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كلية أصول الدين
قسم مقارنة الأديان

THE FEMINIST INTERPRETATIONS OF RELIGION AND THEIR THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

A Study in the Pakistani Context

A Dissertation Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By

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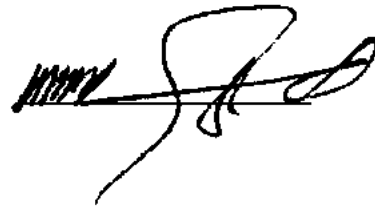
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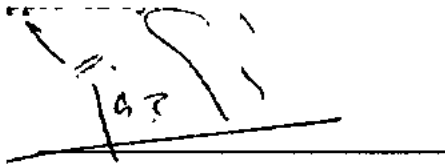
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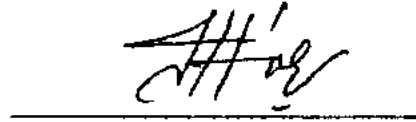
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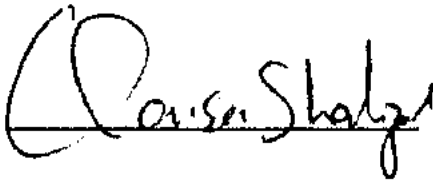
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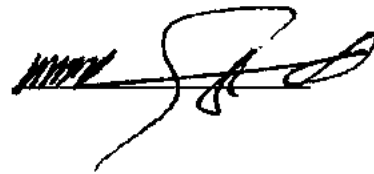
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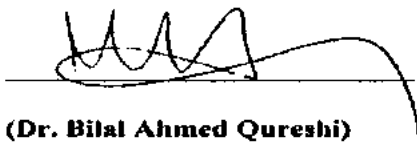
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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved parents, who:

Strained every nerve to furnish me with the discourse of Islam, and graced me with their prayers, and provided me energetic support to acquire higher education.

It is also dedicated to all my teachers who trained me spiritually, morally, and creatively.

Abstract

This study is an investigation into various feminist interpretations of religion and religious texts, with especial reference to the work of Riffat Hassan, for serving the new convenient meanings of equality and discourses about male-female relations according to contemporary social needs and circumstances. Their methodologies stem from the modern western hermeneutics that diminishes the prestige of traditional structure, which serves as the basic source of widespread understanding of indigenous contextual discourse.

This dissertation is addressing four main questions. First, did the feminist movement emerge as the product of social change owing to modernity? If yes, how did it develop? This section discusses the growth and development of the issues of women's rights in various historical phases known as waves of feminism. This issue is highlighted in connection to the types of feminism. Some key concepts related to the feminist theological perspective are also highlighted where the convergence of Islam and feminism are discussed. It presents a review of western and Muslim feminist projects for achieving full equality of male and female genders. Then, a brief introduction is given about the cultural and social background that brought Riffat Hassan to develop her feminist theology. Her contribution is precisely mentioned because half part of this thesis deals with her view of three theological assumptions that take for granted the inferiority of women in Semitic religions.

Secondly, in a religious framework, how feminists made their voice effective and developed it into an academic discipline. What are the certain elements of this interpretative discipline? This chapter deals with the analysis of the engagement of feminist scholars with their interpretive task. Here, it is shown that they try to study the Quran in complete isolation from traditional literature. Theoretically, the chapter draws a picture of the nature of the feminist hermeneutical methods that are based on the theory of Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), who urges for understanding the inherent capability of the text and its

interpretations through the fusion of horizons of both the text and that of its reader. This section also reflects the tone set by Fazlur Rehman (1919-1988), who blamed the traditional exegetes for not taking the ethical concepts lying behind the text. The idea to read the Quran allegorically to release the tension of adherents and to explore the intended meaning is discussed in detail in this chapter.

Thirdly, how do feminists compete with the religious traditionalism in the field of the study of religion? What are their conclusive potentials to criticize the traditional heritage of religions? This chapter is divided according to the titles of the three theological assumptions (primary creation of man, fall story, and women assigned secondary status for being a servant of men). All these issues are viewed through content-based comprehension of the three Abrahamic faiths. Traditionally, all the three religions share a common notion that Eve was created after Adam, but differ on account of her creation from the rib of Adam and her being responsible for the temptation of Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. The Quran considers both Adam and Eve equally responsible for their act of disobedience. Discussion is made on a vital course of debates about “Crooked Rib” by many feminists, especially Riffat Hassan, in terms of its authenticity.

Fourthly and finally, do the feminists justify their position in their adaptation of various hermeneutical mechanisms? In this part criticism and analysis is made about the feminist methodologies. The question has been dealt with if feminists are really trying to understand the Quran or simply reading into it in their preconceived conclusion of so-called equality of genders? It is also argued that Muslim feminist scholarship is the continuation of western hermeneutical tradition developed in the milieu of modernism. It is also shown as to what extent the feminist scholarship goes for a deconstruction of well-established structures of the Quranic scholarship in medieval periods.

ملخص البحث

الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية إسلام آباد-باكستان

كلية أصول الدين - قسم مقارنة الأديان

عنوان البحث: التأويل النسوي للدين و محاوره اللاهوتية (الدراسة من المنظور الباكستاني)

بحث تكميلي مقدم لنيل درجة الدكتوراه

إعداد: عبدالباسط قريشي

إشراف: الدكتور محمد أكرم

محرم 1442 الهجري - سبتمبر 2020 الميلادي

الحمد لله تعالى وحده، والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده سيدنا ونبينا محمد وعلى أهله وصحبه أجمعين.

النسوية حركة نسائية تركز على استخراج معاني جديدة للنصوص الشرعية لتحقيق المساواة الكاملة بين الرجل والمرأة وفق الاحتياجات والظروف الاجتماعية السائدة المعاصرة حسب رأيهن. وتتبع المناهج النسوية من الهرمينوطيقا الغربية التي تقلل شأن تفسير النصوص الدينية التي تم معظمها على أيدي الرجال وبالتالي أهملت هوية النساء و حقوقهن في تلك التفسيرات الدينية، وحددت لها أدوارا سلبية حتى أصبحت الثقافة الدينية كارهة لوظيفة النساء ومكانتها في المجتمع. وسعى هذا البحث على دراسة تلك التفسيرات النسوية المتنوعة للنصوص الدينية مع الإستناد الخاص الى مساهمة رفعت حسن الباكستاني المولد والغربي المنشأ في نشر تلك الحركة والدفاع عنها بناء على ما رأى من النظرة الدونية للمرأة الباكستانية.

في الفصل الأول لخصنا الاتجاهات النسوية التي تطمح التركيز على التعبير القانوني والسياسي للمساواة الكاملة في جميع شؤون الحياة المختلفة، وعلى إعادة التفكير في المساهمات الخاصة بالنساء في التاريخ البشري وتقييمها والتغيير الجذري لتلك العادات والأفكار السائدة بتسلط الرجال على النساء، وتحديد وظائف الرجال بتوضيح الأصول الاقتصادية والسياسية والاجتماعية الخاصة بالرجال، فإسقاط نظام هيمنة الرجال في المجتمع هو الهدف الأساسي عند أصحاب هذه الحركة.

و في الفصل الثاني تحدثنا عن ظهور الحركة النسوية كنتيجة التغيير الاجتماعي بسبب آثارالحدثة التي ظهرت في الغرب، وتكلمنا عن مظاهر تنميتها وتطورها، مع مناقشة عوامل التنمية والازدهار لقضية حقوق المرأة في المراحل التاريخية الثلاثة المعروفة باسم "الموجات النسوية" وهي كما يلي:
المرحلة الأولى: بدأت هذه الحركة في هذه المرحلة بالتركيز على حقوق المرأة السياسية والاقتصادية والقانونية والمدنية.

المرحلة الثانية، ثم سعت في المرحلة الثانية خلال الأربعينيات وحتى مطلع السبعينات من القرن العشرين للوصول إلى المساواة الكاملة المطلقة دون تفرقة بينهما في جميع الأمور.

المرحلة الثالثة: بدأت هذه الحركة تتعرض للأديان وتعتبرها أحد المصادر التي تعمل على التقليل من شأن المرأة حيث أتاحت للرجال الصلاحية المطلقة لتفسير النصوص الدينية، وأعطت للمرأة مكانة ثانوية في تفسير

تلک النصوص، ومن ثم تسببت تلک الأديان حسب زعم أصحابها لهيمنة الرجال في المجتمع، ومن هنا تأتي حاجة ماسة إلى دراسة الدين من خلال الفهم النسوي وليس من خلال الفهم الذكوري.

فلم تعد النسوية اليوم مجرد مطالب ونشاط حقوقي، بحيث تهتم بحقوق المرأة فحسب، بل أصبحت فكراً ورؤيةً ودیناً عالمياً ومنهجاً اجتماعياً ونظاماً فاعلاً في مناحي الحياة كلها فبعد ما كانت هذه الحركة تدور حول حقوق النساء ومشاركتهن في بعض وظائف المجتمع أصبحت حركة فكرية دينية اجتماعية تسعى إلى تغيير بناء العلاقات بين الجنسين وصولاً إلى المساواة المطلقة وكيفية مساواتهما إلى الجدل حول حقيقة هوية كل منهما .

وقد انتقلت هذه الحركة إلى العالم الإسلامي بأفكارها وأهدافها وأنشطتها كما هي في العالم الغربي، فعلى نفس المنوال الغربي تهدف الحركة النسوية في العالم الإسلامي إلى إعادة فكرة الأمة أو المجتمع الإسلامي في احتواء كلا الجنسين دون التفریق بين جنس وآخر، ووجدت مجموعة من الأكاديميات المسلمات من أتباع هذه الحركة تحاول مناصرة الأفكار النسوية من خلال مصادر الدين الإسلامي مثل ليلى أحمد، وعزيزة الحبري، وعاصمة برلاس، ورفعت حسن وفاطمة المرينسي، اللاتي قدمن بحوثاً دقيقة ومحاولات للتوفيق بين الفكر النسوي والدين الإسلامي.

كما القينا في هذا الفصل الضوء على أنواع النسوية، والتركيز على بعض المفاهيم الأساسية لللاهوت النسوية وعلاقته بالاسلام. وأن هذه الحركة في الحقيقة مشروع غربي لاجل مساواة كاملة بين الجنسين.

ثم قدمنا مقدمة موجزة عن الخلفية الثقافية والاجتماعية التي دفعت رفعت حسن إلى تبني فكرتها النسوية، حيث ترى أن انحطاط مكانة المرأة في الفكر الإسلامي التقليدي أمر مسلم، وتضرب لذلك ثلاثة أفكار رئيسية التي أخذتها من مرويات في ديانتها اليهودية والمسيحية. وهي:

1 - أن أول الخلق هو الرجل وليس المرأة .

2 - وأنها سبب هبوط الرجل من الجنة والمسؤولة عنه .

3 - وهي خلقت أساساً للرجل فقط .

فهي تحاول أن تنبني ثيولوجيا النسوية Feminist theology على هذه العقائد والأفكار الثلاثة من خلال الهرمينيوطيقا الحديثة وخطأ تلك الأفكار والعقائد السائدة. وبالتالي تحاول أن تعيد للمرأة مكانتها وحقتها في المساواة بالرجل.

وفي الفصل الثالث درسنا عن الطرق والأساليب التي اختارها النسوية لأعطاء الصفة الدينية لأفكارها، ففي هذا الفصل قمنا بتحليل طرق النسوية في تفسير النصوص الدينية. والقينا نظرة شاملة على كيفية اتخاذ بعض خطوات تجاه قراءة النصوص بعيدة عن الأدب التقليدي أو التراثية في فهم النصوص الدينية. في الجانب النظري يعرض هذا الفصل صورة في اتخاذ الأساليب التأويلية على المنوال الذي وضعه هانس جورج غادامير (1900-2002) الذي بحث على استخراج المعنى الكامن في النص وتفسيره حسب ما يفهمه القارئ، بناء على قابلية تلک النصوص لتفسيرات مختلفة. يلمس هذا الفصل أيضاً على نموذج فضل الرحمن (1988-1919) الذي يلوم المفسرين التقليديين على تغفلهم البنائي عن المفاهيم الخلقية الكامنة وراء النص.

وفي الفصل الرابع تحدثنا عن كيفية التنافس النسوي مع التفسيرات التراثية للدين. يتناول هذا الفصل مناقشة الافتراضات والعقائد اللاهوتية الثلاثة السابقة بناء على محتوى موضوعات الأديان الإبراهيمية

الثلاثة، وأن الأديان السماوية تشترك في أن حواء عليها السلام خلقت بعد آدم عليه السلام، وأنها خلقت من ضلع آدم، وأنها مسؤولة عن إغراء آدم في أكل الشجرة الممنوعة. فالقرآن يعتبر أن كلا منهما مسؤولان دون الفرق بينهما في الخطيئة. كذلك يناقش هذا الفصل مناقشة دقيقة في أصالة قضية "الضلع الأوج" الذي خلق منه المرأة، ومسارها المثير عند النسويات وبالأخص عند رفعت حسن التي تذهب من خلال فهمها التعسفي القرآن أن آدم ليس شخصاً بل هو الجنس البشري، وأن كلمة "زوج" مذكور لا علاقة له بالمرأة وبالتالي لا أولوية في الخلق للآدم وأصالتها (آدم وحواء) يرجعان إلى الجنس البشري على وجه التساوي.

وفي الفصل الخامس والأخير قمنا بالتحليل للمبررات النسوية من حيث تكييفها مع المناهج التأويلية المتنوعة. تم في هذا الفصل النقد والمقارنة لمختلف المناهج النسوية لدراسة الدين وهل هي تقصد من خلال هذه المناهج الفهم الصحيح للمواقف القرآنية أم مجرد حركة تطالب بإعادة قراءة القرآن الكريم لأجل المساواة بين الجنسين. وأنها تأييد واستمرار تطبيقات للمناهج التأويلية الغربية تطورت في رحاب الحداثة. كذلك ألقى الضوء على مدى صحة منطلق تلك الافتراضات الثلاثة التي استعرضها رفعت حسن وأثبتنا بأنها غريبة على الإسلام. وكذلك جهودها في الاستدلال على هذه الافتراضات تبرز جهلها باللغة العربية والعلوم الشرعية تتعلق بأصول التفسير وأصول الحديث وأصول الفقه التي تصدى لها العلماء في تفسير القرآن الكريم ودراسته بطريقة علمية.

Preface

Western hermeneutical approaches to the study of religions have now taken a wide range of access to academic horizons. New trends in the 21st century settled for the study of religions have enabled feminist scholars to understand the holy texts in lieu of their percepts about equality once isolated from the sheds of tradition. Hermeneutical approaches by nature have offered new and fresh breath for reading the scriptures, whereas theologians have opened gateways for new concepts and interpretations of religion. Hermeneutics have encouraged subjectivity and allegorical trends in understating the text where interpretation has been framed in accordance with the patriarchal understanding. For this purpose, the merit of existentialism has been examined to undergo the subjective and contextual interpretation of the religious text. In this arena, the religious environment became diverse, whether to interpret the text based on tradition or exclude it altogether.

The colonial influence has made Muslim modernists to appease Islam with modern culture and encouraged Muslims to rely on intellect and reason-based understanding. Modernist Muslim thinkers have started finding ways of reconciliation with Islam, as they are convinced that Islam potentially welcomes new patterns of thinking and development. Among many of the contributions towards modernity, they started treatment of the holy texts based on rationality. Some famous figures like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) Mahmud Taha (1909-1985), Fazlur Rehman (1919-1988) and Muhammad Arkoun (1928-2010) appeared in Muslim societies. They urged for an understanding of the Quran, which was compatible with modern standards.

While getting a boost from such modernist approaches, Muslim feminists have also started understanding the Quran in search of equality to evolve women's role in society. They have also raised various issues regarding the substantial role of women in various domains of life. Among the most prominent issues were the flaws established by traditional male scholars in interpretation of the creation story of both the sexes mentioned in Holy scriptures. According to feminists it is assumed

by traditional scholars from the context such story that man was the original creation of God and not the women. It is not only debated in Islam but in other religions as well. Muslim feminists reached the point that certain pre-modern Quranic interpretations establish some suppressive notions that did distort the 'origin' of women. As such, an attempt is required to liberate the Quran from oppressive religious traditions. A wide variety of disciplines have been established in the academy to explore the actual status of women through employing specific methods and techniques that either reject the entire tradition or offer new interpretations of those traditions. Among such efforts, the feminist discipline has challenged the mandate of classical religious literature. In this scenario, the current study has been carried out to see the course of this discipline and its outcomes in terms of theological assumptions.

The current work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter consists of an introduction that elaborates the significance of the study, its main research questions, and methodology. The second chapter discusses some crucial themes regarding the emergence of feminist interpretations relative to the development of western hermeneutical approaches. The third chapter presents the survey of methodological techniques of feminists applied to religious texts. Although the broader content of the study relates to the Muslim feminists' terrain, some glimpses are given from Jewish-Christian scholarship due to their sharable amount of concepts and thoughts. This chapter gives a general view of ongoing methods established by feminist scholars for reading the text. The fourth chapter elucidates the accounts of feminist consciousness regarding the issue of women's inferiority. Here the basic idea has been taken from a feminist of Pakistani origin namely Riffat Hassan whose whole thought is based on three theological assumptions about the women in the traditional theology: a) men are original creation; - b) women are a source of a curse for men;- , and c) woman has been created from the man for his service. The scope of these three assumptions has been visualized in three Semantic religions. The fifth chapter analyses the narratives made by feminists on the basis of their implication of methodologies in general and for three theological assumptions.

The practicalities that are used here include the *Chicago 17E manual of style* for references and footnotes as well as the bibliography. Reference to the Quran is shown as (Q. chapter number: verse number). For transliteration purposes, the sample of academic journals of the Islamic Research Institute is selected and followed in this work. The resources consulted other than English like Arabic and Urdu, are translated. The year of birth and death of Western- Muslim scholars is given according to the common era of calendars.

In the end, I would like to extend my acknowledgment to all who helped me one way or the other in the completion of this research. My special gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. Muhammad Akram, for his valuable support and help, whose trust, critical insights and guidance made it possible for me to accomplish this task. I am deeply indebted for his generous direction in academic writings, understanding, analyzing, and criticizing.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Professor Dr. Ahmed Gad for introducing me to this topic. I am indebted to him for his kind interest in my academic endeavor. I owe my sincere thanks to Professor Dr. Nabil al-Foly for his invaluable suggestions and encouragement.

I am grateful to the generous help and kind support of my mentor Professor Dr. Haroon ur Rashid, Dean of the faculty in all administrative issues pertained to pursuit of my doctoral studies. It would be impossible to accomplish this task without his tremendous stimulation and considerate disposition. I am also very much obliged to Dr. Muhammad Arif, Head Department of *Aqīdah* and Philosophy for his persistent cooperation in terms of relaxation in teaching workload and other academic matters of the department.

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Transliteration Table*

TRANSLITERATION TABLE									
ا	a	د	d	غ	gh	ب	bh	Long Vowels	
ب	b	ذ	dh	ف	f	پ	ph	آ	ā
پ	p	ر	r	ق	q	ت	th	ی	ī
ت	t	ز	z	ک	k	ٹ	ṭh	و	ū
ث	ṭh	ج	j	گ	g	چ	ch	و (Urdu)	ō
ج	j	س	s	ل	l	ح	dh	ع (Urdu)	ē
چ	ch	ش	sh	م	m	ڄ	ḡh	Short Vowels	
ح	h	ص	s	ن	n	ڇ	ḥh	ا	a
خ	kh	ض	z	و	w	ڀ	kh	ا	i
د	d	ظ	z	ی	y	ڙ	ḡh	ا	u

<p>ا (e), when it appears at the middle or end of a word, is transliterated as elevated comma (') followed by the letter representing the vowel it carries. However, when ا appears at the beginning of a word it will be represented only by the letter representing the vowel it carries.</p> <p>ع is transliterated as elevated inverted comma (').</p> <p>ض as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (ḡ), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter as (z).</p> <p>و as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (w), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter is transliterated as (v).</p> <p>و is transliterated as (ah) in pause form and as (at) in construct form.</p> <p>Article ة is transliterated as (al-) whether followed by a moon or a sun letter, however, in construct form it will be transliterated as (l).</p> <p>و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as (-o) whereas as an Arabic conjunction و is transliterated as (wa).</p> <p>Short vowel (ا) in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as (-i).</p>		<p>Diphthongs</p> <p>و ا (Arabic) aw و ا (Persian/Urdu) au و ا (Turkish) ev</p> <p>ی ا (Arabic) ay ی ا (Persian/Urdu) ai ی ا (Turkish) ey</p> <p>Doubled</p> <p>و و (Arabic) uww و و (Persian) uvv و و (Urdu) uvv</p> <p>ی ی iy</p>
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* This Transliteration Table is taken from the academic journal of *Islamic Studies*, publishes by Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University Islamabad.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1- Introduction

Feminist interpretation of religion is a recent academic development in the study of religion, which is of civilizational importance in the areas of various discourses about religion. In view of this scholarship, the distress that the field of the study of religion is far more influenced by patriarchy led women yet to search for their place in this scholarship.¹ Feminism here in this thesis means the movement that struggles to shift out the status and social roles settled by various patriarchal domains. The term “feminism” by itself remains a debating topic in terms of its interpretive techniques in the field of the study of religion.

The tendency to find the distinct position of women as a necessary subject under the premise of the modern western concept of equality has resulted in the emergence of feminist scholarship which strives to achieve equality theoretically through, either by rejection or by revision of the traditional religious literature of religion as per the requirements of the intended definition of equality. This project has resulted in the emergence of feminine scholarship in both western and Muslim societies employing various methods to redefine the traditional structure of religions.

This study presents a detailed survey of the hermeneutical techniques employed as competitive models to that of traditional hermeneutics used by males in medieval periods. The broader task of this work will deal with the outcomes of feminist approaches like Pakistani origin Riffat Hassan curtailed to her three theological assumptions: (Male agency as in primary creation, the descendants of Adam from Eden due to Eve, and her creation for the cause of man). A detailed description will be made on these three theological assumptions in the light of three revealed faiths Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The objective of Islamic feminists is to advocate complete equality for women through Quranic interpretation according to their techniques. Scholars like Hassan Al-Shāfi view that the Muslim feminism is nothing but a blind imitation of the

¹ Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). 40

western mode of thinking to charge the boundaries of religious tradition, a danger to the Islamic heritage of interpretations. Despite its deviation from the very fundamental nature of Arabic language and structure and *Hadīth* tradition, this scholarship of feminist interpretation of the Quran progressed and became an alternative discourse for some Muslim circles.²The task of this study is to provide a description of the methodological discussion of Muslim feminist approaches to the study of religions and to analyze it according to the episteme of Quranic decorum of interpretation. The feminist approach to the study of religions views traditional understanding of religion as an instrument of oppression rather than a source of liberation.³

The present study aims at dealing with the feminist theology established by Pakistani Muslim feminists. In their theology, they demand the equality of women's status through new Quranic interpretations by expounding a theology in their favor. The Biblical and Quranic verses that discuss female gender are the concerns of feminists. They try to give it a new interpretation, which is different from the traditional understanding (regarded by them as male-centered). They are of the view that the traditional interpretation of the Quran by male Muslim scholars is responsible for the backwardness of the Muslims. Therefore, it is necessary to re-understand and re-evaluate the interpretation of the Quran and Tradition.

Keeping in view the challenge of feminist interpretation to the established Islamic thought and its development from the edge of Islamic tradition rather than its center, Richard Bulliet comments upon the role of religious authorities in the Islamic history. He says that in some instances, where the religious authorities play a vital role in appointing some aspects of Islamic traditions, strictly repel any alteration or

² Hassan Mahmud Abdel Latīf Al-Shāfi, - *Qawl fī al Tajdīd*" (*Essay on the Renewal of Religious Discourse*) (Egypt: Dārul Al-Quds Al-Arabī, 2016), 159–63.

³ Riffat Hassan, "The issue of woman-man equality in the Islamic tradition", *Women's and Men's Liberation: Testimonies of Spirit*, Leonard Grobb, Riffat Hassan, and Naim Gordon (eds). New York, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1991. 67.

deviation which is assumed to at its edges or outside its parameters.⁴ The edge continuously remains under pressure of change throughout its all intervals. He indicates certain occasions that various modes of Islam have been practiced against the authority of center, and the quest for change always emerged from the edge of Islamic Tradition.⁵ Bulliet also pointed out that not the only feminist scholarship of interpretation took its destination from that edge but many other progressive developments, too, which are not considered as compatible to the center of Islamic tradition.⁶

In their various works, feminists have criticized the traditional interpretations of the Quran, which, according to them, due to their being male-oriented, do not necessarily reflect the real spirit of the Islamic texts. These interpretations have given opportunities to males to supervise the women and subject them to unwarranted religious oppression, especially in the views of Riffat Hassan. She uses theology in her writings in its broad Christian sense, not limited to belief, but it means all religious thought concerning women. Therefore, it is required to investigate her thoughts about the religious perception of women comprehensively and her confrontation with Islamic tradition.

2- Aim and Ambition of this Research

The main focus of this study is the feminist discourse about theological assumptions through a wide range of its methodologies and critical analysis at the end. In critical analysis, some key issues about women, like, male supremacy and hierarchical set up in the Quran, will also be included in the final discussion. The conclusive notions feminists deducted from their understating through the readings of the specific Quranic passages will also be analyzed. For this purpose, the themes of the three

⁴ Bulliet Richard, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 186.

⁵ Richard, 195.

⁶ Bulliet Richard, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 140.

theological assumptions are selected with special reference to Riffat Hassan. The particular aim is to maintain a critical view from the Islamic point of view about those theological assumptions. In this study, the researcher will use description and analysis of the writings of feminist theologians like Riffat Hassan about the equality of genders.

Besides this, the researcher will also provide a clarification about the trends of feminist hermeneutical scholarship for the interest of understanding the reader to conceptualize the whole discipline. The researcher will explain some of their common terminologies that serve their collective discourses. I will remain confined to their selective readings of the Quran that serve their common interest of equality and will only expound those verses which feminist finds convenient to quote in support of those three theological assumptions. By explaining their interpretative models, I will try to show how they treat the whole Quran through selected themes.⁷ By the term 'feminism interpretation/hermeneutics/ *tafsīr*' here, I mean the project that undermines the male agency and interpretative privilege as the authority. I will also remain limited to those feminist works that are integral to interpretational or hermeneutical approaches and which essentially apply to the collective set of methods, like those employed by Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Riffat Hassan, and to some extent Kecia Ali, Sadiyya Shiekh, Leila Ahmed, Fatima Mernissi, Khalid Abou el Fadl, and Fatima Seedat as well Judeo-Christian feminist scholars like Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Mary Daly, and Rosemary Radford Reuther.

3 - Review of Literature

The issue of feminism became a debating topic after the 1960s in various parts of the world when this movement discorded with the stance provided by the traditional religious interpretations of the Holy texts. Every religious tradition has a different opinion on woman's creation, status, and, most frequently, the origin of woman. The religious scholarship of Muslim Feminists focused on the specific Quranic

⁷ Julian Hammer, *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 219.

verses that discuss women should be interpreted anew to reconcile with their intended definition of equality. In this regard, some male scholars have presented new patterns of understanding the Quran e.g., Muhammad Arkoun⁸, Mahmud Taha⁹, and Fazlur Rehman Malik.¹⁰ Perhaps the same ideas are taken by the Muslim

⁸ - Muhammad Arkoun, who took his last breath on the evening of September 14, 2010, was born in *Taorirt Mimoun*, a town in Grand Kabylie in Algeria. He attained his PhD in philosophy at the University of Sorbonne, France and also a lecturer there. He was also a member and a visiting lecturer at the board of directors in the Islamic Institute in London. He remained a significant icon in various institutions and organizations of the world as member and director. He was considered one of the most influential scholars in Islam contributing to new interpretation of Tafsir and re-understanding of Quran in historical context. He published numerous books in Arabic, French and English, and most popular are: "Rethinking Islam: Common Question, Uncommon Answers, today, West view Press, 1994; The concept of Revelation: from the people of the book to the societies of the book, Claremont Graduate University, California, 1998; Islam: To reform or to subvert, Saqi Books London, 2006.

⁹ - Mahmud Taha is a Sudanese religious scholar born in 1909, and was executed for apostasy at the age of 76 by the regime of Gaafar Nimeiry in 1985. He has revolutionary ideas about the second message of Islam. Taha opposed sharia law as applied in Sudan as un-Islamic and preached that the Sudanese constitution needed to be reformed. He believed that Islam in its original uncorrupted form accorded women and non-Muslims equal status. His famous works are: *The Second Message of Islam, this is my Path and Muhammad's Path*. Please see, Mahmud Taha, Muhammad., "The Second Message of Islam", (trans) (USA: Syracuse, 1987), 147.

¹⁰ - Fazlur Rehman Malik (d. 1988) born in Hazara, Pakistan in 1919, his father Maulana Shihabuddin was a well-known scholar of the time. After studying Arabic in Punjab University, he moved to Oxford where he wrote a thesis on Ibne Sina. After post-graduation he taught at Durham University, McGill University and University of Chicago till 1969. He was recognized probably as the most learned of the major Muslim thinkers in the second half of the twentieth century, in terms of both classical Islam and western philosophical and theological discourse. In his memory the center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago was named after him due to his long services at the University of Chicago. His famous books are: *Islam and modernity:*

Feminists and drew different results in their research. Some of the important works of Muslim feminists are mentioned as under:

Fatima Mernissi¹¹ wrote a book "*Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Inquiry*" (Blackwell Publishers, 1991). She discusses various issues here concerning women in Islam by entailing it with specific prophetic tradition, the narrators, their personalities, the Quranic verses, and the causes of revelation from a feminist perspective. This book is considered modern feminist writing.¹² Her other notable work in the area of women and gender in Islam titled "*The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*" offers the traditional view through the contribution of Prophet and his companions made in the actualization of the status of women in that time. She holds a view that Muslims did not foster the notions of equality emphasized in detail in the Quran or reflected in the life of the Prophet. The male interpreters wanted to sustain the pre-Quranic environment as misogynistic. She also mentions that even in the time of Prophet,

Transformation of an intellectual Tradition, University of Chicago Press, 1982; Islamic Mythology in History, Center Institute of Islamic Research, 1965; Major themes of the Quran, University of Chicago Press, 2009. Please see Abdullah Saeed, "Fazlur Rehman: A Framework for Interpreting the Ethico-Legal Content of the Quran." *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Quran*. Ed. Suha Taji-Farouki. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 37-38

¹¹ Fatima Mernissi, an Arab-Muslim Feminist, was born in Fez, Morocco in 1940 in a middle-class family. Mernissi studied at Muhammad V University in Rabat and moved to Paris afterwards. She graduated in US. After getting her doctorate in 1973 in sociology from Brandies University, she returned to Muhammad V University as a sociologist. She is a renowned social figure internationally, especially in France. Frame of her research outlines relationship between sexual ideology, gender equality and status of women in Islam. In her both published books, *Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (1975) and *The Veil and The Male Elite* (1987), she collectively holds the opinion that the original message of Islam is manipulated by the Male jurists-theologians in order to preserve the patriarchal system. Please see for further details <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/print/opr/t236/e0527>, accessed on 06/07/2017.

¹² - <http://www.mernissi.net> , accessed on 29/09/2017.

the environment was not favorable for the egalitarian project, and patriarchy became stronger after him.

The other category of scholarship deals with the matter of the status of women and their rights from the prospect of classical Islamic law exemplified in the work of Azizah Al-Hibri.¹³ She introduced conditions that necessarily be placed in a marriage contract, that gives protection to the interest of women, such as the rights that women can revoke that marriage in case her husband marries second, or if wife rejects to perform her domestic duties or child care. She treated the issue of rights of women without objection to the methodological foundations of patriarchy. She does not take into account the assumption and the conceptual implication of traditional Islamic jurisprudence.¹⁴

¹³ al-Hibri Azizah Y., "An Introduction to Muslim Women's Rights," in *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America*, vol. 51 (Gisela Webb, 2000), 51-65. Azizha al_Hibri is professor emerita of Law, taught from 1992 to 2012 at the University of Richmond School of Law in Virginia. She also had the teaching career in the capacity of Professor at Texas and A&M University and Washington University on her credit from 1975 to 1983. Born to rich family of potent Islamic scholars she started teaching Quran and Arabic classics from her early childhood at home in Lebanon. She obtained her B.A. in Philosophy from the American University of Beirut in 1966, and PhD in Philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania in 1975. By the 1970s, the feminist movement at United States had played a potential role in turning out to be a feminist. Although she was not comfortable with American feminism because it remained embraced U.S policies. American feminism is seen to her as empowering patriarchal goals. She used the term "womanist" for the purpose to enrich the label of reinterpreting the Quran. She believed that Islam is inherited as patriarchal not by its indigenous status. She contributed in this realm to the Journal of Women's Studies International Forum on women in 1982 as a guest editor. She also contributed of being engaged in in international women and human rights though NGOs. She also founded the Kramah an organization for Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights in 1993. Please see for further readings, Braude, Ann. "Azizah al-Hibri." *Transforming the Faiths of Our* Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 173-197.

