

IRSHAD MANJI

b. 1968

MUSLIM REFORMIST

“My journey is about speaking out against injustice, no matter who is offended.”

In 2004, Oprah Winfrey awarded Manji the first Chutzpah Award for her “audacity, nerve, boldness and conviction.”

Irshad Manji is an award-winning Muslim author, feminist and advocate for Islamic reform. The New York Times described her as “Osama bin Laden’s worst nightmare.”

Manji was born in Uganda to an Indian father and an Egyptian mother. In 1973, when Asians were deported from Uganda, her family immigrated to Canada as political refugees. She attended public school during the week and the madrasah, an Islamic religious school, on the weekend. At 14, she was expelled from the madrasah for asking too many questions.

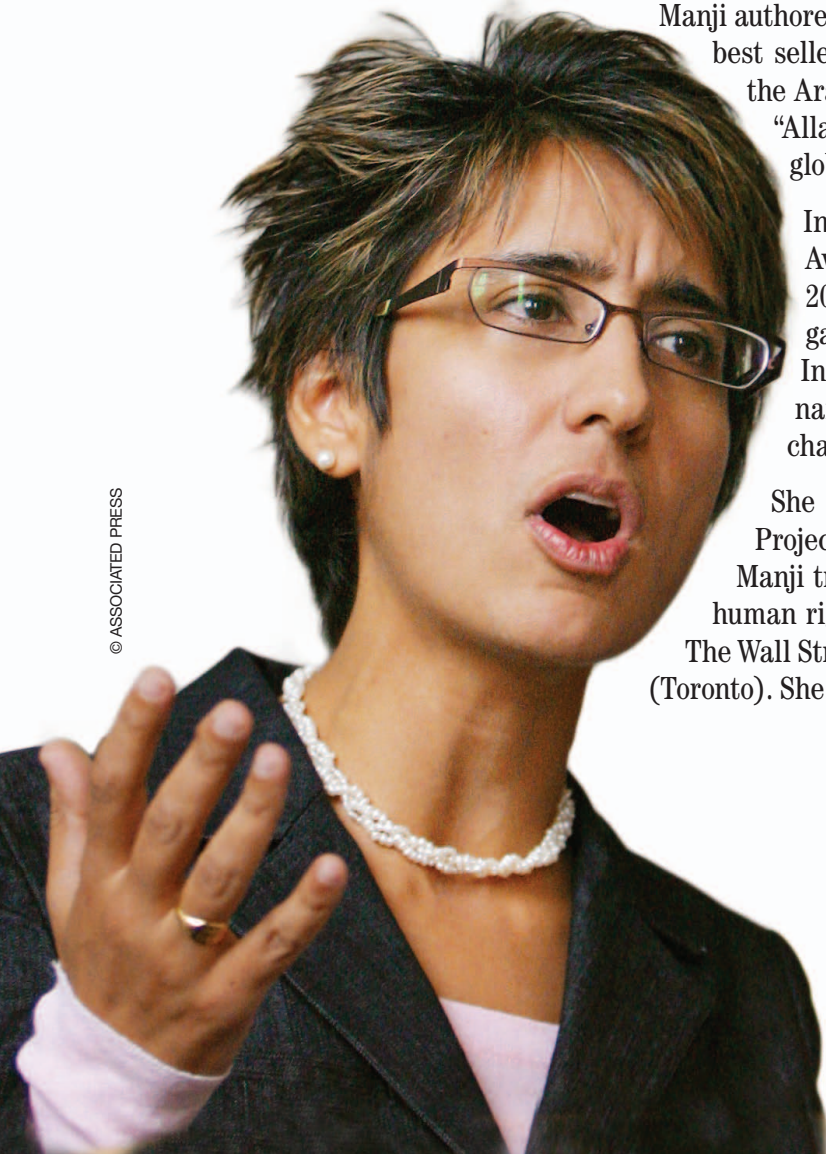
In 1990, Manji graduated at the top of her class from the University of British Columbia. She worked as a legislative aide to Parliament and became the speechwriter for the leader of the New Democratic Party. At 24, she wrote editorials on national affairs for the Ottawa Citizen.

In 1998, Manji hosted Citytv’s “QueerTelevision,” the world’s first commercial broadcast exploring the lives of gays and lesbians. The show won a Gemini, Canada’s top broadcasting award. She produced the Emmy-nominated PBS documentary “Faith Without Fear” (2007), which follows her journey to reconcile faith and human rights.

Manji authored “The Trouble with Islam Today” (2004), an international best seller published in more than 30 languages. In its first year, the Arabic translation was downloaded 300,000 times. She wrote “Allah, Liberty, and Love” (2011), her guide to becoming a robust global citizen.

In 2004, Oprah Winfrey awarded Manji the first Chutzpah Award for her “audacity, nerve, boldness and conviction.” In 2007, she was named one of the country’s 50 most powerful gays and lesbians by Out magazine. The Jakarta Post in Indonesia, which has the world’s largest Muslim population, named her one of three Muslim women creating positive change in Islam.

She is the director of New York University’s Moral Courage Project, which develops young leaders to challenge conformity. Manji travels the world speaking about religion, LGBT issues and human rights. Her columns have appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Times of London, and The Globe and Mail (Toronto). She is a frequent guest on CNN and other television networks.



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