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## ***Scrutinization of Commenced Tiers of Women Emancipation and its Elucidation in the Light of Prophetic Seerah***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The current era, as it is glorified has reached its peak due to the humongous success of science but at the same time, a lot of problems and challenges are such that still await guidance. In a broadly followed westernized school of thought, Islam is persistently censured and cogitated to have an obsolete and discriminatory behavior towards women. The importance of women in Islam is belittled and the status; derogatory in contrast to the western societies whereas Seerah has the distinction of being a beacon of light and an example of guidance for every generation. The research paper whilst highlighting the freedom of women, discuss the western societies in general tend to ignore the vast cultural and ideological differences with Islam. The research topic is worth addressing as it will tend to focus the overruling genus of women individualism and highlight the struggle to achieve the conceptual freedom hampering the social and religious ethos and actions. The research article therefore, discusses all such points in light of Seerah and bring out the most suitable elucidations as Seerah can be used as ideal, most satisfactory and suitable model to intercept such provocations.*

***Key words:*** *obsolete discrimination, censured Islam, conceptual freedom, religious and social ethos.*



Women are the potent symbol of identity. They signify a vision that identifies a nation. The issue of women freedom is highly controversial today. Islam being a clearly global demographic presence, is the fastest growing and expanding religion but still there is a wide spread belief in the west that Islam has failed to keep up with the time and is still ancient in its socio-religious affairs. Western critics love to offer that vast gender inequality is a way more serious in Islam as compared to West, but woman in Islam is much better than what is actually acknowledged by west which can clearly become visible by having a look onto the status given to them by the preacher Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Woman is a female human being. The term woman is usually reserved for an adult. It is sometimes used to identity a female human regardless of age. Woman may also be a person whose sex assignment does not align with her gender identity.<sup>1</sup> The term used for women in Urdu language is “*Aurat*” which signifies the feminine meanings of the parts of body which is considered the most reclusive and protected one. Another meaning of “*Aurat*” in Arabic language identifies anything that may cause sores in eyes.<sup>2</sup>

Quran has also used the words “*Nisa and Imrah*” for the women, which carries the meaning of matters relating to women issues with regard to protection of their body.

أِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَدَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ  
الْعَلِيمُ<sup>3</sup> آ

Mention, O Muhammad), when the wife of “Imran said, “May Lord, indeed I have pledged to you what is in my womb, consecrated (for your service), so accept this from me. Indeed, you are the Hearing the Knowing.

أَوَإِنِ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُورًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا  
وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ<sup>4</sup> آ

And if a women fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them... and the settlement is the best.

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا  
رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً<sup>5</sup> آ

O mankind, fear Your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.

### **Women Freedom and Feminism:**

It is defined as a *basic human right that allows women to make her choices freely, without the pressure of men.*<sup>6</sup> It has acquired the connotations of separatism, feminism, extremism, men avoiding lesbianism and other terminologies like gender equality, women liberation and women diversity etc.<sup>7</sup>

“The advocacy of Women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes”.<sup>8</sup>

It is originated from the French word “Feminisme” 1840-1845 from Latin Femina “Women” and English ism and 1890-1895 for sense of “women movement” (from feminist adjective) French feminism”.<sup>9</sup>

“Feminism is defined as the group of person who wants to bring change in the attitude of men and norms of society towards women”<sup>10</sup>

It is a theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. Generally it means the advocacy of women’s rights to full citizenship that is political, economic and social equality with men.<sup>11</sup>

### **Difference Between freedom and Feminism**

There is basically no such difference. Both are the synonyms of each other and connotations as well but still there are two schools of thought. 1<sup>st</sup> one says: Freedom is the sex equality which implies that men and women should receive equal treatment whereas the movement towards the gender/sex equality is named as feminism.<sup>12</sup>

The second school of thought says:

Freedom is all about equality whereas feminism is the equity of sexes.

The debate arise from the perceived in adequacy of the concept of quality to address the women’s concerns with either the public or private sphere. It has been identified as strict, formal or legal equality that results from access to employment, politics and all those areas of life traditionally dominated by men. This approach, therefore, aims to promote legislation that remove all formal obstacles to women’s entry in public sphere.<sup>13</sup>

Equality is interpreted as sameness, thus men and women are not only equal, and they become the same. Whereas feminism language of “sex equity” introduces a new way of discussing women’s rights which promotes the substantive equality. It promotes the equity as a necessary condition for social justice.<sup>14</sup>

### **Kinds of Women Freedom Emancipation:**

#### **1-Liberal freedom**

This is the variety of freedom that works within the structure of mainstream society to integrate women into that structure. Its roots stretch back to the social contract theory of government instituted by the American Revolution. Abigail

Adams and Mary Wollstonecraft were there from the very beginning, proposing equality for women. It is often the case with liberals they slog along inside the system, getting little done amongst the compromises until some radical movement shows up and pulls those compromises left of center. This is how it operated in the days of the suffragist movement and again with the emergence of the radical feminists.