¹⁴ Ibid, 51-65.

Kecia Ali has presented another approach that genuinely provides the context of pre-modern Islamic tradition and critically investigates the assumptions that build the traditional Islamic law.¹⁵ For instance, she provides a detailed study about the concept of marriage and slavery laid down in pre-modern traditions. She examines in her works the androcentric elements engraved in the pre-modern Islamic law that presume male supremacy over women. Her interest in this field reflects in her books like "*Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam (2010)*" and "*Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Quran, Hadīth, and Jurisprudence (2006)*." She also entertained the nature of marriage in Sunnah tradition from third to ninth Hijra. She finds however that the concept or nature of marriage rests upon the respective context available to jurists of their own time that leads other jurists towards diverse opinions about it.¹⁶ This stance sets up the course for her to investigate the gendered presumptions upon which the concept of marriage is deduced in Islamic law. Subsequently, she interrogates elements remain instrumental in the establishment of jurisprudential establishment of marriage, which are dealt as a contractual exchange of males in the shape of economic support in turn for sexual access to women's bodies. Ali investigates this establishment, relied upon gendered treatment of women as proprietary objects in regard to Islamic legal proportions, in

¹⁵ Kecia Ali earned her BA in feminist studies from Stanford University. She got MA and PhD from Duke University in 2002, and currently working as professor of religion at Boston University. She got interested in jurisprudence which is well represented in her book *Imam Shafi'i Scholar and Saint (2011)*, *Marriage and Slavery in Islam (2010)* and *Sexual Ethics in Islam: Feminist Reflection on Quran, Hadīth, and Jurisprudence (2006)*. She is focused on the presumptions made about the marriage which are to her gender oriented. More specifically she concentrated the structure of marriage deduced by jurisprudence, that produced the contractual agreement conceding toward the access of women's body in shape of sexual relationship. To her marriage is a treatment of women in way to control over her which contradicts with comprehensive Quranic concept of spiritual equality. Please see for details Kecia Ali *Sexual Ethics in Islam: Feminist Reflection on Quran, Hadīth, and Jurisprudence*. Oxford: Oneworld. (2006).

¹⁶ For further readings please see Kecia Ali, *Money, Sex, and Power: The Contractual Nature of Marriage in Islamic Jurisprudence of the Formative Period*, PhD Thesis, Duke University 2002, 68-70

connection to the Quranic narrations on sex that explicates male's agency over women, and more importantly with intensity to rest of the overall Quranic notions of spiritual equality between man and woman.

Haideh Moghissi¹⁷, in her book "*Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*," *Zed Books, Second Edition, 2002*, elaborates another approach nullifying the pre-modern traditional literature and favors to acquire rights of women from the modern secular techniques. She sharply criticizes the nature of Islamic Jurisprudence and advocates the western style of understating as a suitable and proper choice for the protection of women's rights. Another notion she deduced is that the parity of genders addressed in the Quran is to ensure equality in the eyes of God, which is different from the one ascribed in this world.¹⁸

Sa'adiyya Shaikh¹⁹ gives in her work the important part of investigating the reasons behind the frames of gender formulation in the traditional Islamic heritage of *tafsīr*,

¹⁷ Haideh Moghisi, a leading scholar of woman's studies, was born in Iran. She graduated in Law and Political science from Tehran University and achieved her Ph.D in Political Science from Queen's University. Moghisi was among the founders of Iranian National Union of Woman. Being an activist and internationally renowned analyst of woman's problems round the globe, she debates on a no. of issues which includes social injustice, gender democracy, woman and Islam. Her landmark book *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism* (2000) won the award of Choice Outstanding Academic Book. Currently, she is directing an international comparative research project "Diaspora, Islam and Gender." Please see for further readings, <https://profiles.laps.yorku.ca/profiles/moghissi/>, accessed on 06/07/2017.

¹⁸ Haideh Moghissi "*Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*", *Zed books, Second edition, 2002, 137-138*

¹⁹ Sa'adiyah Shaikh with an Indian origin was born in South Africa where she became interested in interpreting the Quran with possible liberal understanding. This kind of approach inflicted upon her due to anti-apartheid movement at Cape Town. She reflects her readings specifically in Sufism which resulted into a book titled *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn 'Arabī, Gender, and Sexuality* (2012). She expounds a connectivity between Sufi metaphysics and gendered selfhood and ethics. Currently she is working as professor at the University of Cape Town (South Africa) She received her PhD from the Temple University (Philadelphia) in 2004. She implicates Sufism for Islamic feminism and its theory. She examines in her works the treatment

which treats women as deficient in knowledge, intellect, and leadership. On the other hand, men are considered “superior creatures and even divine intermediaries for women.”²⁰ She points out the types of gender construction have been used throughout the whole medieval Quranic interpretations that even provided grounds for domestic violence and other elements of subjugations of women.

In another concise work, Leila Ahmed²¹ points out that before the advent of Islam, women enjoyed a slight social and sexual freedom. She mentions in her book²² that Islam inherited external attitudes and behavior towards women from the co-existing civilizations, especially through the process of assimilation after the conquest, and hence legal institutions of Islam helped “orthodox” Islam in the authentication of these foreign attitudes. These attitudes provided the foundations of victimizing women in various domains.²³ She explains in detail various issues like veil, polygamy, and divorce in such a way that undermines the voice of Muslim woman. She discusses these issues in different discourses of history.

of women as irrational and deficient in intellect as compare to men. See <http://www.religion.uct.ac.za/religion/staff/academicstaff/sadiyyashaikh> and <https://www.tf.uio.no/english/research/news-and-events/events/guest-lectures-seminars/2013/shaikh-cv-2013-for-jone.pdf>. accessed on 06/07/2017.

²⁰ Sa’adiyya Shaikh, “Exegetical Violence: *Nushūz* in Quranic Gender Ideology”, 1997, 29.

²¹ An Egyptian American professor, Leila Ahmed was born in Egypt in 1940 in an upper-class family. She got her higher studies at Cambridge University and was the first one ever to teach Women studies in Islam at Harvard School. During her brought up, she tasted contradictory cultures, one being presented by her Muslim parenting and the other by British instructors in Western Schools. It casted an immense influence upon her thoughts and became evident when she penned down her views about the historical role of gender in Islam in her widely acclaimed book, *Woman and Gender in Islam* (1992). She aimed to deconstruct the misapprehension of West about Islam and Muslim woman by criticizing male-centered traditional beliefs in Middle East. Please see www.arabwomenwriters.com and www.islamandfeminism.org, accessed on 06/07/2017.

²² Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of Modern Debate* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1992).

²³ - <http://hds.harvard.edu/dpa/faculty/area23/ahmad.html> accessed on 07/07/2017

Another speculative work is done by an African-American Muslim feminist Amina Wadud.²⁴ The is “*Quran and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Women’s Perspective*; (Oxford University Press, 1999). This book is dedicated to “Sisters in Islam”, a feminist movement in Malaysia. She argues that Muslim scholars of interpretation focused much on the traditional Islamic literature while advocating women related issues, rather than the profound understanding of the original text.

She mostly concentrates on exploring various hermeneutical methodologies in order to form a female inclusive interpretation of the Quran. The methodologies provide an inquiry of the nature of language and the deduction of meanings. For this purpose, she introduces ‘hermeneutic of *tawhīd*’ related to the holistic study of the Quran. She also employs a method to analyze the various Quranic discourses on the basis of linguistic paradigm, syntactical formulations, and textual content known as textual contextualization. By coining the term ‘textual development,’ she alerts the reader to be careful while treating different Quranic Trajectories.

She also analyzes the gender-specific language because it affects the consequences of the interpretation drawn from a specific language. She also establishes her theory about the creation of humanity by saying that man-woman creation in the Quran is meant to be understood with the comprehension of linguistic precision and its syntactical nature. She fully endorsed Riffat Hassan by assimilating that Quranic

²⁴ Amina Wadud was born in a Methodist Christian family in Maryland and converted to Islam when she was in college in 1972. She got her bachelor’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania and was awarded with doctorate in Arabic and Islamic Studies by the University of Michigan in 1988. She taught in International Islamic University Malaysia and VCU from 1989 to 2008 respectively. Wadud, a portrait of Muslim feminism, describes her scholarly experienced life as outcome of the racism of African Americans. She wrote a classic feminist Quranic Interpretation “Quran and Woman; Rereading the Sacred Text from a woman’s perspective”, which was published in Malaysia in 1992 and in US in 1999. She has been an active member of Sisters in Islam, an activist organization of Muslim women, where she led a guiding role in readings of the Quran in late 1980s. For further readings please see Amina Wadud, “On Belonging as a Muslim Women.” *My Soul is a Witness: African-American Women’s Spirituality*. Ed. Gloria Wade-Gayles. Boston: Beacon Press 1995, 265.

description about human creation does not lead towards the interpretation to assert that man was created prior to woman. She also explores that human beings originate from one pair (*zawj*) at one time, on the same manner, and from one substance, which means that both man and woman are equal partners in creation, and no gender specification will be attributed to both words (*nafs*-soul) and (*zawj*-mate) while interpreting them. She pointed out that Quran did not describe any fixed role for any of the gender, rather, culture defines the role for both the gender. Also, she brought the opinion that all the traditional understanding of gender has negated the proper understanding of women's role and status. So, it is needed to be re-interpreted.

The same theology has been expressed by a Pakistani born feminist, Asma Barlas.²⁵ She agrees with other Muslim feminists about the dominant orbit of male interpretation of the Islamic text in favor of their own. She wrote various articles regarding women issues and delivered lectures at various institutions. She divided her book "*Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran*," in two parts one is theological and other is hermeneutical. The theological part deals with Quran, *Tafsīr*, and *Ahadīth* and inter-textualities, external context, the *Sunnah*, *Sharī'ah*, and State. The hermeneutical part consists of three chapters; The Patriarchal Imaginary of Fathers, the Quran Sex – Gender, and Sexuality, Sameness, Difference, Equality, and Family and Marriage: Retrieving the Quran Egalitarianism. In her book, she agrees with other feminists, that the Holy Quran should be re-read. She, also, agrees that Muslim women never questioned the oppressive misreading of the religious texts. She criticizes the methodology of Muslim scholars that generates patriarchal reading of the Quran to

²⁵ Asma Barlas had got her PhD in International Studies from Graduate School of International Studies, (GSIS), University of Denver, Colorado in 1990. She is professor of politics at Ithaca College in New York since 1991. Her interest turned towards feminist studies due to Islamization process of laws carried out by General Muhammad Zia ul Haq in 1980s who removed her while she was a diplomat in Foreign affairs department of Pakistan. Her removal was made because of her critical views about the administration of General Zia ul Haq. Please see https://www.ithaca.edu/profiles/cv/cv_abarlas.pdf?1551719556, accessed on 07/07/2017.

conceal the egalitarian aspects of the Quran. She agrees that all the text is polysemic, which, therefore, is open to variant readings. Hence, it is necessary to examine the question of who read the Quran historically and how they read it. The role of Muslim interpretive communities and states in shaping religious knowledge and authority should be examined in ways that enabled a particular reading of the Quran. She opted for very controversial theories about the veil (*Hijāb*). Regarding the emphasis of scholars to the historical context, in which the Quran revealed, she said that the Quran occurred in the light of history and against the socio-historical background.²⁶

Barlas also asks readers of the Quran to read it with an open mind (free from patriarchalism), whereas, Wadud emphasized on reading the Quran in relation to its thematic holism. Barlas holds the opinion that the Quranic text contains polysemic nature. This opinion leads her to argue that the Quran should be understood through various contextually eligible methods as well as in patriarchal and liberation modes. Therefore, she favors an intra-hermeneutical strategy for reading the Quran in order to inculcate the message of justice towards both sexes at all grounds. She proposes to read it as a meaningful book that demonstrates the aspect of textual holism to ensure that it does not advocate injustice in the course of patriarchy.

Another scholar who emphasized hermeneutical approach to understanding the Quran in her article, "The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform," is Ziba Mir-Hosseini, who concentrates in her works on Islamic legal theory. She differentiates between three approaches, which she termed as traditionalist, neo traditionalist, and reformist.²⁷ She mentions various methodological principles pertaining to the reformist Islamic legal theory. She emphasizes that fairness and justice being irrefutable objectives of Sharia must be

²⁶ Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an* (Austin University of Texas Press: University of Texas Press, 2002), 53.

²⁷ Mir Hosseini Ziba, "The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform," *Hawwa*, 2003, www.brill.nl. accessed on 17/10/2016.

reflected in the laws and frames of rights between men and women. It is also pertinent to have the possibility of ensuring equal rights in Islamic Sharia. She often quests for techniques to affirm fairness on an equal basis for both genders. Like other feminist scholars, she also sustains the view that equality can only be achieved through fairness and justice, and that can be made the main mechanism for interpretation of the religious texts. She also gives her rationale that the study of the history of reformation and non-patriarchal epistemology sets the course for the contemporary gender theories, which not only shows the misogynist trend exists internally in *fiqh* rules but, also, that these rules are appropriate to advocate the interest of an individual and society.²⁸

Another work pertaining to the subject of hermeneutical aspect is Khaled Abou El Fadl,²⁹ who wrote a book, "*Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law Authority and Women.*" In this book, the author goes to deconstruct the *Salafī* authoritarian approaches. He views that such approaches have distorted the real image of Islamic legal theory. In the case of women, these approaches have demolished the real status of women. He read those verses of the Quran that uphold the foundation of God's sovereignty, Omnipotence, and His ontological link with his creatures.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ A distinguished scholar, Khaled Abou El Fadl was born in Kuwait in 1963. He attained the degree of B.A in Political Science from Yale University and J.D from University of Pennsylvania and Ph.D in Islamic Law from Princeton University. He is a world-renowned Islamic Jurist, author and a prominent public thinker who remained active in scholarly discussions on human rights, democracy, morality and universal themes of humanity from an unrevealed feministic viewpoint. He also acquired a systematic training in Islamic Jurisprudence and eloquence in Egypt and Kuwait. He holds teaching experience and participated on both academic and nonacademic grounds throughout the Europe for twenty years. Abou El Fadl is well known for his intellectual writings which includes ten books and more than fifty articles on Islamic Law. Being condemnatory to Wahhabi Islam, he regularly appears on national and international television and radio including CNN, NBC, PBS, NPR, and Voice of America (broadcast throughout the Middle East). Please see www.scholarsofthehouse.org, 07/07/2017.

Human beings, as vicegerents of God's intent, can never present it without any ambiguity. In this regard, El-Fadl says that Salafi's authoritative project of interpretation is insensible to maintain an accurate link between author, text, and the reader to actualize the meaning of the indicators (*Adillah*) of God. Therefore El-Fadl presents a proper approach to deal with the text that lacks the privilege of interpretation, neither appointed to the author and reader nor the language itself. It is needed here to tackle the issue of interpretation on equal potentials in all these three elements to negate the authoritative interpretations. He also analyses the concept of authority considering Islamic Tradition and indicates the points that lead towards the misrepresentation of authority. He treats this theme by introducing two terms the "multiple authorship" and "authorial enterprise."³⁰ By the former, he means the authoritarian approach in *Hadīth* interpretation, which is not only based as per the decorum of sciences of *Ahādīth* but also to the mode of receiving a *hadīth* that involves the number of companions who heard, seen and transmitted the *Hadīth*. El Fadl argues that it is not a proper method of authority to treat the interpretation of *hadīth* known as "multiple authorship." The latter term means that each *hadīth* cannot be fully attributed to the actual sayings of the Prophets due to "authorial enterprise" that imprinted the intention of the interpreter. El Fadl concludes that reports of the Prophets lack moral insight because of the mechanism inherited for the formulation of *Hadīth*. El Fadl says that *Salafi* based scholars have neglected the status of women while interpreting the *Hadīth* literature.

Riffat Hassan has done numerous works on feminist theology and been considered one of the pioneers of feminist theology in the context of Islam. She did not produce any specific book but wrote various articles among them are: "*Made from Adam's Rib: The Women Creation Questions:*" Published in *Al-Mushir, Theological Journal of the Christian Study Center, Pakistan, Vol: XXVII, autumn 1985, No.3.* "*Equal before Allah,*" published in *Harvard Divinity Bulletin, Harvard University – The Divinity School, January – May 1987, Vol: XVII No. 2.* "*An Islamic*

³⁰ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001). 93-94.

Perspective,” in “*Women Religion and Sexuality: Studies on the Religious on Woman,*” Ed: Jeanne Becher (Geneva; WCC Publication, 1990). “*Women’s and men’s Liberation: Testimonies of Spirit,*” Ed: [Leonard Grob, Riffat Hassan, and Haim Gordon], the article, “*The issue of Women – Man Equality in Islamic tradition*” by Riffat Hassan (Green Wood Press, 1991). Riffat’s point of view can be summarized as such that all primary sources of Islam have only been interpreted by men who have arrogated to themselves the task of defining the ontological, theological, sociological, and eschatological status of Muslim women. She mentioned the implementation process of *Hudūd* ordinance in Pakistan; she portrayed the negative ideas and attitudes present in Muslim societies about women. To her, it is imperative to bring a decisive and conclusive change to women’s status in Islamic societies. Her theology consists of “First Creation of Humankind, Interpretation of the term *Zawj*, *Al-Nafs*, and critical discourses about creation of woman in *Hadīth* literature.

The above-reviewed work shows the unanimous agreement of feminists on the lower status of women in society. For that matter, they have enlisted many elements of subjugation, including religion, state, culture, and tradition. However, Riffat Hassan differs from them in those three theological assumptions. She says that while Muslim scholars refer to the biblical account while perceptualizing the concept about the creation of man. To her, that is not Islam, but it is the tradition that distorts the image of actual Islam. It is the endeavors of this study to articulate her thoughts about woman ‘s equality. It is also found that her works challenged the exclusive male supremacy in Quran and focused on those verses that replicate male-female equality and do not bother those ones which delineate distinguishing aspects of males.

4- Research Questions

As stated above, several contributions appeared in the academy pertaining to the discipline of feminist hermeneutical approaches to the study of religions. Mostly, it can be categorized into two groups: the first of these focuses on the study of women and gender in Islam with a concise elegance of methodological

interpretations as most of such works are shown in the review of the literature. The scholars of feminism of three revealed faiths have contributed to a growing body of literature. In a broader sense, this amount of literature can be classified further in several modes. Firstly, those who paid attention to women from a historical point of view. Those who reside in the second category concentrate on the issue of sexuality and its ethics, and it is related to the status of women in societies as exists in Islamic jurisprudence. The last one is related to the Muslim feminist hermeneutics, which is the subject area of the current work and which is utilized as a primary tool in an attempt to prove complete equality of genders. This study carries the following research questions.

- 1- What are the historical circumstances and intellectual environment that provided an impetus for feminism to develop their theology and its relationship with religion?
- 2- What are the methodological strategies proposed by feminist scholars of the revealed faiths to do their theology while reading the text?
- 3- What are the three theological assumptions as proposed by Riffat Hassan and to what extent they are compatible with textual interpretation of the three revealed faiths?
- 4- What mandate and scope is available to feminist theological assumptions from Islamic point of view?

5 - Research Methodology

In order to meet the research objectives, the researcher will use three types of methodologies, descriptive, analytical, and critical. Through description the researcher will be able to understand the exact feminist approaches towards traditional Islamic literature. This will lead to an exploration of the meaning and significance of the notion of Muslim feminism. In the description, the researcher will rely on the feminist's approach towards the understanding of the religious text, and the researcher will use their sources to understand their feminist theology.

The analytical methodology will be employed for a deep understanding of the subject and to trace back the Muslim feminism to its origins. This will also enable the researcher to analyze feminism in the context of contemporary Muslim feminist theology. In the analysis, the researcher will try to put feminist thoughts on three theological assumptions in the context of the feminist hermeneutical study. The researcher will also try to interrelate feminist views of the Modernist Muslim thinkers for the purpose of further clarification.

The researcher will analyze the methodology of western hermeneutics and its implication on the study of the noble Quran and Islamic tradition as a theoretical framework. For this purpose, the researcher will analyze different key points of western hermeneutics, which provide the base of feminist interpretation of Islamic texts and will ascertain that how and up to what extent Muslim feminists have adopted the western hermeneutical approach to the Quran and Islamic tradition.

Criticism will help us understand the nature and objectives of feminist theology. It fulfills the purpose of comparison of feminist stances from religious point of view. The researcher will study feminist views critically with the help of prominent Muslim scholars, to expose weak and strong points to provide an opportunity for further suggestions and research.

The theoretical framework of the research is established basically on the hermeneutical methods applied to eradicate the idea of complete equality for women extracted directly from the Quran. In this regard, the main idea is framed on the scriptural hermeneutical method elucidated by the famous western theoretician of hermeneutics Hans George Gadamer, whose work is related to the techniques of the understanding of the text.³¹ Hermeneutic, as a process for understanding the principles of interpretative ethics and epistemology of understanding, help out in navigation of meaning in the past as well as its relation

³¹ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev.ed., trans. rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004). 164.

to navigation of it through the present time.³² Muslim feminists' works challenge the traditional authority and undermine the exclusive authority of males. Subsequently, the work of Fazlur Rehman remained widely instrumental in the production of modern feminist hermeneutics of the Quran. The precision of framing design for articulating the general moral intent of the Quran from its more specific statements addressed to the seventh-century audience provides convenient techniques for feminists to read the other purposive passages of the Quran.³³ Rehman declares that any hermeneutics method which fails to reconcile with the contemporary requirements, should be avoided and nullified.³⁴

³² Duncan S. Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1986), 85.

³³ Saeed Abdullah, "Fazlur Rehman: A Frame work for interpreting the Ehtico-Legal Content of the Quran", in *Modern Muslim Intellectual and the Quran*, Ed. Suha Taji Farouki (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 43.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 59.

**CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF
FEMINISM AND ITS RELATION WITH RELIGION**

2- Rise of Some Key Concepts of Feminism

In the western context, the term feminism contains multiple discussions and views regarding its nature. It seems impossible to select one way of defining feminism. The feminist dictionary expounds feminism as a conscious position of women to resist the defamation of men and the suppression of women, where sexual discrimination is based on cultural reasons and not rooted in the biological structures.³⁵ By equal status, a feminist means to be treated “with equal seriousness and respect.”³⁶ Margot Badran demonstrates feminism as a movement that evokes women to realize their aptitude and capabilities hence creating a culture of their own.³⁷ Karen Offen regards it as a term which first appeared in France 1880s when Hubertine Auclert (1848-1914) coined it in her journal *La Citoyenne*, in order to undermine the male superiority and promote the legitimacy of women’s rights.³⁸

The history of feminism had gone through three famous waves that provide a well define objectives of feminism throughout the western terrain. The first wave of feminism concentrated on equal rights in property and mutual contracts that turned into political rights (rights of the vote) at the end of the nineteenth century. Feminists achieved their goal in the United States of America when the nineteenth Amendment was made in the constitution in 1919, granting women the right to vote.³⁹

³⁵ Cheri Kramarae and Paula A Treichler, “A Feminist Dictionary” (University of Illinois, 1996).¹⁰

³⁶ Margaret L. Andersen, *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), 35.

³⁷ Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1995), 31-32.

³⁸ Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, n.d.).

³⁹ Malinie Philipps, *The Ascent of Women: A History of the Suffragette Movement and the Ideas behind It*, Illustrated (Little Brown, 2004). 23.

In the west, the literature of 19th century discusses rights of women as seen in the statements of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Mill who said “If the Principle of democracy is true, we ought to act as if we believed it, and not to ordain that to born a girl instead of a boy, any more than to be born black instead of white, or a commoner instead of a nobleman, shall decide the person’s position throughout the life.”⁴⁰

The current status of the Western woman is a result of the struggle of women’s rights, which was given different titles throughout history, such as “Women’s Rights, Suffrage Movement, Women Liberation Movement, Feminism or Feminist Movement. The book of Mary Walstonecroft, “Vindication of the Right of Women,” published in 1792, played a significant role in the women's liberation movement. The struggles continued, and in 1882 Married “Women’s Property Act” was passed by the parliament of the United Kingdom, which gave women the freedom to spend their own money. In Norway, in 1840-50, the right of inheritance was given to the women and in 1864 the right to run their own business. The women's liberation movement emphasized the importance of the right to vote, but it was given to women in Switzerland in 1917 and in Britain in 1918. Women were declared eligible for government job in 1920 in America, in 1946 in France, and in 1912 in Norway. Nineteen women were the members of the parliament in Finland in 1910. Women continued to struggle for their political and social rights, and more significantly for their independence and freedom from supposed oppressions. The industrial revolution caused the farmers to move from rural to urban areas which forced the women to work. As a result, the movement of women’s wages and rights emerged. It was based totally on equality.”⁴¹

Sylvia Walby stated that the Women Liberation movement initiated as a result of other American movements like “Black Power Movement,” “Students for Democratic Society,” “Peace movement.” By the 19th century, they had gone

⁴⁰ John Stuart Mill, *The Subjugation of Women* (Oxford University Press, 1947), 11.

⁴¹ Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History*. 9

beyond the demand of vote, and in the 20th century they mainly focused on equal legal rights for every human being, irrespective of gender.⁴² According to Juliet Mitchell, those movements made women realized that they should start their own movement.⁴³ Barbra Decard also has similar views.⁴⁴ Tress Gill and Larry Witty said that women were forced to work on wages because of poverty, but the housework was still their main job.⁴⁵ The decade of 1960 is important because new social development took place. The awareness of independence caused the emergence of new slogans and new demands for women.⁴⁶

In the 1960s, the liberation movement took a new turn because now liberty as a whole was the main focus and not just the rights. It was declared that freedom and liberty were sovereign values. If we look at the evolution of this struggle, we see that the industrial revolution forced women towards working outside their homes, but women considered liberation their right and struggled for it. On the one hand, where western society being devoid of any concept of segregation. On the other, Christianity looks at it as forbidden filth. Furthermore, gender mixing in societies provided both genders with opportunities for sexual interactions. This was a problem for women because sexual intercourse resulted in pregnancy. It is a biological strength for a woman as well as her weakness; strength in a way that through this process woman becomes the creator of the family and the center of respect for children; it is also a weakness because woman depends on man for the upbringing of the children. Emotional and biological attachment ties her down to the child who is also crucial for the survival of humanity. In addition to that, she is

⁴² Walby Silvia, *Patriarchy at Work: Patriarchal and Capitalist Relations in Employment* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); Walby Silvia, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Cambridge: Basill Blackwell, 1990)., 49.

⁴³ J.J Mitchell, *Women's Estate*, Penguin, 1971. 34-36.

⁴⁴ Decard B.S, *The Women's Movement* (New York: Harpers Row, 1975).

⁴⁵ Tress Gill and Larry Whitty, *Women's Right in Work Place: Know Your Rights – The Questions and the Answers* (Pelican: Paperback, 1983)., 49.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

unable to perform her duty alone without the assistance of man as both are involved in the reproduction phenomenon. Thus, it is evident from the historical scenario that shared contribution of either is essential for successful brought up in the protection of the new generation.

The second wave of feminism focused on granting women cultural and social equality besides rectifying women's position in political institutions. While comparing this wave with the first one, Estelle Freedman debates the salient features of the second wave by associating it with the complete end of women's discrimination.⁴⁷ At the same time, it was also proposed to examine all integral thoughts regarding women in contrast to "real life experiences."⁴⁸ Such type of quest for the experience on a political basis stemmed from Marxist epistemology, which contributes to the reposition of real life.⁴⁹ This potential for women activism had paved the way for the emergence of women's organizations and platforms. This period also gave privilege to the French Philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) and a concise introduction due to her view that "one is not born woman, but becomes one" focusing on the social construction of woman as the Other.⁵⁰ She asked feminists to leave thinking in oppressive portions and start moving forward.

History tells us that, for centuries, men and women have worked mutually for the continuity of life. Like all other schools of thought, they have also undergone phases of agreement and disagreement. Throughout history, strong overpower the

⁴⁷ Estelle Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (Ballantine Books, 2003).

⁴⁸ Rosi Braidotti, "The Uses and Abuses of the Sex/Gender Distinction in European Feminist Perspective," in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, by Griffin, G and Braidotti, Rosi (eds), (London: Zed Books, 185AD), 285-310; Rossi Braidotti, "Feminist Philosophies," in *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 195-214.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Please see <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:518916/FULLTEXT01.pdf>, accessed on 04/04/2017.

weak. The same way women also have to go through oppression and face some injustice but one fact can't be denied, that she has also been protected. Feminists have presented a deteriorated interpretation and used the gender equality as their slogan.

2.1-Types of Feminism

2.1.1- Radical Feminism

This school of thought concentrates critically on the patriarchal system of family in a conclusive manner. They think that there is patriarchy in society, and that is why men always rule, and women are ruled over. Women are exploited, and the family system plays a significant role in this. Drastic changes are needed to remedy this. However, the members of this group have not agreed on the actual cause of women's exploitation. Some think the cause is biological, especially the quality of women to give birth. Others think that culture is responsible for men's behavior. The third group thinks that men maintain their power through sexual and physical assault on women. This radical group is so extreme in their views that they refuse to accept any help from men in their movement.⁵¹ They believe that women should free themselves from male domination. Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group thinks that lesbians are the true feminist. One group that believes in female supremacy thinks that there should be matriarchy instead of patriarchy since women are morally supreme. Diversity is found in the interpretations of this school of thought. Following are some of their interpretations of the feminist themes:

2.1.1.1-Sexual Oppression

This term was introduced by Firestone in her book. She introduced terminologies like sexual oppression, sexual class system, and biological family. These terms were, in turn, used by feminists of all schools of thought. Firestone thinks that men and women are biologically different, and this has given rise to what she calls "biological family." She says that this family has four main features. Number one is the biological weakness of women, such as menstruation, menopause, and

⁵¹ Lindsey LL, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 10.

childbirth. During pregnancy and breast-feeding, women have to rely on men. The second is accepting the superiority of men during the upbringing of their babies because, at that time, women need men's help and their attention. And then, there is the mutual dependence of the baby and the mother on the father, which creates an imbalance of authority. The fourth feature of the biological family is that it creates gender inequality and gives men a chance to spread and strengthen their dominance. The sexual class system has provided men with economic power, and in Firestone's opinion, complete equality cannot be achieved in its presence.⁵²

2.1.1.2- Cultural Interpretation

In the paradigm of radical feminism, Ortner has presented this disparity by cultural scales. Sherry B. Ortner agrees with Firestone to this extent that woman is globally oppressed and low valued, but to her, the reason is not biological strand but its interpretation which is deeply engraved with the culture of its respective society. The thing that matters is not the biology of the woman but the assessment of her biological status and ranking its value. She thinks that until this interpretation of her value will not end her enslavement will still endure. She argues that either nature or culture determines the status of a human being. In many different societies, culture is being valued more than nature. Culture is the source through which human nature can be controlled. According to her, culture is a skill through which man has attempted to control and regularized nature. She puts culture, technology, and ideology in the same regards, that is why it is superior to nature. Furthermore, this superiority is the actual base of the devaluation of woman.⁵³ A woman is considered closer to nature that is why she is inferior to man. Further she explains her opinion in four basic points:

1. Ortner argues that it is globally excepted fact that woman is closer to nature because her physique and psychological factors are compatible with natural patterns that are related to creation. These patterns include menstrual cycle,

⁵² Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: 19 Union Square West, 2003).

⁵³ Ibid

pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. The physique of the woman is naturally suitable to these factors because they were created on a unified natural basis.

