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## Feminism in the context of Islamic critique

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### Abstract

*This article deals with the genealogical development of feminism. Women's rights are a major concern in the contemporary world. Women have been subjugated in a patriarchal narrative for thousands of years. With the advent of science and secularization, women's empowerment has become a major issue in the 21st century. This research is important because there is a need to understand how Islam sees women's empowerment and feminism. The rise of Islamic feminism has also been noticed among Muslim countries. This article uses qualitative methodology. A historical method is adopted to understand the rise of feminism and the impact of feminism in Muslim society. This research finds that feminism as a new ideology influenced Islamic literature in contemporary Muslim society.*

**Keywords:** *Feminism, Islam, Islamic feminism, Muslim society*

### Introduction

Women have been treated with disdain throughout Western history, from ancient times to the Enlightenment and beyond. According to the philosopher Socrates<sup>1</sup>, the existence of women is

the main factor contributing to humanity's downfall. As stated by Aristotle<sup>2</sup>, a woman is nothing more than an imperfect man, and

<sup>1</sup> An ancient Greek philosopher who lived in Athens in the 5th century BCE. He was one of the three most important figures of the archaic period of Western philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, born 384 BCE in Greece and died 322, was an ancient Greek philosopher and scientist who was one of Western history's most influential intellectual figures. He wrote a

when nature could not produce a man, it made a woman.

A conference was held in 568 A.D to address the issue of whether or not women are considered human beings. Women were often associated with cruelty, evil, ignorance, and inferiority in the minds of many Western intellectuals. Because of this, women have always been despised in the West, and the injustices women faced on societal and personal levels brought vision closer to reality. Therefore, the first feminist voices to emerge were those advocating for changing society's perception of women, addressing the issue of their contempt, and achieving equality.

Feminism is an ideology and a movement that has evolved from its roots and is currently changing. Women's rights demands made by Feminism up to 1920 represented a social renaissance, but after 1970 it aimed to become a social ideology.

The ideologies of Feminism have received support throughout the world, and it is a movement with many facets from a cultural and historical perspective. If we examine the feminist discourse and the degree to which it enters everyday thought, we can assess how effective Feminism is.

The Feminist movement did not stop at the Western geographical borders. Nonetheless, its philosophical and ideological fleet reached Muslim countries, influencing and advocating its goals, programmes, and principles. Instead, its intellectual and ideological fleet was affected and approved by its plans, programs and regulations. It spread its concepts between complete approval of it, trying to reconcile it with the Islamic vision and drag it according to the data of the modern era to the Muslim countries.

Islam forbids to neglect or oppressing women. Every human person, not only women, has the right to exist in a world of freedom and reform. However, in the Western world, women experienced early-era oppression and persecution from the Church and the community.

Feminism's message reached the Islamic world, went beyond social requirements, and evolved into a supported and fostered culture. So, It was necessary to study Feminism from the Islamic perspective because of its philosophical ideas that emerged from the beginning and how its ideologies reached modern times, primarily in Muslim nations.

### **Origin and Definition of Feminism**

When we discuss Feminism, we do not mean to refer to women's history because women's history is also the history of humanity and its origins. Thus, we shall start by discussing the beginning of the term feminism and its historical development as an intellectual and social ideology.

The word "Feminist" first appeared in the writings of Western literature of thought around 1895<sup>3</sup>. The term concept represents the feminist movement for equal rights for women that started at the end of the 18th century.

The term "Feminism" was first used in the human sciences in 1910 at an international conference where notable feminists contributed,

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philosophical and scientific system that served as the foundation and vehicle for Christian Scholasticism.

<sup>3</sup> The new definition of the word "feminist" was not initially used in the English language until 1895, in a publication of the literary journal the *Athenaeum* 27 Apr. 533/2.

such as Clara Zetkin<sup>4</sup>. The League of Nations chose the 8th of March as International Women's Day<sup>5</sup> to honour the civil disobedience that New York City employees engaged in 1895 to protest the terrible conditions they faced, some of whom died.

The word "Feminist" is of French origin, *Féminisme*<sup>6</sup>, which utopian scholiast Charles Fourier<sup>7</sup> used by 1837<sup>8</sup>. Its first use in English was in the 19th century, when the term was employed to support women's equal legal and political rights with the privileges of men.

The literal translation of this term is "Feminism", as stated in the Oxford Dictionary, taken from Female and Feminism, which Feminism means the principle of equality between men and women in various rights<sup>9</sup>.