## **2-Marxist and Socialist Emancipation**

Marxism recognizes that women are oppressed and attributes the oppression to the capitalist/private property system. Thus they insist that the only way to end the oppression of women is to overthrow the capitalist system. Socialist emancipation is the result of Marxism meeting radical feminism. Marxists and socialists often call themselves “radical”, but they use the term to refer to a completely different “root” of society: the economic system.

## **3-Amazon Freedom**

Amazon freedom is dedicated to the image of the female here in Greek mythology, as it is expressed in art and literature, in the physiques and feats of female athletes and in sexual values and practices.<sup>15</sup>

## **4-Cultural Liberation**

The theory that there are fundamental personality differences between men and women and these women’s differences are special and should be celebrated.

## **5-Ecofeminism**

It is a theory that rests on the basic principle that patriarchal philosophers are harmful to women, children and other living things. Parallels are drawn between societies treatment of the environment, animals or resources and its treatment of women.

## **6-Individualist or Liberation Emancipation**

Is based upon individualism or liberation philosophies.

## **7-Material Feminism**

A movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century working to liberate women by improving their material condition.<sup>16</sup>

## **8-Pop Freedom**

Is often mistaken by people to be feminism in general the negative, typical man hating ideology.

## **9-Radical Freedom**

Is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from Feminism. Radical freedom was the cutting edge of feminist theory from approximately 1967-1975.

## **10-Separatists**

Are often wrongly depicted as lesbians. These are the feminists, who advocates separation from men sometimes total, sometimes partial.<sup>17</sup>

Under normal circumstances when the stream of life runs calm and undisturbed, every individual enjoys the sense of mental peace and satisfaction. The time through which we are passing is disturbed and distressing. Nations of the world are in conflict with each other and everyone is anxious to strike at the other, only to serve his national interest. Individuals are behaving like sworn enemies of other individuals. Life is in a tumult. The world has progressed in the certain important directions but all the moral vices have diminished. The entire humanity is suffering from the festering sores of moral depravity.<sup>18</sup>

In this alarming situation, there comes a need to study the women's position in Islam and west, the verge on which there is a conflict between two societies and also needs to mention that on what points Muslim woman stands against the western concept of freedom.

### **Perspective in Modernity**

Modernization theory (Late 40's until the mid-60's) characterized the inevitability of progress, the invincibility of science and the desirability of liberal democracy. Nothing was considered higher than human reason: secular was preferred to religious and the rights of the individual were focused.<sup>19</sup> Modernization has had differing outcomes for different classes, including women. Most benefits from increased work and educational opportunities, and piecemeal legal reforms, have accrued to elite women, but the experience of others (rural & lower class urban women) has been less favorable.<sup>20</sup> Modernization is rarely applied to the women. Recently it has been the subject of the semantic debate and has suffered harsh criticism. It describes the dynamics of social change brought about by the transformation of west over last two hundred years and used as a philosophical statement of how things should be but as a way of measuring rate of this change. In short, term "modernity" compels people to think rationally and believe in progress and self-determination. Modern life style is an ongoing process: its chronological limits are never set.<sup>21</sup> It is not possible to separate man's way of thinking from his way of living and his dealing in life. Man is a wise and understanding being who thinks for himself, wants to comprehend his surroundings and tries to know the beginning and the end of everything, in order to be able to understand the mysteries of the world and the beings around him.

Religion is a law inseparable from man's nature just as the laws of life are inseparable from living beings religious feelings involve a sense of sacredness.<sup>22</sup>

Islam naturally emerges into shape of preface ethical system for man who is free from all those defects which are to be found in the ethics of idolatrous religions and of secular creeds. It gives the humanity the moral values in which there are no

pieces of immorality. This is Islam's fundamental attitude towards life. No sphere of life is exempt from the universal and comprehensive applications of the moral principles of Islam.<sup>23</sup>

Mr. Kenneth writes:

“Religious system can also provide human service professionals with models for the development of communities.”<sup>24</sup>

The world of humanity is processed of two wings the male and female. The world in the past has been ruled by force and man has dominated over women by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities both of body and mind. But then the scales shifted, force lost its weight, and mental alertness, there comes intuition and the spiritual qualities of love and service in which women is strong and will be able to gain ascendancy. Hence Islam came and blessed women with the rights and helped in balancing the society.

Women's status in Islam is one of the most controversial and serious issues of our time, not only among Muslim women and those who represent them in the area of women rights in the Islamic world but also among fundamentalist Muslims.

Discussing women in Islam is to extrapolate the position of women in Islamic sphere from an examination of religious texts i.e Prophetic Seerah.

There is no Quranic distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim women in terms of her status as a biological social being, but men are, on principle, in charge of women and the male is not like female.<sup>25</sup>

Islam encourages women for Economic, Educational, Health, Political ventures, and acknowledges their participation in relief efforts, charitable associations, Social services, and House holding.