2. Being a mother, her role in society does enrich her closeness to nature. Basically, a woman establishes a sense of togetherness. Children and infants are on that level of humanity whose manifestations are very much associated with nature. Their cultural sense and cultural contribution are lesser than adults. Intense care and protection of children will bring women close to nature.
3. Women are instrumentally connected to the family system, which also play a spontaneous role to affirm natural entity as compared to other institutions. Political wars and religious activities are considered far beyond nature and ranked higher than domestic responsibilities, and that is why they are in the scope of man. So, man is considered superior.⁵⁴
4. Ortner argues that because of women's closeness to nature, she knows the manner to nourish and develop personal, mutual, and special relationships. Her exclusive nexus with children becomes the medium for their wholesome growth and her mothering steadfastness and expressions. As compared to this, man establishes a wide range of connections and links due to active participation in politics, war and religion, and he affords it. That is why he is hesitant in developing personal and special relations. So, man tends to be more objective and less emotional. Overall man's mentality is more ecumenical and conceptual and less personal and specific. According to Ortner, culture prevails in endowed existence through intellectual system and technology. So, man is implied closer towards culture because his thinking is more distant, clear, conceptual, and objective-based and because the culture is considered better than nature, so

⁵⁴ Ortner S.B, "Is Female to Male as Nature to Culture", in *Women Culture and Society*, Ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 6-8.

here once again, the psychology of women is considered inferior to man. Ortner concludes that woman through her biological existence, psychological process, social role, and psychology appears to be standing somewhere between culture and nature.⁵⁵

The predomination of culture and inferiority of nature, which is the base of Ortner's argument, is not always considered as right. There are many expressions of the supreme power of nature which has been accepted by different societies. Moreover, having control over some powers of nature does not mean that nature is inferior. However, this analysis has played a vital role in defining some behaviors in the west.

Mitchell Rosaldo states that there is a distribution of public and private life, and this is the reason for women's oppression. She says that in private lives, women are mothers, and being mothers, their jobs are limited but fruitful. She argues that the biology of women is used to limit the scope of women. Men are not directly connected to the family system. They don't maintain personal connections as women do, that is why they are considered more suitable for religious and political activities of the outside world. This gives him power and dominance inside homes. Rosaldo believes that to achieve equality, men should take part and help more in domestic life. The impact of this can be seen in the west. Men are encouraged to help in their homes by doing the dishes, washing clothes, cleaning, and taking care of babies. Feminists are winning in their quest to domesticize men. Women are being encouraged to work outside of their homes. However, they are still inferiors, and their services are considered somewhat less important. The difference in wages is still there. It is said that due to this distribution of jobs, men work full-heartedly to provide for their families.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, *Women Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 28-30.

It can be said in light of the above-mentioned interpretations that women's status is presented indigenously on the basis of their biological and social roles to which they are created by God. On her contribution to both roles, she faces two paradoxical situations; one highlights her weakness in the alien ambiance with the society outside the home, while the other is her unique capability in educating the society in the portrayal of as mother as men are unable to perform that role. If this role is taken from the women, it will only lead to chaos, but the West does not comprehend that. The women's role should be understood in the realm of the true interpretation of her biological and social strands not based on negative consequences drawn as mentioned earlier, which is a biased and prejudiced approach towards women's natural capabilities. To revolt, the natural and social principals are not the solution for the elimination of woman's subjugation but to prevail justifiable system. Considering this system, both men and women should play their equal roles, and neither should oppress the other.

2.1.2- Marxist and Socialist Feminism

The followers of this idea do not blame patriarchal society for women's oppression; rather, they think capitalism is responsible for it. They think that domestic work is a way to oppress women because they aren't paid for it. They agree on this matter with radical feminists. Nevertheless, the difference between rich women and lower-class women worries them that is why they think they can work together with the lower class. They consider socialism a solution where means of products are in collective ownership.

Friedrich Engels has given special attention to gender inequality. In his theory, he presented that primitively in the age of savagery and barbarism, women enjoyed a higher status. Men worked outside the home; meanwhile women worked within the boundaries of four walls. However, it is worth mentioning that women were not subordinates. The reason behind this was the absence of marital bonds. A woman had sexual relationships with many men, and only she could tell about the actual father of her child. That is why heirloom was inherited through her. Afterwards, men started to keep herds of animals. Since men controlled the economy, so they

were considered the owners, and the mode of inheritance was shifted from women to men. Furthermore, men also started to restrict and bound women, which resulted in the emergence of the new civilization, and patriarchy was formed.⁵⁷ In the context of Marxist and socialist feminism, Engels views get state of the primary source, but these ideas are based on the human eye towards reasons behind women's subordination, which remains just as theory. Such theory does not find it as presented by Engels. Stephen Coontz and Peta Henderson have also presented their views in this school of thought.⁵⁸

Stephen Coontz and Peta Henderson find the reason for women's subordination in social circles. They disagree with radical feminist and do not accept Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) theory of women having the higher ground at the beginning of times. They believe that in the beginning, there was total gender equality. There was a distribution of labor but only for the protection of women. Societies were communal. They considered kin corporate property the reason for gender inequality. Before that, all relatives in a community used to get their fair share of food, even strangers, but later on, they were deprived of their rights as elderly, and aged members dominated the property.

Coontz and Henderson have not explained why men domination came into being. They try to find its reason in marriage. There were different forms of marriages in different societies. In the patri-locality woman moved to her husband's house, and her status was lowered. In matri-locality, man moved to his wife's house. In this system, there was gender equality. The man shared his income with his wife's family. The ownership gradually shifted from family to one person, and rich people dominated the poor ones. Men and women had an equal part in this.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of Family, Private Property and State* (United Kingdom: Foreign Languages Publishing Press, 1978), 8.

⁵⁸ Stephenie Coonts and Peta Henderson, *Women's Work, Men's Property: The Origin of Gender and Class* (London, 1986), 220.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

This theory explains that in the distribution of labor, women gather and cook the food because they give birth and breastfeed, while men hunt. This distribution has its roots in biological differentiation and is thus one of the main reasons for gender inequality.

2.1.3- Liberal Feminism

It is also called egalitarian feminism and acknowledged as a moderate form of feminism. Its main aim is gender equality but by achieving one goal at a time. According to its proponents, gender inequality has not benefited society. They think that gender equality is related to individuals rather than the whole society. They aim to have equality in education and workplaces, for that they try to pass laws. For example, they supported the “*Sex discrimination Act*” and the “*Equal Pay Act*” in Britain. They do not support revolutionary changes rather, they think that change should come democratically. To eradicate gender equality, they accept everyone’s opinion irrespective of gender. Their open-mindedness in their approach might cause a significant change in society.

The feeble standpoint of the second wave gave birth to the third wave of feminism, which arose in response to its failure. The projection of this particular wave was to unrest the extra focus on the experiences of the white women. Its origin is traced back to the beginning of the 1980s when Gloria Jean Watkins and Audre Lorde explored the extensive gap for the themes related to race.⁶⁰ As it was highlighted by Deborah King that the weak element in feminist thought was their ignorance of black women.⁶¹ As such, feminism as an academic discipline can tackle some latest issues of feminism but not to explain settlement or solution.⁶² Given such a biased

⁶⁰ Gloria Jean Watkins, “Ain’t I a Woman?: Black Woman and Feminism”, in *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Centre*, Bell Hooks, 1981; 124, Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1984), 60

⁶¹ Debora King, “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness”, *The University of Chicago Press* 14, Number 72-42 : (1988) 1.

⁶² S, *Feminist Method*, 17.

single-sided dimension of feminism, Andre Lorde re-introduced feminism as black feminism is not the reflection of white feminism because it contained some legitimate issues like birth control and sexual relations. Many of black feminists have adopted the term “womanist” instead of feminist.⁶³ Although some others considered that women are all sisters in virtue of their shared oppression. Black feminists opened the way for many other forms of feminism like postcolonial feminism and third world feminism just to recognize the variant issues universally.⁶⁴

2.2- Emergence of Islamic Feminism

The introduction of modernity to the Muslim world has given birth to the harsh discussions among Muslims about its validity, especially in roil of conservative sheds, and probably has given a new direction to feminist activism.⁶⁵ The western modernization and colonialism have paved the way for Muslim women to think about their changing roles that affect the traditional conventionalism.⁶⁶ The European colonizers mark Muslim societies as gender-segregated in the treatment of women in an uncivilized way. In response, the feminist movement plays a role of moral gateway for the hegemonic perusal for the west in Muslim societies that paves the way for civilized mandate freeing women from the dominance of

⁶³ Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983), xi.

⁶⁴ Haleh Afshar, "Women, Marriage and the State in Iran", in *Women, State and Ideology: Studies from Africa and Asia* (London: MacMillan Press, 86–70 and J E Lindsey, *Daily life in the Medieval Islamic World* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 178.

⁶⁵ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, (eds), *Islam, Gender and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34; Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender In Islam: Historical Roots of Modern Debate* (New heaven: Yale University Press, 1992), 67.

⁶⁶ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation", in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, Ed. Patrick Williams , Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 387.

patriarchal societies.⁶⁷ Muslims have taken various positions in response to the western hegemonic stance about women's status. The nationalist quad (*mahaz*) has replied that Islam had already empowered women long before the emergence of the feminist movement in the west that offered nothing than the abuse of their rights. Some have considered access of women to the public sphere as the adaptation of westernizing Muslim culture. While some have justified the opinion of women education and political participation "as a component of modern yet authentic Islam."⁶⁸ Such debates have strengthened the struggle over the issue of rights and competing for traditional culture.⁶⁹

Subsequently, colonialism has given rise to the confrontational movements in the Muslim world, working for the revival of Islam or exploring pure Islam at the end of the twentieth century.⁷⁰ The marginal activation of women in politics is maligned to domestic obligations, which are the pure and real assignment of women. The rights of women in an array of Islamic revival have been fore fronted.⁷¹ The ultimate need of the Islamic revivalist movement was to regain the true picture of Islam.⁷² The constrain upon women's freedom from oppression justifiably made through the treatment of religious scripture, especially the Quran, which is taken further as a source for relegating women to domestic affairs and repressing her access to a public spectacle.

In contrast, women have taken on their call for complete equality authenticated through the interpretation of the Quran. In the 1990s, Muslim modernism has formulated the scenario for the emergence of counter readings that inverted into a

⁶⁷ Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 151.

⁶⁸ Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents," 387.

⁶⁹ Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 149.

⁷⁰ Mariam Cooke, "Multiple Critique: Islamic Feminist Rhetorical Strategies", in *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse*, Ed. Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-Lan (New York: Routledge, 2002), 151.

⁷¹ Badran, *Feminism*, 303.

⁷² Cooke, "Multiple Critique," 147.

worldwide movement, namely “Islamic Feminism,” ensuring the equality of men and women. The term “Islamic Feminism” takes its birth first in the writings of Ziba Mir Hosseini, and Afsaneh Najmabadeh, Iranian scholars in the 1990s in women’s journal *Zanan*.⁷³ A certain number of female scholars appeared to deduce male-female equality directly from the Quran by attributing authority convincingly to their self for reading the Quran in contrast to the male experience like Nazira Zain al Din did in her *Unveiling and Veiling* in 1928 in Beirut.⁷⁴ Instantaneously, these feminist interpreters have made “*Ijtihād*” as a gateway for independent readings of the Quran according to their intended concepts. They followed the stamps of modernist thinkers when drawing isolation between particular and universal passages of the Quran, who understand the Quranic notions in its entire message.⁷⁵ To include their experience in the reading of the Quran is like accomplishing the task of interpretation in a way to drive new guidance according to the contemporary needs as did by male interpreters before from their own perspective. Because feminist scholars point out that classical as well post classical Quranic interpretive works are established upon male centered experiences which desperately needs the addition of women’s spectrum of perspectives. As the interpretation is always open legitimately with lineage of *Ijتهād*. Thus, feminist scholars strive to find their own place in the task of interpretation to derive their claim for male-female equality.

2.2.1 - Islam and Feminism

Scholars of feminist theology have heated discussions over the plausibility of feminism with Islam, that is, whether it is compatible with Islam or not?⁷⁶ The view that emerges from such debates shows that feminism is native to Islam in response

⁷³ Badran, *Feminism*, 37; Cooke, “Multiple Critique,” 150.

⁷⁴ Badran, *Feminism*, 247.

⁷⁵ Hibba Abugideiri, “Hagar: A Historical Model for ‘Gender Jihad’”, in *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thoughts in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001),84.

⁷⁶ Mir Hosseini Ziba, “Beyond ‘Islam’ vs. Feminism,” *IDS Bulletin* 42.1, 2011.

to the notion of feminism as alien to Islam.⁷⁷ On the contrary, this group often relates feminism with Marxism and secularism that undermined the very fundamental structure of family, resulting in ethical discrimination of women and hence squandering feminism as a western delegated movement.

The other position is based upon the opinions of various critics who commonly present that Islam is an oppressive and anti-women normative force in society. In contrast to the notion of conservatives who consider feminism as totally western-oriented, Sa'adiyya Shaikh argues as to throw so much rich discourses in the hands of the west and to alienate the critical response of non-western women to patriarchy.⁷⁸ Margot Badran has also viewed that considering feminism as a western concept is declaring the deficient potential of Muslims to criticize the patriarchal culture and female suppression.⁷⁹ It is a matter of the fact that Islam inspired women in respect of their duties and rights without any contradiction but discredit the feminist discourses while finding their counter-attack on the credibility of Quranic sexist interpretations.⁸⁰ According to Badran, the reciprocal contradiction between Islam and feminism is a result of a naive approach in response to devalue the academic efforts at the end of Muslim feminists.⁸¹ Both Sa'adiyya Shaikh and Badran oppose referring the notion of feminism to secular western projects as well as the definition because of the emergence of the term "Islamic Feminism" in Muslim countries like Egypt, Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, and South Africa along with identification of the same pronouncement in the 1990s.⁸² As Sa'adiyya Shaikh points out that once a link has been made between the gender-

⁷⁷ Cooke, "Multiple Critique," 151.

⁷⁸ Sa'adiyya Shaikh, "Transformation Feminisms: Islam, Women, and Gender Justice", in *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*, Ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 155.

⁷⁹ Badran, *Feminism*, 327.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 246-50.

⁸¹ Ibid, 245.

⁸² Ibid, 270.

biased reading of the Quran and the patriarchal oriented societies by the Islamic feminists, the path may become easier to make Islam convenient to feminism.⁸³ She further asserts that feminism and Islam are both supportive to each other while inferring logically to their promise.⁸⁴ Therefore, Islamic feminism considers itself to maintain justice in both the genders to ensure that their Quranic discourse becomes integral to Islam.⁸⁵ Keeping in view their exploration that the experiences of women are unjust while accessing various social activities like education, jobs, etc., the Muslim feminists try to repulse the dilemma of idealism-radicalism in different social contexts.⁸⁶ While searching for complete equality, Muslim feminists derive their stances from the Quran to legitimize their movement in the framework of Quranic rendered equality.⁸⁷

The feminists present divergent opinions about the convergence between Islam and feminism, which essentially made Islam a tool of liberation for them. Therefore, there are a number of feminist scholars who find no space of quarrel between Islam and feminism.⁸⁸ Valentine Moghadam, Afsaneb Najmabadi, and Ziba Mir Hosseini struggled to empower women in the Iranian context with an approach to converge feminism with Islam to use it as a binary position in response to anti-women issues.⁸⁹ Mariam Cooke often establishes a much easier concept of Islamic feminism comparatively while deriving it from literature produced by some Arab women literature, such as Fatima Mernissi and Zainab al-Ghazali. They did a quest for women activism and evolving roles of women against post-colonial modern age.⁹⁰ She relates the concept of Islamic feminism with their discourses on

⁸³ Shaikh, "Transformation Feminisms: Islam, Women, and Gender Justice," 155.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 155.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 156.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 157.

⁸⁷ Badran, *Feminism*, 324.

⁸⁸ Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 65.

⁸⁹ Fatima Seedat, "When Islam and Feminism Converge", *Hartford Seminary*, 2013, 406.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

modernity. In this sense, Islamic feminism applied in general terms to most aspects of modern Muslim women's gender work. Na'eem Jeenah's assessment of the past practice sets a course for South African women to relinquish apartheid struggle. He was concerned with Islamic feminism in its relation to "retrospective analysis of the gender imperatives of Muslim anti-apartheid activism."⁹¹

Another group of feminists, which negates any possibility of convergence between Islam and feminism, is comprised of Zeenath Kausar and Haideh Moghissi. Zeenath Kausar is against of any convergence between the two of her works, primarily, reveals the ideology of feminism to be opposite to Islam in its nature. Later on, she regards feminism as a critical object to the ethnocultural traditionalism.⁹² She is of the view that feminism and Islam are inclusive rather than exclusive to each other. Moghissi looks much clear than Kausar regarding the question of the convergence. She argues that it is unnecessary to have any convergence of feminism with Islam and may not provide any compatible notions about equality.⁹³

There is a wide variety of use of Islamic feminism due to immutable context of Muslim societies that makes it difficult to put forward an agreed-upon definition of Islamic feminism. It would be difficult to confine the meaning of Islamic feminism inarticulate form as well as impossible to line up the all diverse, native meanings of Islamic feminism.⁹⁴ Arriving at its elegant definition is a difficult task as it is packed with multiple views and debatable meanings, which hinder in making it acknowledgeable.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Zeenath Kausar, *Crossroads: The Rights of Women in Islam and General Muslim Practices* (Paperback, 2006), 145-146.

⁹³ Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis* (Zed Books, 1999), 142.

⁹⁴ Ziba, "Beyond 'Islam' vs. Feminism," 68.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 71.

Some of the Muslim feminist scholars do resist the identification of their work with the term feminism due to one of reasons in many others as being external to Islam. Asma Barlas, Amina Wadud, and Riffat Hassan do not associate their works with that of Marxist and Socialist feminism and to avoid their self as promulgators of the others. Asma Barlas, particularly, excludes herself from any injustice committed against Muslims in the name of feminism.⁹⁶ She argues that as it is difficult for non-Muslims to accept the liberal potential of Islam, so it is difficult for her to accept feminism as fostering liberty.⁹⁷ She considers herself as standing in the line of many feminists for playing a role of criticizing in order to negate prevailing feminism in the process of exploration of equality through traditional literature. She is against holding the view that feminism is a product of feminist inventory. She acknowledges that equality of men and women is not instead of feminist thought but stems from reading the passages of the Quran that allude to the notion of equality.⁹⁸ She accepts that feminist theory has given her the track for conceptual tools to owe it and discuss it at various levels.

She became active in theorizing feminism with other reasons: "It seems to me that, for the most part, feminism has secularized the idea of liberation itself such that feminists often assume that to be a believer is already to be bound by the chains of false consciousness that precludes liberation."⁹⁹

Therefore, feminists have a stance that traditional Islam is a patriarchal religion by the reason that preambles the equality in its compres and designated footnotes to devastate female dignity. She refers to Fatima Mernissi here, who considers "Islam is misogynistic because it views God 'himself' as being oppressive."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Asma Barlas, "Engaging Feminism:" Provincializing Feminism as a Master Narrative" (Finland: Tampere Peace Research Institute, 2007),2.

⁹⁷ Asma Barlas, "Quranic Hermeneutics and Women's Liberation," *Barcelona, Spain*, 2005, 11.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Fatima Mernissi, *Women's Liberation and Islamic Memory* (Zed Books, 1996), 13-14.

Asma agrees with feminists not to derive their view from the Quran because of being reluctant to make counterfeit pretensions. She favors avoiding confusing Quranic injunctions as she urges feminist not to make it confused with patriarchal readings.¹⁰¹ She further goes to say that if feminism stems from language and reading of any text, it would probably resonate with the feeling of studying the Quran in many styles. The appropriate approach for deducing results should be to go through multiple exegeses of the Quran as it is practiced in finding feminist definitions. She counts herself as feminist if it is what meant by Margot Braden in her definition of Islamic Feminisms as “a discourse of gender equality and social justice that derives its understanding and mandate from the Quran and seeks the practice of rights and justice for all human beings in the totality of their existence across the public-private continuum.” On this, every Muslim can become feminist if he or she reads the Quran in the same way; this, however, is not the case. She deems to re-theorize the methods of traditional readings of the Quran with an aim to distinguish between what Islam is and what Muslims understanding of Islam is as between Muslim feminism and the Islamic one. And this will be the only possible way to come out from the label of feminism. She identifies her works with an ambition to re-look critically the relationship between men and women in the Quran for a better gender harmony in this world.¹⁰²

Riffat Hassan names her theology as “Islamic Theology of Women.” Her exegetical works cannot be isolated from hegemonic feminist discourses, but her works seem to be rooted in Islam. Fearing her work to be termed as un-Islamic, she tried to bring its base in the ambit of Islam. This will also provide credible potential to the language of equality in the shape of feminism. The arrival of Islam blessed the women with prestigious rights in society; thus, leaning upon this view, feminists assume that it qualifies their movement. ¹⁰³ Islamic feminism legitimizes its study

¹⁰¹ Barlas, “Quranic Hermeneutics,” 12.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 19.

through the interpretation of gender verses in the Quran.¹⁰⁴ Whenever the study upon feminism is persuading any prospect, it could not succeed in its escape from colonial settings because it is impossible to isolate feminism from its historical origin and the frame of development.

2.3 - Riffat Hassan's development of Feminist Theology in Pakistani Context

Riffat Hassan considers her father's conventional attitude as a root cause to change her mind in favor of feminist theology. She rigorously states the fearful and unpleasant environment of her home, where her father was stuck stubbornly with a belief of marrying daughters at the age of sixteen. She deterred her father on various occasions by maintaining the traditional norms holding a view of the submissive position of women and related it with pre-Islamic Arabian societal discrimination of women by burying daughters alive. At the age of twelve, she witnessed the arranged marriage of her sister to an affluent but poorly educated person that brought her to the position of stiff resistance. She appreciated her mother for helping her escape from that nomadic culture and provided her every opportunity to become a valuable one for the whole society.¹⁰⁵

The fall of 1974 was a landmark for Hassan's feminist theology at Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Stillwater, to which she moved in a young age. There she was supposed to become a faculty advisor of the Muslim Student Association chapter while getting associated with OSU as a visiting assistant professor. In the prospect of the MSA tradition of holding an annual seminar, the faculty advisor was supposed to give a brief overview of the theme of the seminar. Hassan was asked by the MSA organizers to talk about the concept of women in Islam, which was

¹⁰⁴ Barlas, "Engaging Feminism:" Provincializing Feminism as a Master Narrative," 5.

¹⁰⁵ Riffat Hassan, "Riffat Hassan: Muslim Feminist Theologian", in *Transforming the Faith of Qur Fathers: Women Who Changed American Religion*, Ed. Palgrave Ann Braude (New York: MacMillan, 2004), 173-97; Riffat Hassan, "Islam, and Islam and Human Rights in Pakistan: A Critical analysis of the Position of Three Contemporary Women.", *Canadian Foreign Policy* 10, Number. 1, 55-131, (2002).

actually not the topic of the prescribed seminar. Due to a lack of interest in the subject of women in Islam at that time, she felt reluctant to give a concrete talk on the required subject. But she realized the importance of the topic and gave her view for two reasons.¹⁰⁶

- 1) The audience was all male, mostly Arabs, who segregated their women from co-public events, and because of that, no single woman was part of the audience.
- 2) She had tired of hearing the subject of women's role, whereas she wanted to talk about the role and status of men.

Hassan observes, during her travels to various Muslim countries, the Islamization process was on its way to promulgate Islamic laws for more practicing Muslim society.

In the same phase of the 70s and 80s, Zia ul Haq (1924-1988) had laid down the Islamic reformative rules in the series of "Hudood Ordinance" known as "Zina Ordinance, *Qanoon e Shāhādat* (Law of Evidence), and *Qisās & Dīyat*, (Blood Money) to ensure the implementation of Sharia in the country in the name of "Islamization." The whole series of those laws, according to Hassan, were abusing women.¹⁰⁷ The problem that got her attention was why the government paid more

¹⁰⁶ Riffat Hassan, "Challenging the stereotypes of fundamentalism: An Islamic feminist perspective", *The Muslim World* 91, Number 1-2, 2001: 55-69.

¹⁰⁷ She Even refers to one the cases trialed under Zina Ordinance was a case of Young but blind lady named Safia Bibi of sixteen years of age working as a domestic servant, became pregnant raped vigorously by her master. Eventually, her guardian brought the case to Shariat court. The Judge rejected her evidence because of her deficient position and disability of being a blind and female. She was unmarried but became pregnant due to rape as evincing the guilt of Zina. According to court she was supposed to be punished, although the court dealt her leniently because of her poorness and blindness, and as a result she was sentenced to be punished with eighty lashes along with three years of imprisonment. See Riffat Hassan: *Islam and Human Rights in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of the Positions of Three*

attention to the submissiveness of women than the problems like corruption, economic problem, and other sociological issues.

The reasons behind the motivation of Islamization in Muslim countries are underlined by the modernity that leads them to understand it in two ways as perceptualized by Riffat Hassan;

1. Modernization: Which is compared with science & technology and innovative and inventive progress. It has a prior recognition in Muslim societies, which is largely accepted and desired.
2. Westernization: "This is associated with promiscuity and all kind of social problems ranging from latch-key kids to drug and alcohol abuse." It is disliked and condemnable.¹⁰⁸

Based on this distinction, Hassan argues that progressive women have been visualized as west oriented in Muslim societies. Both men and women are availing various opportunities of higher education in the west, but only women are symbolically categorized as westernized while men as modernized.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the westernized women are considered to be in violation of the necessary barrier between private space-related to women and public space related to men. Ironically, Muslims inclined towards the segregation of both men and women in their designated spaces, because women's intervention in the designated domain of men probably resulted in the disruption of the male-dominated society.

From 1974 to 1984, Riffat has had a private study of the Quran, but once she observed the oppressive treatment of women in Muslim societies, she turned towards activism for the sake of women's rescue. The promulgation of Islamic laws in that time had led to the emergence of feminism in Pakistan. In 1983-84, she became a feminist activist while the Islamization process was underway in

Contemporary Women," In Canadian Foreign Policy, Volume 10 Number 1, Fall 2002: p 131-155.

¹⁰⁸ Hassan, "Muslim Feminist," 173-76.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 184.

Pakistan. Hudood laws were being strictly implemented because “those were regarded as self-evident in all Muslim cultures that maintained the superiority of men and inferiority of women.”¹¹⁰

While she engaged in working on woman related issues in Islam, she paid serious attention to the sources of Islam. She points out a confused state of mind of an average Muslim about the range of Islamic legal sources. It seems from her standpoint that examining an issue through Islam and through its tradition are two different things. She holds the opinion that tradition is composed of many other sources in addition to the Quran, which are, by large interpreted by males, “who have arrogated to themselves the task of defining the ontological, sociological and eschatological status of women.”¹¹¹ Probably it would not be appropriate to formulate distinct viewpoints through one or all Islamic Sources incoherence, by excluding it from their contextual meanings.¹¹² Starting from the authenticity of *Hadīth*, the oral literature of the Prophet (Peace be Upon Him), she expresses her caution about the legitimacy of tacit/individual *Hadīth*. She views that issues that are not clearly built in the Quran and are mentioned by *Hadīth* need to be testified for their reliability of transmitters and, at the same time, the text of *Hadīth* itself.

Riffat Hassan is also gives a critical view about the absolute meaning of *Ijmā* (Legal Consensus) as free from any error in the first three centuries of Islam that binds people of all the time to accept it.¹¹³ She says that *Ijmā* cannot get the status of infallibility for all the times. While referring to various verses of the Quran, she says that it would be inappropriate to consider the *Ijmā* of the concise group as a

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 174.

¹¹¹ Riffat Hassan, “Muslim Women and Post-Patriarchal Islam,” *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions*, 1991, 39–64.

¹¹² Islamic Sources Quran, Sunnah, Hadīth, Fiqh, Madhāhib. and Shriah

¹¹³ Riffat Hassan, “Feminism in Islam”, *Feminism and world religions*, 1999, 252–60; Riffat Hassan, “Feminist theology: The challenges for Muslim women”, *Critique: Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East* 5, Number, 9(1996) : 53-65.

floatable source of Sharia for all the time.¹⁴ She also views that the current social circumstances require rethinking about *Ijtehād* to endorse the Universality of the Quran. It is important to note that the prominent figures of the modern South Asian Muslim cultural history like Syed Ahmed Khan and Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) gave many privileges to reconvene the tools of *Ijtehād* that sympathize the Universal order of the Quran in its transmission.

While paying attention to her prior concerns on *Ijtehād*, she counts *Qiyās* (analogy) as an alternate of *Ijtehād* by taking support from the viewpoint of Allama Iqbal as she quotes his description:

“-In the terminology of Islamic law, *Ijtehād* means to exert with a view to form an independent judgment on a legal question. The idea... has its origin in well-known verse of the Quran, “And to those who exert We show Our path!” We find it more definitely adumbrated in a tradition of the Holy Prophet. When Ma’ad was appointed ruler of Yemen, the Prophet is reported to have asked him how he would decide matters coming up before him. “I will judge matters according to the Book of God,” Said Ma’ad. “But if the Book of God contains nothing to guide you? Then I will act on the precedents of the Prophet of God. But if the precedents fail? Then I will exert my own judgment.” Students of the history of Islam, however, understand that with the political expansion of Islam systematic legal thought became a necessity, and our early Doctor of Law, both Arabian and non-Arabian descents worked ceaselessly, until all the accumulated wealth of legal thought found a final expression in our recognized school of law. These schools of law

¹⁴ To the verses of the Quran she refers while condemning the universal use of Ijma are: Surah Al- Baqarah: 43, Surah Al Imran: 102; Surah An- Nisa: 115. She marks her understanding in the light of these verses by saying that, “it is an invaluable instrument of law-making by means of which Islam can become dynamic but it has been used- unfortunately- to keep Islam static through the insistence of the traditionalists.....”in Riffat Hassan: “An Islamic Perspective, in Women, Religion and Sexuality:” *Studies on the Impact of Religious Teachings on Women*, edited by Jeanne Becher, World Council of Churches Publications, Geneva, 1990: 93-128.

recognize three degrees of *Ijتهād*: (1) complete authority in legislation which is practically confined to the founders of schools, (2) relative authority which is to be exercised within the limits of the particular schools, and (3) special authority which relates to determination of law applicable to a particular case left undetermined by the founders.... The theoretical possibility of (the first) degree of *Ijتهād* is admitted by the Sunnis, but in practice it has always been denied ever since the establishment of the schools, in as much as the idea of complete *Ijتهād* is hedged around by conditions which are well-nigh impossible of realization in single individual. Such an attitude seems exceedingly strange in a system of law based mainly on the groundwork provided by the Quran which embodies an essentially dynamic outlook on life.”¹¹⁵

Hassan shows her feelings that lack of clear and distinct meanings of Islamic interpretations have laid down the idea of inferiority of women because the most part of the Islamic tradition is a product of patriarchy, where it was rare for women to be part of Islamic scholarship. According to Hassan, sources of Islam are explained by men “who arrogated to themselves task of defining the ontological, theological, sociological, and eschatological status of Muslim women.”¹¹⁶ Therefore she started studying Quranic passages about women from a non-patriarchal perspective.

After having had deep study, Hassan realized that women considered inferior because of three theological assumptions that were even reflected in Jewish and Christian traditions, which are:

¹¹⁵ Riffat Hassan, "Conservatism in Various Forms: Women in Islam", in *Women in Religion*, Ed. Sr. Mary John Mananzan (St. Scholastic College, Manila, The Philippines: The Institute of Women's Studies, 1998), 140-52; Riffat Hassan, "Made from Adam's Rib?: - The Women Creation Question", *Christian Study Center Rawalpindi - Pakistan XXVII*, number,3, (Autumn 1985): 124-30.

¹¹⁶ Hassan, "Muslim Women," 39-44.

- (1) The Prime creation of God on this planet is the man (Adam) and not the woman (Eve), as she has been created from Adam's rib. Consequently, she has been designated a secondary and derivative status.
- (2) Woman caused Fall of Adam, as she has been regarded as responsible for his exclusion from the Garden of Eden.
- (3) Women are created from men and for him only, a view that considers her ontological status as instrumental and not fundamental.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Riffat Hassan, "Equal for Allah, Unequal on Earth? Women's Rights in Modern World" (International Conference on Muslim Women Development, The Hague, The Netherlands: Women and Development Division and the Social and the Institutional Development, Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Collaboration with the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam 2001, 2000), 39-55; Riffat Hassan, "A Muslim Women's Perspective: Sources of the Islamic Tradition", *Entwicklungs Politik (Special Issue entitles Population Policy: Practice, Criticism and the View of Religion) Frankfurt, Germany* 16, Number 1, (1994), 53-59.

