

Example of islamic feminism essay



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Arab women were not in isolation of such a debate and many Arab activist women were outspoken in their protest against what they considered unfair theatrical cultural norms that aimed at depriving women of their freedom. On the other hand, their opponents claimed that those activists relied mainly on feminist discourse which, far from being a universal one, is rather an imported discourse that came about as a reaction to a completely different cultural and historical situation. In this context, they refer to many pressures Western women had to face and were eventually the fuel of their revolt against the status they occupied in their society.

In addition, they argue that even feminist jargon, such as patriarchy and patriarchal society, is culturally mound and directly associated with the church and its organization. On the other hand, Western feminism has often been associated with colonial discourse that “ devalue[s] local cultures by presuming that there is only one path for emancipating women -? adopting Western models” (ABA-Lughole 14)Len this sense, a need emerges for an examination of the historical circumstances that govern the status of Arab women nowadays, a status that began to take shape in the first Hajji century (the 7th century L. C).

Thus, this paper will examine the degree of the freedom granted to women during the invent here years that started with the beginning of the new religion and ended with the death of Prophet Mohamed through an analysis of collections of Width (prophet’s saying) and some of the prophet’s biographies.

Freedom is generally understood as a prerequisite of human existence itself. It “ is included in every subject, in the very fact that there is a subject, that there is a being” (Elevens 54). It follows that freedom is usually an “ affirmation of human existence and hence its essential consummation occurs through freedom of decision.

This freedom lays hold of the necessary and places itself n the bonds of a supreme obligation” (Heidegger 565).

This sense of obligation is itself based on the capability to choose, for “ free choice is at the heart of freedom” (Koran 26). It is free choice to limit your own freedom out of a sense of obligation. Thus, it becomes self-evident that “ freedom is immediately limited by its responsibility” (Elevens 55), that free will works within the perimeters of a law that is capable of preserving it but is simultaneously intent to preserve the freedom of the Other.

The point here is to assess the amount Of freedom granted by the Islamic law and the early Islamic society to women.

It is noteworthy that the inseparability between ethics and freedom is emphasized in the Quern in relation to people in general and women in particular, it says: “ Prophet, if believing women come to you and pledge themselves to serve no other God besides Allah, to commit neither theft, nor adultery, nor child-murder, to utter no monstrous falsehood of their invention, and to disobey you in nothing just or reasonable, accept their allegiance and implore Allah to forgive them” (Al- Maintain “ She Who is Tested” 12).

In this context, it is commonplace to find that women are automatically within the range of any Aquaria verse that addresses the believers in general. For example, women are included in the Aquaria declaration of ultimate human freedom “ this is the truth from your Lord. Let him who will, believe in it, and him who will, deny it” (AAA-Kafka ‘ The Cave” 29).

However, they are especially addressed thirty five times in the Quern: 15 times as believing women, eleven times as just women, five times as female, and four times as woman.

Moreover, their moral responsibility is stressed by the prophet Mohamed in his famous Width (saying): “ Surely! Everyone of you s a guardian and is responsible for his charges: The Imam (ruler) of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; a man is the guardian of his family (household) and is responsible for his subjects; a woman is the guardian of her husband’s home and of his children and is responsible for them; Surely, everyone of you is a guardian and responsible for his charges” (Babushka 9. 252).

Despite the fact that the responsibility in this Width is ethical and primarily to God, it lays the foundation for the legal equality between men and women in terms of the limits and punishments (hoodoo) set by Allah. In fact, there is no discrimination of any sort between men and women concerning those punishments. In addition, the testimony of women was legally acknowledged by prophet Mohamed in the court of law. For example, a woman’s testimony was the sole basis for his verdict concerning a case where a man married a woman whom he was said to be his sister by suckling.

That is why it comes as no surprise that Muar Bin AAA-Shasta, the second Caliph (successor of prophet Mohamed) appointed a woman called Al- Shift binds Abdullah as superintendent of the Medina market where she exercised judicial and executive powers.

In Mecca, also appointed Samara bins Nashua Said to the same post and gave her a whip to punish anyone who cheated or gave short measure. It is also self-evident that human freedom is dependent on awareness and knowledge as a person “ knows what s/he wants and what s/he rejects, s/he does not take an action without being aware of its causes and effects” (Whap 463).

Bearing in mind that “ the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power” (Factual 52), it follows that the empowerment of women is intertwined with the amount of knowledge they et. Thus, since the beginning of Islam as a new religion, women were given the right and the opportunity to learn their new religion just like men. Actually, the women who asked the Prophet to fix a day for them because the men were taking all his time, were motivated by a thirst for knowledge and a belief that they need to be on equal footing with men in this respect.