The Feminist trend is not one direction; however, several trends emerged from the feminist waves and differed among themselves according to the ideological and analytical dimensions of the same movement—all stand to confront prejudice and discrimination against women.

It is challenging to develop a comprehensive and familiar definition of all feminist movements due to the different frameworks, visions, and goals of intellectual trends throughout their historical course and the various surge and movements among them.

Feminism is a trend that centralises around the female by using the tools of religious, political, social and philosophical analysis to create a new revolution in contemporary Western thinking. It's a trend that constitutes a Copernican revolution<sup>10</sup> in the relationship between men and women in modern Western studies.

Modern feminist historians identify three "waves" in the history of Feminism. They are;

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<sup>4</sup> German feminist, socialist, and communist leader Clara Zetkin was born in Wiederau, Saxony, on July 5, 1857, and died in Arkhangelskoye, Russia, on June 20, 1933. She was a crucial figure in the new Communist Party of Germany and the Comintern following World War I.

<sup>5</sup> International Women's Day (IWD) evolved from early 20th-century campaigns to advance women's rights, particularly suffrage. The Socialist Party of America organised the inaugural National Woman's Day in 1909 as part of its campaign for women's suffrage, which was celebrated with large-scale events all around the country. The day was commemorated until 1913.

<sup>6</sup> In late 19th century.: from French *féminisme*.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Fourier, a French social theorist who advocated rebuilding society based on cooperative associations of producers known as phalanges, was born in Besançon, France, on the 7th of April, 1772, and passed away in Paris on the 10th of October, 1837.

<sup>8</sup> The word had spread to the Netherlands and Great Britain by the 1890s and the United States by 1910. On which movements should be credited to feminism, academics are still divided. Some contend that feminism should be used in any movement for women's rights.

<sup>9</sup> The belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim.

<sup>10</sup> The Copernican Revolution, as described by the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus in the 16th century, was a change in astronomy from a geocentric understanding of the cosmos, centred around the Earth, to a heliocentric account, centred around the Sun.

## First-wave Feminism

First-wave feminism refers to a period in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when women were active in the United Kingdom and the United States. It initially focused on topics like equal legal rights to contracts and property, opposition to chattel marriage, and husbands' ownership of married women and their children.

By the end of the 19th century, political power and women's suffrage were the principal causes that motivated campaigns. Feminists like Margaret Sanger<sup>11</sup> and Voltairine de Cleyre<sup>12</sup> advocated for women's sexual, reproductive, and economic rights. In Britain, the Suffragettes campaigned for women's voting rights. The Representation of the People Act 1918, which gave women over 30 who owned homes the right to vote, was approved in 1918. All women over 18 were given access to this in 1928.

Leaders of this movement in the U.S. include Susan B. Anthony<sup>13</sup> and Elizabeth Cady Stanton<sup>14</sup>. Before promoting women's voting rights, they individually ran campaigns to end slavery. Women from various backgrounds participated in American first-wave feminism; some were members of conservative Christian organisations, while others embodied the diversity and radicalism of much of second-wave feminism.

## Second-wave Feminism

Second-wave Feminism refers to a period of feminist activism that lasted from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. It was a continuation of the earlier stage of Feminism, which fought for political and legal rights in the United States and the United Kingdom. Since then, third-wave feminism has coexisted peacefully with second-wave feminism. Cultural and political injustices were intertwined, according to second-wave Feminism.

The movement pushed women to recognise how highly politicised and indicative of a gender-biased power system some aspects of their own lives were. Second-wave Feminism was primarily concerned with other equality issues, such as gender discrimination in society, education, and the workplace. First-wave Feminism, on the other hand, focused on absolute rights such as voting. The

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<sup>11</sup> Founder of the birth control movement in the United States and a pioneer in the area, Margaret Sanger was born in Corning, New York, on September 14, 1879, and passed away in Tucson, Arizona, on September 6, 1966. The term "birth control" is credited to her.

<sup>12</sup> American anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre, who lived from November 17, 1866, to June 20, 1912, was well-known for her writing and speaking ability. She fought the state, capitalism, marriage, and the dominance of religion over sexuality and women's life, which she believed to be interconnected, as well as all of these issues. Her beliefs are frequently referred to as a notable early feminist because of her thoughts.