**CHAPTER THREE: FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES
IN THE INTERPRETATION OF
RELIGIOUS TEXT**

3.1-The Nature of Feminist Hermeneutics

The nature of feminist hermeneutics¹⁸ dwells upon the process of actualization of the status of women through the interpretation of the religious text in accordance with women experience. It seems like producing feminist theology through deploring traditional literature of the religion. Feminists put women in subvert attitude with men to explore their right position in all spheres of the society fully

¹⁸ The term hermeneutics has been derived from the classical Greek work, which literally means “to explain”, “expound” or “interpret” normally aims at articulation of thoughts in words. Technically it is “the theory of interpretation, concerned with general problems of understanding the meaning of text.” See Badick Chris, “The Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms”, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 97.

In theological sense it is applied to interpreting the biblical text and trace back to Christian Biblical scholarship. The term has undergone through various evolutionary developments according to its widened and narrowed sense along with religious philosophical thoughts in western context and Biblical studies.

In modern period the Biblical text has been subject to historical criticism and open linguistic analysis especially in 17th and 18th century where the enlightenment has thrown a great impact on free interpretation as did by rationalists like Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza. The humanism called for implication of one standard upon which every text will be undermined whether it is religious or ancient. As a result, “strong voices emerged calling for the abandonment of subjective interpretation and to follow a rationalistic and objective approach.” In 19th and 20th centuries hermeneutic developed in such a way that liberation has taken the dominance. So modern hermeneutics consider its birth in realm of rational, humanistic philosophies, and therefore Dr. Shāfi goes on to say; “hermeneutics progress from Greeks till present era is a response to genuine factors within that context most significantly, the requirements of interpreting the Bible and complication stemming, on the one hand, from the nature of the subject and the challenges of comprehension; and on the other hand, from the stances of church and power.”

For further reading see “*Al -Qawl fi Tajdid*” in *Essay on the Renewal of Islamic Discourse (in Arabic)* by Shaykh Hassan Mahmud Abdul Latif Al Shāfi. (Cairo: Dārul Al Quds Al-Arabī, 2016), 145-158.

and henceforth suggesting new patterns for studying religion and comprehending the new understanding of the term 'religion' itself. Feminists feel that male religious scholars have interpreted religion through their own models of thinking, where masculine and feminine might have different epistemologies, and various ways of thinking different and from those of man alone.

Feminists have a stance that their understanding of religion cannot be recognized until it reflects the true interest of females only. Due to a variety of directions, they have criticized religion and religious studies to re-validate it from an eternal women's perspective. They argue for the universal understanding of a human being's perspective of religion through women's experiences in the world.

Therefore, feminist theologians criticize the respective religious tradition in terms of its formation under male dominance, which they consider to be liable for change and re-interpretation. For them, it is the religious tradition that demonstrates a culture of suppression, discrimination, and subjugation of women in order to understand the feminist perspective. This feminist perspective for them can be traced once to pose a critical quest for navigation of feminist hermeneutics aiming at the revitalization of the essence of the status of women and hence the true dimension of religion.¹¹⁹

According to feminists the patriarchal religious culture rests upon its androcentric hermeneutical intentions. Feminists quite often clearly and unambiguously confirm their sincere affiliation with faith and express that they are not ambitiously striving for demolishing the fundamental structure of religion, but rather to restore it to its core value system, that has been crafted by the patriarchal tradition throughout the entire history of textual interpretations.

Therefore, feminist hermeneutics is naturally embodied in two things:

¹¹⁹ Ahmed Muhammed Gād, "al_Manāhij al-Nasawīyya fi Dirāsāt al-Adyān (Feminist Methodologies in the Study of Religions)", *Islamic Research Institute: Islamabad*, al Dirāsāt al Islamīyyah, 44, Number, 2 (2009): 62.

- (1) Detection of masculine patriarchal assets; and
- (2) New understanding of religion and epistemology that regains the essence of religion expounds actual justice, equality, and distinct values according to feminist perspective.¹²⁰

3.2- Patterns of Feminist Hermeneutics

As a part of aiming at the construction of humanistic institutions through religious tradition, feminist theology functionalizes the pattern of “deconstruction” in its first step, which is followed by reconstruction of a new paradigm for modern religious studies.

The process of such theory may strike back with an endorsement in the case of the three Abrahamic religions¹²¹, where feminists found that these traditions had neglected the exact demonstration of women’s status through textual interpretations.

Riffat Hassan argued that anti-women interpretations are deeply engraved in Judeo-Christian traditions where male Muslim interpreters have taken androcentric tradition from them, who have arrogated to themselves the task of androcentric interpretation.

The scenario of Muslim feminist interpreters shows that their argument for revalidation of Quranic study commonly shares the same goals and ambitions advocated by Judeo-Christian hermeneutics.¹²² Consequently, this leads towards

¹²⁰ Seth D. Kunin, *Religion: The Moderns Theories* (United States: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 137.

¹²¹ The term “Abrahamic Religions” touched the surface of Academy in 1990s just to the share the divergent concepts and taking the charge of replacing the older terms like “semantic” or “Religions of the Book” and acknowledging the shared opinions about interfaith harmony and explore disputes while interpreting their relative sacred Text.

¹²² Pim Valkenburg, “Does the Concept of ‘Abrahamic Religions’ Have a Future?”, in *Islam and Enlightenment*, Ed. Eric Borman and Pim Valkenburg, New Issues 5 (New York: Concilium, Maryknoll, Orbis, 2005), 103.

uniformity among them in the critical study of the Holy text, and normativity of males.

The Judeo-Christian feminist theologies aimed at revisiting the image of God and reclamation of female status in the Holy Bible. Therefore, they ask for full access to religious study, their expressions, and leadership. Feminist theologians felt that understanding the Holy Bible demonstrated the biasness, male centeredness, and non-neutrality.¹²³

Probably most feminist theologians agree on the argument that patriarchal and androcentric assumptions have not just overwhelmed the interpretation of the Bible but even the biblical text, which eventually negated the women's experience.¹²⁴ It is because of this exclusion that feminists tend to develop a criticism on the assumption that men are the normative recipient of revelation. Therefore, many internal and external aspect of the Bible as a text has been questioned and examined, such as its the oral and written transmission, and its authorship. This critical investigation subjected the realm of the various circumstances and the context of social-cultural environments that encompass the manners of all who were involved in the compilation of the biblical text. This is because feminist feel that male has got the privilege of the canonicity of the Bible in various phases of its transmission.¹²⁵

The presentation of God as a male figure has also been a harsh subject of criticism for feminist theologians. They argue that the usage of language in the direction of male intent expounds on the anti-feminine element.¹²⁶ The imagination of God in the masculine context creates a kind of idolatry about males. This amounts to an assumption that prophets should be treated as patriarchs. In Christianity, it leads

¹²³ Anne M. Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 64–65.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 55.

¹²⁵ Natalie K. Watson, *Feminist Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 10.

¹²⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 23.

towards the pronouncement that Christ was necessarily male, in order to maintain the standard of the normativity of human nature. Therefore, only men are liable to represent Christ.¹²⁷ Feminist opine that God must be understood in the paradigm of human language, and thus be entertained allegorically and symbolically rather than precisely or literally.

Rosemary Radford Ruether pays attention to explaining the reason behind the exclusion of women's experience from the surface of biblical interpretations. She states that women's voices are not coincident with Christian tradition. The prestige has given to men experiences and, therefore, the charge of interpretation. This kind of attitude had made the entire proceedings to some necessary consequences that put the women in the realm of suppression and subjugation.¹²⁸

Additionally, this type of avoidance of female experience will give normativity to the experience of men, where men's experience becomes equal to the experience of humanity as a whole. According to Ruether, it benefits women in a sense of the word "man" has been considered neutral instead of gender specifications. Again, the problem of the application of language counts a bit of hurdle for women's experience in biblical interpretation. Thus, the form of interpretative tradition will represent the normativity of one side, and the experience of women becomes ruthless and wasteful.

Mary Daly has explored the statements that are a good representation of male prejudices and patronage about women in Christian theology. Daly argues that this bias is not "marginal and accidental."¹²⁹ It is not merely an 'idiosyncratic' personal

¹²⁷ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Methodologies in Women's Studies and Feminist Theology", in *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*, Ed. Arvind Sharma (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 193.

¹²⁸ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminist Interpretations: A Method of Correlation", in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Ed. Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 123.

¹²⁹ Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 69.

view of a few writers but rather the engagement of the whole tradition that designates the whole Jewish and Christian theology.¹³⁰ Women have been shown as subordinate to men in order of creation in such scriptural hermeneutical navigations.

Daly also reviews the factual glorification of patriarchal methods of studying the Bible, that she calls "methodology." Consequently, this was the probable instrument of female status from an acknowledgeable domain.¹³¹

Phyllis Trible has criticized the androcentric interpretation of the story of the creation of Adam and Eve.¹³² The story elaborates on the inferior position of women to men, as argued by Riffat Hassan as well.¹³³ Such stories advocate the primary creation of God is Adam, where Eve was created second. This makes the position of man substantial and women as instrumental, as she has been created for utilization by man. Also, Eve has been declared responsible for the fall of Adam by committing a sin, and hence women become under the rule of man.

It is the simultaneous creation of man and women in the Bible as revisited by Trible in the Genesis. Adam is an appropriate noun that does work always, and perhaps may not be pointed to gender neutrality.¹³⁴ Both men and women are created to share their mutual relationship. It is a sin of eating from prohibited trees that manifest the gender hierarchy between the two. The distinction between the two

¹³⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Patriarchy and Creation: Feminist Critique of Religious and Scientific Cosmologies", *Sage Journals* 1, Number, 2 (1993): 391.

¹³¹ Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 11-12.

¹³² Phyllis Trible, *Text of Terror: Literary Feminist Readings and Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

¹³³ Clifford, *Introducing*, 69.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 68.

came into view after Fall.¹³⁵ That is why humanity faces the contention of patriarchy.¹³⁶

During the second wave of feminism, a Christian theologian and scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza produced seven hermeneutical strategies¹³⁷ for feminist biblical interpretation. Following are her hermeneutical strategies:

- (1) A hermeneutic of experience,
- (2) A hermeneutic of domination,
- (3) A hermeneutic of suspicion,
- (4) A hermeneutic of assessment and evaluation,
- (5) A hermeneutic of re-imagination,
- (6) A hermeneutic of reconstruction and,
- (7) A hermeneutic of change and transformation.¹³⁸

She centralizes women's experience for biblical interpretation while offering the above-mentioned strategies. To her, it is a common hermeneutical strategy for feminist theology, and she stresses on personal experience to start with. The significance of women's experience becomes worthy because it had remained absent due to androcentrism.

¹³⁵ Clifford, 70.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ To some there are ten different methods cover almost the paradigms as discussed. These include: "revisionist interpretation, text and translation, imaginative identification, women as authors and Biblical interpreters, historical interpretation, sociocultural reconstruction, ideological interpretation, women as subject of interpretation, sociopolitical location in the context of Biblical texts and a critical feminist interpretation", quoted from Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth, *But She Said*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992). 30-34.

¹³⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 77.

Hermeneutic of domination would, however, reveal some un-usual dimensions of her method that relinquishes the experience with socio-religious and cultural locations along with a response to a specific biblical text or historical stories.¹³⁹ It might be seen in different reactions of white American men about slavery in the biblical story rather than African American women.

The hermeneutic of suspicion traps a strategy of reading the biblical text with suspicion rather than with trust. Instead of treating the text with loyalty, she instructs scholars to look over the biblical text with admonition and “avoid taking its claims to divine authority” at face values.¹⁴⁰ Schüssler Fiorenza explains that this work should be carried out through one’s “emotions, anxieties and fears,” and “explore what good comes of upholding a hermeneutics of appreciation and consent,” because many people would feel “compelled of questioning the biblical authority as taboo.”¹⁴¹ As a result, while questioning the biblical authority, it is imperative to overcome personal issues.

The strategy of the hermeneutics of assessment and evaluation tries to recognize the different meanings contained in the text. This strategy takes the text in the paradigm of context along with the analysis of the rhetoric of the text and its traditions.

She introduces the term “kyriarchy” [Patriarchy] to point out a series of multi-directional, dividing/breakdown structures “of graded subjugations and suppressions.”¹⁴² It seeks to make conscious the cultural-religious internalizations

¹³⁹ Ibid, 77.

¹⁴⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Orbis Books Maryknoll, 2001), 172.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 176.

¹⁴² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Women Church: The Hermeneutical Center of Feminist Biblical Interpretation” *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 5.

and legitimation of kyriarchy [Patriarchy], and to explore the values and visions that are inscribed as counter cultural alternatives in biblical text.¹⁴³

This strategy confesses the elements of patriarchal structures and does not make excuses for these elements. In spite of this, it examines the containment of patriarchal elements.

The hermeneutics of re-imagination quests for better future. It can provide the nerve to furnish the prospect of others. This would show the struggle of women in the past and its connection with today's life. The method paved the way for understanding the perspective of others. This would prevent negative stances and change them to work for a better future. ¹⁴⁴ It is the study of history in new patterns, aiming at perceiving, changing, and breaking unfavorable situations in the future.¹⁴⁵

The hermeneutics of remembering and reconstruction locates the grounds for voiceless in the biblical text. It seems to recall the un-listened ones. By taking the responsibility of subscribing rhetorical realism, the historical sources have not been taken into account as historical facts.¹⁴⁶ Here the text is seen with the assumption of the presence of women, and therefore it re-inscribes the fact that women are not and have not been a subject of absence but of presence in all human affairs.¹⁴⁷ Ironically, this absence of women in the text makes Fiorenza say that absence may be traced back to the indulgence of women infrequent activities in the past. She argues that "text must be contextualizing with their particular religious-cultural environments and reconstruct then not only in terms of the dominant ethos but also in terms of an alternative social movement for change."¹⁴⁸ This means that social movements that are not existing in the text will take set a forth.

¹⁴³ Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 177.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁴⁵ Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 185.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 183

¹⁴⁷ Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 101.

¹⁴⁸ Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 186.

The last strategy in this series of hermeneutical methods is hermeneutic of change and transformation. This strategy provides the endeavor of the transformation of the current position of hegemony into a just future. According to Schüssler, it is possible without going through experiences that are, however, over-heard already due to previous suppressions. So, they suggest for analysis of past and present in such a way that pronounce sound visions and ultra-dynamic imaginations for a new humanity, global ethology, and religious community.¹⁴⁹

The above-mentioned strategies have paved the way for critical operation in biblical studies for Fiorenza. In broad, she attempts to affirm liberation through the track of deconstruction¹⁵⁰ and reconstruction¹⁵¹ of the text.

The androcentric perspective provides Fiorenza a stance to indicate another aspect of theological method that deals with language. This is not to be found in her hermeneutical strategies; rather, it can be traced in her works.

She argues through examples from English words that the words are basically neutral and cannot be gendered. The process of gender classification is not grammatical. Thus, the neutrality of the words becomes corrupt and hence cannot be described in its full comprehension.

Additionally, the process of genderization stems from biological standards that make the hierarchy among gendered words in which the masculine word gets elevated in comparison to feminine ones. She creates a distinction between grammatical and a neutral word.

¹⁴⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Will to Choose or to Reject: Continuing our Work", in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Ed. Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 129-32.

¹⁵⁰ Deconstruction means a hermeneutic of experience, suspicion, domination and evaluation.

¹⁵¹ Reconstruction means some hermeneutics of re-imagination and change.

By giving the example of the moon and its use in both masculine and feminine gender because of grammatical distinction, she argues that women are subjected as ends of subjugation from a gender perspective as well as natural ones. The receptacle aspect of the sun's light by the moon creates the elements of typical references that of masculine stereotypes.

So is the case of the earth, a country, and a city contrarily considered as receivers and constrainers in the English language.¹⁵² The words like mother, daughter, or bride in feminine usages "celebrate women and emphasize femininity ends up reiterating the androcentric perspective since these constructs come from the dualistic gender politics of androcentric language."¹⁵³

Some scholars have a view that the Torah is deficient in terms of its consideration of God's disclosure, which has been restricted by human language. Among them, Judith Plaskow argues that the Torah contains anecdotes of "God interaction" with Jewish people and fixed by their man-hoodness and to the specific circumstances and environment in which they vividly lived.¹⁵⁴ Torah is just as an idiom of certain people who had the capacity to comprehend the divine. Therefore, Torah should be considered a factional book of revelation deemed in the realm of its transmitters and interpreters.

Due to its incompleteness, in terms of its revelation, it is always available for re-readings and increments of new text because of its generosity and flexibility through posterior generations. This attitude aimed at regaining and recapturing those parts of revelation that have not been transmitted. Therefore, it has provided the platform for the feminist theologians to trace back the convenient meaning of text suitable to all humans. Additionally, it also furnishes the practice of Midrash¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Ibid., 115.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 152.

¹⁵⁴ Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 33.

¹⁵⁵ Midrash: Pattern of Jewish - Biblical Interpretation

to expand the comprehension of the texts. As a result, the feminists retake Midrash to broaden the biblical canon to add the women's experience.¹⁵⁶

It looks that perhaps the feminist theology in the Christian paradigm is not looking for new theology rather adjust the exact understanding of Christian faith and engrave it deeply and comprehensively.

In this regard, Letty M. Russell's approach may be mentioned as her methodology is the reflection of her own experience that stems from active demonstration, as a feminist activist. Like other feminists, her methodology compounds the other various liberation theologies. She goes for an action-reflection methodology to encourage the application of women's experience. The action-reflection method will provide a nerve for women to raise her quest of the equal epoch through a moderate understanding of the faith. It will also provide a glimpse for an individual in the faith community to act for equivalence and righteousness. In response, the action will be pursued by a theological reflection. Consequently, this theological reversion of women originates the Christian faith more comprehensively. She goes on to say:

“-Out of the reflection on tradition in light of concrete situations come new models of thought and action. Such a methodology does not lead liberation theology away from the basic paradoxes, the discovery of the presence of living tradition and sets people free to take risks in shaping the future. -”¹⁵⁷

The action-reflection method can become more visible while pondering the context. This would be understood explicitly when looking at the relationship between context and tradition made by Russell. It is important to examine the orientation of the context of tradition and the environment of its interpretation. The context may

¹⁵⁶ Judith Plaskow, "Jewish Theology in Feminist Perspective", in *The Coming of Lilith: Essays on Feminism, Judaism, and Sexual Ethics*, Ed. Judith Plaskow and Donna Berman (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 79.

¹⁵⁷ Letty M. Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective: A Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 104.

vary from one situation to another, and hence the interpretation of the text relies a lot on the multiplicity of readers. The dependence of contexts on interpreter makes Russell indicate that “contextual theologies are suspicious of any theology which proposes abstract statements that can be expected to hold in every circumstance.”¹⁵⁸

In order to explore the context, she argues for the necessity of unity and diversity, which means to her “unity of the text and diversity of cultural situations.” It would be too inexplicable to consolidate the social context while reading the Bible and interpreting it. In solution to this complexity of considering social context, while interpreting the Bible, Russell depicted “a spiral method of action and reflection.”¹⁵⁹

Perhaps Fiorenze gives directions for avoiding the androcentric grammatical-gender reading of the Bible, and it would be treated beyond the limits of grammatical language.¹⁶⁰ It seems from her writings that she goes for solving the grammatical gender problem in a few subtle ways. For example, the portrayal of God in the male figure is not appreciated by her, and she negates gender specification with regard to God. While handling this issue, she prefers to write the word of God like “G*d” because it cannot be subjected to enforce a concept of genderization on it.¹⁶¹

In the case of writing the word “women,” she prefers to write the word “wo/men.” She wanted to comprehend the inclusion of men and women. For her, both are actually inexplicable by patriarchalism and church.¹⁶² She says:

“-[M]y way of writing wo/men seeks to underscore not only the ambiguous character of terms men and women but also to retain the expression women as a sociopolitical category. Since the traditional rendering is often read as referring

¹⁵⁸ Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 32.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 27.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 153.

¹⁶¹ Schüssler Fiorenza, “Speaking about G*d,” *The Living Pulpit* 6, no. 1 (1997): 20.

¹⁶² Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 186.

to white wo/men only, my orthodox writing of the word seeks to draw to the attention of readers that those kyriarchal structure which determine wo/men' lives and status also impact those of men of subordinated race, class, country, and religion, albeit in different ways, wo/men are therefore to be understood as an inclusive rather than as an exclusive universalized gender term. -"¹⁶³

The goal behind the spiral method is to float a new model of interpretation to move for a quality mode of comprehension rather than moving around one circle and moving back to the same mark.¹⁶⁴

In the same manner, some Christian theologians have employed "a hermeneutic of suspicion to locate the inspirational female figure and liberating stories in the bible", to recall voices of oppressed women in the entire history of Christian history.¹⁶⁵

These voices will be recovered through attempting for establishing an "open cannon" that represents the women and her experience. Although this led to the "promotion of composition of new supplementary texts."¹⁶⁶

3.3- Muslim Feminist Hermeneutical Mechanism towards Interpretation of Text¹⁶⁷

This work is mostly focused on the theological assumptions of Riffat Hassan, but although she indicates that in the case of the creation story, the inferior feminine

¹⁶³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Reaffirming Feminist/ Womanist biblical Scholarship", *Encounter* 67, Number 4 (2006): 362.

¹⁶⁴ Like Russell, Fiorenza represents and action-research oriented methodology.

¹⁶⁵ Ayesha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Quran* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Watson, *Feminist Theology*, 13.

¹⁶⁷ Different amount of literature available on the issue of women today can be categorized as one is dealing with the status of women in a Muslim society from prospect of Islamic legal theory, and the other is dealing with the interpretation of text purely from women perspective in different religions. This thesis deals with the amount of scholarship of feminist hermeneutics that seeks gender equality through its own conceptualization from Quran and Sunnah and traditional Islamic literature.

position has been borrowed from Judeo-Christian traditions.¹⁶⁸ She asserts that not only Islamic tradition has a suppressive attitude towards women but the Judeo-Christian as well. There is a perception of three theological assumptions in all revealed faiths.¹⁶⁹ This shows another aspect of convergence among Muslim feminist scholars in the implication of shared opinions, tools in their interpretative works. In this prospect, the case of Hagar's story becomes the area of interest for Abrahamic Religious traditions, which is focused on the recovery of the female figure in the early historical discourse of religion. For Muslim feminists, it enhances a wide range of female role in Islam.¹⁷⁰ The Hagar story amounts strength of encouragement and empowerment, which she demonstrated in her valiant struggle as a single parent, in the course of women for these traditions.¹⁷¹ Therefore Muslim, Jewish and Christian feminists refer to the rapture of trials of Hagar in their exegetical works and perhaps become partners in their methodological concepts.

Like Jewish and Christian, Muslim feminists also line up for the interpretation of the Quran according to women's experience.¹⁷² As Amina Wadud expresses that there is a tendency of understanding the Quran and Hadith on the basis of male experience and through their psyche.¹⁷³ Because patriarchy, to her, is not only the

The term Islamic Hermeneutics is meant for the developments made in the Quranic interpretation after postmodern era challenging the very institution traditional Islamic Hermeneutics for ignoring the real voices of women.

¹⁶⁸ Riffat Hassan, "Islam, Her Voice, Her Faith, Women Speak on World Religions", Ed. Arvind Sharma and Katherine K. Young Boulder (Westview Press, 2003), 228.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 226.

¹⁷⁰ Abugideiri, "Hagar," 84.

¹⁷¹ Azizah Y. Al-Hibri, "Hagar on My Mind", in *Philosophy, Feminism and Faith*, Ed. Ruth E. Groenhout and Marya Bowers, Indian Series in Philosophy of Religion (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 86.

¹⁷² Judith Plaskow and Coral P. Christ, Ed. *Weaving the Vision: New Visions in Feminist Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 56.

¹⁷³ Amina Wadud, *Quran and Women: Rereading the sacred text from a Woman Perspective*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xv.

affirmation of men's experience but rather to ensure their supremacy and authority over women, therefore, for women empowerment, the implication of their experience towards the interpretation of the text is the only solution.¹⁷⁴ Muslim feminists often refer to Jewish and Christian tradition when they try to describe the escape of women's experience from traditional Quranic interpretation as Amina Wadud refers to Mary Daly when she applies the term "methodolatry."¹⁷⁵

Asma Barlas has referred to the work of Rosemary Reuther while to portray God in a male image that resultantly dominates the men over women and hence set up a hierarchy as God-male-female. The authority has been streamlined in male-dominated Christian structure "as women relate to male as he relates to God." Women would relate secondarily to God via men.¹⁷⁶ In the same manner, Barlas criticizes the portrayal of God as male in the traditional Quranic interpretations, which is not in accordance with the Quranic directives. Masculine representation of God has placed the man under God above women that imply "that there is a symbolic (and sometimes literal) continuum between God's Rule over humans and male rule over women."¹⁷⁷

Textual hermeneutics lens on its utmost issue of accuracy of meaning or linguistic accuracy, as Riffat Hassan has indicated in her various works. Determinacy of meaning and factors subscribe it. Both are prior areas of concern in the scriptural hermeneutical approach. It involves investigating the destinations for the delivery of meanings and ways for its derivation. From a literary perspective, the determinacy of meaning is the product of the process of interpretation of the text that encompasses the intention of the author, the nature of the text, and its context.

¹⁷⁴ Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reforms in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 5.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk*, 53.

These factors play a vital role whenever the interpretation is made, which resultantly contribute to the determinacy of meaning. It is understood from this process in the case of Islamic hermeneutics that it is the outcome of the study of theories of interpretation and understanding of primary Holy texts.

The conducive element in scriptural hermeneutics is the art of deriving meaning from the text and factors involved in influencing this approach. In the process of meaning, derivation of the intention of the author, and the text itself has a wide range of impact that factually gives centrality to the interpreter. The process of derivation of meaning entails the prevalence of the author while designating himself in the creation of meaning. This process can be called as interpreter centered hermeneutics, which inculcates fundamental road map for Muslim feminist hermeneutics to conceptualize the patriarchal nature of the interpretation of the Quran. Probably this patriarchal nature operates under the considerable influence of patriarchal context. Muslim feminists in their works have examined the scope and mandate of the interpreter in determining the outcome of the derivation of meaning. The factors that influence the process of determinacy of meaning have been well examined by Karen Bauer. She states that Quranic verses related to gender relations (like 4:1, 4:34) have substantially been influenced by the kind of meaning and interpretation by mutual cultural understandings, historical narratives, and current prevailed patriarchal environment.¹⁷⁸

Amina Wadud, in her, *Quran and Women: Rereading the sacred text from a Woman Perspective*, has pointed out the same hermeneutical model by referring to “prior text.” According to her, the intention of text stems from reading as the “prior text” consolidates the prospect and context of the interpretation that in part functions by means of language which is the outcome of individual interpreters.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Karen Bauer, “Room for Interpretation: Quranic Exegesis and Gender” (PhD Diss, New York, Princeton University, 2008), 182.

¹⁷⁹ Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 4.

Ayesha Chaudhry, in her *Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition*, has navigated the variant interpretation of the Quranic verse 4:34 by stating that its interpretation represents the understanding of a specific community in which text has been interpreted. She has the opinion that any interpretation is made before the modern period belongs to single patriarchal community of interpretation. She focuses on aforementioned verse just to understand the conclusive factors involved in the process of determinacy of meaning that eventually rests in the nature of Quranic communities of interpretation.¹⁸⁰

Another important contribution in the context of Islamic law, which is useful for feminist hermeneutics is the work of Khaled Abou Al-Fadl in *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*. He certainly points out that the interpretational tradition has been dominated by Arabian male scholars that, by its nature, strengthen the authoritarian hermeneutical nature and presenting women degrading Islamic Hermeneutics. He takes a very serious note of negligence committed by Arabian scholars for being incautious in creating a good linkage between the author, text, and the reader while arranging determinacy of meaning. Resultantly it would be unfair to equate the author's intent with that of the reader that smashes down the principles inherited in Quranic hermeneutics and the entire normative structure of the religion.¹⁸¹

Farid Esack, a South African Muslim liberation theologian, explores the patriarchal bias in Quranic interpretation in his notable work on this issue. He argues that work of reading and meaning derivation always remains under the affection of tentativeness and bias and thus negates any availability to the universality of the Quranic interpretation. His temptation for contextual hermeneutics for the sake of liberation favors the instrument as terms as an interpreter –centered

¹⁸⁰ Ayesha Chaudhry, *Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition: Ethics, Law, and the Muslim Discourse on Gender* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

¹⁸¹ Adis Duderija, "Constructing the Religious Self and the Other: neo-traditional Salafi Manhaj", *Routledge* 21, Number, 1 (2010): 79.

hermeneutics.¹⁸² Karen Bauer has presented the example of this interpretational bias by referring to classical *Tafsīr Zamakhsharī* and his interpretation of verse 4:34 by the assertion the men are superior to women because God has conferred them the dignity to govern on the basis of their determination and qualities of judgment in various domains of life.¹⁸³

To somehow, it became obvious from aforementioned works that based on tentative-biased patriarchal interpretation and derivation of meaning has provided the base for Islamic feminist hermeneutics to go for non-patriarchal interpretation of the Quran as well as al-Sunnah. Because production of meaning being vitally influenced by the nature of the interpreter.

The accurate and appropriate application meaning of the text has been visualized by feminists through employing the “historical contextualization method.” As articulated by Ayesha Hidayatullah, this method involves the study of the circumstance and occasion of the revelation, aiming at identifying the descriptive and prescriptive verses of the Quran. Historical contextualization would enable the interpreter to make a distinction between the practices of the precise Arabian audience and practices of general all audiences. It is a kind of division between the verses that describe the practices of the immediate audience (Arabian audience) and verses that prescribe the practice to humans in general. Hidayatullah tries to present that by a historical reading of the Quran, feminist interpreters universalize its meaning to every changing historical circumstances and not to reduce it to the context of revelation.¹⁸⁴ While criticizing the interpretative endeavor of classical interpreters, feminists argue that they feel reluctant to study the Quran in historical context as to historicize its content, and hence it would automatically reduce the

¹⁸² Farid Esack, *Quran, Liberation, and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), 131.

¹⁸³ Jar Allah Mahmud b. Umer Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al Kashshāf*, Ed. am-Munīr al-Iskandarī (Beirut: Dār al- Kitāb al-Arabī, 1995), 137.

¹⁸⁴ Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges*, 65; Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 69.

worth of the Quran to its historical occasions.¹⁸⁵ Wadud argues that the Quran does not prescribe specific Arabian practices which patriarchal in nature to the current situations. It was just a prescription of the particular situation of seventh-century Arabian society, and it cannot be stretched as divinely prescribed in universal form. Hidayatullah points out, the historical contextualization method has only be applied by feminists to the verses that advocated patriarchy or gender issues.¹⁸⁶ She further shows such intent of feminists like Wadud, Barlas, and al-Hibri by interpreting certain verses of the Quran. Ironically, it appears from their approach to that social and cultural situation of the Arabian audience has provided the contextual basis to patriarchal versus as specified to that society, and hence it might be not prescribed universally.

The use of *Hadīth* in applying historical contextualization method to the Quran has made feminists hold some critical analysis about the authenticity and canonicity of *Ahādīth* literature. In this regard, Riffat Hassan becomes very harsh in her methodology of reading the Quran upon the questionable *Hadīth* reports, which in her view, has overwhelmed the authoritative works of Quranic exegesis and Islamic history. Her methodology shows an approach of disapproval of the application of *Hadīth* in the interpretation of the Quran. She had a critical observation on those *Ahādīth* reports that became disappeared with the passage of time and “interpreters referring to the earlier commentators who cited them just to support their views.”¹⁸⁷ To her, the basic reason for Islamic tradition that reflects the inferior position of women is because of those *Ahadīth* reports that took place due to *isnad* (chain) criticism *not matn* (content) criticism by *Hadīth* scholars. To rule out the historical context of the Quran, she goes for rejecting those *Ahadīth* reports that have any signs of conflict with the Quran. She holds the view that the Quran and its meanings have the prevalence over everything as she rejects creation reports of women from

¹⁸⁵ Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Quran*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 28.

¹⁸⁶ Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges*, 68.

¹⁸⁷ Hassan, “The Issue of Women,” 112.

man's rib and reports that direct women "to bow before their husbands and obey them as duty to God."¹⁸⁸ However, her approach of *Hadīth* tradition in historical contextualization is selective and not convenient to support her views. Further detailed discussion on this issue is coming in the subsequent chapter.

