intellectual, economic, and social agency.” Giving Muslim people with wombs access to reproductive and sexual resources, services, and medical interventions can help them embody their roles as khalifahs, allowing them to make empowered and informed decisions about their bodies and reach their full potential—whether as parents or not.

Hurma

SACRED INVIOABILITY

Protecting sacred bodies from reproductive and sexual harm

Inspired by Dr. Ingrid Mattson’s Hurma Project, we center the islamic value of Hurma, or sacred inviolability. We believe each individual is a sacred being and if any harm is to come to them, it is a grave injustice. If their bodies are violated, it is incumbent upon our communities to challenge those who bring about such harm, and center the healing of the individual that was violated. Following our mission of centering the most impacted, in the application of Hurma we center how the person who is being harmed understands the harm and the boundaries that are being crossed in their specific context.



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We reject reproductive and sexual violence on the very basis that it violates Hurma and brings harm to our sacred bodies. Forcing an individual to do something to their body, whether that be terminating a pregnancy, carrying a pregnancy to term, living with chronic pelvic pain, forcing sterilizations or carrying out medically invasive procedures without consent- these are all forms of reproductive violence that bring harm to individuals in our communities.

When applied to our RJ work, we seek to minimize the harm that may come from the political landscape, communal violence, and interpersonal pressures by providing education, resources, and pathways for healing for those who experience or are actively navigating harmful situations. In the context of this work, we are also including any chronic illness, disease or medical conditions they may be navigating. One should not have to live with harmful medical conditions when there are treatments and medicines out there that can support them in healing their bodies. Whether it be physical, mental or emotional pain, we seek to provide access to knowledge, treatment, funds and choices for people to take care of their sacred bodies.



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RIDHA

FULLNESS OF CHOICE

Exercising bodily autonomy as a God-given right

When the Prophet (S) married Saffiyah (R) she declined to engage in sexual intimacy with the Prophet (S) on their wedding night. The Prophet (S) responded with respect and care for this decision and boundary. The concept of Ridha stems from this prophetic example of respecting one's agency, practicing consent, and not denying individuals their God-given rights to bodily autonomy.

In the context of our reproductive and sexual lives, this can be applied to how individuals can gain information about their bodies to make safe and aligned choices regarding their health and wellness. We believe that centering the concept of ridha--fullness of choice--is the best way to honor a Muslim's right to fully consent and be in control of their sexual health decision-making. As such, we developed the RIDHA framework, to be an aide to identify healthy decision-making that are rooted in choice, consent, compassion, communication, and spiritual well-being. From accessing contraceptives, to carrying a pregnancy to term, to receiving treatment around sexual dysfunction, we believe it is imperative that we apply the RIDHA framework to support informed decision making for our community members. The framework can be applied as so:



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R
Rooted in Rahma

The decision is **rooted in compassion** for themselves, their specific situation and context

I
**Informed by
knowledge ('ilm)**

A person **equipped with the knowledge** ('ilm) they need with regards to their reproductive or sexual health conditions, needs, and the potential options

D
**Driven by equity +
fairness (aDalah)**

A person has **equitable access to the resources** they need to make the choice that is best for them

H
**Housed in safety
and security (hurm)**

A person can make the choice they need to in **safety and security to protect their sacred bodies** - they understand the risks involved with regards to criminalization or potential harms for the decision they want to make and know how to navigate such risks using safety planning tools

A
**Affirmed in
commitment ('aqd)**

The person understands the potential impacts of their decision and feel good about moving forward with whatever the choice is to minimize regret or remorse. They don't feel rushed into a decision that they aren't sure about, and their decision is **rooted in a commitment to themselves and their values.**



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At HEART, we believe that it is up to the pregnant person to determine what is aligned with their religious and spiritual understanding and what is best for their health and safety. The RIDHA framework offers guidance on how to be satisfied and content with any decision being made and exercise of the fullness of choice for one's reproductive and sexual health across the lifespan.

RAHMA COMPASSION

Responding to the impacted individuals and yourself with compassion and care

One of the first and core values we have embodied through our work at HEART is that of RAHMA or compassion. We start all we do in the remembrance of Allah using Their names: Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim - the Most Merciful, Most Gracious. We see it as no coincidence that the root word for Rahma and the root for Womb in Arabic - Rahm- are the same R-h-m. We pray that all matters of the womb are met with compassion. This sacred bodily space stores the trauma of our experiences, and responds constantly to the environment in which it is in. We honor this sacred part of our body and provide tools to reduce any impacts of trauma on the womb and promote systems and processes that will allow all individuals to be treated with compassion as they navigate decision making around their reproductive and sexual lives. We developed the RAHMA principles inspired by this beloved Islamic values, and they can be used to respond in moments towards oneself or others in the following way:



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R **Respond by** **Listening**

Let the impacted person take lead on the conversation with how they're feeling and what they are thinking about.

A **Affirm & Believe**

Provide validation that their feelings are grounded in truth and their experience is real.

H **Honor cultural &** **religious contex**

Regardless of your own personal religious perspective on the issue, support them with resources that will help them with their decision making in a non-judgemental manner. Hold their values with respect.

M **Maintain privacy**

This may be a personal and private decision that should be kept confidential at all times. Support the impacted person in sharing with who they want to on their own timeline.

A **Assist with** **providing resources**

What information are they looking for to make a decision? Can you support them with finding clinics with services? Do they need access to funds? Would they like to connect with a religious leader to talk more about their options?

The RAHMA framework aligns with HEART's practice of centering the most impacted and doing so in a way that is focused on healing. It offers a way to hold space and connect people to critical information and resources that can often be lifesaving.