<sup>13</sup> American activist Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams, Massachusetts, on February 15, 1820, and passed away in Rochester, New York, on March 13, 1906. She was a pioneer in the fight for women's suffrage in the country and served as president of the National Woman Suffrage Association from 1892-1900. Her work paved the path for the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1920), which granted women the right to vote.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an American pioneer in the women's rights movement who was born in Johnstown, New York, on November 12, 1815, and died in New York City on October 26, 1902, made the first organised call for women's suffrage in the country in 1848.

essay by Carol Hanisch's<sup>15</sup> motto "The Personal is Political" came to represent second-wave Feminism and the women's liberation movement.

## Third-wave Feminism

Third-wave Feminism may have begun in the mid-1980s. It is when black feminists like Gloria Anzaldua<sup>16</sup> and Bell Hooks<sup>17</sup> strove to negotiate a prominent space within the feminist theory to examine racial subjectivities.

The third wave of feminism emerged in the early 1990s in response to the second wave's perceived shortcomings and pushback against the initiatives and movements it had sparked. The third wave's ideology significantly impacted a post-structuralist understanding of gender and sexuality. Third-wave feminists frequently focus on "micropolitics," challenging the second wave's assumptions about what is and is not beneficial to women.

## The intellectual roots of Feminism

Despite differing perspectives, feminist ideology revolves around four fundamental issues: gender, patriarchy, women's resistance to male oppression, and women's rights. Even if several tendencies feed them, previously mentioned things fall into these broad categories. Liberalism, Marxism, and radicalism each handled one of these factors per their respective worldviews, with women's empowerment and supported serving as the circle's hub.

## Gender

The word "genus" comes from the Latin word for "type" or "origin." Then it developed until it acquired the exact meaning of origin or gender and became *genre* in French.<sup>18</sup>

Because grammatical employment influences cultural and social concepts, Feminism clung to the term "gender." Gender is thus not a biological distinction. Cultural values are unaffected by a person's sexual development. Gender or sexual orientation refers to a sociocultural framework that has nothing to do with how people develop their sexual orientation. Society imposes gender distinctions through law and force from its various cultures. Sociocultural influences determine gender structure.

Therefore, feminists oppose the term "sex". They insist on gender because they believe the word "sex" imposed by men not only differentiates men and women but emphasises men's dominance and women's inferiority.

## Patriarchy and male oppression

The term "patriarchate" are two Greek words that collectively refer to the father's rule.<sup>19</sup> The word patriarchy means the father's rule or

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<sup>15</sup> A radical feminist, an essential member of New York Radical Women and Redstockings. She is best known for popularising the phrase "personal is political" in a 1970 essay of the same name.

<sup>16</sup> Gloria Evangelina Anzaldua, who lived from 1942 until 2004, was a queer, feminist, and Chicana philosophy pioneer.

<sup>17</sup> An American academic and activist born on September 25, 1952, and passed away on December 15, 2021. Her work focused on racial, gender, and economic class relationships. She frequently looked at how different people perceived Black women, Black women writers, and the emergence of feminist identities.

<sup>18</sup> "Kind, sort, class, a class or kind of persons or things sharing certain traits," from Old French *genre*, *genre* "kind, species; character; gender" (12c., Modern French *genre*), from the stem Of Latin *genus* (genitive *generis*) "race, stock, family; kind, rank, order; species," also "(male or female) sex,".

the patriarch. Initially, used to describe a specific type of male-dominated family – the large household of the patriarch, which included women, junior men, children, enslaved people and domestic servants, all under the rule of this dominant male. It generally refers to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterises a system whereby women are kept subordinate in several ways.

Feminists refer to the power dynamic between men and women as patriarchy. Feminists employ the concept of patriarchy, which is more than just a term; it is, like any other concept, a tool for comprehending women's realities.

It is one of the terms advocated in the anthropology of humanities and Feminism. The anthropological concept served as the foundation for feminism, but it was used and interpreted for its reality. The rejection of the patriarchy by feminists is a rejection of the patriarchs' exercise of religious authority on behalf of the father, whom Christians believe to be God - God is free from and far above the things they say about Him.

### **Male oppression**

Women, on average, have less control over sexual encounters than their male partners. Most feminists face a double standard of sexual behaviour favouring men, and men's economic and social dominance over women impacts sexual interactions.

Feminists disagree about the importance of sexuality in understanding women's oppression. According to many radical feminists, sexuality is the primary means by which men dominate women and maintain their dominance over them in society. Others, particularly socialist feminists, do not believe that sexual oppression is the primary cause of women's oppression. They have criticised this school of radical feminism for undervaluing other factors such as women's disadvantage in the labour force and domestic responsibilities within families.