Another methodological pattern of feminist hermeneutics has been utilized by Muslim Feminists termed as "Comprehensive Contextualization and Dialogical Nature of the Quranic Discourse," which means that at the time of revelation, different discourses has been operated in its context that took part in constructing the content of the Quran. The purpose of this methodology is to examine and enquire the role of context and its operational discourses of the circumstances (whether it was social, cultural, political or economic of the first recipients of or listeners of the Quranic revelation) in designing the content of the Holy Quran upon which the Dialogical nature of the Quran is based.¹⁸⁹ This inquiry also includes the survey of grammatical and syntactical structure in which the Quranic content is engraved and hence well established in the language of the Quran. In fact, these operational discourses are designed by patriarchy. This dialogical nature of the Quran will reveal the stage for Islamic feminist hermeneutics in a sense that those patriarchal practices that were apparent at the time of revelation do not encompass the fully religious proportion because they do not translate the universal aspect of the normative religious texts. In this context, the universality is asserted to the constant Quranic initiations for guarding the weak and protection of deprived women from their rights.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Riffat Hassan, "An Islamic Perspective", in *Women, Religion, and Sexuality: Studies on the Impact of Religious Teachings on Women*, Ed. Jeanne Becher (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 122; Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (Cambridge: MA: Persesus Books, 1991), 142.

¹⁸⁹ It is also known as "Intrinsic Conceptuality" means a "hermeneutical recognition of sociological injunctions found in the Quran and Sunnah."

¹⁹⁰ Bauer, "Room for Interpretation", 182.

Such type of hermeneutical mechanism is advocated by Nasr Abu Zayd, who convincingly argues that sociological directions of the Holy Quran represent the only seventh – century civilization that is not in accordance to the Quranic initiated teachings. Gender issues like inheritance and divorce, polygamy, and witnesses are to be understood as historical and cultural in order to provide ground for initial operation and procedural motive to the Quranic injunctions. Therefore, they are not universal in nature and cannot be considered to systemize utter laws and rules. Because the civilization of the seventeenth century mirrors the prominent patriarchal culture of that time, and instantly cap in the dialogical nature of the Quran. Abu Zayd is convinced to apply the same mechanism to the concept of Sunnah.¹⁹¹ For an instant, in case of divorce Quran entails the husbands to allow their wives to reside till the maturation of ‘iddah’ period, and after passing it, they can divorce their wives in a kind manner. Probably most of the Quranic exegetes the merit of divorce it the natural and exclusive right of men.¹⁹² While the medieval exegetes have paid much attention to the proper treatment of wives during ‘period of ‘iddah’ and hence this would be the occasional situation of the verse, which again represents the seventh-century Arabian social situation.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Abu Zayd Nasr, "The Nexus of theory and practice: in the new voice of Islam", in *Rethinking politics and Modernity*, A Reader, Ed Mehran Kamvara (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 67-73.

¹⁹² Adis Duderija, "The Hermeneutical Importance of Quranic Assumptions in the Development of a Values-Based and Purposive Oriented Quran-sunnah Hermeneutic", *Brill, HAWWA Journal of Women of Middle East and Islamic World*, 1, Number,11: (2013), 57.

¹⁹³ Quran: 65: 1-2

As Chaudhry asserts that the “Quranic exegesis and Islamic jurisprudence assume a husband’s right to discipline his wife and the ethical deliberations therein are concerned only with the procedure of hitting.”¹⁹⁴

Kecia Ali terms the Quranic verses that institute the supremacy of males over women as “problematic” verses.¹⁹⁵ Hidayatullah also outlines the same verses as “hierarchy” verses engendering the male authority over women, which according to her, set apart in-equality in male-female relations in the Holy Quran. She asserts that text does not support the Islamic feminist hermeneutical projects results in employing extra-textual hermeneutical principles in their entire hermeneutical mechanisms.¹⁹⁶

Duderija identifies another approach named as “thematico-holistic approach” expounds that any concept develops, Quran and Sunnah will only be understood exactly when analyzes in relation to subjectively pertinent verses in a broader framework of interpretation through the process of corroborative induction. This method shows that traditional interpretation of the Quran has limited the scope and universality of the verses that are not applicable in all relevant situations and hence not comprehended to “thematico-holistic approach.” This approach aims at a reading of the text to uncover the comprehensive constant by means of “corroborative inductive approaches to textual evidence.”¹⁹⁷ According to this

¹⁹⁴ Ayesha Chaudhry, "Wife Beating in the Pre-Modern Islamic Tradition: An Inter - Disciplinary Study of Hadith, Quranic Exegesis, and Islamic Jurisprudence" (New York University, 2009), viii.

¹⁹⁵ Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Quran, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 24.

¹⁹⁶ Ayesha A. Hidayatullah, “The Quranic Rib-Ectomy: Scripture Purity, Imperial Dangers and Other Obstacles to the Interfaith Engagement of Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics,” in *Women and Interreligious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille and Jillain Maxy (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 150.

¹⁹⁷ Mabrook Ali, "A New Historical Discussion in Islam", in *Blackwell companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*, Ed. Ibrahim abu Rabi (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 271–83.

approach, the textual evidence (concerns about women's rights) shows that sacred text, in actual, has lessened the patriarchal practices and do not launch them. All textual evidence disclosed by this approach (which plays an instrumental role in establishing a systematic, progressive development in the current practices related to women) may undergo the "comprehensive constant." Thus "thematico-holistic approach" is not only uncovering the deficient capabilities of the traditional interpretation of the Quran but provides alternative women emancipatory interpretation, which is beneficial for Islamic feminist hermeneutics.

Hidayatullah searches out form Muslim feminists work another but a much similar approach to the previous one, namely the "Intra-Textual Method," focusing on a cohesive reading of the Quran.¹⁹⁸ According to this approach, the entire text of the Quran considered as unified one just to deal it holistically or to apply in a holistic approach, as suggested by Wadud as well.¹⁹⁹ The verses of the Quran may have understood in light of the meaning of another verse altogether and not in isolated form. In this regard, Fazlur Rehman sets a tone for feminists to understand the Quran with the help of its other parts. He also has a view that earlier approach of interpreters was "atomistic" who have not paid substantial attention to general unity of Quran or in other words they have negated the holistic approach which was essential to formulate justifiable interpretative tradition of the Quran.²⁰⁰ On the contrary, as concluded by Wadud and Barlas that traditional exegetes have deplored the standards of Quranic coherence and treated it in a piecemeal manner.²⁰¹ This critical assessment has made a lot of sense for feminists to call for the development of an organized exegetical system for a purposeful and meaningful study of the Quran and to recapture the anti-patriarchal epistemology.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges*, 89–90.

¹⁹⁹ Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 44.

²⁰⁰ Fazlur Rehman, *Major Themes of the Quran* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 15.

²⁰¹ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 6.

²⁰² Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 3.

Riffat Hassan provides the impetus for holistic reading through interpreting the creation story of the Quran. The single, unique, and distinct creation of the first woman from one substance has interwoven the potential for feminist interpreters to engender the message of gender equality at all levels. Hassan pays her attention to some key verses that describe the primary creation, fall of Adam, and Adam's temptation. Subsequently, getting through various relevant portions, Hassan argues that some integral parts of *Hadīth* accounts have subverted the righteous understanding of those because they probably reflected the Biblical accounts. Resultantly the *Hadīth* accounts made the status of women inferior, secondary, and subordinated one to men. Although none of the Quranic passages supports the aforementioned accounts. While focusing on the verse 4:1 she argues that the word (*nafs*) is feminine that manipulates the originality of all humankind following by the word (*zawj*) that does not represent any gender specification grammatically. So, there is no room for attributing maleness to the (*nafs*) assuming as Adam.²⁰³

Therefore, any tricky understanding derives from the verses retunes back to the omission of the reader who explained them in isolation or in piecemeal instead of in view of the larger progression of the Quran.

To penetrate their series of critique on traditional interpreters of the Quran feminist develops their interpretive project within the framework of "Tawhidic Paradigm," befitting such hierarchies that manifest a role of human beings suits exclusively to God, and one cannot judge his interpretation of Quran is final one once to trigger in the position of God. Based on the core Islamic creed of Tawhid, the approach establishes a general principle for human beings to act according to God's disclosure. Any interpretation dignifies the superiority of men over women will amount to polytheism (*shirk*) and to abolish the privilege of Tawhid. Feminist asserts on a constant reading of the Quran because it has been revealed in human language, which does not express the perfect image of God. Therefore, the Tawhidic paradigm avoids hierarchy of androcentric tendencies and traditional

²⁰³ Hassan, "The Issue of Women," 74.

exegesis. Riffat Hassan pins out that authority belongs to God only and not to man according to the doctrine of Tawhid. However, male interpreters have made such an assumption that characterize the intermediate platform in relation between women and God.²⁰⁴ She shows her embarrassment on the valor of male exegetes to deny the direct access of women to God.²⁰⁵

To sum up Hassan's methodology, she focuses on her works in linguistic accuracy, has the exact understating of the background of the verse revelation in its original contexts, which would be free from the endorsement of the meanings created in specific periods of history. This is very similar to the historical contextualization method, as urged by Hidayatullah. Secondly, she quests for understanding the concepts in the Quran in the realm of all other instances as she applied in her assumption about the creation of Adam and Eve. Her attempt shows to understand one account in all other relevant contexts. She terms this approach as the criterion of philosophical consistency. This approach is the other explanation of the holistic approach argued by Wadud and Barlas, by Hidayatullah as Intra-textual method. The other one she calls the ethical criterion by she means that the Quran is the word of God, who can exclusively express it better. Being the word of God Quran focuses on the normativity aspect the most. She also encourages the reader that event if some passages seemingly look unjust, so the interpreter should try to go for justifiable interpretation. Because if one wants to be just with the Quran, he must interpret it according to the intent of God or otherwise, it would be an act of polytheism as discussed earlier in explanation note of Tawhidic paradigm designated by Hidayatullah as well.²⁰⁶

In traditional Islamic heritage, the Salafi world view put under severe critique by Islamic feminist hermeneutical projects to layout a feasible road map for their

²⁰⁴ Hassan, "Muslim Women," 59.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 60.

²⁰⁶ Riffat Hassan, "Islamic Modernist and Reformist Discourses in South Asia", and *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity*, Ed. Shaheen Hunter and M.E Sharpe (Armonk, New York, 2008), 177.

feminist-oriented hermeneutics. The emergence of Salafism, being an important branch of Sunni Islam, took place when there was moral decline among Muslims in the second century of Islam.²⁰⁷ Being so-called *Salaf ul Sālih* or “emulation worthiness” advocates a system of ethics that based on their interpretation of text according to the moral situation of Muslims at that time. The Salafism formats such a hermeneutical episteme to interwoven such a system of ethics that were not prominent at a formative time of the moral, legal canonicity.²⁰⁸ The entire Salafi based ethical system has provided women a subordinate position ontologically, legally, religiously, and socially. Salafi Weltanschauung (Study of Quran and Sunnah) has been considered a reflection of Divine will, and hence no evolutionary study has been made in the classical Islamic period. The entire follow up of this ethical interpretative system in the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah has paved the way for Islamic feminist hermeneutics to undertake the plan for non-patriarchal interpretation against the patriarchal nature of traditional Islamic hermeneutics.²⁰⁹

Islamic feminist hermeneutics edifice will be much more understood through the implication of “purposive and ethico-religious values-based approach to the interpretation of textual sources,” that manifest the idea that immediate nature of Quran & Sunnah discourse is stationed on the purpose of formulation of ethico-religious values dignified in normative style which is non-patriarchal in nature. It aims to designate such value-based ethics that are understood under standard purposes. The purpose of the text will better have understood than literal meaning as conferred by this hermeneutic. The utmost purpose of Islamic law is

²⁰⁷ Adis Duderija, "Constructing Normative 'Believer' and 'Muslim Woman' Concepts: Identifying, Comparing and Contrasting Neo-Traditional Salafi and Progressive Muslim Methods of Interpretation (*Manāhij*)", 39–36.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Hassan Eskeveri, "Rethinking Men' Authority over Women: Qiwwama, Wilaya and their Underlying Assumptions", in *Gender Equality in Muslim Family Law*, Ed. Ziba Mir Hosseini (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 191–213.

accomplishing the task of its objectives (*Maqāsid*) specified on the foundation of legal theoretical methodology, that features from hermeneutical prospects an ethic-religious values-based approach to the interpretation of textual sources. Wadud has studied this element in light of the fundamentals of “textual development” and “moral trajectories.” By this, she requires the vigilant attitude of the reader to observe the Quranic establishment of moral, social, and political trajectories that exceed its importance of literal meaning. The hermeneutical importance of such trajectories has, however, been overlooked by the entire body of Islamic law and legal theories.²¹⁰ In the interpretation of inheritance verse,²¹¹ less attention has been given to theological hermeneutics. This verse mentions the reception smaller share than that of males. However, Souaiaia points out that the verse of divorce and inheritance should be understood in relation to each other.²¹² Where the focus of the Quran very much similar to the issue of divorce that is ‘procedural’ in nature in order to protect the rights of women “to inheritance from being compromised by their male and female kin command.”²¹³ Therefore Islamic feminist hermeneutics will get support from this theological hermeneutics that equips purposive and ethico religious values based hermeneutics, which is footing gender equality and justice.

Feminist hermeneutics also have concerns with *Hadīth* developed Sunnah Hermeneutics. *Hadīth* remains a well establish episteme for the interpretation of the Quran. There are books of *Ahadīth* that provides supremacy of males over females, and therefore mostly *Hadīth* literature is patriarchal. This mechanism would be called as “A Non *Hadīth* Dependent Sunnah Hermeneutics. Among the books that exemplify the misogynist intension of the reporters like *Abū Hurrayra*.

In contrast to this Khaled Abou El Fadl demonstrates the idea of “authorial enterprise” and a “conscientious pause” that helps the cause of Islamic feminist

²¹⁰ Duderija, “The Hermeneutical Importance,” 57.

²¹¹ 4:11-12

²¹² Ahmed E Souaiaia, *Contesting Justice, Women, Islam, Law, and Society* (Sunny Press, 2008), 60-79.

²¹³ Ibid.

hermeneutics. El Fadl points out that the exportation of these reports (that favors that supremacy of males over females) made improper, do not suit to the teaching of Sunnah. El Fadl argues that each *Hadīth* involves many transmitters that mark as “authorial enterprise” because it is based on the outcomes of their (Companions) observation. Resultantly in such multiple reports and transmission, different come in order. In such a situation, the interpreter employs the “conscientious pause” to refine the text or otherwise dismiss it.²¹⁴ This discussion leads towards the separation of Sunnah and *Hadīth* that separates Sunnah from *Hadīth* conceptually, hermeneutically and methodologically.²¹⁵

Therefore, a non-*Hadīth* based Sunnah hermeneutics is useful for Islamic feminist hermeneutics to reject the patriarchal character of *Hadīth*, which were considered strong in the classical Islamic tradition.

²¹⁴ Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, 88–94.

²¹⁵ Adis Duderija, "A Paradigm Shift in Assessing/Evaluating the Value and Significance of Haith in Islamic Thought – From Ulūm ul Hadīth to Usūl ul Fiqh", *Arab law Quarterly* 23, number,2 (2009): 195.

**CHAPTER FOUR: FEMINIST THEOLOGICAL
ASSUMPTIONS**

4- Feminist Theological Assumptions & their References to Religious texts

The exegetes of Abrahamic faiths deliberately cover the stories of Sarah and Hagar to figure out the women's status in their respective works. Feminist interpreters tried to embody women's empowerment to embrace the tone of women's liberation and struggle. These stories provide them the strength of those significant female figures shown in the wild environment of that time. The three theological assumptions about the creation of humans in all three revealed faiths are the upstanding unit for the superiority of men over women. The strength Hagar shown in her trial in the wild environment with her son is a source of inspiration for Muslim feminist activists.²¹⁶

As mentioned earlier, Muslim feminist scholars' work coincides with that of their counterparts in the other Semitic faiths. Asma Barlas associates Rosemary Radford Reuther when synchronizes women in the catalyst of oppressed one through textual affirmatives.²¹⁷ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has expressed the term "gender dimorphism" that to be entrenched by humans and not by the Creator,²¹⁸ whether Sa'adiyya Sheikh recognizes the work of Letty Russell who orientates androcentric from medieval interpretational modes.²¹⁹

The female discourse in empowerment has interestingly assimilated by all feminists of three revealed faiths by referring to the outstanding role of Hagar in most of the

²¹⁶ It is on this trial some feminists associate their ambitions with a consideration as descendant of Hagar like Al Hibri, pointing to Hagar a credit of foremother, and Wadud who places a discussion on "A New Hagar Paradigm: Motherhood and family in her book, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, in proportions to expose the attitude of neglect.

²¹⁷ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 20; Asma Barlas, "Women's Rereadings of the Quran", in *The Cambridge Companion to the Quran*, Ed. Fereshteh Nouraie-Simone (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2005), 256.

²¹⁸ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 23-24.

²¹⁹ Shaikh, "Exegetical Violence: *Nushūz* in Quranic Gender Ideology", 4.

textual terrain.²²⁰ Wadud points out that Hagar's story, while takes its place in the traditional paradigm, takes as an aberrant state that gives a deviant position in society.²²¹

Besides the fact that feminists of all three faiths have common concerns in the articulation of patriarchy in the interest of women, they have some cracks in their works. They treat the Sarah-Hagar's story on desirable grounds of empowerment that would not be well enough to elaborate on the collusive parts of the whole story. Because in biblical treatment of the mistress of Abraham's child, caring has put Sarah in anger, which laid down the situation that led Hagar and *Ismāe'il* to barren land full of wilderness. The tough treatment of Hagar and her son by Sarah is an act of hostility. This attitude of Sarah to Hagar cannot be ignored while noticing the role of the female figure in the Bible.²²² It is equally important to pose the relationship of women within the text of three faiths and its scholarship that gage the conclusive cross counter readings. Somehow men are not just suspicious of one another, but women are.²²³

To consolidate on the other crucial issues related to the interreligious relationship between women of the Abrahamic faiths, no attention has been paid even in the recent efforts like *Daughters of Abraham, Hagar, Sarah, and their Children* and the current compilation of Reuther, *Feminist theologies: Legacy and Prospect*. Scarcely a very few of them go into a perturbed history of these three revealed faiths, just to point vaguely to the idea of peace-making and harmony via the efforts of women. The authors and editors of the three faiths have almost ignored the self-

²²⁰ Ibid., 8.

²²¹ Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 148-53.

²²² Amy-Jill Levine, "Settling at Beer-lahai-roi", in *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Ed. Yvonne Yazdek Haddad and John L. Esposito (Gainesville: University of Press of Florida, 2001), 18-19.

²²³ Bauer, "Room for Interpretation", 185.

proclaimed diversity that exists within the feminist theology. The contributors of the three faiths, while claim their impulse, neglect the intricate issues that exist on their own.

Another matter of fact that later led to further obscurities rests upon the dissension among feminist scholars of the three faiths is to catch out on collaborative kind of communion between the daughters of Sarah and Hagar. Perhaps it might have happened with contemporary Muslim thinkers not to pretend the traditional expedience of *Isrā'iliyāt* while studying Quran whether feminist scholars may keep the Quran away from the biblical interpretations of collateral anecdotes and assertions. A study with such tendency led Muslim exegetes to pass the creation story in the Quran as manifested by the Bible affects the idea that sexist interpretation of the story stemmed from biblical origins, which in one way or another devalue the women. Such a strategy perhaps is the outrage for harmonious cooperation among the feminist scholars of three revealed faiths.²²⁴ Nevertheless, it is also a matter of the fact that Muslim feminists are totally different from their counterparts in their approach while treating the Quran. Being the word of God, they respect its authenticity and do not mark the question on the text as the Jewish or Christian theologians do. Muslim feminists consider human deficiency while not understanding the difficult and "*problematic portions of the Quran*" and not the text itself.²²⁵ Therefore Muslim feminists engage in understanding the text more

²²⁴ Ayesha A. Hidayatullah, "The Quranic Rib-ectomy: Scripture Purity, Imperial Dangers and Other Obstacles to the Interfaith Engagement of Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics", in *Women and Interreligious Dialogue*, Ed. Catherine Cornille and Jillain Maxy (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 150.

²²⁵ Roald Anne Sofie, "Feminist Reinterpretation of Islamic Sources: Muslim Feminist Theology in the Lights of the Christian Tradition of Feminist Thought", in *Women and Islamization: Contemporary Dimensions of Discourse on Gender Relations*, Ed. Karin Ask and Marit Tjomsland (Oxford: berg, 1998), 41-42.

rather than to “*change the immutable words.*”²²⁶ Whether Jewish and Christian theologians put the bible under critique while going for historical study of it and by considering it as human made work.²²⁷ This marks distinct boundaries for feminist scholarship in all three revealed faiths.

4.1 - Primary Creation in Judeo – Christian and Islamic Tradition

Riffat begins her discussion on theological assumption from the creation story of Adam that according to her is misrepresented by the traditional understanding of Islam.

Generally, people of three revealed faiths believe that God’s primary creation was Adam, and Eve was created from his rib. I will cite relevant sources of all the three faiths to present the views that prevailed in these religious traditions.

4.1.1 - Primary Creation in Jewish Tradition

The belief in women’s creation from Adams’ rib is rooted in the almost entire traditions of Judaism, which is taken from the *Yahwist* account of creation in Genesis (2) 18-24.²²⁸

²²⁶ Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 205–6.

²²⁷ Sofie, “Feminist Reinterpretation,” 21–22.

²²⁸ The Jewish Old Testament that takes its official start from Abraham called the Moses code or Ten Commandments exits till date since four thousand years. In the view of Gored Eleanor, the book of creation is compiled five centuries before Christ, which is edited in the light of Semitic, Babylon, and Canaanite and Egyptian civilizations. It remains hard for historians to search out the original course of Jewish history. Flavius Joseph was the first Jewish historian who wrote the various aspects of Jewish history, but ironically historicity was not acclaimed as an acknowledgeable standard by Jewish scholars. The history up to 19th century is silent about any dignified book of Jewish history. It would be often difficult to fix the beginning of Jewish history. Mostly it has been traced. The entire historical narrations in Torah give an explanatory picture. It describes fifty-five prophets in which seven are women. Some of them like (*Rubqa*,

The creation of Eve from Adam's rib clearly negates her being a distinct being, as she has been counted as part of Adam's body less in intellectuality and obedience than him. Torah takes her account of disobedience towards God by eating from the forbidden tree, asserted Adam too accompany her. She has made Adam responsible for the Original Sin. Therefore, God punished her with bearing the pain of pregnancy, and she would beg for the attention of her husband, who would command her.²²⁹ The supremacy of man and woman conviction is from God and not from man. There is a double standard in *Isrā'īliyyāt* narration, where they grace women as prophetess on one side but pose Eve as a symbol of all problems on the other. The Exodus of Adam and Eve is not the plan of God, but because of her sin that diminished the real status of women.

Sarah, Rakheel, and liya) have been given prominence over Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that shows the privilege of women in Jews. Instead of this description a very little attention has been paid to the Sister of Moses who helped her brothers in exodus of Jews from Egypt. She has been described in the Hebrew word 'Nabīyya.' She was familiar for her praiseful songs which are now the part of Hebrew literature. Maryam has got a high place by these songs to thank God in poetic way.

In Hebrew the term "Nabīyya" has its different usage, like the woman who teaches the commandments of God, or to sing praiseful songs or to be a wife of a messenger. The association of word with Maryam manifests the great respect for her among women. Jews always gave the charge to *Rubqa, Sarah, Liyah* and *Rakheel*. Leonard Swidler included mother of Moses (*Yukibd*) and daughter of Pharaoh who have important role in release of Jews from Egypt. *Sarah* was also considered as respected because she did circumcise her son to follow the command of God. *Hulda* and *Debora* are mentioned as messengers. But after inquiry it is proved that they belonged to the early Jewish history. For further readings please see Shiekh Abdul Malik, In *Thy Seed: Judaism, Christianity, Islam – Addressing Some key Issues*, Paramount Publishing Enterprise, 2010, P. 120-1, and Sheve Grumer, Brun, *Thinking about Judaism – Philosophical Reflections on the Jewish Thought*, Jason Aronson Inc., New Jersey/Jerusalem, P 125 and Roth, Recil, "Historiography" in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 8, P 560-2.

²²⁹ Book of Creation. 16:3

Louis Gins Berg (1873 – 1953), a Jewish Scholar, presents his view on the anecdote for undermining the Eve in her entire life on earth. He points out that earthly life started with Eve's misery. They had both mourned for seven days right after their fall from Eden and moved around for fruits like that of Eden for another seven days but all in vain. As a result, Eve asked Adam to kill her because she was the only cause of God's anger, but Adam did bear it on and let Eve beg for repentance. She was supposed to stand for thirty-seven days at the deepest place on stone sinking up to the neck. She did as direct by Adam but on the eighteenth day became under the influence of fraudulence of Devil, who came to her in the shape of an angel. It was the second act of disobedience, as mentioned by Gins Berg, where she lost the chance of God's pleasure.²³⁰ Therefore she was cursed by God with ten maledictions. Therefore, women are inferior, socially, spiritually, and physically. Such types of inferences are the reflection of the Torah's passages.²³¹

While using the words like sons of God and daughter of humans, the editors of Torah actually rate the sons on high stage because of God's son and women being their offspring are lower and inferior. ²³²

The *Talmūdic* view and *rabbī's* writings also convincingly confirm the respectful and dignified position of women in initial periods. Besides this, there are many passages in *Talmūd* that present women as lazy, cunning, wasteful, and needless. They have not been encouraged to take an interest in education or religious affairs because that would escape them from performing domestic duties. Synagogue pertained to *Izrā* was established by Pharisees for worship where women participated along with having various slogan at their end as leader, mother of the synagogue, and the priests. However, in 70AD after the destruction of temple *Talmūd* was a very significant document for women. A woman's consent was

²³⁰ Louis Ginsberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (New York, 1910), 59.

²³¹ Book of Creation: 1-5:6

²³² Susan Starr Sered, *Women as Ritual Experts, The Religious Lives of Elderly Jewish Women in Jerusalem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 46.

necessary for marriage, and the man was the breadwinner for her. Marriage was a legal act, and she was paid in case of divorce and was not just getting a woman to fulfilling his emotional desires. *Rabbī* Garshoum in the 10th century has banned multiple marriages in the west through an order. Afterwards, no such changes occurred in *Talmūdic* traditions that take care of the woman's requirements at different stages and become a jammed text. *Talmūdic* tradition contains narrations regarding gender roles for both sexes. She is reduced to look after the affairs of the home. Women are exempted from various religious duties. Women were gradually excluded from synagogue. Jewish man thanks God to be created as a male to be capable of shouldering commandments of God. They worship the male image of God.²³³

Not only man but woman also thanks God, who created her according to His own will. It means that she is not ready to accept her inferior position. Because women are closer to God in spiritual perfection that even please God their creation as a woman. However, some like George Tavard (1922-2007)²³⁴ argue that she was created in an impeccable state but redeemed when she realized her sexual entity. She became indigent of her husband and suffered pregnancy.²³⁵

The book of Proverbs also contains negative narrations about women because the main books of the Bible are written by men. Most of the Jewish literature is

²³³ Leonard Swilder, *Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (N.J: The Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, 1976), 17.

²³⁴ Born on February 6, 1922, in Nancy France and got fame as "Augustinian of the Assumption" in 1947. He had Doctorate degree in Sacred Theology from the Lyon, and thought theology at Carpenor, House in Surry, England and in Princeton Theological Seminary respectively from 1949 to 1951 and 1951 to 1952. Afterwards he shifted to US in 1952 as permanently. He was the first one to talk about the importance of women's role in Catholic Church in 1973 through a book, "Women in Christian Tradition," that influenced positively the rest of the environment in interest of women. Taken from: <http://www.assumption.us/Tavard/biography.htm>, accessed on 11/04/2018.

²³⁵ Swilder, *Women in Judaism*, 18.

produced after their exile period. The most notable in this regard is Ecclesiastes (compiled in 300B.C), Ecclesiastics by Ben Sira in the 2nd century, and Wisdom of Solomon in mid of the 1st century. Due to intellectual potential, these books address man.²³⁶

The book of Ecclesiastes goes in deep animosity about women by stating her exertion of evil that catches the only malignity.²³⁷ Men are advised in this book not to get close to women if to create a constant relationship with any family because women are dirty, and her luscious attitude dooms her entire life. While going through in Ben Sira's biased narrations in Ecclesiastics, it can be said without any obscurity that Rabbis go beyond the limits of Moses' code while catalyzing it with religious overlaps. Perhaps all prejudiced motifs are seen in the exegetical works of Torah but not in its original texts.²³⁸

4.1.2- Primary Creation in Christian Tradition

The early history of Christian discourse shows Jesus' attitude towards women was positive where he affirmed the equality between men and women in creation as asserted in the book of Mark: 10:6, but the interpreters have gone up to the *Yahwist* account of creation that entrenches the inferior position of women being created from Adam's rib, as she has no distinct personality besides Adam. Paul has given duplicity of opinions about men and women's interaction. The low and secondary status in creation has furnished her with deteriorative and derivative impulses "in accordance with the deutero-Pauline tradition" that rectify the patristic reading of the Bible willfully. Riffat points out that Hellenistic in the flow of negative impact from Paul ideology has shown its definite impacts on the writings of Augustine and Aquinas.²³⁹ Also, the Christian scholars like Martin Luther (1483 - 1546), John

²³⁶ Swilder, 78-91.

²³⁷ Ecclesiastes 26-8:7

²³⁸ Ecclesiastes 9:3, 9:5 and 9:9

²³⁹ Riffat Hassan, "Woman and Man's "Fall": A Quranic Theological Perspective", in *Muslim Theology: The Voice of Muslim Women Theologians*, (Wiener Islamstudien), Ed. Ednan

Calvin (1509 - 1564), and John Knox (1513 – 1772) have declared women as inferior to man in the course of her creation from his rib, or because of her deceitful role in the fall of man. The tyranny of such biased ideas expanded to the protestant Christian scholar Karl Barth (1886 – 1968) in the 20th century. Riffat says that Christian tradition is overwhelmed by anti-women interpretation for almost two thousand years.²⁴⁰

Gospels, as Torah, considers women as the main source of sin because of eating from the forbidden tree. However, the concept of the Original Sin committed by Eve is later developed in Christianity. The attributes of God portray male in His image. Manhood is an integral part of piety; as Mary Daly (1928 – 2010) goes on to say that if God is male, then man is God. The linguistic and symbolic display of God in male portrayal categorically means that God is in much comfort to deal with male rather than female.²⁴¹

In this regard, Ben Whittington has critically investigated the discourse about men and women in Gospels and explained it. He is of the opinion that Luke equates men and women through various verses. Likewise, both have been respectfully regarded and bestowed with equal blessings. Luke is the only Gospel that mentions the worry of Jesus about the widows and women of deprived castes.²⁴² The gospel of Mark is a little flexible in respect of women and Mathew conferring men the standard of superiority.²⁴³

Aslan, Marcia Hermansen, and Elife Medeni (Germany: Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2013), 101-13.

²⁴⁰ Hassan, "The Issue of Women," 82-85.

²⁴¹ Leona M. Anderson, Pamela Dickey Young, "Women in Christianity", in *Women and Religious Traditions*, 2nd Edition (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 161.

²⁴² Ben Whiterington, "Women and Their Roles in the Gospels and Acts" (Department of Theology, University of Durham, 1981), 130; H. Flunder and St. Luke, *Theologian of Redemptive History* (London, 1967), 9-10.

²⁴³ Ibid.

The explanatory analysis of Whittington means to consider the editors of Gospels somehow reformative in approach to the patriarchal system that rests upon the extensive moral responsibilities versus the average of rights.²⁴⁴ This indicates that Christianity concentrates more on the responsibilities of women in the name of morality rather than rights and privileges. Even though the broad concept of Gospels about women is looked like balance and poise, but Paul's teachings overturn it who considered women is less in character and inferior in status.²⁴⁵

According to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, one lady has inflicted perfume on the head of Jesus to show her acceptance to him. Disciples have not loved it but consider it the wastage of perfume.²⁴⁶ It is also a matter of the fact that the name of the woman is not written in Gospels, but she has been identified as Mary Magdalene. Therefore, Robert McElvaine very categorically expressed her feelings that those males who took charge after the crucifixion are excluded from all other females, including Mary.²⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene was the first lady who witnessed visual sight of the prophet. It becomes strange later on too that she yielded up with bad character yet attained visual sight of the Prophet. But Paul intentionally ignored her dignity where he incorporated his concepts in religious teachings and designate the position equally to prophets to himself.