#### **Islamic reforms for women by Law:**

Polygamous marriages difficult or illegal, Permitted wives to sue for divorce in religious courts, particularly in cases of cruelty, desertion, or dangerous contagious diseases, Provided women with the right to contract themselves in marriage, Required husbands to find housing for a divorced wife while she has custody over the children, Increased the minimum age for spouses, Limited the ability of guardians to contract women in marriage against their wishes, Provided opportunities for minor girls wed against their wishes to abrogate the marriage upon reaching maturity, Enhanced the rights of women with regard to child custody, Allowed Women to write clauses into marriage contracts that limit the husband's authority over them.<sup>26</sup> Some narration are giving in following regarding women emancipation in social activities:

حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى، عَنْ حَنْظَلَةَ، عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((إِذَا اسْتَأْذَنْتُكُمْ نِسَاؤُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ، فَأَذِّنُوا لَهُنَّ)) تَابَعَهُ شُعْبَةُ، عَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ، عَنِ مُجَاهِدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ<sup>27</sup>

Narrated Ibn Umar: The Prophet said, “If your women ask permission to go to the mosque at night, allow them.

حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ حَفْصٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، عَنْ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ حَفْصَةَ، عَنْ أُمِّ عَطِيَّةَ، قَالَتْ: ((كُنَّا نُوَمِّرُ أَنْ نُخْرَجَ يَوْمَ الْعِيدِ حَتَّى نُخْرَجَ الْبِكْرُ مِنْ خِدْرِهَا، حَتَّى نُخْرَجَ الْحَيْضُ، فَيَكُنَّ خَلْفَ النَّاسِ، فَيَكْبِرْنَ بِتَكْبِيرِهِمْ، وَيَدْعُونَ بِدُعَائِهِمْ يَرْجُونَ بَرَكَةَ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَطَهْرَتَهُ))<sup>28</sup>

Narrated Um ‘Atiya: we used to be ordered to come out on the Day of eid and even bring out the virgin girls from their houses and menstruating women so that they might stand behind the men and say Takbir along with them and invoke Allah along with them and hope for the blessings of that day and for purification from sins.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ بْنُ أَيْمَنَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي، قَالَ: ((دَخَلْتُ عَلَى عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، وَعَلَيْهَا دِرْعُ قِطْرِ، ثُمَّ خَمْسَةَ دَرَاهِمَ، فَقَالَتْ: «ارْزُقْ بَصْرَكَ إِلَى جَارِيَتِي انْظُرْ إِلَيْهَا، فَإِنَّهَا تُرْهِى أَنْ تَلْبَسَهُ فِي الْبَيْتِ، وَقَدْ كَانَ لِي مِنْهُنَّ دِرْعٌ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَمَا كَانَتْ امْرَأَةً تُقِينُ بِالْمَدِينَةِ إِلَّا أُرْسَلَتْ إِلَيَّ تَسْتَعِيرُهُ))<sup>29</sup>

Narrated Aiman :I went to Aisha and she was wearing a coarse dress costing five Dirhams. Aisha said, “Look up and see my slave-girl who refuses to wear it in the house though during the lifetime of Allah’s Apostle I had a similar dress which no woman desiring to appear elegant (before her husband) failed to borrow from me”.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو كُرَيْبٍ، وَمُوسَى بْنُ جِرَاجٍ، قَالَا: حَدَّثَنَا حُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، عَنْ زَائِدَةَ، عَنْ مَيْسَرَةَ الْأَشْجَعِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ((اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ، فَإِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلَعٍ، وَإِنْ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٌ فِي الضِّلَعِ أَعْلَاهُ، فَإِنْ ذَهَبَتْ نُفَيْمُهُ كَسَرْتَهُ، وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ، فَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ))<sup>30</sup>

Allah’s Apostle said, “Treat women nicely, for a woman is created from a rib and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion, so, if you should try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So, treat women nicely.

حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ فَضَالَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ، عَنْ يَحْيَى، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، حَدَّثَهُمْ: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ((لَا تُنْكِحُ الْأَيْمَ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْمَرَ، وَلَا تُنْكِحُ الْبِكْرَ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْذَنَ)) قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَكَيْفَ إِذْنُهَا؟ قَالَ: (أَنْ تَسْكُتَ))<sup>31</sup>

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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 her silence indicates her permission.”

### **Conclusion**

Keeping in view the rights, status and place of women in light of Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (SAAW), we come to this conclusion that the women who were only considered the tools of enjoyment in the ancient societies, to them Prophet (SAAW) gave full rights and called them potent symbol of identity and hence proved to be the best reformer for women to give them their suitable place in the society as per their need. If we start to believe that freedom provided to women in Islam is complete and up to date according to the recent era, there would be no more war situation in society between both genders.

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