In addition, the prophet’s consent to give “ them one day for religious lessons and commandments” (Babushka 1 .

101) reveals his awareness of the importance of knowledge for them. For the same reason when Prophet Mohamed gave a speech to the people then “ went towards the women thinking that they had not heard him (I. E. His

sermon),” he approached them and repeated the sermon for their benefit. (Babushka 1 . Egg).

It was also narrated that whenever “ Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) heard anything which she did not understand, she used to ask again till she understood it completely” (Babushka 1 . 03). This eagerness to learn and to have in depth knowledge of everything later paid off as Aisha became a known Scholar of Islam narrating alone 5965 widths. She was also an expert in a wide variety of fields such as law, Medicine and literature. Furthermore, it is historically evident that she was responsible for the education of 232 man and 67 women and that she gave legal opinion (fatwa) in the time of the orthodox Caliphs including ABA Baker, Muar and Atman.

She was also known for her eloquent taffies (commentary on Quern) and deep knowledge of legal jurisprudence (fish).

It is very important here to note that there were no boundaries or limits to the areas women were permitted to learn about. The women of AAA-Nanas (the people of Medina) were praised by Aisha because they did not hesitate to ask about every and each point that had to do with heir lives including women’s most intimate issues. She says, “ the best women are the women of AAA-Nanas. Shyness did not prevent them from learning Fish. ” Babushka 1.

97). This call for education was not confined to one class of women, but was rather applied to all women even slaves.

Prophet Mohamed said that among the people who will be doubly rewarded by God is “ a master of a woman-slave who teaches her good manners and educates her in the best possible way and manumits her and then marries her. ” (Babushka 7. 20) In this context it is crucial to point out that Islam did not originate slavery which ad been a deep rooted system in the Arab societies and all the neighboring nations and empires of that time. Thus, even though Islam has tolerated slavery, it has never approved of it It has consequently put lots of rules that lead to its immediate improvement and its subsequent and gradual termination on the long run.

Moreover, whereas in other slave systems, the salves’ “ very claim to humanity has been questioned at various times, their persons abused, their intelligence insulted” (Achebe 1 38), great attention has been paid to slaves after the emergence of Islam. The Prophet put the rules overseeing the status of slaves, men and women, in society saying: “ Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one’s brethren under one’s control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like Of what one wears.

You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job)” (Babushka 3. 721 In addition, acknowledging the importance of discourse in creating reality, Prophet Mohamed asked people to be cautious even in the terms they use in referring to their slaves.

He asserts that a slave-owner should not say “ my slave (Abed), or my girl-slave (Matt), but should say, my lad (Fatal), my lass (Faith), and my boy

(Gullah)” (Babushka 3. 728), as the latter terms are less pejorative. On another level, freedom has always been divided into two main categories: mental and practical.

Mental or intellectual freedom is concerned with issues of conviction and belief, whereas practical freedom has to do with social and political issues. Mental freedom is prior to any other kind of freedom because the ability to choose between different alternatives necessitates a prior intellectual process that “ is not only independent of the practical side but also forms an indispensable basis of it” ((Koran 33). This appreciation of intellectual freedom was apparent at the time of the Prophet in many different ways.

Lots of women of that age showed great courage in their defense of their freedom of belief.

Interestingly, the first martyr in the cause of Islam was a woman named Summary bins Kathy, who died as a result of persecution by Aquarius. Another outstanding example is Ramada Bins ABA Soften who chose to convert to Islam and had to leave her country and her mom to join the Moslem migration to Ethiopia (Abyssinia/Wabash). Her husband went with her but later chose to renege from his religion.

She, on the other hand refused to follow him and clung to her belief despite all the hardships she had to go through in that foreign land. Practical freedom was equally stressed during that time on all its levels.

Bearing in mind that “ it is desirable that in things which do not primarily concern others, individuality should assert itself’ (Mill 62), personal freedom

in issues of food, clothing, worship and work has always been of utmost importance. Women of that time were given great freedom concerning all those issues. However, it should be clear that freedom in Islam is not the freedom from responsibility, moral obligation or virtue. It is rather freedom within the boundaries set by the rules of religion.

Thus, apart from the forbidden foods such as pork, wild or dead animals and alcoholics, people were free to choose what they prefer to eat.

Prophet Mohamed gave example to all, men and women, as he is said to have “ never criticized any food (he was invited to) but he used to eat if he liked the food, and leave it if he disliked” (Babushka 7. 320). As for clothing, it is known that Islam outlines a code of modesty, according to which women are required to evade wearing clothes that draw attention to themselves by being transparent, tight or revealing. Other than that, it does not command a certain style, color, or fabric. The range of clothing reported to have been used during the early Islamic period is a sign of the great variety available at that time.