Instead of Paul's effort to haul down women, Mary Magdalene remained well respected in the hearts of the people as one of the iconic like twelve disciples. Perhaps in 200 AD, the Gospel of Thomas and Mary that spelled women have been excluded from the contents of the Holy books. Furthermore, a notion associated with Magdalene is that women need protection because of weak nature and physique, and the priesthood can only be accumulated to men.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ermarth Sittler Margaret, *Adam's Fractured Rib* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 80

²⁴⁶ Mark 3-9: 14

²⁴⁷ Daly, *Beyond God*, 19.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

Marry Magdalene has been considered as a prostitute as Jesus ejected seven evils (souls) from her body. In turn, this view presented by Pope Gregory the Great (541-604 AD) while referring to Mark although the exegetes have the opinion that it was actually the recovery of Marry from various diseases.²⁴⁹

The classical interpretation of the course of gender, male and female in relevance to creation, fall, and redemption in the Christian theological discourse have been credited to St. Augustine (354 – 430) at the end of the 4th and beginning of 5th century. The Greek culture has entrenched the idea that actual creation occurred mortally in an immaterial unit where no gender distinction existed. It is perpetuated that the distinction came through God's addition when connected to sin or fall. While getting through Genesis, Augustine has preferably mentioned the creation of both sexes male and female in their exact and distinctly physical forms that reflect the design of God's original creation; and it would not be referred to the causes of sin. But even though God's deliberate creation was man, and woman has been created from his rib in relation to ensure the superiority of man.²⁵⁰

Luther is very confident about the normal and pleasurable sexual relationship of Adam and Eve, but not for lust or concupiscence in Eden resulted in robust and healthy children, who used to stand and walk from the very first day. As both Adam and Eve being part of original creation would have been well in physique and mentality as well as possessed a sound knowledge about God. Besides these qualities, they are not dead finally but took a "fallen asleep in heaven." Luther, therefore, convinced that she has been bestowed an equal image with God in the creation and had well repute in Eden. She is not deficient or faulty, but weak naturally that degrades her brilliance and prestige more than man. The physical roles as mother and housemaster makes her status as secondary and instrumental. Her weak nature has been undermined by Satan and deceived by the serpent and

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Rosemary Radford Reuther and Judith Chelius Stark, "Sexuality, Gender, and Women," in *Feminist Interpretation of Augustine* (Penn State University Press, 2007), 48–52.

become succumbed. In order to please her wife, Adam accepted her offer to eat from the forbidden tree.²⁵¹

Calvin sees women as paralleled in creation to the imagery of God in relation to spiritual matters and not in the realm of mastery cases. This dichotomy of women's creation disqualifies them from honoring any dignified positions in the public sphere. Normatively women have nothing to do with public duties. They have been kept away from the public arena due to the natural layout of the society after the fall. It may be possible that women can rule society in exceptional cases that serve as signs of any social disorder by males to put them down for being obedient to women.²⁵²

4.1.3 - Primary Creation in Islamic Tradition

The modern and feminist scholarships hold the view that women's creation passages mentioned in the Quran are not sufficient that lead the classical exegetes to rely on other sources. Since equality becomes a prominent subject with the passage of time, so discussions on the creation and especially the process of women's creation widen the variety of inferences among scholars.

Muslim interpreters of the Quran have discussed the creation of narratives in the Quran and made the opinion that the creation of Adam took place from a single soul and Eve from its mate. They have given three meanings of 'from' as of the same 'type,' the 'rib,' and the 'clay.' The issue of equality made the creation of narratives more debatable among the medieval interpreters. I will cite some relevant interpretations of medieval Quranic scholars with respect to creation verses in this section. In this regard, the verse 4:1 (*fear your Lord who created you from single soul, and from it created its mate*) has been narrated and interpreted in various

²⁵¹ Mickey L. Mattox, "Luther on Eve, Women and the Church," *Department of Theology, Lutheran Quarterly, Marquette University* 17, no. 04 (Winter 2003): 456–74.

²⁵² Gratian Vandici, "Reading the Rules of Knowledge in the Story of the Fall: Calvin and Reformed Epistemology on the Noetic Effects of Original Sin," *Penn State University Press* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 175–80.

directions. This verse basically elaborates on the creation in a broad sense as the connection to the entire intellect of soul to bodily format.

Modern western and feminist scholarship probably developed their collective consensus that Eve's creation story from the rib is totally injected through external factors by Muslim exegetes.²⁵³ This view is equally adopted by Riffat Hassan, which will be detailed in its relevant section. The discussion, especially in this verse (4:1) among exegetes, circulates around two words (*min*) and (*lahū*), the former means creation from man and the later means for man. In light of these meanings, the creation account of the Quran has been viewed the same as in the Bible.²⁵⁴ Similarly, it is found in the Quran and the Bible that Adam is described as a human, the first one who was created that definitely privileged him as the father of all humankind. Other Quranic narrations delineate Adam's creation from the "substances of the earth" of "material of earth" as described in (Q. 17:16) as clay.²⁵⁵ Another verse says that human creation is associated with single soul (*nafs*) and its mate, called in the Quran as (*abawaykum*). There are several meanings referred to (*nafs*) as "self" or "an individual."²⁵⁶ It is also said the not only humans are created from a single soul, but from it, God created its mate as well. Feminists found here to locate their theology on exploring the language problem existed in the word 'soul,' which is feminine and being referred to as "masculine being Adam."²⁵⁷ Although it is clear in (Q. 7:189) that by the single soul is meant Adam. Heated debates rose among the medieval scholars who interpret creation from (*min*), as a creation from the rib. Feminists criticize that scholars, in this case, took assistance from Biblical narrations.

²⁵³ Catherine Bronson, "Imagining the Primal Women: Imagining the Primal Woman: Islamic Selves of Eve", PhD Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2012, 85.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Karen Bauer, *Gender Hierarchy in the Quran: Medieval Interpretations - Modern Responses* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 102.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

Perhaps the exegetes of the Quran provide their judgments about the issue of creation either on the base of transmission, opinion, or *Hadīth*. For instance, Ibne Kathīr (1300 – 1373) gives details of the process of Eve’s creation in the light of *Hadīth* tradition by expounding that the Quranic word *nafsin wāhida* refers to Adam and *Zawj*, means Eve took creation from backside of the left rib of Adam while sleeping. He (Adam) saw Eve when awakened and astonished. So, he became compassionate with her, and she with him. Ibne Kathīr here is referring to the stance of Ibne Abbās (619 – 687), who says that woman is created from man, so her glutton did rest in man; he who has been created from the earth, his glutton rests in the earth.²⁵⁸

Fakhar al-Dīn Al- Rāzī (865 – 925) gives his opinion examining the advantage of the two narrations made about Eve’s creation where the former counted Eve created from Adam’s rib and the later counted her as his type. He favors the tradition narrated from the Prophet that mentions Eve’s creation from the crooked rib as he endorsed the inference of al- Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) who acknowledged Eve’s creation from the rib of Adam. Here it looks that he presents his inference in a straight way based on the opinion that creation took place from “single soul” that shows his ultimate power of creation, knowledge, and wisdom.²⁵⁹ He further says that Muslims exegetes unanimously pin a point that “single soul” refers to Adam as “*Zawj*” refers to Eve. Two points regarding Eve’s creation from Adam have taken the attention of Quranic scholars.

- (1) Majority of them holds the opinion that when Adam was created by God, he put him in sleep, and then created Eve from his left rib. When he awakened saw Eve and became closer to her, because she was created from

²⁵⁸ Aboul Fidā Ismae’īl bin Umar Ibne Kathīr Al-Quriashi Al-Adhamishqī, *Tafsīr ul Quran Al-Azīm*, Ed. Sami bin Muhammed Sulama, 2nd edition (Dār Tayyība Publication & Distribution, 1999), 333.

²⁵⁹ Fakhru –ud – Dīn Al- Rāzī, *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 1st edition, Volume, 9, (Lebanon: Beirut, 1990), 161.

one of the parts of his. The people of this notion have relied on one *Hadīth* narration:

(استَوْصُوا بالنساء خيرا، فَإِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلْعٍ، وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ مَا فِي الضِّلْعِ أَعْلَاهُ، فَإِنْ ذَهَبَتْ تُقِيمُهُ

كسرتُهُ، وَإِنْ تَرَكَتُهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ، فَاسْتَوْصُوا بالنساء)²⁶⁰

Most of Quranic scholars here give their opinion about verse 4:1 in light of this *Hadīth*, and they treat the exact portion that commonly held for the creation of Eve. It will also be noted here that probably scholars while explaining this *Hadīth* admit the creation of Eve from rib and not from single soul. Probably scholars referred *Hadīth* tradition to discuss the substance and nature of Eve as well. These narrations had also established a preamble for appropriate moment of creation that determined the reason of the foremost creation of Adam. It is a matter of theoretical fact that some scholars look convinced that Eve created second and as secondary in status which will be discussed in detail later on under the title of “Women creation for Man,” but even though some inferences indicate that Adam’s consciousness about feeling alone necessitated the company of Eve as a helpmate to him.

Ibne Jarīr al-Tabarī in this connection, appears to be prominent in his narration about creation that produced a huge amount of exegetical work, is regarded as

²⁶⁰ Sahīh al-Bukāhri, Kitāb al-nikāh (Book of Marriage), of “Bāb al-Madārah ma’al-nisā” Hadīth No. 5186, Vol. 7, P 26. Imam Bukari authenticated and extracted in (332/2 and 440/3) and Imam Muslim in (178/4), And Nisa’i in “ashrat-un-nisā” from “al-sunan al kubrā”, and al-Baihaqī in (295/7) from Abī Hazim than Abu Huryra. Also authenticated and extracted by al-Tarmizī in (223/1), and al-Darmī in (9148/2), and a-Baihaqī, Ahmed in (428/2,449 &530), and al-Hakim in (174/4) and al-Tabrānī in “al-Awsath.” As it is also authenticated by al-Nisa’āi in (85/2) al-Dārmī and Ahmed in (164/4) from the narration of Abī-Zar, and so on by Ahmed in (279/6), al Tabrānī in “al-Awsath” from the narration of A’isha, and al-Hakim from the narration of Samura bin Jundub.

authentic in its field, reliably accessed to the narration of Prophet, his companions and early pioneers of exegetical tradition.²⁶¹ Al-Tabarī makes his view on the opinion of the early scholars by saying the reference of the single soul pertained to Adam.²⁶²

This *Hadīth* has been narrated from Abou Hurayra in an elevated position. Ibne Hajr (1372-1449) says in *Fathul Bārī* that from (*imra'ā*) means *Hawwā* who was created from Adam's left rib.²⁶³

Ibne Ishāq says that here the place of creation has been specified, which is left side of the rib close to the neck, where an empty point of the rib was filled before the entrance to paradise. Abu Hayān elaborates in the light of this narration that a woman is being described as deficient by nature for a cause of competence and exemplification. She is, by nature, disturbed and cannot remain steady and stable potentially.

(2) Here it sustains the view that “*wa khlaqa minhā zawjuhā*” means from its kind or gender or type as Quran says: *wallāhu ja'ala lakum min anfusikum azwājan* and *laqad jā'akum rasūlun min anfusikum*. (Q.9:128)

While citing his rationale about this, it appears that al-Rāzī confronts the first notion and chooses the view expounded by the *Mu'tazilī* Abou Muslim al-Asfahānī (868-934) as he says that men and women are created from the same type.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Mulana Goher Rehman, *Tafheem-ul-Mas'ail* Vol. 4, (Mardan, KPK: Maktabah Tafheem-ul-Quran, 2003), 105.

²⁶² Abū Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī, , *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3, (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007). 2114.

²⁶³ Ibne Hajr al-Asqalānī, *Fathul Bārī Sharh Sahīh al-Bukhārī* Ed. Abdul Aziz ibne Bāz, Muhammad Fawād Abduel Bāqī and Muhibbuddīn al Khatīb, (Dār ul Kutub al Salafiyyah, 1999).

²⁶⁴ Al- Rāzī, *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 9:161.

Here Qādhī opines that the first point is prior to creation status of Eve from “single soul,” and if Eve becomes the first creation, then humans took creation from two souls, not one.²⁶⁵ Ibne Āshūr tenders the word *nafsin wāhidatin* to Adam, and *Al-Zawj* to Eve. She came out from Adam from his rib. Ironically her creation took place from the part of Adam. ²⁶⁶

Shihāb al-Dīn Mahmud al-Ālūsī (d. 1854) while interpreting *wa yā Ādamuskun anta wa zawjuka al janna*, explores the difference in opinion about the time of the creation of his partner (*Zawj*). It was the exodus of *Iblīs* from Eden that replaces Adam in it alone as some scholars have made their stance about it. Since Adam was alone, then no one was there for amiability or in a cordial treat. So, God put him in sleep and took a rib from his left side. God put meat on that place and created Eve from there. When he awakened, so found her sitting beside his head. He asked her who are you? She replied to a woman. He then asked why you are created. She replied to dwell in with me. Although Ālūsī refers to the major opinion of the scholars that she was created before the entrance and both of them entered once creation accomplished.²⁶⁷ Al-Rāzī indicates that *Zawj* priorly means Eve. Instead, it is not mentioned before in this verse and in the entire Quran.

In connection to the verse 7:189 *wa ja'ala minhā zawjuhā li yaskuna ilaihā*, he transmits the differences occurred in the opinion of scholars in the time of Eve's creation. He explains that those who hold the view that Eve created before the entrance of Adam to Eden and those who entail her creation in the Eden prevailed

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibne Āshūr, *Al-Tahrīr wa Al- Tanvīr* (Al-Dārul Taunasiya for Publication, 1984), 108-9.

²⁶⁷ Shihāb al-Dīn Mahmud al-Ālūsī, *Rūhul Ma'ānī fī Tafsīr al Quran al- Azīm wa'l Saba Al Mathānī*, Ed. Ali Abdul Bari Attīya, 1st edition (Lebanon: Dārul Kutb Al- Ilmīyah Beirut, 1994).

to other opinions of scholars.²⁶⁸ Ibne Kathīr goes on to say that Eve was created before admittance of Adam to Eden.²⁶⁹

It is now becoming clear that almost all the Muslim exegetes are convinced about the meaning of “Single Soul” prior to Adam, although *nafs* describes the feminine prospect. It has two directions: (1) the observance of meaning as it means to Adam; (2) the word *nafs* is used in both masculine and feminine gender, and Adam is male. It is apparent from pronouns that are used in *Hadīth* literature for the creation of Adam. That convincingly shows that Eve was created from that “single soul.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Al- Rāzī, *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 9:162.

²⁶⁹ Ibne Kathīr Al-Quriashi Al-Adhamishqī, *Tafsīr ul Quran Al-Azīm*. 334.

²⁷⁰ Amina Wadud has also given her understanding about the origin of mankind that stems from one pair. She translates the word ‘from’ (*min*) in two ways: one is in the meaning of extraction as a straight translation, that indicates that the first created being was superior while creation extracted from him (woman) was not his equal and thus inferior. Secondly if ‘min’ is understood as of the same type and taken it with the account of the verse 31:32 so it will give the meaning as your mates are the same type or kind. The word “*Nafs*” she said has been used both in technical and common usage. The common aspect applied on mankind and the technical is on all human beings of the one and the same origin despite different colors and race. *Nafs* is neither masculine nor feminine in its conceptual sense that represents the essential parts of each male and female. Therefore, it does not mention in the Quran that the creation, human race and gender begin with male. While discussing the word ‘*zawj*’ she gives its grammatical and conceptual inference where a grammatical concept is masculine and conceptually not. There is very little information about the ‘*Zawj*’ so she gives three possible reasons: that sufficient detail has been provided on the subject, that detail are not too important, and that Quran is referring to something unseen for human language is deficient. She points out that everything is created in pairs means everything has duality in sequence as day for night, warm for cold, “as the male is irrevocably linked with female as man is compatibly linked with woman.” Woman is not blamed for her temptation, and both bear the responsibility of fall. She referred to the stance of Riffat Hassan while engaging in the Hadīth narration about creation. She agrees with Riffat Hassan about the single, weak and below standard of those narrations.

Here Muslim exegetical scholarship proceeds in two approaches. Firstly, the creation of Eve is from the left rib of Adam. Secondly, the Quranic verse 38:6, which gives the meaning of kind or type. Even Al-Rāzi refers to the opinion of Abou Muslim Asfahānī, and Al-Qādhī that the first opinion much stronger than the later one.²⁷¹ As Ibne Āshūr says that if the meaning is taken from the type of Adam may not contradict with kind or of “his type” in the prospect of *minhā zawjuhā*, because this does not concern the human type, the female of each species is of its kind.²⁷² The word in the Quran is used for both genders male-female, as explained by Ibne Āshūr when he gives the contextual paradigm of the word in feminine prospect. He argues that at first, the use of the word accorded to Eve, the female who stands on the position of reproduction of humans. The word *Zawj* has been implied on her because she shares affairs of life with a man in the home. Each of them becomes *Zawj* to one another in this sense. This word may identify their relationship. In that introductory sense, the word may be used equally to express the relation between both.²⁷³

It seems that Muslims exegetes go ahead to contribute meaning of “*minhā*” as a creation from rib while expressing their tendency and comprehension about *wa khalaqa minhā zawjuhā*. It also sets a view that creation from rib can possibly endorse by reason and intellect. Because creation from rib or mud and semen are equal for God, but the word “*minhā*” explicitly does not denote the meaning of creation from the rib. Not even any authentic *Hadīth* supports this view. Ibne Jarīr Al Tabarī locates from Ibne Ishāq that view of creation from the rib is being known from the people of Torah as it resonated from Ibne Abbās and other scholars as well. According to it Adam was slumbered when some part from his left ribs was taken for creation of his wife Eve.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Al- Rāzā, *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 9:164.

²⁷² Ibne Āshūr, *Al-Tahrīr wa Al- Tanvīr*. 112

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 4/214

²⁷⁴ al-Tabari, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān*, 224–25.

This narration of Ibne Ishāq shows convincingly that rib narration belongs to *Isrā'īliyāt* sources that have been tendered other *tābiye 'in* like Ibne Abbās and Mujāhid as a fiction and not as their comprehension. Perhaps there is no harm to mention any narrations of the people of the book as fiction. Ironically it is not supported by the Quran and *Hadīth*.

While discussing the creation account and significance of Adam Riffat Hassan refers to the interpretational understanding of the Quranic passages that encompass the whole range of being Allah's "deputy on earth," and to whom the glorious goal of succession has been assigned, and course of recognition made to the early creation of human beings.²⁷⁵ She presents the linguistic account of the word "Adam" counting as a Hebrew word manifest to the soil in literal terms that occurred 25 times in the Holy Quran as a symbol of self-awareness of humanity.²⁷⁶

Albeit, the term Adam is used in different connotations (such as a proper noun for an individual, a prophet probably, father of Cain and Abel), while referring to the verses (Q.3:35 and 18: 58) and Genesis 4: 1-14, she makes a note that Adam was a proper name used for an individual, may be a prophet or predecessor of prophets. She categorically points out that Quran does not speak about the credibility of Adam being a prime creature of Allah.²⁷⁷ In her opinion, the term Adam is generally or, in most instances, used in reference to humankind, in the Quran. Hence it occurs in the Quran as a collective noun stands for humankind as she refers to the following verses in support of her view (Q. 3: 26-27, 31, 35, 172). The Quranic account of Adam rests upon his humanness as (*Bashar*) and (*Al Insān*). Besides Adam's origin from the soil very little references are available about the physique of Adam in the Quran as she refers to the verses (Q. 1:34, 17:50, 3:11, and 15:61).

²⁷⁵ Hassan, "Made from Adam's Rib?," 128-35.

²⁷⁶ Hassan, "Woman and Man's "Fall.", 101-5.

The auspicious fact about the term *Al-Bashar* and *Al-Insān* generates the meaning in general to all human beings just to differentiate it from the Angels and to inculcate the position of humanity as representative of the word of Allah on earth.²⁷⁸

She refers to the Yahwistic account of creation in the book of Genesis that says:

¹⁸ The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

¹⁹ “Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals.”

“But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.”

²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

²⁴ “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” ²⁷⁹

While setting a course in the case of Adam and Eve, she depicts that the Quran does not mention the name of *Hawwā*; rather, it uses the term *Adam* and *Zawj* as she inferences to verses (Q. 1:35, 3: 19 and 19:117).

The aforementioned statement is taken as granted, further establishes that *Zawj* or the mate was a woman, or the *Zawj* mentioned in the Quran is equal and equated with *Hawwā* or Eve. It is therefore obvious that the Quran does not state that Adam

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Book of Creation 2:18-24

was the first male or human being created by Allah.²⁸⁰ In the light of the verses that describe the words in its singular or plural forms like (Adam, *Zawjā*, *Zawjatun*, *Zawjuka*, *Zawjika*, *Azwāj*) transmit the meanings masculine nouns, and hence it would not be necessary to declare the Adam as man and *Zawj* as a woman.²⁸¹

Riffat takes her opinion verified form *Tāj-ul-Arūs* where the word *Zawj* perhaps understood in the percept of a wife by people of *Al-Hijāz* as it is *Zawjatun* in actual Arabic paradigm. She pays attention to reason behind the usage of *Zawj* in the Quran, which is not a specified book for *Al-Hijāz* that might take into consideration the utilization of life for the interest of both man and woman in later endeavors.²⁸²

Riffat Hassan looks conscious about her inference, assuming that the Quran does not show the distinct discourse of the terms “Adam” and “Zawj” which remain ambivalent willfully. It is perhaps a deliberate approach of the Quran to not catch the exact gender and number of Adam in order to ensure the harmonized interaction of human beings and not the certain events of the life of them.²⁸³ The indication to two genders in thirty or so passages in the Quran is just to entertain the creation purpose of both and not to grant any superiority or supremacy or priority of any

²⁸⁰ Riffat Hassan, "The Development of Feminist Theology as Means of Combating Injustice Towards Women in Muslim Communities/Culture", *European Judaism*, Volume,28, No.2, Issue 55, (Autumn 1995): 80-90; Hassan, "Islamic Modernist", 455-59.

²⁸¹ Riffat Hassan, "Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics," In *Our Voice: Four Centuries of American Women's Religious Writings*, Ed. Rosemary S. Killer and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *San Francisco*, 1995, 455-58; Hassan, "Made from Adam's Rib?", 130-33; Hassan, "The Issue of Women", 70-72; Riffat Hassan, "The Chicago Theological Seminary Register (Special issue on Muslim Women Scholars on Women)", *The Chicago Theological Seminary*, 1&2, LXXXIII (Winter and Spring 1993): 8-10; Riffat Hassan, "Eve and Adam (Jewish, Christian and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender)", Ed. K.E Kvam, ., L.S Schearing, and W.H. Ziegler, *Indiana University Press*, 1999, 465-68; Riffat Hassan, "Women Studies in Religion: A Multicultural Reader", Ed. Kate Bagley and Kathleen McIntosh, *N.J. Pearson Prentice Hall*, 2007, 143-49.

²⁸² Hassan, "The Issue of Women," 72.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* 73

gender. Riffat feels that some verses of the Quran in the course of creation have been understood in a shared manner with that of Genesis's story of woman's creation from man.

After explaining her view of creation from the Quran, she tends towards *Hadīth* to explore the reason why Muslim exegetes believe that Eve was created from Adam's rib. Since the Quran does not give any glimpse of the rib, she feels that Muslim interpreters have relied on the narration from the book of creation in the Bible.²⁸⁴ She believes that this view entered in Islamic exegetical scholarship while absorbing the *Hadīth* literature. The *Hadīth* which has been determined by (*Muhaddithīn*), critically became subject of controversial debates, as Riffat focused on the authenticity of tacitly approved *Ahadīths*. She also examined the whole structure of *hadīth* that will be discussed later. She mentioned Alfred Guillaume (1888-1965), who assured the importance of *Hadīth* not from its autonomous aspect of the law, and theologies but from the sentimental prospect that is related to consciousness and thought.

²⁸⁴ "So, the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

²⁴ "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh".

The story of the creation of Eve is counted a part of the literature of *Hadīth* by Riffat Hassan, and which is articulated by Jane Smith and Yvonne Haddad in their works titled: *Eve: Islamic Image of Woman*. This *Hadīth* as we quoted before is:

- "Treat women nicely, for a woman is created from a rib, and the most curved position of the rib is its upper portion, so if you would try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So, treat women nicely."-

²⁸⁵

Then it followed by these words: "When God sent *Iblīs* out of the Garden God and place Adam in it, he dwelt in it alone and had no one to socialize with. God sent to sleep on him and then he took a rib from his left side and place flesh in its place and created *Hawwā* from it. When he awoke, he found a woman seated near his head. He asked her, "Who are you?" She answered, "Woman." He said, "Why were you created?" She said, "That you might find rest in me." The angels said, "What is her name?" and he said, "*Hawwā*." They said, "Why was she called *Hawwā*?" He said, "Because she was created from a living thing". ²⁸⁶

This *Hadīth* according to Riffat, contradicts in larger terms with Quranic narration about creation. It looks compatible with the book of Creation in the Bible.²⁸⁷ She views that some foreign accounts have been incorporated in the *Hadīth* with slight alterations, which in turn represented the Arab culture that had comprehended some feature both about right and left side. The right side has been attributed with good fortunes and felicity in contrast to the left one. Riffat starts comparing the biblical account with this *Hadīth* by saying that rib is not mentioned in the Bible, but *Hadīth* has mentioned it. The latter one is the reflection of Arab culture that accorded great

²⁸⁵ Sahīh al-Bukāhri, Kitāb al Anbiyā (Book of the Prophets), Chapter 1

²⁸⁶ Please see Riffat Hassan, "Women in Islam, "Contemporary Challenges", Ed. Sybille Fritsch Opperman, Evengelischen, *Akademie Loccum, Rehburg-Loccum Germany* 2, Number, 4, (1997): 67-82.

²⁸⁷ Riffat Hassan, "Women in Islam and Christianity: A Comparison," *Nijmegen, The Netherlands* 3 (1994): 19-20.

significance to the right, as stated before. The left side as in *Hadīth* and in lieu of Arab culture is a symbol of materiality and auspiciousness.

The Biblical account named *Hawwā* after the fall, however, in *Hadīth* she was attributed with name *Hawwā* immediately after Adam saw her sitting at his head side. Genesis calls her *Hawwā* being the mother of all living things that are the main source of life. While *Hadīth* points out her as *Hawwā* being created from a living thing and it confirms her coming after Adam that makes her status derivative. These alterations and differences cannot be ignored when interpreting the creation story through the Quran since it became obvious that the classical heritage of Islamic tradition did not escape from such alteration, which makes it imperative for the interpreter to examine the source of *Hadīth*. Unfortunately, such colored work in the context of culture has not been inquired by the classical works in exegeses, Islamic history, and *Hadīth* literature to favor the misogynist approach towards women. As an advice to the latter interpreters, she pays attention to such narration and does not rely at all on the earlier works of interpreters and exegetes as they did it intentionally.²⁸⁸

She mentioned six *Ahādīth* narrated by *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī* in the perspective of creation. She gave her comprehension about these *Ahādīth* by posing substantiation that the Quran has used the word “soul” in both masculine and feminine terms. The entire compendium of these *Ahādīth* serves as an argument in the realm of aforementioned *Hadīth* for being prevalent in Islamic culture that even explores the reality that myth of Eve’ creation from rib is accepted without any enquiry. The theology of woman in the *Ahādīth* narrations determinate her status from the ontological, biological and psychological aspects in general sense that contradict with the spirit of the Quran. Since it becomes vital to focus on the content of such narrations because of reflection of the pagan Arab, Jewish-Christian and Hellenistic ideas that Muslim absorbed. While providing her critical observation she details a discussion about its transmitters and narrations. These *Ahādīth* are as follows:

²⁸⁸ Hassan, "Woman and Man's "Fall.", 110.

- I. “Abu Karaith and Musa bin Hazam (*haddathanā*): *Hussain bin Ali (haḥathanā)* that he was reporting on the authority of (‘an) Zaidah (‘an) Maisarah al-Ashaī (‘an) Abu Hurayra who said: Allah ‘s *Rasūl* said: Treat women nicely, for a woman is created from a rib, and the most curved position of the rib is its upper portion, so if you would try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So, treat women nicely.”⁻²⁸⁹
- II. –“*Abd-al-Aziz (haḍathanā)* that he was reporting on the authority of (‘an) Abd Allah (*haḍathanā*) Malik (*haḍathnā* ‘an) Abu Zinad (‘an) al-‘Araj (‘an) Abu Hurayra who said: Allah’s *Rasūl* said: the woman is like a rib, if you try to straighten her, she will break. So, if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness.”⁻²⁹⁰
- III. “(*Haḍathanā*) *Ishaq bin Nasr (haḍathanā)* *Hussain al Jūfī (‘an) Zaidah (‘an) Maisarah (‘an) Abu Hāzim (‘an) Abu Hurayra* who said: the Holy Prophet said: Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt (trouble) his neighbor. And I advise you to take care of women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked part of the rib is its upper; if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so I urge you to take care of woman.”⁻²⁹¹
- IV. “(*Haḍathanā*) *harmalah bin Yahya (haḍathanī) Ibn Wahib (akhbaranā) Yunun (akhbaranī ‘an) Ibn Sāhib* who said: (*haḍathanī) Ibn al –Musattan (haḍathanī ‘an) Abu Hurayra* who said: *Allāh’s Rasūl* said: Woman is like a rib. When you attempt to straighten it, you would break it. And if you

²⁸⁹ Sahīh al-Bukāhri, *Kitāb al Anbiyā (Book of the Prophets)*, Chapter 1 Hadīth No. 3331, Vol 4, P 133.

²⁹⁰ Sahāh al-Bukāhri, *Kitāb al-nikāh (Book of Marriage)*, of “Bab al-Madārah ma’al-nisā” (Chapter on Sociability with Women). *Hadīth* No. 5184, Vol. 7, P26.

²⁹¹ Same Chapter the very next *Hadīth* No. 5186, Vol. 7, P 26.

leave her alone you would benefit by her, and crookedness will remain in her.”²⁹²

V. (*Ḥaḍathanā*) *Abu Bakr bin Abu Shaibnan (ḥaḍathanā) Hussain bin Ali ('an) Ziadah ('an) Maisarah ('an) Abu Hāzim ('an) Abu Hurayra* who said: the Holy Prophet said: He Who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards women, for women is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there no act towards women.”²⁹³

VI. “(*Ḥaḍathanā*) *Amr an – Naqid and Ibn Umar (ḥaḍathanā) Sufyan ('an) al-A'araj ('an) Abu Hurayra* who said: Allah's *Rasūl* said: Woman has been created from a rib and will in no way be straightened for you; so if you wish to benefit by her, benefit by her while crookedness remains in her. And if you attempt to straighten her, you will break her, and breaking her in divorcing her.”²⁹⁴

She gives her criticism about its transmitters that all these narrations reported by Abu Haurayra whose personality remains strife to many scholars including Imam Abu Hanīfa. All these *Ahādīth* are *Gharīb* and *Dha'īf* because their reporters are single.

From the subject point of view (*Maṭn*), she says that these *Ahādīth* give privilege to men only that represent the patriarchal nature that may not suit to Quranic message of justice. Moreover, hence women are victimized because of the *Hadīth* literature, which cannot be referred to the Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) because

²⁹² Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-nikāh, first *Hadīth* of the last Chapter “Bab al-wasīyah bi al-nisā” (Chapter on Advice regarding Women), *Hadīth* No. 65 Vol. 2, P. 1090

²⁹³ Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-nikāh *Hadīth* No. 60, Vol. 2. P 1091

²⁹⁴ Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-nikāh *Hadīth* No. 59, Vol. 2, P 1091

he was a spectacular upholder of the rights of women. Resultantly these *Hadīth* narrations are rejected.²⁹⁵

While explaining the creation of human beings Kāshānī brings a relation of the universal rational soul with bodily shape. A single soul in this setting advocates Adam, the father of humankind, and its mate advocates Eve, the mother of humankind.²⁹⁶ The question of human equality for feminists stems from the analysis of the interpretational courses about the process of human creation. The mode of woman's creation is not elaborated in the Quran, so therefore exegetes and interpreters tend towards other sources that are perhaps the Judeo-Christian in the feminist view. Riffat Hassan shows her reservation that the interpretational literature produced by several exegetes to such an extent that represents the opinion of their learned judgment that is regarded as personal judgment later on. In this account, the Judeo-Christian narratives about creation have been taken for granted.²⁹⁷ It is not clear what is the meaning of Eve created "from" Adam, besides the fact that she has been created "from" and for "him."