Women's rejection of men and desire to be on an equal footing with him in all aspects of life, including political, social, economic, and anti-oppression, prompted feminists to seek power and political, economic, and social support, a concept known in feminist thought as granting power.

According to Simone de Beauvoir<sup>20</sup>, men and their institutions create all of the roles for women, but women can be anything they want, not what men want them to be. She proposed three strategies to help women change who they are. First, working demonstrates a woman's transcendence and identity, even if it is oppressive or exploitative. Second, she should pursue intellectual pursuits because doing so allows her to impact society. Third, she must strive for financial independence from men because economic independence is the key to women's liberation.

### **Women's rights**

Feminist movements have and continue to advocate for women's rights, such as the right to vote, hold public office, work, earn equal pay, own property, receive education, enter contracts, have equal rights within marriage, and take maternity leave. Feminists have also ensured that women and girls have access to

<sup>19</sup> from Greek patriarkhēs "chief or head of a family," from Patria "family, clan," from pater "father".

<sup>20</sup> Simone de Beauvoir was a French writer and feminist born in Paris on January 9, 1908, and died there on April 14, 1986. She was a member of the intellectual group of philosopher- writers who gave existentialism's issues a literary interpretation.

contraception, legal abortions, social integration, and protection from rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. Feminist movements have frequently included changes in female dress standards and appropriate physical activities for females.

### **Feminist theories and schools**

There are several variants of feminist ideology that have emerged over time, and some of the more essential subtypes are the following:

#### **Liberal Feminism**

Liberal Feminism promotes gender equality through governmental and judicial reform. It is a type of individualistic feminism and feminist philosophy that emphasises women's ability to demonstrate and maintain parity through their choices and actions. Liberal feminism views men's and women's interactions as the starting point for introducing gender equity into society.

Liberal feminists argue that because all women can assert their right to equality, change is possible without changing how society organises. Access to contraception, the right to an abortion, sexual harassment, voting rights, education, equal pay for equal work, affordable child care, affordable health care, and publicising the prevalence of sexual and domestic violence against women are all high priorities for liberal feminists.

#### **Radical Feminism**

According to Radical Feminism, a sexist capitalist hierarchy characterises women's oppression. Radical feminists argue that women can only be accessible after abolishing what they see as a fundamentally oppressive and authoritarian system. Radical feminists believe that male-based authority and power structures cause oppression and injustice and that significant social change will be impossible as long as the system and its principles remain in place. Capitalism views as a barrier to the abolition of oppression by radical feminists. Most radical feminists believe that destroying and rebuilding society is the only way to achieve their goals.

Separatist feminism is a type of radical feminism that opposes heterosexual relationships because it believes there is no way to end men's and women's sexual inequality. Separatist feminists agree that men cannot contribute constructively to the feminist movement and that even well-intentioned men perpetuate patriarchal dynamics.

Anarcha-feminism is a subset of radical feminism. It incorporates both anarchist and feminist principles. The fight against patriarchy, according to anarcha-feminists, is a critical component of the anarchist struggle against the state and class inequality. They see patriarchy as a symbol of the hierarchy.

#### **Socialist and Marxist feminisms**

According to socialist feminism, women's exploitation links to Marxist concepts of exploitation, oppression, and labour. Socialist feminists believe that women's unequal status in domestic and professional spheres is holding them back. Women are said to be exploited by a patriarchal system that, among other things, undervalues women and their significant labour through prostitution, domestic work, childcare, and marriage.

Socialist feminists focus their efforts on a significant change that affects society as a whole rather than just individuals. Because they see women's oppression as part of a larger pattern that affects everyone involved in the capitalist system, they know the importance of working with all groups, not just men.



### **Post-structural Feminism and postmodern Feminism**

Post-structural feminists are also known as French feminists. They investigate and define feminist issues by drawing on ideas from various epistemological movements, such as race theory, literary theory, and other intellectual currents. Many post-structural feminists believe that women's ability to be unique is one of their most potent tools in fighting against patriarchal dominance. They also think that restricting the feminist movement to the concept of gender equality limits women's options because "equality" is still defined from a patriarchal or masculine perspective.

Feminist thought that integrates postmodern and post-structuralist concepts is known as postmodern feminism. The claim that sex and gender form through language is the most significant divergence from other schools of feminism.

