

Reclaiming rights and leadership: the long march of muslim women

Crux: Fiqh mentality

Worth of a woman is less than worth of a man

Fiqh's perception

- Diyya: blood compensation
- Umm Waraqa's leading the prayer

Theological background for reclaiming role and rights

Theology and Exegesis

- work on holistic exegesis:
- reading the Qur'an as a whole, and not in parts,
- in its context,
- and ridding our reading from the patriarchal interpretation (secondary texts, reviewing fake hadiths)

biologically different, ontologically equal

- O MANKIND! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living soul, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. (An-Nisa' 4:1)

Khilafa

- And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am appointing on earth a vicegerent', they said, 'What, will You appoint therein one who will do corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify You?'; He said, 'Assuredly, I know what you know not'. (Al Baqara 2: 30)

The fall

- We said: "O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression." Then did Satan make them slip from the (garden), and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been. (Al Baqara 2:35-36)

Qur'an heard the women and answered them

VERILY, for all men and women who have surrendered themselves unto God, and all believing men and believing women, and all truly devout men and truly devout women, and all men and women who are true to their word, and all men and women who are patient in adversity, and all men and women who humble themselves [before God], and all men and women who give in charity, and all self-denying men and self-denying women, and all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, and all men and women who remember God unceasingly: for [all of] them has God readied forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward. (Al Ahzab 33: 35)

Equally responsible over each other

- And the believers, both men and women, are allies of one another; they enjoin decency and forbid indecency; they observe prayer and pay the alms, and they obey God and His Messenger. Those, God will have mercy on them. Truly God is Mighty, Wise. (At Tawba 9:71)

- " And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you might find peace by their side, and He ordained between you affection and mercy. Surely in that there are signs for a people who reflect.(Ar-Rum 30:21)
- "They are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them" (Al Baqara 2:187)

Issues

- Inheritance
- Testimony
- Polygamy
- Violence

Practical theology Marriage

- And if you have reason to fear that you might not act equitably towards orphans, then marry from among [other] women such as are lawful to you – [even] two, or three, or four: but if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then [only] one – or [from among] those whom you rightfully possess. This will make it more likely that you will not deviate from the right course. (An-Nisa' 4:3)

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Practical theology- Inheritance

- God (thus) directs you as regards your children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half (An-Nisa' 4:11) Those are limits set by God (An-Nisa' 4:13)

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Historical background for reclaiming role and rights

Time of origin

- Women in public life: mosque, war, converts
- Women in education
- Women in transmission and production of religious knowledge

History 7th-19th c

- During the first centuries of Islam, a number of women scholars in religion
- Transmission of religious science was done in informal settings
- Topics taught and transmitted: Hadith, Qur'an, Fiqh (jurisprudence)
- 13th-14th century, formalization of religious education in institutes (universities) closed for women

History 13th-19th c

- After 13th century regression in islamic sciences, and of role of women
- As of 19th c. Missionary schools, education for all (girls and boys, christians and muslims, in the Middle East...
- Feminism starts as lay feminism, but concerned with religious issues

Islamic Feminism

- In the 1960s we start having women back on the scene of religious science: Bint ash-Shati' and Nusrat Amin with Qur'anic Exegesis
Development of women religious scholarship in the 20th century
- We have to wait until the 1980s to start having an "Islamic feminism"

Position of Authority in Practices

- Leading prayer (for women and mixed)
- Women muezzin
- Friday sermon
- Women performing marriages
- Women changing laws (personal Status)

Women's involvement in personal status laws

- Sisters in Islam
- Mudawwanah Morocco
- Tunis commission for rights and liberties
- Musawah

Conclusions

- 1) Rights and role go hand in hand: we need women in leadership in religious positions, and for personal status laws, we need women religious judges
- 2) In our part of the world the same goes for women from other religions. Permeability between religion and culture, and also mimetism between religions
- 3) Feminism at the time of the revolution