The current feminist scholarship does not consider the creation of Eve from Adam's rib as a Quranic oriented but fragmented due to external factors.²⁹⁸ Some scholars see the creation story of the Quran partly different from that of the Bible, or even going for exposure for equal points that have been taken from one of them for granted over others and that is the Bible for exegetical purposes.²⁹⁹ Adam has been presented as the father of humankind in both the Quran and the Bible. There are connections among the verses that Adam was the model for all when life had been transmitted in human attributes where Adam and his mate are more specifically

²⁹⁵ Hassan, "Made from Adam's Rib?" 150-51.

²⁹⁶ 'Abd al-Razzāq (attrib. Ibn 'Arabī) Kāshānī, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm Lil-Shaykh al-Akbar ... Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī*. (Beirut: Dar al-Yaqza al-'Arabīya, 1968).

²⁹⁷ Hassan, "Made from Adam's Rib?", 110-11

²⁹⁸ Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 128.

²⁹⁹ Bauer, *Gender Hierarchy in the Quran: Medieval Interpretations - Modern Responses*, 105-

presented as the fathers of humanity, as mentioned in the Quran: *kamā akhrajā abwaykum*³⁰⁰ from a single soul out of dust or clay. The other thing is the verse problematic for feminists is the problem of language in Q.4:1 whether souls are masculine or feminine. Because the verse means that Allah created the entire humanity from a single soul (Adam), and from it, he created his mate. This verse resonates the human creation from a single soul and its mate but begins with a warning to the people to fear their Lord. The verse speaks to the people or to mankind, whose creation has been addressed in plural form. The soul here is feminine but referred to Adam as a masculine. Nevertheless, in another verse (Q. 7:189), the single source has been referred clearly to man.

This verse mentions that Adam and Eve are physical beings and capable of reproduction, and the mate (Eve) is created for Adam, who can attain repose with her. The possibility of creation from Adam's rib may be citing in the word (*min*) amounts to the meaning of the same type (*min anfusikum*). This is much convincing narration and different from mentioning a single soul in syntactic prospect. This means that it is pertinent to understand that God created Eve from the type of Adam or from his mate, i.e., rib. The other question is, who created first?³⁰¹ As mentioned

³⁰⁰ (Q. 3: 27)

³⁰¹ It is also pertinent to mention here Fatmīd Ismaelī view about creation narrative which is totally different from that of Sunni exegetes. Al- Qādī al-Numān describes that it is spiritual hierarchy created from Adam in shape of Eve and not his physical form to deliberate the proof of Adam. Fatimid Ismāelī hold a view that every prophet demonstrates in form of *Nātiq* (law giver) and then pursued by executer (*wāsi*). Every *Nātiq* contains several proofs in form of *hujaj* and Eve is the Adam's *hujja* in this world as elaborate by al- Qādī al Numān. Referring to the Quranic verse (قَالَ مَا مَنَّكَ إِلَّا أَنَسَجِدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ 7:12) in edition he further describes that Iblis was privileged with the position of *wasi* disciple of Adam but he refused to obey Adam and therefore Iblis has been replaced by Eve. Consequently, in spiritual hierarchy Iblis was replaced with Eve, and hence both (Adam and Eve) directed to live in the Eden. The spiritual mark transformed through physical ancestry in form of *tayīd* (discipleship). The special knowledge thread to Eve is not because her physical interim with him, but the imparted knowledge. In this sense Eve became in the position of disciple to

before the account of Genesis considers the creation of the male and female at the same time, but in later change to creation of Eve as second in the whole story.³⁰²

The *Hadīth* based interpretation include al-Tabarī, Al-Sūddī, Mujāhid, al-Dahhāk and Ibn e Abbās describe the creation verse of the Quran in its larger implication where they declare that single soul represents Adam. Al-Tabari removes the tension that soul is feminine usage, saying that “grammatically feminine single soul refers to a man”.³⁰³ He resolves this problem by mentioning a poem as an example where two feminine words ‘caliph’ and ‘another’ are used in grammatical sense to two men. But they are single so al-Tabarī says that single feminine word can be used for masculine as in the verse “the word ‘single’ is feminine because ‘soul’ is feminine.”³⁰⁴

Adam based on shared knowledge that firstly given to Adam by God which then passed to Eve by Adam. By acknowledging the *tayīd* of Eve she became a cryptograph of Adam as they are bound to be in stark in shape of mentor and disciple. Needless to say, that Eve is a woman. Now the relation of Eve with Adam as his mate in feminine discourse replicates her discipleship. The femininity of Eve here shows her as student of Adam. She became pregnant by the knowledge that mentors poured in her. So, in worldly matters women can attain the position of spiritual hierarchy but not up to the mark of Imam and *wāsi*. Please see al-Qādī al Numan, *Asās al-Tawīl*, ed. Arif Tamer (Beirut: Dār al Thaqāfa, 1960) P 59.

The Imāmī Shi’ie the exegete took a slightly different interpretation that rejects the creation of Eve from Adam’s rib, but the clay left over after creation. In this regard the Shi’ie Ayyāshī is prominent who made the statement of the ‘leftover clay.’ Although al-Qummī gives the interpretation of creation from rib, which is likely endorsed by Sunni exegetical scholarship based on the *Hadīth* tradition.

³⁰² Genesis 1:26-7 and 2:20-4.

³⁰³ al-Tabari, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, 2114.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

4.2 - The Story of Fall of Adam

4.2.1- Story of Fall in Jewish Tradition

The Jewish tradition endorses the account of Genesis 3:14-24 and considers Eve central cause of all evils when tempted by Satan in the shape of a snake. She disobeyed God's instruction to recover wisdom once eaten fruit from a magical tree. She attempted to gain wisdom that she could not gain being created second and from rib of Adam. By this act of temptation, she curses the fortune of all women. The fall story turned to myth once viewed that Adam had first wife named Lilith, who left him due to animosity about equal status of each. She was replaced by Eve but in submissive and derivative form.³⁰⁵

According to Israelites, a woman named "Lilith" was created before the creation of Eve, who left Adam due to some discordance. It is found for the first time in a book named "Alphabets of Ben Sira." It is not sure that who is its writer and when it was written. However, it is being said that it was written in between 8th to 10th century B.C.E. It is also impossible to say that this narration of creation of Lilith took place at that time or it was only the description of some ancient story.³⁰⁶ This narration is also found in the book "Zohar" written by Moses De Leon in the 13th century B.C.E. Jewish scholars think that Moses knew the story of Lilith mentioned in Alphabets of Bin Sira.

According to a narration, Yahweh created a woman named Lilith with the soil of earth along with the creation of Adam, with a difference that soil of Lilith contained some particles of pollution. Adam and Lilith started living together as husband and wife but with a sense of confusion about equality and superiority. At the time of intercourse, Lilith refused to lie down beneath Adam because she thought that this thing makes Adam dominant over her, whereas Adam thought that he was superior, so he should attain a dominating position. This issue went so serious that Lilith flew

³⁰⁵ Shawana Dolansky, *The Immortal Myth of Adam and Eve: The Historical and Contextual Approach*, 2015. Available at <http://thetorah.com/the-immortal-myth-of-adam-and-eve/>,

³⁰⁶ Valerie Velkes, "Lilith, Adam and Eve: A Family of the 90s", *Women's Changing Roles*, Number,4, (2010): 19-23.

high in the air while reciting the most gorgeous name of God (According to different narrations God did not tell His name to anyone, but Lilith succeeded to know it). Adam got angry due to this attitude of Lilith, and he wanted her back. Upon his wish, God destined three angels to bring her back. They found her at Red sea (according to another narration in a cave at the seashore of the red sea) and asked her to come back, but she refused. When they failed to convince her to take back, they frightened her that if she refused to go back to Adam, her hundred sons would die every day. Instead of getting scared, she responded with provocation that she would kill a hundred human children every day.

On one side, Eve is the originator of all the sins, whereas on the other side, Lilith also does not contain any positive aspects. It is being mentioned in Jewish tradition that she had strong relations with devils and evil spirits. According to different narrations, Lilith remained instrumental in the creation of bad and harmful powers. Not only that, but she is the source of sexuality and pornography.

According to some Jewish and Christian narrations of the medieval period, Lilith or one of her daughters succumbed with sleeping men. This character is named "succubus." They make themselves pregnant by the semen of men, whether in the state of dreams or while awakening, and in this way devil's generation increases.³⁰⁷

According to Jewish mystic "*Kabbālāh*" after separation from Adam, Lilith became the wife of a devil Samuel. She gave birth to a hundred children daily and became the source of bad deeds and sexuality. Another narration also exists, and according to that, Adam and Eve were created once, and at that time, Samuel and Lilith were also created. Besides that, the leader of devils Asmodeus's wife's name is also told as Lilith commonly known as "Nokhez Lilith". Due to her beauty, Samuels felt jealousy for Amadeus.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Joseph Dan, *The Early Kabbalah*, 2nd edition, (Paulist Press: 1986), 172-182.

³⁰⁸ "Lilith", *Encyclopedia of Judaica*, Vol 13, 2nd ed. , 17-19.

In fiction and stories, the sexual side of Lilith is very prominent. One of the feminist groups takes her as their ideal because she refused to accept the superiority of Adam or, in other words, a man. Due to her character, she represents such a woman who is equal to man, not only that, but in front of her sexual power, men are seemed to be powerless. In other words, Lilith is a living icon and symbol of sexuality, but in the sight of some critics, the uncontrolled sexual power of Lilith is really destructive.

Another tenet says that Lilith was not executed by heaven because of her bad habits, but she could not bear that men (God and Adam) were trying to give her a less degree. Her freedom does not predict that she was bad or she had uncontrolled sexual desires, but she is the leader of all such women who is trying to let them out of men's authority. These narrations about Lilith, where she refused to accept the superiority of Adam and in reaction left the heaven was the proof of her autocracy and self-confidence.³⁰⁹

There is another religious book of Jews, "Genesis Rabbah," which is the commentary of the book Genesis of Torah. The commentator of this book is Rabbi Yahūda. The name of Lilith is not mentioned in this book, but at two places it seems that commentators are pointing towards her. According to Ben Sira the reason of separation between Adam and Lilith was that Lilith wanted equal rights like those of Adam but he refused. Whereas according to Rabbah reason of separation was that Adam saw the blood during the process of creation of woman so he felt unhappy (may be this was the menstruation blood) so from the very first day he felt hatred for woman. When god saw this, he separated both Adam and Lilith and created a new woman from the ribs of Adam so he said, "Now she is a bone from my bones and meat from my meat" (Genesis 23:2).

In the Book *Zoher* of Moses De Leon, it is mentioned about Lilith that "soul of the souls," namely Lilith was present with Adam from the first day. At the time of the

³⁰⁹ <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/eve-women/7evelilith.html>, accessed on 12/04/2018.

creation of Adam, thousands of souls attacked Adam, and then God separated them from him. That soulless body was there, and the bad souls were present in the surrounding, then a piece of cloud came, and all the souls were thrown away. When that body stood up, his woman Eve was present beside her. God separated the woman from Adam by dividing Adam into two parts and then brought her to Adam as a bride. When Lilith saw the creation of a new woman, she ran away, and from that day onwards, she tries to harm mankind.

Another interesting narration says that murder of *Hābīl* by *Qābīl* was also due to Lilith, but Jewish scholars do not take it seriously and reject this narration by criticizing that Lilith left Adam before the creation of Eve so this narration is understandable.³¹⁰

In the book of "Isaiah" of Torah, the Day of Judgment, the day of revenge, night monsters, and flying snakes are mentioned. Commentators of the Torah explain these words as Lilith. In an article of "*Jewish Encyclopedia*," Lilith is known as the Devil of the night. In the footnotes of Good News Bible, the English word "night monster" is explained as "A female Demon, believed to live in desolate places."³¹¹ The Jewish migrants who started living in Babylonian used to worship Lilith. According to a narration Aramaic word "Lial" is referred to as Lilith, but it is wrong because night means thunderstorm and frightening storm. By these words some Jewish scholars meant to be Lilith but Christopher L.C.E Witcombe explained in his book "*Eve and the Identity of Woman*" that Aramaic translation of Torah contains the word Lilith but afterwards somewhere it is written as night monster and somewhere as shouting owl or as night creature or as ghost of night.³¹² However, whatever is the meaning of this word, commentators take it as Lilith.

³¹⁰ Torah (Book. Isaiah: 35:4-14-15).

³¹¹ Good News Bible –Today's English version, *The Bible societies, Collins*, 4th ed., 1976.

³¹² Howard Schwartz, "*Lilith's Cave*," in *Lilith's Cave: Jewish Tales of the Supernatural* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 120-123.

Reader can easily understand from these words the character of Lilith. A lot of stories are being narrated about Lilith, in those stories bad habits of Lilith are described prominently.

Jewish traditions show another form of Lilith, which her entrance into heaven as a snake is disguised. It is said in clear words in Torah that snake compelled Eve to eat the prohibited fruit. In Israelites, the snake is said to be the disguise of Lilith. We have seen that Lilith left Eden garden after fighting with Adam. God created Eve after she refused to come. Since Lilith became the symbol of evil and error, so by enticing Adam, she became successful in entering into paradise. Maybe she had the idea of making Eve fall in the eyes of Adam in her mind or maybe by means of snake she wanted to make Adam her victim. Whatever be the background of the tale, Lilith, in every form, is captive of satanic mind and psychiatric deserts.

Lilith's character is a link to a thread due to which women are proven to be a type of woe to men, evil, and debauchery. Stories starting with the creations of Pandora Lilith and then Eve are just conscious efforts. The purpose is that if women never existed, then this mortal world would have been territorial heaven and happy fort. Surprisingly, Judaism, whose base is the faith in the oneness of God and not in supernaturalism and strange stories, here no logical reason for unprofessional stories should be seen. Point to ponder is that just like other societies, Jewish system also wished and tried to speed up this strong domination. That is why it was important to spread these things about women continually, which show their heartfelt connections with moral imbalance, rude sexuality, fraud, and torment.

4.2.2- The Story of Fall in Christian Tradition

The dialogue between Adam (the serpent) and Eve about the forbidden tree, with emphasis "to cast Eve in the role tempter, deceiver, and seducer to Adam," has been reported in Genesis 3-6. The traditional interpretation of such passages eternizes the impulse of woman evil in exile of Adam from Eden and hence to endorse the myth of her deceiving nature. The Christian tradition fling out the responsibility

“fallenness” on Christian women to minor her status in respect to man, and to symbolize her as the mobilizer of the Original Sin.³¹³

The Augustinian approach towards the relationship between Adam and Eve considers both disappeared but not dead, with dignifying unity with God through souls where the possibility of death was conceivable.³¹⁴ To procreate offspring, both required to have a sexual relationship that is leashed absolutely from concupiscence. Eve dwelled in virginal parturition in pertinent to Mary. However, offspring would not have happened besides a lust free insemination, incidents of fall and sin occurred once the creation of Eve took place, and because of deficient rational capability, she absorbed the act of disobedience towards God. Being a woman with a sluggish capability and underline self-potential, she was effortlessly defrauded by the temptation of the serpent. As Adam just accompanied her in a kind manner was not subject to the deceitful act, but even then, both were culpable, in a sense that Adam has strayed maleness by obeying her rather than making her obey him. Furthermore, hence Adam is the glory of God and Eve being a woman is the glory of him, and alone she cannot represent the image of God, but man alone has the prestige to be in the image of God but perfectly only once joined by woman, because she does not possess the potential to perform social roles in the society.³¹⁵

Augustine considers the waste of genuine free will is one of the consequences of falls where humans cannot obey God upon free will because they became surrounded by the esteem of selfhood and self-will. There is only one solution to demolish this servitude of selfhood of the slumped human nature, and that is the divine favor. This divine grace would enable man to obey God, not his self. In the sequence of this view, Augustine holds an opinion that God has chosen a little

³¹³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women in Creation, Fall and Redemption: The Classical Paradigm*, 2. available, on, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/dba4/9fc272b7c40236a923caf6d12d89a06d208c.pdf>. accessed on 12/04/2018.

³¹⁴ Augustine, *The City of God* (London: Harvard University Press, 1957), 44.

³¹⁵ Augustine, 45.

number of humans for granting his grace and not the whole. This choice of God is complementary to award a selected number of humans with grace because most of them are the recipient of conviction. Such teachings like servitude of the will, little election, and twin predestination are remarkable in earlier Christianity. It emphasizes on human freedom of will on both the direction either to fall into sin or to revert back to God.³¹⁶

Augustine views that in the case of men and women to receive this little but causeless election. This may appear in their potential to choose God and the life of boon over selfhood. This relief condition will manifest in the choice of virginity or “sexual continence.” Augustine here sees marriage and procreation in natural terms that was workable before Christ. In modern times the retrievable humans (in speedy proceeding to the expiry of history) can swift their redemption through sexual continence, “anticipating the heavenly state where there will be no marriage or giving in marriage, although Christian married people can also be redeemed.”³¹⁷

In the case of women, the grace in her respect will no longer overtake her subordinate position, whether married or continent. She inherited subordinated status right from the time of creation. Her subordination, femaleness, and being punished via disobedient act to God; she bears the responsibility of servitude behavior to males. Augustine clarifies that just women are supposed to subordinate due to original creation.³¹⁸

Luther viewed ramp of the Adam and Eve in their nature when they ignored wisdom after an act of disobedience to God. Resultantly, the rest of life is shaped in falsity and sacredness. The punishment of heavy labor on the flimsy ground to Adam and painful childbearing and husband’s forceful control to Eve has been enacted. They lost their joy at Eden due to falling where Eve disobeyed God, while

³¹⁶ Ruether, *Women in Creation, Fall and Redemption: The Classical Paradigm*, 3.

³¹⁷ Augustine, *The City of God*, 47.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Adam just wanted to please her by accepting her offer of eating from the forbidden tree.³¹⁹

The fall story has been narrated by Calvin the same to that of Luther. Satan proceeded to Eve, who is being deficient in ethical and intellectual terms. The sin of both is considered equal, but their punishment is quite different. In addition to the punishment of Eve, Calvin views that woman not only disobeyed God but man as well. In case she refuses, she may be made obedient by force.³²⁰

4.3.1- The Story of Fall in Islamic Tradition

Another parallel issue that came under discussion of the interpreters is the issue of temptation at the Garden as mentioned earlier the Biblical account of creation declared Eve, who attempted the first act of temptation, where the Quran marked them both to bear the responsibility of temptation, as mentioned in (Q.2:36 and 7:20).

As discussed earlier that al-Tabarī shared his opinion that there would be a difference at the time after or before the entrance of Adam in the garden, but she has been created for Adam to dwell in as (Q.3:19) shows.³²¹

Iblīs came out of paradise when cursed, and Adam has been placed in paradise, felt loneliness without a partner to dwell in. So, when he woke up after a deep sleep, found a woman sitting closer to his head, created by God from his rib, so he asked her, why have you been created? She answered to dwell in me, so angels told him, to look at what he learned: then they asked Adam about her name, so Adam told her name as *Hawwā*, and express the meaning of *Hawwā* being created from living thing. So, God told him to stay at paradise with his partner and eat with plenty of opulence and affluence.

³¹⁹ Ruether, *Women in Creation*, 4.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, 709.

According to Quranic exegesis, when God got free from the execution of *Iblīs* he taught all names to him and created Eve from his left rib by taking some part among his rib. Adam was sleeping, and God created his wife *Hawwā*, so he started liking her as she happened to be his flesh, blood, and wife. When God put them both in marriage and make them inhabitants of Eden they were told to live in paradise with their ease and eat from its blessings (Paradise) widespread extensive amount of livelihood affluently with plenty of will. So, al-Tabarī gives the final statement that God Almighty forbade Adam and his wife not to eat from a certain tree among all other trees of paradise, but they went against the will of God and ate from it. This means that they (Adam and Eve) were from those who were transgressing to what was not authorized and permissible for them in it. Rather, they meant that you were close to this tree, and they were on the position of transgressing His limits. It is not clear which tree was forbidden because Quran is silent in this regard. Although some say it was a grape tree or fig. So, if it is known or not, it is equal in stance from its utility point of view.³²²

The literal concept of Quran in verse *Fa'azallahuma al-shaytānu a'nhā fa-akhrajahumā wa qulanā ahbitū mihā* (Q. 2:36) about their act of disobedience is that both have been seduced apparently. According to Al- Tabarī *Iblīs*, they lost their designated and glorified position over there in paradise. *Iblīs* shook them from the obedience of God. As mentioned earlier in the section of creation that their mode of disobedience is explained by al- Tabarī in the light of two opinions respectively, one pertained to Wahb ibn Muabbih and the other to Ibne Abbās. As stated by Abu Ja'āfar that *Hadīth* reports have been narrated to underline the extinction made by *Iblīs* the enemy of God towards Adam and Eve, who brought them out from paradise. ³²³

After their exodus from Paradise, the Quran gives the description of their nullified position by God, and they became ashamed of their disobedience. They were

³²² al-Tabarī, 708.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 751.

desperate to embrace their act and went for repentance, where God taught Adam the words of repentance, shown in (Q. 2:37 and 3:38). Abū Ja'afar says that God gave him the opportunity to repent, which he did. The words which are received by Adam for repentance are:

We said: "Get ye down all from here; And if, as is assure, there comes to you Guidance from Me," whosoever follow my guidance, on them Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." (Q.2:38)

Al- Samarqandī (d. 375/985), while interpreting this verse says, that it is evident that once sin enters, demolish the blessing or grace, so Adam was exiled from paradise by the commission of sin. They were sent to earth to receive more guidance from God through prophets/messengers and books to them and their offspring. So, the address is made here in this verse to Adam, and it meant his offsprings.³²⁴

Here Al-Rāzī deviates from the concept of sin towards the natural deficiency of Adam. He mistakenly ate from that tree because of his nature of forgetfulness and it was not a sin, but he also mentions if it was possible for *Iblīs* to repent besides the fact that his destination was out of paradise.³²⁵

Their exodus from paradise and coming on earth is another blessing of God to line up for another task to accomplish according to the will of God, as Al- Badhāvī pointed out. Whosoever restraint from it will escape from destroying his entire status.³²⁶

Abou Hayyān al-Andlusī says *Iblīs* entered into paradise by obsessing Adam and Eve to put them in trouble and denominating them. *Iblīs* brought them out from

³²⁴ al Samarqandī Abū 'l- Layth, Nasr b. Muhammad, *Tafsīr al Samarqandī al-Musammā Bahr al- 'Ulūm*, Ed. 'Alī Muhammad Mu'awwad, Ādil Ahmad Abd al-Mawjīd, and Zakariyā 'Abd al-Majīd al-Nūti (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1993), 38.

³²⁵ Al- Rāzī, *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 161.

³²⁶ al-Imām al-Bayḍāwī, *Hāshiyat al Qūnawī 'alā tafsīr al-Imām al-Bayḍāwī*, Ed. 'Abd Alāh Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Umar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2001), 156.

total obedience. ³²⁷ The rest of the story of their exodus, and its reason are mentioned in the Quran (Q. 7:21-22).

The first parents of humankind were created innocent, but due to the peculiar faculty of reason and intellect, they sustained the capacity of evil, but during their training, they fell to realize the danger of the free will. Humanity has been given a chance to re-avail the total bliss again in this world.³²⁸

Abd al- Razzāq al-Kashāni (1252-1329) has interpreted this verse totally different from its literal meaning. Eve actually by her physical nature, seduced Adam, and it resulted in his downfall. This is the view of Kāshanī alleges Eve for Adam's fall. Because she was seduced first by *Iblīs* and then she seduced Adam. He says:

“It is well known that *Iblīs* enticed [Eve] first, so as to attain the seduction of Adam through her seduction, and there is no doubt that this attachment to the body would not have come about except through her. And from them were spread forth many men, i.e., spiritual beings (*ashābul qulūb*), who tend towards their father, and women beings of soul and nature (*ashabu nufus wa tabai*) who tend towards their mother.”³²⁹

Al- Shārāwī presents his views in support of the verse (Q. 2:36) that once God settled, Adam and his wife informed him about legitimate and illegitimate actions. *Iblīs* switched his horrific task to put Adam and his offspring in faulty lapse. He says that animosity of *Iblīs* was already known before. Adam witnessed the act of disobedience of Iblis for not prostrating before him. *Iblīs* went against the will of God. The entire behavior of *Iblīs* resonates with the fact that Adam should have been aware of his ambition, as he exposed pride as mentioned before in the Quran

³²⁷ Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī al-Andalusī Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, Ed. 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd et (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993), 163.

³²⁸ Abdullah Yousuf Ali, *Translation and commentary of the Holy Quran* (Islamabad-Pakistan: Dawah Academy), 260.

³²⁹ Kāshānī, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm Lil-Shaykh al-Akbar ... Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī*, 248.

that he assumed himself better than Adam, who was created from the material of earth or clay.

Al-Shārāwī then moves on to discuss the reason behind *Iblīs*' rejection to prostrate to Adam, as it was not just the physical proofs of *Iblīs*'s stance but to acquaint them the animosity of *Iblīs*. Al-Shārāwī provides through his interpretations the legitimate base for their exodus from paradise; the Quran mentions it as well; *falā ukhrijannakumā minal-jannate fa'tashqa* (Q. 19:117). Here the address is made for Adam instead of both of them. Shārāwī turns toward the main duty of men and women. The men should access to fulfill the economic and domestic requirements, whereas women should provide tranquility to him because of the nature of duty, men acquire. The type of task makes him suffer, which can be stabilized by her wife.

Shārāwī further says that Adam was supposed to be aware of *Iblīs* hazard because it was Adam who became the main cause of his expulsion from the heavens. Then to tell how *Iblīs* faulted Adam and his wife Shārāwī mentions another verse here that reveals the temptation of *Iblīs*. *Iblīs* tempted Adam by embellishing the sin, in whatever mode he perpetrates it. Sharāwī says that Adam fell into the sin due to the nature of forgetfulness as God says in the Quran: *walaqad a'hidhnā ilā a'ādhamā min qablu fanasiya wa lum njid lhu azamā* (Q.19:108)

In the prospect of the verse 7:24 Shārāwī says that the downfall of Adam and *Hawwā* is the commencement of their task in this world. Shārāwī differentiates between compositional connotations of الخطيئة and الخطاء. The former potentially lead towards righteousness, whereas later one is for execution. So, he committed الخطاء (mistake) and recovered from it to righteousness, and hence God taught him certain words to attain His pleasure.³³⁰

³³⁰ Mutawallī Al-Sharāwī, "Khawātīrī Hawla al Quran al Karīm (Akhhārul Yawm, 1991), 25.

4.3- Creation of Women for the Sake of Men

4.3.1- Woman's creation for Man in Jewish Tradition

In Jewish texts, the woman has been presented in Genesis II and III of Torah as spiritual in status. Ironically there is a mystery in narrations of the Biblical story of creation about rendering her well-recognized status as accorded to the man before the fall. Her exact position has been deteriorated after the accident of fall that instantaneously came under the curse of man.³³¹ According to the Biblical interpreters, the woman might not be considered as an addition to man or humankind. She is identical with Adam. Because her image is taken from his rib. Contrarily the whole portrayal of Adam is centered on Eve (woman). The personality of Adam on conscious standards rests upon the exposure of women.³³²

The position of womanhood in subordinate form treated categorically in Yahvistic writings when she was in a pre-lapsarian state. The entire curse occurred to women outraged in the post-lapsarian state whereby default, her innocence has been triggered by her husband to whom she encompassed her sexual desire.³³³ Hence the dominant position in the post-lapsarian state has vanished. Therefore, the image of women in the post-lapsarian period became distorted, seduced, tempted. Subsequently, the woman poses much suffering in the post-exilic phase of formal Jewish settings. The accent of pre-exilic proverbs, along with pre and pro-exilic Biblical literature in respect of women is misogynic.

Another side of the Biblical concept of womanhood has been described in lieu of Lilith myth.³³⁴ Here the plausibility of creation story takes two directions where Genesis I presents man and woman equally created beings, and Genesis II shows

³³¹ Swilder, *Women in Judaism*, 30.

³³² *Ibid.*, 27

³³³ *Ibid.*

the denomination of women's creation from the rib of Adam. This discrepancy gives birth to the Lilith myth.

In addition, the rationality of Jewish customs and tradition also shows a derivative prospect of women. She has been ignored and avoided in Jewish liturgical prayer every day:

"Hear, O Isrāe 'il, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one...." ³³⁵

In this pray Jewish man thanks God "for not having created them as women and women thank with thanksgiving for not having been created as a slave or a heathen..."³³⁶

Loewe goes on further to say:

All three thanksgivings are for having been vouchsafed the opportunity for a more active and intense (though not necessarily, in each case, "higher") spiritual activity than would have been the case, had the accident of birth been otherwise. Yet should it nevertheless prove to be the case that the formula did have its earliest origins in anti-feminine feeling."³³⁷

The above-mentioned extracts show the spiritual strength of women with men, but this is not in the case of thanksgiving prayer. Simone De Beavoir also endorse the same opinion about the misogynic pattern of Jewish customs and prayers that, in one way or other it sensualizes superiority of men to women.

The traditional ethos of the Biblical interpretation by men embodies the biases against women's intake by theological schools where these male interpreters are studied. ³³⁸ According to Meyer, giving the meaning of manhood to the word

³³⁵ Deuteronomy 6:4.

³³⁶ Raphel Loewe, *The Position of Women in Judaism* (London: S.P.C.K, 1966), 63.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

³³⁸ Coral Meyer, *Discovering Eve* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 81.

“Adam” generically, phonetically, and etymologically may not meet with the word “*Ādamah*” (translated as ground or soil) from which the very first human is created.³³⁹

After having a look over the role of women in Christianity, it is worth mentioning to see the decisive position of Eve and Marry. As mentioned earlier, Eve has been accumulated the center of all evils, blamed for the fall of Adam. However, Marry, who is an integral part of Trinity, may also be characterized as hatred and inferior because of Eve’s complicity. In association with Eve, Marry “God’s mother” may be deemed guilty, has a sexual appetite, and succumbed to sin. To preserve Marry from decrying she has been accorded the status of divinity and isolated from the cognate of women. Her life would be free from all kinds of sins and inadvertency. Her self is bounded with such a miracle that makes a perfect and distinct personality.³⁴⁰ Certainly, these are the effects of Paul’s teachings that mark Eve repeatedly as the cause of all evils. The Augustinian approach in this regard is even gone too extensive in her act of disobedience. Augustine is supposed to theorize Eve created in subordinate status to overwhelm by her husband even before the act of disobedience. She comprises a source of sprouting men offspring.³⁴¹ Augustine further explains that Adam was also trounced with the interception of evil in his progeny because of his favor to Eve in the act of disobedience. Resultantly, due to the population, the evil inculcated in him is called “*Pudenda*.” Genetically infection is transforming in every woman due to copulation.

We had a glance at Augustine's approach that how Marry would have escaped from the insertion of evil, especially in the catholic paradigm. Women cannot remain safe when a man releases his spermatogenesis. She cannot escape from this genetic effect. In respect of Marry, an “Immaculate Concept” has been developed, which

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Al-Sheikh Jād Ahmed, *Qisa al-nisā fi al-Quran al-karīm* (Egypt: Dar al-Ghad al Gadeed, al-Mansoorā), 44.

³⁴¹ Daly, *Beyond God*, 202.

signifies the temporal elimination of evil in her womb she was grown in her mother's cradle safely from any sinful genetic effect. This concept has been converted to the level of creed in 1854. Although Marry escaped from allegation of sin another gloomy concept was remaining in which Paul made a depiction that humanity has to face death because of Eve's perpetration of sin. If it is so, then why Marry faced death instead of her creation purely from iniquity. Here she has been saved from crucifixion. This creed was officially legalized in 1950.