Postmodern feminist works highlight stereotypical female roles, but only as original beliefs. They are unconcerned about the history of feminism, and their only concern is what they will do about it. The history of feminism is dismissed and used to demonstrate how absurd previous beliefs were. Modern feminist theory criticises for being primarily, if not exclusively, associated with western middle-class academia. The mainstream feminism movement has come under fire for focusing on and ignoring associated racial and social class issues.

### **Postcolonial Feminism and third-world Feminism**

The gendered history of colonialism gave rise to postcolonial feminism. Colonial powers frequently imposed Western norms on the countries they colonised. Following the formation United Nations in the 1940s and 1950s, the West kept an eye on former colonies for what it saw as "social progress." Using primarily Western standards, organisations such as the United Nations have examined and monitored the situation of women in developing countries. Traditional practises and roles adopted by women, considered distasteful by Western standards, can be viewed as a form of rebellion against the gender roles imposed by colonial powers. Today's postcolonial feminists struggle to combat gender oppression within their cultural models of society rather than those imposed by Western colonisers.

Postcolonial feminists argue that women's marginalisation in postcolonial cultures is due to racial, class, and ethnic oppression associated with the colonial experience. They question the assumption that patriarchy is primarily motivated by gender oppression. Postcolonial feminists object to depicting non-Western women as helpless, voiceless victims compared to Western women as modern, intelligent, and empowered.

One definition of third-world Feminism is a collection of feminist theories created by feminists who gained their perspectives and participated in feminist politics in so-called third-world nations. Chandra Talpade Mohanty<sup>21</sup> criticises Western feminism for being ethnocentric and ignoring the specific experiences of women from third world countries or the existence of feminism native to those regions, even though women from the third world have participated in the feminist movement. She claims that third-world women

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<sup>21</sup> Mohanty was born in Mumbai, India, in 1955, and later in life became a U.S. citizen. Chandra Talpade Mohanty is a postcolonial and feminist theorist who fights for a more transnational approach to feminism. Her brand of feminism had been described as "crystal clear, and clearly radical, and refreshingly rooted in the global south.

believe that Western feminism rests its view of women on its internal racism, classism, and homophobia.

### **Islamic Feminism**

Margot Badran<sup>22</sup>, an Egyptian women's movement historian, mentioned Islamic Feminism in her article Towards Multiple Islamic feminism - A Look at the East.

In the late 20th century, some feminist intellectual organisations coined Islamic feminism to recognise religion's role in ensuring women's rights and freedom. And that it is a reference and an integrated system that does not need other methods to achieve human dignity and establish equality. They blame women's tragic situation on cultural and social factors and misguided masculine interpretations of women. The legal texts are exempt from the Arab world's lost status of women.

Since the 1990s, the term Islamic feminism has applied to the efforts of Iranian female activists following the Islamic Revolution to extract legitimate legal rights from within the Shiite jurisprudence system.

The goal was to undermine previous interpretations of Sharia from within the Sharia. Religious studies academies are directly responsible for carrying out this task. In recent years, a group of academic feminists, primarily secular, have begun to use the term Islamic feminism to describe an alternative to Western feminism. They came to Islam because it is an authentic and natural path to gender equality and justice, and their main work, like those who came before them, was to defend the harmony between Islam and feminism.

It is a feminist movement because it arose intellectually to defend women's rights in the name of Islam. And it is Islamic because they made the Qur'an and Sunnah the foundations of their thought and its reference.

It also defines Islamic feminism as a title raised by Muslim women who defend freedom and equality to obtain just political and social rights and confront discrimination within the confines of the patriarchal interpretation of Islamic ideology. As a result, they see discrimination against women in Muslim societies and use the religious text as a reference. The current discrimination stems from bias and an incorrect understanding of masculine authority. As a result, it believes it is necessary to renew the religion by reinterpreting it and creating a new version of women.

The truth is that, while Islamic feminism claims to use religious teachings and religious references in framing and analysis, its curricula and interpretive mechanisms resemble Western feminist tools. And its critical approaches, as well as its application in re-reading and comprehending legal texts through a feminist lens, are comparable to current data.

The new feminist movements seek to establish their identity, declare absolute equality between the sexes, and eliminate biological differences.

### **The Islamic conception of Feminism**

The perception in literature is one of the most notable tributaries of intellectual progress. Principles and concepts are the foundation of thought. This idea typically stems from a person's religious or human-made beliefs. Its influence on individuals is proportional to

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<sup>22</sup> Margot Badran is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Muslim Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, US.

their dedication to it, enlightening them with its principles on the one hand and providing powerful interpretations of human issues, the universe, and life on the other. Instead, personal experiences are incidents that result from specific convictions.