In matters of worship, women were keen on offering daily prayers in the mosque. The Prophet encouraged them to do so and addressed the men saying: “ if the wife of anyone of you asks permission to go to the mosque, he should not forbid her” (Babushka 7. 165). The presence of women and their special needs during prayer was always taken into consideration as, for example, when she is accompanied by her children.

In this context, the prophet is quoted saying “ sometimes I enter prayer and I intend to prolong it, but then I hear a child crying, and shorten my prayer

thinking of the distress of the child's mother" (Fish us-Saunas 2. 1 b).

Women were also entitled to retire to the mosque (Aitkin) during the last third of the month of Ramadan just like men. Aisha narrated that " the Prophet used to practice Taking the sat ten days of Ramadan till he died and then his wives used to practice Aitkin after him" (Babushka 3. 243).

Apart from that, they also attended the meetings that were held there.

Whenever an announcement about a gathering was made, women hurried alongside men to attend that. Here one may refer to the narration of Fatima bins Says who responded to one such call and attended the meeting (Muslim 1373).

A woman is also free to fast in Ramadan and to travel to Mecca on pilgrimage (the " farad" or obligatory pilgrimage only) without the consent of her husband. In addition, women were not confined to souse work or forbidden from seeking employment in all fields of life.

Assayed Jading, the Prophet's first wife Was one of the richest and most important business women in Mecca and he was her employee. Many women traded in the marketplace, others were nurses like Ruffian who was the first nurse in Islam. Other women, such as Leila al-Seafaring, took part in battles, carrying water and nursing the wounded.

At the time of the Battle of Thud, Nanas reported that " I saw Aisha, the daughter of ABA Baker and Mum Salaam both lifting their dresses up so that was able to see the ornaments of their legs, ND they were carrying the water skins on their arms to pour the water into the mouths of the thirsty people

and then go back and fill them and come to pour the water into the mouths of the people again” (Babushka 5. 156).

Moreover, while some contemporary societies pride themselves on having females fighting alongside men in actual combat, Muslim women had the precedence in that field more than fourteen centuries ago.

In the same battle [Thud], an ANSI woman, Nasal bins Kebab, excelled herself. The Prophet said about her, “ Whenever I turned right or left, I saw her fighting to fend me” (Faithful Barb 6. 80). Likewise, Mum Amman is mentioned as one of the heroines of the battle of Thud.

In addition to this, several other names like Assam bins Hazily, Mum Harm, Shawl bins AAA-Czar and Suffice bins Abdul Mutuality figure prominently as active participants in military actions. On the political level, women were granted a role in the political life very early in Islam.

They participated on two different occasions where they pronounced their pledge of allegiance to God and his Prophet. The first is AAA-Kafka second pledge of allegiance where two women, Jim Mare Nauseas Bins Saab and Jim Mania’ Assam Bins Mar, took the pledge along with the men of AAA-Nanas to protect the prophet and fight with him. The second is the pledge Of allegiance taken by women migrating from Mecca to Medina mentioned in Sarah Al- Maintain “ She Who is Tested” verse 12, and has to do with putting the moral and legal basis of the new nation.

On the other hand, the status of Prophet Mohamed as a religious and political leader did not prevent him from following the political advice of his

wife Um Salaam. In the Treaty of Hudaib made in AD 628 between the Muslims and the Quraysh, many of the Muslims did not approve of the treaty and thought it was unfair for the Muslim side. Thus, " when the writing of the peace treaty was concluded, Allah's Apostle said to his companions, " Get up and slaughter your sacrifices and get your head shaved. " By Allah none of them got up, and the Prophet repeated his order thrice.

When none of them got up, he left them and went to Um Salaam and told her of the people's attitudes towards him.

Um Salaam said, " O the Prophet of Allah! Do you want your order to be carried out? Go out and don't say a word to anybody till you have slaughtered your sacrifice and call your barber to shave your head [both are signs of ending his Ihram or that state during which a Muslim is prohibited from doing some allowable things like shaving because of devotion to some kind of worship, minor pilgrimage in this case]. So, the Prophet went out and did not talk to anyone of them till he did that, I. E. Slaughtered the sacrifice and called his barber who shaved his head. Seeing that, the companions of the Prophet got up, slaughtered their sacrifices, and started shaving the heads of one another" (Bukhari 3.

891). Thus the difficult situation was overcome as a result of Um Salaam's sound advice. On the social level, women enjoyed their social rights as equal human beings. The most important realization of freedom for women in early Islamic time came in marriage as a social situation.