Feminism came as a movement that was far from the correct religious conception. Instead, it steps out from everything related to religion.

The rise of feminism in the West causes us to reflect on the distorted Judeo-Christian religion's treatment of women, which gave rise to the feminist movement as a reaction to it. The woman has been viewed as a curse by Judaism because she deceived Adam. A girl is considered a servant from birth in Judaism. Her father may sell her while she is still a child, and she has no right to inherit unless the father has no sons. According to Christianity, the woman is the gateway to Satan, and her relationship is an abomination.

It called a meeting to discuss whether or not she was a human being. Is she endowed with a soul? What happens if we accept that women are human beings on par with men? According to the conference, she appears to be a human formed to serve the man, so under early French law, she was considered a minor and was not granted any personal or property rights.

When religious reform movements arose, they did not treat the lady equitably but attempted to mitigate the harm done to her. She persisted in resisting the flames of discrimination and exclusion. As a warning, the Christian Saint John

Chrysostom<sup>23</sup> said: Let her be left without education since as soon as a woman gets educated, everything becomes wrecked. Martin Luther<sup>24</sup> claimed that women are subordinate to men based on biblical principles. Luther was born over a thousand years after Chrysostom! For nine centuries, the woman's circumstances remained unchanged.

The religious leadership has established and entrenched the inferior view of women, which has pushed women to break with everything sacred. This philosophy originated with men in the West, who dealt with women out of inferiority.

Women in the West rose in opposition to all forms of injustice. And the cause was the Church and whoever wielded this power. She rejected the so-called patriarchy to achieve equality and freedom and treated men differently. She then invented gender to give her the option of being male or female based on her whims. She preferred to generalise it because society makes the decisions, and neither men nor women are born with a predetermined gender. The differences between them are no longer biological and have no other meaning.

As a result, the family shackle shattered, and chaos erupted at every level of creation. When homosexuals began to marry, the traditional definition of a family—a man and a woman— was replaced by one that included two men or two women. It is undeniably a flaw at the level of cosmic rules and instinct.

<sup>23</sup> St. John Chrysostom was an early Church Father, a biblical commentator, and the archbishop of Constantinople. He was born in Antioch, Syria, around 347 CE and died on September 14, 407.

<sup>24</sup> German philosopher and religious reformer Martin Luther, born on November 10, 1483, and passed away on February 18, 1546, served as the impetus for the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

However, feminist ideas permeated Western decision-makers, and Third-World countries were obligated to participate in the resulting conferences and agreements. The Islamic reaction to the discussion of feminist philosophy was therefore unavoidable and essential for Muslim women to understand the dangers of these ideas disguised as liberating women from oppression, which in our religion is injustice.

Qur'an and Sunnah, which serve as the foundation for an Islamic conception, are the principles upon which the judgement in the circle of Islamic criticism establish. These principles also give us various perspectives and visions during our Islamic reign. We must first understand how Islam views women to highlight the Islamic perspective on women.

They are general rules for how to treat women in Islam. They are;

**First rule:** There is no distinction between a woman and a man in humanity; it is stated clearly in both the Quran and the Sunnah.

Allah says in the Quran, "O mankind! Have Taqwa of your Lord, who created you from a single person, and from him, He created his mate".<sup>25</sup> And he says, "And He it is Who created the two kinds, the male and the female,".<sup>26</sup>

Prophet said, "Indeed, women are the partners of men."<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, Allah made one of the signs of his great power the marital life between the male and the female. He says, "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect."<sup>28</sup>

Each gender has distinct roles and responsibilities in this universe. The wholeness principle, which has given both men and women different potential and capabilities, has given each gender qualities that set them apart and make them specific for their roles and lives.

According to the Almighty, women and men are equal in the sense of humanity, and their Lord responded to them, "Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another."<sup>29</sup>

In Islam, women and men are equal in law and religion. Allah says, "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."<sup>30</sup> And "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."<sup>31</sup>

**Second rule:** Justice

Much like the rest of Islamic Sharia, ruling on men and women in Islam begins with the principle of justice. As some advocates, they did not base their decisions on what is referred commonly to as equality.

<sup>25</sup> An-Nisa -1.

<sup>26</sup> An-Najm -45.

<sup>27</sup> Sunan Abi Dawud 236, Mishkat al-Masabih 441, Jami` at-Tirmidhi 113.

<sup>28</sup> Ar-Rum -21.

<sup>29</sup> Al Imran -195.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Hujuraat - 13.

<sup>31</sup> An-Nahl -97.

The principle of justice implies equality in what must be equal and differentiation in what must be differentiated, considering undeniable differences between men and women.

A man should not demand things that are not within his purviews, such as pregnancy and childbirth, or inappropriate for him, such as breastfeeding. Similarly, a woman should not demand things that are not within her purviews, such as congregational prayer, her husband's obligation of alimony on her and children, or something for which she was unprepared, such as participating in a war.

Almighty says, "Indeed, your efforts are diverse."<sup>32</sup>

Because of this clear distinction, the task and aims, each man and woman have different needs to deal with because of their different natures. Life has provided all possible facilities and the appropriate adaptation for employment.

Syed Abu-al-A'la Maududi said<sup>33</sup>, "This is that for which an oath has been sworn by the night and the day, and the creation of the male and the female. It means to say: Just as the night and the day, and the male and the female, are different from each other, and their effects and results are mutually contradictory, so are the aims and objects for which men are endeavouring and struggling; different in their nature and contradictory with regard to their results. In the following verses, it has been told that all these divided endeavours are divided into two main kinds."<sup>34</sup>

Third rule: Islam honours women by proving their innocence and disproving the falsehood of the accusations levelled against them by corrupt religious clergymen.

All of the Qur'anic verses demonstrate that sin did not originate with Eve alone, contrary to what the distorted authors of the Bible assert. Instead, it confirmed that Satan slipped out of it and his wife, Eve, altogether.

Allah Almighty's said, "But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been."<sup>35</sup>

He said, "But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts."<sup>36</sup>

Instead, Adam was mentioned alone in another context of the story of seduction. Allah says, "thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced."<sup>37</sup> And before this verse, Allah said, "so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery."<sup>38</sup>

Here's a nice gesture in this verse: God did not say you two should be in misery. According to scholars, men are responsible for protecting and maintaining women because their happiness and pain are shared.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Layl -4.

<sup>33</sup> Ab al-Al al-Mawdd, a journalist and Muslim scholar who was influential in Pakistani politics, was born in Aurangabad, Hyderabad state, India, on September 25, 1903, and passed away in Buffalo, New York, on September 22, 1979.

<sup>34</sup> Tafheem-ul-Quran by Syed Abu-al-A'la Maududi, 595 English Traditional.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Baqarah -36.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Araf -20.

<sup>37</sup> Ta-Ha -121.

<sup>38</sup> Aariah Ta-Ha -117.

Islam's inheritance laws, which unfairly apply to men and women in the religion, are a topic of critique among feminists towards Islam.

In Islam, a man receives half of the inheritance because he was financially responsible for his wife. There is no obligation for a married woman to spend a penny of her property or income on the household. However, the female does not always inherit half of the male. The woman inherits the double in several cases. It sometimes equates with the man, and sometimes the woman inherits without the man—details on these issues can be found in inheritance law books. The real problem is generally judging without a complete understanding of these rulings, and the most extraordinary calamity results from ignorance of Islamic legislation.

As it raises some of those unfamiliar with Shariah's rulings, why is the testimony of one woman, like a man, insufficient?

It's important to understand that testimony is not a right, and exempting a woman from it once would not violate one of her rights. Instead, it is kindness toward the woman and keeping her away from hostile sources so that she can devote herself to her incredible task in life without commitments or psychological anxiety. In Islam, a testimony is an ordinance, and anyone who hides it sins. Allah says, "And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it - his heart is indeed sinful, and Allah is Knowing of what you do."<sup>39</sup>

The Shari'a reduces the ordinance for women as mercy and honour for them. Because reducing ordinance brings comfort to women and relieves them of hardship. The testimony frequently results in dire consequences for the witness and his reputation. And it may expose him to moral pain that may cause him a psychological complex, especially if he is soft-hearted, intensely emotional, and susceptible to criticism, like most women. Even among men, this is apparent in this situation. It is noticeable that men may escape testimony because of its consequences, but rights must base. The Almighty says, "Let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon."<sup>40</sup> And a responsibility that men evade, what is the value of being pursued by a woman?

The testimony of women is of different types.