Many events and examples can be cited to point out the degree of women's freedom in the choice of their husbands, the continuity of marriage or its

ending by divorce. Bin Bass reported that a girl came to the Messenger of God, Mohamed and she reported that her father had forced her to marry without her consent. The Messenger Of God gave her the choice (between accepting the marriage or invalidating it). (Bin Hannibal 2469). In another version, the girl said: " Actually I accept this marriage but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right (to force a husband on them)" (Bin Major 1873).

ABA Hurrah also narrated that the Prophet said, " A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission.

" The people asked, " O Allah ; s Apostle! How can we know her permission? " He said, " ere silence (indicates her permission)" (Babushka 7. 67). When she finally consents to marriage, all the practical aspects can be covered by the marriage contract, n which the wife can specify all the conditions she needs.

Even if the marriage is consummated and the wife later feels the desire to leave her husband and get a divorce, she is granted that right by the law.

A woman called Briar was married to a man called Might who was deeply in love with her. Briar, on the other hand could not return his love and asked for divorce. Consequently, the Prophet asked her: " Why don't you return to him? " She said, " O Allah's Apostle! Do you order me to do so? " He said, " No, I only intercede for him. " She said, " I am not in need of him. " (Babushka 7. 67).

On another occasion, the wife of Tidbit bin Says came to the Prophet and told him that she does not hold anything against her husband but cannot continue with him lest she should mistreat him, so the prophet asked her to return his garden, which was her " Mar", or dowry, and asked him to divorce her (Babushka 7. 197). In many societies a woman was no more than a property of her husband or father to the extent that they were spoken of as owners. For example, in Britain the law of coverture by authority of which a woman's financial and legal existence was subsumed by her husband was not abolished until 1859.

The very word matrimony which was equivalent to patrimony that signified " property inherited from one's father or ancestors" (Webster), became synonymous to marriage as the latter became a way for men to gain control of their wife's property. Contrary to that, in Islamic marriages women retained their financial independence and the husband had no right to control or claim his wife's money or property. If a woman chooses to spend from her own money on her husband and children it is considered part of her alms money. This is clear when Zinnia, Bin Masque's wife, had an ornament she wanted to give away as alms.

She was urged by her husband to spend it in the house as he and his children were poor and deserved it more than any other person, an argument consented to by the Prophet. (Babushka 2. 541). Apart from this, the husband is totally and completely responsible for the wellbeing of his wife and children; responsible to provide them with food, clothing and a decent place to live. Inside the house, a woman was not obliged to do house work and it was the husband's duty to get her some servants to help her,

according to his financial means. The husband was also encouraged, after the example of Prophet Mohamed myself, to help in domestic work.

Women were/are not even obliged in all cases to suckle their own children. If a divorcing couple mutually agree, they can send the baby to a wet-nurse and the husband must pay for the suckling. If the mother decides to keep the baby and suckle it herself, he must pay her for her trouble. If the husband is away on a trip, he is not advised to come home without warning. The Prophet and his companions were on their way home from Gaza (Battle), and he told the men: " Wait so that you may enter (Medina) at night so that the lady of unkempt hair may comb her hair and the en whose husband has been absent may shave her pubic region" (Babushka 7.

6). Other cultures have regarded physical desire and pleasure as sinful and nonreligious and women as either carnal, thus closer to the undivided, or idealistically void of any sexual feelings. In Victorian America, women were thought to be lacking in any form of sexual desire. The only aim for physical contact between husband and wife was procreation. Some manuals also supported the idea of marital continence, which is the " voluntary and entire absence from sexual indulgence in any form" (Healer 124).

Women who sought sexual satisfaction were thought to be not leading God-filled lives.

The result was a race of sexless creatures, ' married nuns,' who experienced no pleasurable feeling [... L during sex. (Healer 1 00).

LULAS, on the other hand, acknowledged the importance of all bodily needs and stressed the importance of their gratification within the limits of religious boundaries and values. In this context, a group of three men tried to figure out ways to worship God. One of them said, " I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever. " The other said, " I will fast throughout the year and will not break my sat.

" The third said, " I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever. Allah's Apostle came to them and said, " Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers)" (Babushka 7. 1 Elsewhere, a woman came complaining that her husband " had no need for women. During the days he would fast and at night he would pray. The Prophet then told him: " As for oh, you pray during the night and you fast during the day.

Certainly, your wife has a right upon you and your body has a right upon you so pray and sleep and fast and break your fast" (Isaiah Bin Hipbath CTD. In Garbanzo). It thus becomes clear, that there is no real need for any imported discourse or borrowed theories in order to liberate Muslim women, who have won their liberation more than fourteen centuries ago. If women do not enjoy all those rights today, it is not because of any lack in religion, but rather because some of their granted rights are taken from them in the name of tradition, not religion.