A type-only women's testimony accepts, and the jurists describe it as what no one else investigates or discovers about it except women. Some of them express it with what is only acceptable for women's evidence, such as childbirth and women's defects, and so on. The testimony of women alone is also taken in other forms, including women's testimony in the will if only women attend it. And a single woman's testimony accepts in exchange for a single man's identical testimony, such as in the case of curse testimony when a man slanders his wife without any witnesses. There are other types where women's testimony takes with men's testimony, and certain situations—such as criminal cases, hudud and retaliation—where women's evidence is not accepted. It has a divergent philosophy; that helps prevent retaliation against women and the harm that may befall them due to their testimony in a criminal case. It also helps to spare women from many problems and potentially severe consequences.

Thus, we realise that Islam's rulings base on justice and completeness, so it is not necessary to look at the Islamic treatment

<sup>39</sup> Al-Baqarah -283.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Baqarah -282.

of women without its treatment with the man. Islam gave the woman half of the inheritance in some cases and obligated the man to provide alimony in all cases. In some cases, Islam made the testimony of a woman equal to half that of a man, which is more likely to be of the man's matters, the testimony of the woman alone settled without two men, invalidated by her testimony for the man's testimony as in the curse.

Islam considers a woman's emotional development and grants her the right to good company and children, making it her primary responsibility to take care of them. And the man who increases in his mental formation received the stewardship. It wasn't an honour but an ordinance that requires alimony and full responsibility for the woman and her children. And because the man is more physically capable than the woman, he is better suited to work hard in the land because it is his speciality. Suppose we accept the principle of the feminists' demand for equality. In that case, it would be necessary for women to lead the battling and defence of protection, which is something that women cannot emotionally and physically

withstand. Instead, God made the man who fights for her protection the status of a martyr. The Messenger of Allah said, "he who dies in defence of his family is a martyr."<sup>41</sup>

What tremendous honour bestows upon a woman whom God has cherished! Is there any higher dignity bestowed upon her! However, it is an honour granted to those pleased with Allah as their Lord, Islam as their religion, and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as their Prophet. A person's glory and survival from humiliation are according to his fortune of "Iman" in word, belief and action. Whoever seeks to honour without religion will be humiliated, and whoever desires apart from Islam will be despised.

But the foundation for achieving this honour is serving servitude in its most profound sense, which reaches to God in both the hidden and apparent, surrender to God's submission and contentment with His rulings. The Almighty says, "Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?"<sup>42</sup>

The fascination with feminist claims of instinctual inversion and cosmic rule clashes will only result in thorns. Unfortunately, it only causes bleeding in the hands of seemingly victorious women.

The u.s.a. today publishes a report on the country's state. It mentions that 80% of American women believe that today's decadence and violence resulted from women's independence over the past thirty years. 75% of people are distressed about the breakdown of family values. 80% of women say balancing their work and spouse's responsibilities is tough. According to 87% of women, if the course of history would reverse, they would view the call for equality as a social plan against the United States and oppose those who raised it.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

Numerous social, political, and cultural influences led to the Western feminist movement. Its emergence as a reaction was not surprising. However, with the Church's dominance, feminism roamed on earth, making dealing with the philosophy it adhered to

<sup>41</sup> Abu Dawud and At- Tirmidhi.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Mulk -14.

<sup>43</sup> في المراجع، أكرم ضياء العمرى، عالم مختلّف -قراءة المرأة- 44-68.

more unbalanced. So, it came up with a concept and turned its ideology into a response.

The Islamic world is not far from the rest of the world. Due to the spread of contemporary communication, our Muslim societies have responded to feminism in this way. Apart from that, Muslim women's rights are protected entirely in Islamic law was not acknowledged in perception or idea. As a result, the feminist philosophy—which stands against Islam's core principles—was adopted.

A Muslim woman's perception of the injustice done to her arises from two factors.

1. Personal injustice perpetrated by individuals and Islam disassociates from their actions.
2. A lack of understanding of Islamic law accorded women respect, justice, and rights compatible with their natural formation.

Demanding a woman's rights, removing oppression, and protecting her from violence are legitimate religious rights. And no one can blame her if she has her evidence. Women demanding Western freedom and rebelling against Sharia's dominance and public morals in Sharia-related matters is abnormal and contrary to Islam's religion. Injustice and insulting a woman's dignity do not justify abandoning her faith, mistrusting her Lord, opposing a legal ruling, or generalising slander, belittling, and hatred for all men. It is not wise or fair, and no matter how much she listens to her freedom, she will lose her afterlife.

Therefore, we disapprove of feminism's philosophical foundations per Islamic thought. Gender is against the universal law and Allah's creation in the world. Accepting it necessitates abandoning the rules that prepared men and women to build the earth and carry out human responsibilities by treating them as complementary two halves.

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