Bertrand Russell beholds that St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, Pope Gregory the Great are the valuable scholars of the Western church. According to Bertrand Russell, St. Ambrose is against women's dignity. He views that it is better to make human offspring disappear instead of reaping children through sexual relationships with women. St. Jerome views women is brutal, harmful, a course of quarrel and clashes, and a hand of support to cruelty.³⁴² St. Augustine as discussed in detail that he accords man the position of Jesus and to woman as equal to church, as he advises wife to be servant for her husband.³⁴³

The inferior position of women in Jewish tradition developed in the three phases called "Torah – tolerated," "Torah established," and "Torah taught." The first stage scrutinizes her as non-personal and counted as slave or property, the second as personal, and the third considers her deficient status for public access, but she may teach it to herself in the strength of equality. The Mishnah gives priority to man to be saved first if found both in a terrible situation. The woman must please her husband whenever she willfully divorces her, but women must go in an appeal for taking divorce in her interest. Similarly, women are placed on intense honor to their husbands to keep them ever reluctant in Maimonides's culture. Her devotion, dedication, and commitment must not be trusted ever. Midrash declares women's

³⁴² Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc, 1945), 404-5.

³⁴³ Edward Westermarck, *Christianity and Morals* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1939), 340.

incompetency in external domestic access, and she is not supposed to rely on them.³⁴⁴

It is also important to note that *Yahweh* culture exists in many different Israelite societies where women availed various designated positions mirroring various grasps of *Isrāelī* society, and “those who worshipped *Yahweh* along with female divine figure (*Asherah* an eastern goddess) are likely to disappear from the traditional narrations of Jewish history, as well as the leading figurative roles like *Hulda* and Moses sister *Mariam*.³⁴⁵ Despite contradictory images of Women in Hebrew Scriptures, it can be acknowledged that women do not enjoy equality with men.

4.3.2- Woman’s creation for Man in Christian Tradition

Christian tradition has also emphasized on the issue that woman is not just created from a man but for man.

The Augustine's view, subordination is the only job that she inherited by femaleness. So, it is imperative for her to move around for the interest of men. The fall and sinful self-will may make the social disturbance and chaos which is to be stopped by some domination. Therefore, heretics and dissidents are made to submit forcefully to the authority of church in Christian course of order. Women are subordinated dually in course of nature and in guilt of sin, and should demonstrate her entire submissiveness to the authority of men whatsoever. Augustine sees redemption is not the complete solution to the course of actual nature, although women are in subordinate position at any level. Human would face death because they have lost a state of free will. The redemptive humans will be raised on resurrection. They become in the union of God due to redemption because of His choice of sovereign will. Augustine also says that men and women will rise as in

³⁴⁴ Eliezer Berkovits, *Jewish Women in Time and Torah* (Hoboken Jersey, KTAV: Publishing House Inc, 1990), 10–15.

³⁴⁵ Susan Nialitch, “Women in Hebrew Bible,” *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, 1991, 27.

the respective genders but lose their reproductive roles in heaven which is called “fitted to glory rather than to shame.”³⁴⁶ Women who spent a spiritual life will be treated as elegantly brilliant as men. In heaven the spiritual state of women stabilizes as fitted to men. The hierarchy in heaven is spiritual and on earth is gender merit where men surpass women in the order of creation as well as in the paradigm of fall. This means that women will enhance their spiritual merit there in heaven not here due to creation order. The same modality is found in the entire Western Christian thoughts as we look at the rest of their theologians.

Thomas Aquinas refers to Aristotelian philosophical view about the subordinated position of women to men that rest on their weak biological structure, calling them as natural slaves. While recognizing the Augustinian division of woman as human and as female, Thomas Aquinas provides his narratives about the subordinated position right from her original creation. In the human paradigm, women may be excluded from the provocation of “gendered intellectual soul in the image of God,” that gives her the capacity to save from sin and can rejoice the slough life eternally in unity with God in heaven.³⁴⁷ In female paradigm, her position in creation is shabby as not distinct or complete in personification but rather rectifying with male as a helpmeet for the purpose of procreation not to markup friendly coordination or otherwise another male would be preferable. So her task is here to assist male for procreation. Because she is faulty and shabby by nature and hence cannot avail creative capacities as Aristotle marked her in this imperfect manner and Aquinas acknowledged him. Aristotelian biological discourse on woman feel no perplexed notion to view male as the only cause of power that forms procreation whether women relinquishes to provision of “matter that is formed.”³⁴⁸ The entire process of formation at the end seems appropriate by the male seed whereas female matter is incomplete and defected, that scores to conclusive incomplete human in the form

³⁴⁶ Ruether, *Women in Creation, Fall and Redemption: The Classical Paradigm*, 4.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

³⁴⁸ Weithman Paul J, "Augustine and Aquinas on Original Sin and the Function of Political Authority", *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, 3, 30(July 1992): 353-76.

of women or missing perfect humanness. It is therefore women are seen as weak in intellect, will, power and physical strength.³⁴⁹ This biological weakness imperatively dignifies males to rule over females often they cannot supervise their selves. This incomplete humanness of women deprives them to become a priest or prophet or any sacred sacrament as swallowed by Aquinas in his theology.

Aquinas urges commission of sin may be preceded by inferiority in original creation may be captivated by biological deflection. The significance of original creation represents an idealistic subordination of the body (might mortal) to God, which would have scored a dynamic and idealistic regulation of the greater on, the lower state of creation. Aquinas opines this as original justice, which is demolished by the commission of the sin through the disobedient act to God and seductive behavior towards Adam. She missed the original justice and even executed with the dispense of the pain of childbirth, and subjected to the dominant behavior of male.

³⁵⁰

Luther views that fall execution is an event developed an instant role between public and private. Adam has been accorded a powerful role in public domain and Eve as in private, where the relationship of both sexes is determined by domination and power for man and servitude for women. Because of her lesser nature defined through original sin, she cannot afford any leadership position in Church, however she had the pursuit of prophetic gifts as mentioned in Hebrew text but that was just to alienate the temporal situation but not as for constant disposals in the entire Christian tradition. She can only redeem her position in heaven but not in this life because here she is naturally subjugated and dominated being punished due to disobedience. ³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Martine Luther, in *Luther's Works: Volume 1: Lectures on Genesis 1-5*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958).

For Calvin, it is the normative duty of a wife to accept with kind intension the rule of her husband to maintain the divine order. It would only be possible when women show her full respect to her husband and assist him for smooth running of life. She is subordinate partner in home to her husband as well as in the society, otherwise women cannot attain a joyful life if deny these designated rules.³⁵²

The story of seducing Adam by Eve in the form of disobedience is well set down, as seen in the book of Genesis. In the case of Christianity, Eve has been presented in the same slurred words. Perhaps Christ has presented man and women as the Children of God without any differentiation and an object of his redemptive ministry. "Women are presented from annunciation to the ascension and Mary, Martha, [and] Magdalene are as important in the Gospels as Peter, James or John."³⁵³

The ordination of women to the priesthood has been heatedly debated in Christianity. The causes such debates are well briefed by Margaret S. Ermarth in four points:

- I. Only men have been considered ideal to be apostles,
- II. Both God and Christ are masculine in gender and so as the priests,
- III. By nature, women are weak to intake the "indelible character" granted by ordination, and
- IV. Women have been accorded a subordinate position by God all the time.³⁵⁴

Women are accepted as saints but not as theologians in Christian culture. The woman has been presented in an exaggerated position.

³⁵² John Calvin, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

³⁵³ Margaret Sittler Ermarth, *Adam's fractured rib; Observations on women in the church* (Fortress Press, 1970), 17.

³⁵⁴ Ruether, *Women in Creation*, 5.

4.3.3- Woman's creation for Man in Islamic Tradition

After viewing the Biblical and Quranic narrations about the creation of the first human pair, it is found that both the texts are equally considering Adam and Eve are as parents of humankind apparently.³⁵⁵ In verse (Q. 7:189) Quran reveals the fact that Eve was not only created from Adam but for him, without mentioning any details of the story, unlike the Bible that treats Eve's creation took place from Adam's rib.

Al-Tabarī categorically elaborates his view in a broader sense of the verse Q.4:1 that Eve created second just for the first. Qatādā and al-Mujāhid are of the same opinion that Adam felt loneliness and was in the necessity of companion, so Eve was created for him. Otherwise, Adam would be incomplete without her although al- Mujāhid asserts that Eve was created from the shortest side of the rib. Al- Tabarī however, not sure about the side of the rib from which Eve created. This means that it was a duty of first women to create an affectionate relationship with the first man.³⁵⁶ Abu Layht al-Samarqandī states that Eve had secondary status; her exact name and her substance were taken from man. But most of them are not sure that mate was actually Eve.³⁵⁷ When exegetes explain their main purpose of the substance of their creation like Ibne Abbās and Ibne Abi Hāthim they refer to *Hadīth* that permits a husband to keep their women in the house. This is bound to her creation from man to insinuate their legal and ethical order. Maybūdi says that even Eve bears secondary status, but Adam transgresses love and complaisance to her.³⁵⁸ To be

³⁵⁵ Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Quran and Muslim Literature* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), 18.

³⁵⁶ al-Tabari, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān*, 635.

³⁵⁷ al Samarqandī, *Tafsīr al Samarqand*, 469.

³⁵⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn Ab ū 'l-Faḍl Maybudī, *Kanz al-anwār fī kashf al-asrār*, Ed. Muḥammad Kāzīm Busayrī (Qom: Daftar Nashr al-Hādī, 2001), 401.

decisive about the type of rib al-Māwardī sees that it is left and most crooked one.

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Some exegetes tried to use the methods of other disciplines like philosophy to cite the nature of women. In this context, Sūrābādī has set a course for whether Eve is the same as Adam or different. He saw verse Q.4:1 in the prospect of marriage of both in the legal framework. He tried to discuss whether Eve is Adam's closest relative, or progeny or newly created one. Possibly three doctrines that pave the way for legal relation of Adam with Eve concerning creation of Eve from Adam. How does Eve become legal for the sexual relationship if she is created from Adam? Sūrābādī gives his solution in three-fold doctrines which are:

- a) Eve is created for Adam;
- b) She is made from him; and
- c) She has been created a new.

Sūrābādī finds the favor of Quran for the second doctrine as Eve is like Adam in verse (Q. 9:138).³⁶⁰

Al-Rāzi here cites the scope of the two accounts, firstly the creation from the rib, and secondly the creation of his type. Al-Rāzi has endorsed the first one with narration from the crooked rib as in *Hadīth*.³⁶¹ Where for the second view al-Rāzi depends on Abu Muslim al-Asfahānī view that men and women were created as the same type as mentioned earlier under the discussion of primary creation. In support, he refers to the verses like, (Q.16:72, 42:11, 9:128) were the same narration came *min anfusikum*.³⁶² The second view bears another scope that is the availability of

³⁵⁹ al-Māwardī Ab ū 'l-Hassan, *al-Nukat wa'l- 'ūyūn*, Ed. Sayyid b. 'Abd al-Maqṣūr b. 'Abd al-Rahīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmīya, 1992), 119.

³⁶⁰ Sūrābādī, *Tafsīr al-tafsīr*, Ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjanī, vol. 1 (Tehran: Farhang -i- Nashr-I Naw, 2002), 380.

³⁶¹ Al-Rāzi, *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, 9:689.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 9:699.

pre-existing thing. Creation 'from' its type or something, al-Rāzī says that it confirms the initiation or otherwise the idea of creation ex-nihilo advocates, which is impossible. Moreover, if it assumed that created thing is distinct from that of before, it leads to the notion that it comes out of nothing. Therefore al-Rāzī says that from (min) means the initial phase of creation, which is known as:

Ibtidā' al-ghāya means that the creation of humans started with Adam.

And if *jins* meant that Eve takes her form from what Adam did and she is not created from him, so this necessarily compounds humans being created from two souls that contradict the spirit of the verse.³⁶³

Riffat says that all these interpretations are treated as for granted and not mirrored from well acknowledgeable authorities. She categorically endorses verses of the Quran collectively serving the statement of preferred instances of man over woman.

These verses are:

- (Q. 4:1)
- (Q. 7:189)
- (Q. 38: 6)

The above verses commonly use the word "*Nafs*" that traditionally establishes a variety of opinions among Muslim scholars. She shows her intense concern about the meaning of the word "*Nafs*" that is considered an integral part of the material thing.³⁶⁴ She discusses the grammatical maturity of the word "*Nafs*" which is contrarily feminine with that of Adam and *Zawj*. For instance, the statement

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Riffat quotes here Fazl ur Rehman who points out, "if the *Hadīth* as a whole is cast away, the basis for the whole historicity of the Quran is removed with one stroke." See Riffat Hassan in Harvard Divinity Bulletin, 4.

“*Khilakakum min Nafsin Wāhidatin*”, the word *Nafs* is placed definitely in feminine form, whether conventional interpreters have translated in masculine form.

In another verse, the term “*Khlaqa minhā Zawjahā*” literally means from her, her mate, but in English translation, a masculine meaning has been accorded to it by saying like from him, his mate. She asserts that the exegetes and the translators have no “difficulty at all making Adam in man and Adam’s *Zawj* woman. Are they psychologically so oriented and so full of perceptions that they cannot imagine first creation (*Adam, Al-Insān, al-Bashar, or Nafsin Wāhidatin*) as anything other than male?”³⁶⁵

She ultimately asks traditional male interpreters that why they were reluctant to be on the righteous end, interpreting it in proper form instead of leading to suggestion of prior creation of woman over man as well the course of superiority. Therefore, Riffat looks confident to assume that all traditional, classical interpreters of the Quran deliberately deviate the actual meaning of *Nafsin Wāhidatin* to Adam to portray a designated role of man. The correct translation may develop a consensus to originate the creation in feminine form. However, she is not successful in exploring any contextual evidence through Quran in support of her assumption about *Nafsin Wāhidatin* exonerating feminine discourse of creation. Resultantly she does consider it appropriate to interpret Adam exclusively as masculine creation and not as feminine.³⁶⁶

In the light of verse (Q. 75:36-39), *Nafsin Wāhidatin* lures to be referred to the creation of all humans and its gender from one unique source, without any alteration and variability in its course. Riffat shows her grief about the misrepresentation of Quranic feminine terms in spite of its ultimate pronouncement in favor of masculine by male interpreters.

³⁶⁵ Hassan, “Made from Adam’s Rib?”, 137.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

After pointing to deviations that occurs in the meaning of the above passages of the Quran, Riffat moves her attention towards another three-fold meaning of words (*Qawwāmūn-daraba-ad-darajah*) as mentioned in the Quran. These are also colored with distorted traditional interpretations in sequence of male superiority over females. Discussing “*qawwāmūn*” Riffat writes that it is difficult to overstate the negative impact, which the popular Muslim understanding of the above verse has had on the lives of Muslim women. In the most preferred comprehension, the word “*qawwāmūn*” is translated as “*Hākim*” or “Rulers” on females. Linguistically “*qawwāmūn*” is probable to settle down the provision of livelihood to maintain the affairs of social intuitions.³⁶⁷

She upholds the view that man by his physique is responsible for functionalizing the economic endeavor of women while she falls on the track of childbearing that is only accorded to women. Intentionally the verse aims at imparting full support of men to their women in the tough task of childbearing where they are under a tremendous duty of child-raising that does not spare for any additional responsibility of being a breadwinner for women, and not to radiate the command ship of males.

The word “*daraba*” begets the wrong perception of beating the women to maintain grip and control over her, although Riffat permits her beating in case of refusal of childbearing by the society.³⁶⁸ Riffat acknowledges and dignifies the understanding of the word “*al-darajah*” as a privilege enjoyable in the case of “*Iddah*” as men are not supposed to wait till the maturation of the period in a divorce situation.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ Hassan, “Muslim Women,” 55–65.

³⁶⁸ Hassan and Barlas 2001, 189.

³⁶⁹ Riffat Hassan, “Conservatism in Various Forms: Women in Islam,” in *Women in Religion*, edited by Sr. Mary John Mananzan, The Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica College, Manila, The Philippines, 1998, 140-152.

As mentioned earlier in the prospect of Imami Shi'i scholarship Ayyāshī refers the following *Hadīth* on the authority of Imams: "On the authority of the Commander of the Faithful [Ali bin Abi Talib]: Eve was created from the 'qusayra' side of Adam, and the 'qusayra' is the smallest rib. God put flesh in its place. And on his chain of authorities, on his father's authority, on the authority of his ancestors, he said: Eve was created from the side of Adam while he was sleeping. On the authority of [...] Abu Abd Allah that God Almighty created Adam from water and clay, so the sons of Adam are interested in water and clay. God created Eve from Adam, so women are interested in men, so confine them in the house (*fahassanukunna fi' l-buyūt*). This *hadīth* legally permit husband to keep their women inside their homes. Additionally, it further explains that creation of men from earth gives them right to pave attention to the affairs of earth. So is the case of woman who created from man so she paves her attention to man only. Therefore, this *Hadīth* allows man to tight their wives. But it may not be irrefutable that there is contradiction of views about Eve creation that are taken in the authoritative part of infallible Imams by Ayyāshi in the case of this *Hadīth* . The creation from rib and the creation from the same clay are prolonged in Shi'i literature. Although on the entry of one akhbārī Muhsin al-Fayd has given his inferences from the outrage of the genre of *tafsīr*. He explains his notion that this *Hadīth* comes out to more definable than the exegetical works made in prospect of human creation. It explains the reason behind submissive position of woman to Adam. Eve was created from "the of Adam's abdomen." She was created for Adam just to embark the pleasant relation between them. But al-Fayd says that this *Hadīth* has been used for several purposes to bound woman in customary laws. Therefore, the scene of garden is ignored in most of the exegetical works. But he says that it was God's plan to create Adam and Eve in such way to make Adam a teacher and Eve as student where Adam acted as dower. The Garden scene helps a lot in what is granted today in the customary laws and marriage to relation between man and woman. When God found Adam glimpsing Eve' beauty He told Adam to ask her hand. In this scenario God acted as her representative to tie them in marriage. In the whole story men's superiority is shown but woman was found wise in the entire process, because she refused to come closer to Adam where God also favored her. Knowing that Adam will direct her according to God's commandment, but she first defied Adam in which she was right. As the earliest version of the story tells that Adam had not asked about Eve, rather he asked God about her. This reconcilable narration of the story al-Fayd discusses on its own. The creations from left rib or from left over clay

shows that men have one rib fewer than women as explained by al-Sudduq. Al-Fayd goes further to say those women have fewer ribs because they are inclined towards physical world. Naturally men are tended toward spiritual world than women, because they are created via material compendium, which are two irreconcilable courses.

See Al- Ayyāshī, *al-Tafsīr*, Department of Islamic, Mu,assat al-Ba'tha. Qom: Mu'assasat Ba'tha. 2000 v. 1, 361-2.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMPARISON & ANALYSIS

5 - Comparison & Analysis

The Feminist works contributed to the interpretation of the Quran, as seen in the second chapter of this thesis, perhaps it looks keen to go for alteration in the prescriptive hierarchy. For feminists, the interpretative job may become more strenuous when trying to trace back their theological extravagance to the Quran. To nullify the previous interpretations of the Quran, eventually overbids the responsibility of exact interpretation goes to process in which the grounds for meanings developed. Feminists are determined to call every aspect of their work stems directly from the Quran. Giving priority to the Quran on Islamic tradition is itself to give the impression that feminist anti-patriarchal interpretations are exact in precedents as accorded by the Quran. Feminists consider their study of the Quran as a true reflection of the Quranic declaration of egalitarian pronouncements.³⁷⁰ To put the Quran for new understanding to acquire the real meaning seems as bigotry with respect to the Holy Quran although they threw away all previous interpretations about women to omit interpretation of male exegetes by declaring the full entitlement to their own interpretation.³⁷¹

5.1 - Nature of Equality – as a Fundamental Principle of Interpretation

The prescriptive track of feminist interpretational work of the Quran is not in its appropriate direction.³⁷² To excavate the normative study of the Quran, feminists seemed to repel just one of their own theories to encompass equality. Nevertheless, this may not be suitable to infect other ideas once being limited to only one trajectory as feminists do. Feminists are so keen to support equality by seeking the egalitarian aspect of the Quran in their way that would often lead them to lose the grounds for their trajectories.³⁷³ Feminist's interpretation shows that it is not

³⁷⁰ al-Hibri, "Muslim Women's Rights," 40.

³⁷¹ Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 18.

³⁷² Jenett Halley, *Split Decision: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 273.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 319.

determined through plausible competitiveness of the principles of *Tafsīr*. Consequently, their interpretational inclinations are indeclinable to transform from absorbing the fear that they would return once again towards male dominance. Re-opening the Quran for a new study is the only way for them to liberalize their theology therefore, feminists are not ready to accept any rightful interpretation of the Quran.

The other element of feminist interpretation is seen as interminable to disown responsibility of the prescriptive interpretation. They prescribe their own understanding of the Quran, which may not fit with the nature of the Quran. In the process of searching equality according to their desires (through reading the verses that functions equality) should not have the mandate to get favor from the Quran nor is responsible for acknowledging their stances. Ideally this intensity may be lifted by feminists as their demand of synchronizing the exact equality for genders. Quran perhaps must not be interpreted according to feminists' wishes in order to keep it safe from any private readings. It is a matter of interrogation that how it would be possible to claim the correct readings of the Quran based on sexual prejudices along with holding a view that all pre-feminist interpretation is incomplete and apparently functionalizing illegitimate supremacy of males. Perhaps this enactment of feminist interpretation does not stand just on sexual prejudices but it seems that feminists locate inaccurate demand on the Quranic passages and challenge the entire exegetical tradition. Scholars of feminist *tafsīr* acquire gender equality according to their own inclination from the Quran which might not be the case if searched through reading or interpretive tradition. Even though feminists could not have had the suitable proportions to steer the understanding of equality as comprehended by the Quranic narratives. Therefore, feminists are compelled to designate their knotted methodologies of interpretations. They see the gender equality holistically from the Quran and not from the apparent meaning of the text. Quran definitely elevates gender equality through functional and ontological order but feminists are retained to those narrations that are reciprocal, and not asserting on the verses that are hierarchical in sexual differences. Probably feminists override the verses that exclusively promote the fundamental

inequality of both genders. The specific thought about the equality and justice of feminists swift them to see just discordance between men and women mutual and hierarchical orbits in order to pick a glimpse for their contemporary ideas. As they take the charge to resolve their ambivalence as they understand through using the holistic approach to the Holy Quran.³⁷⁴

It is also pertinent to say that Quran takes many initiatives to prompt convenient stages for magnification, commutation, and inclusion for women but at the same time project male authority that may be problematic to understand in the current environment of sexual equality and justice. The quest of sexual equality may not rest as special in the frame in the Quran as feminist portrays as Asma Barlas depicts that theory of gender equality cannot be summoned from the Quran.³⁷⁵ She urges that such theory can be deduced from the contextual study of the Quran that connotes anti-patriarchal certainty. Hidayatullah criticizes the feminists while striving to diminish space between their “vision justice and notions of justice in the premodern context, and it would be better for them to make a note of their interpretative gap with “contemporary interpretation.”³⁷⁶ Hidayatullah places a strong critique of the legitimacy of feminist interpretation that sets forth the 21–century queue of equality in the Quran. She holds the opinion that the feminist vision of equality is drained from the fixed nature of a particular modern society. It is against the spirit of knowledge to inculcate a specific pattern on the Quran without acknowledging the significance of the nature of Quranic text. The prescriptive potential of feminist interpretation sets forth the platform for forcible reading of the Quran, which is not an appropriate method of treatment of Quranic text as the feminists go for ascending specific roles as Wadud and Asma Barlas, who admits the sexual distinction between male and female but do recognize the

³⁷⁴ Chaudhry, “Wife Beating,” 10.

³⁷⁵ Bauer, “Room for Interpretation,” 182.

³⁷⁶ Mir Hosseini Ziba, “Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law: Justice and Ethics”, in *the Islamic Legal Tradition*, Ed. Mir Hosseini Ziba and others (London: I, B. Tauris, 2013), 27.

assigned roles for them through their self-evident reading of the Quran. ³⁷⁷ Both Wadud and Barlas manifest not to fix any role upon the gender because the Quran does not suggest any division of role for men and women.³⁷⁸ There are no unique attributes to both of them³⁷⁹ as Barlas argues, the Quran does not support any symbolic or dimorphic roles that rest in both the sexes.³⁸⁰ Even she goes on to say that none of the verses explicate the roles on the basis of biological potentials.³⁸¹ Therefore Asma Barlas sees oddly the role of mother except childbearing for women. Even Quran preambles the grounds for the prime contribution of motherhood.³⁸²

However, in the prospect of *Qiwāmah* verse Asma Barlas, Riffat Hassan, Amina Wadud, and Azizah Al-Hibri defines the supporting role of physical and economic sustenance of men to women during the circumstances of childbearing as a breadwinner but even this does not uphold the stance of dominant authority over women.³⁸³ They pin out the point that women are not confined to this described biological duty of childbearing. Nevertheless, it is a matter of the fact that breadwinning and childbearing are the two exclusive roles for both the genders. Wadud asserts that breadwinning become an ideal and a recompense role for men to accomplish prosperous childbearing. *Qiwāmah* for Wadud resonates tone of responsibility pertaining to men to intake the social-functional process. The *Qiwāmah* role of men just to support women in childbearing to maintain balance in

³⁷⁷ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 127.

³⁷⁸ Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 8-15.

³⁷⁹ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 165.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

³⁸¹ Asma Barlas, "Does the Quran Support Gender Equality?" Or, Do I have the Autonomy to Answer this Question?", November 24, 6.

³⁸² Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 179.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 187.

social order would often resemble the fact of the biological difference between men and women.³⁸⁴

Childbearing is the prime duty of women and men where men are assigned to back up and navigate the family's framework as precedes the *Qiwāmah* verse. Although this verse creates an equitable status of relations between male and females it encompasses the male leadership in the family. The *Qiwāmah* role is associated with men more in terms of its performance. The *Qiwāmah* verse does not create a perception that men are designated superior roles due to their gender. The performance of this role stems out in such a way that it supports the male leadership in the family. Perhaps this role is not just confined to specific economic duties but to the biological distinctions between the two that continuously reconcile the importance of the two to each other.

Feminists like Wadud have pointed out that the Quran does not provide details of the *Qiwāmah* role, and since then, nobody can fix the role of the two. Although their role is different but equal, where men are confined to support their family rather than to enrich his leadership.³⁸⁵ These matters of attributing social values to men's roles are left to the society or interpreter. This notion creates a power imbalance between the two because every society has a different social system to decide the social roles of both³⁸⁶ which the feminists try to provide a reasonable place for sexual inequality.

Another character of *Qiwāmah* preludes by feminists that it is the matter of responsibility or obligation for men rather than a privilege in respect to their wives and families.³⁸⁷ Women become paramount in society due to the solo favor of man

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 102.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 103.

³⁸⁷ Azizah Y. al-Hibri, "Qur'anic Foundations of the Rights of Muslim Women in the Twenty-First Century, in Women", in *Indonesian Society: Access, Empowerment and Opportunity*, Ed. Mudzhar M. Atho and others, (Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1997), 19.

to them.³⁸⁸ Women possess a lauded potential to sustain the family, and hence men should rely on them. Men are ascribed to perpetuate the family.³⁸⁹ It is the innate duty of men to serve the family to hold the overall affairs. Both are ontologically and morally equal, but different when they perceive social values while the feminists are taking the complete concept of equality.

5.2 - Confusions in Feminist Methodologies

Feminists, when reading the verses regarding mutuality of both sexes they necessarily resist sanctioning hierarchical relation between the two. For them, equality of the sexes can sustain on entrusting the mutuality that will not be deterred by the hierarchical difference between males and females. The hierarchical difference leads to an impression of male-female superiority on each other, which is counted as idolatrous act. Therefore (Riffat Hassan as discussed in the previous chapter) and many other feminists are very keen to linger up with the notion of creation of both sexes from one substance. The actual difference between the two lies in their piety that rests on their devoted relation with God. They both equally have been granted with the capability to be loyal with God who assesses the scope of their piety. By this stance feminists are of the opinion that men are not ordained with superiority role and if it is described through traditional interpretive works that seem to amount to violation of God's authority. Men and women pertain to one class that should supervise by God only and not by man to subdue woman. Feminist interpreters clinch the mutuality settlement of the Quran and transform it on the medium of the social equality of male and female, because equality is oriented on social level may associate in clash with ontological and moral equality. To evaluate critically this paradigm, I will refer to Hidayatullah's stance in which she argues that even Quran describes mutual equality, but this may not clash with the hierarchical difference between male and female. The settlement of social

³⁸⁸ Abdallah Adhami, *Women, Society, and Human Nature*, at, skeenah.org, accessed on 22/04/2018.

Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges*, 175.

³⁸⁹ Abdallah Adhami, *The Nature of Women*, at skeenah.org, accessed on 22/04/2018.

inequality does not harm the incomparability of God. The Quranic explication formulates mutuality structure that provides harmonious nerve to stay along with vertical difference of men and women. The hierarchical difference may not be placed side by side with God's authority over humanity.³⁹⁰

To provide her concrete critical assessment over the feminist stance about the un-existence of any clash between mutuality and hierarchical division, Hidayatullah puts a deep glance over those verses. She provides here two groups of verses that describe the Quranic intention about the position of both sexes to one another.

Among the first group of verses (these verses can be called as verses of "mutuality") is 4:1, where it is stated that the origin of human beings in the same substance (*min nafsīn wāhidatin*); both men and women were created by God from the same substance in the same pattern and so accordingly they are created equals. In verse 30:21, it is found that there are mutuality and correlation between spouses when God created partners for human beings from among themselves (*min anfusikum*), he placed love and forbearance between them (*baynakum mawaddatan wa rahmatan*). In verse 9:71 it is stated that both male and female are equally capable of being pious and moral, male and female believers are protectors of one another, both are distinguished as commanding goodness, prohibiting evil, giving charity, praying, and complying to the orders of God and the Prophet SAW. In verses 4:124, 40:40 and 3:195 we find evidence that irrespective of the gender (*min dhakarīn aw unṣā*), both male and female believers are subject to the same ground of morality and righteousness for reward in the life after death; they are promised to be entered into Paradise for good deeds in verses 4:124 and 40:40, whether they are male or female. Verse 9:72 has the same kind of assurance where both male and female believers are promised entry in the Paradise regardless of the sexes. Verse 81:8 and 16:58-59 condemn the act of killing infant baby girls (burying them alive as was the practice of Arabs before Islam). Verse 33:35 repeats masculine and feminine participles ten times to emphasize that man and woman both will be rewarded and

³⁹⁰ Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges*, 175.

forgiven by God if they fast, give charity, have humility, patience, sincerity, and devoutness, and are faithful and chaste.

While describing the second group of verses (known by the author as hierarchy verses), the author attempts to identify those verses which have literal indicators on male advantages and control and tries to read them as plainly as possible, all the while leaving the argumentative terms open-ended. The author's goal is to mention that even when there are a number of interpretations, the presence of some male advantage indicators cannot be denied because of their persistence in these verses. Verse 2:222 commands men that after menstruation when women have purified themselves, men should approach them as ordered by God (*fa-'atuhunna min haythu amarakumu Allahu*); verse 2:223 directs men to approach women as what they cultivate, (*fa-'tu harthakum*) the way they wish (*annā shi'tum*), as wives (*nisā'ukum*) are something that man cultivate from (*harthun lakum*). However, as Kecia Ali points out, these verses might be interpreted as discussing women as "matter to be acted upon" not as "agents in their own right" even as this acting upon occurs "within the scope of divine regulation." Verse 2:187 states that both men and women are mutual garments for each other, and in doing so, this verse indicates a kind of mutuality between men and women; however only men are addressed by the verse in the matter of approaching their wives (*al-rafathu ilā nisā'ikum*) for sexual activity. Verse 2:228 claims that women owe something unspecified to men in an amount / in a manner similar to what is owed to them, according to what is conventionally applicable; however, men have a degree over women of that something unspecified. As compared to men, women are granted lesser of that unspecified something irrespective of what that thing is.

Verse 4:34 identifies men as having some kind of supportiveness, not specified in exact terms, for women, which is related in a few matters; how God has favored some men over others and how men spend their money. The verse then describes righteous women (*sālehaat*) as that they obey God, as they are submissive (*qānitat*) to something unspecified and guard something that is unseen (*hafizātun lil-ghaib*). The verse explains for men that if they fear disturbance from their wives, they

should reach them in a manner unspecified, separate the beds, and hit them in an unspecified way. In the end, the verse orders that if women obey their husbands, then men should not try to commit an unspecified action against them. This verse can be interpreted in many ways; however, it cannot be denied that one way or the other, women seem to have one or more of the following roles; recipients of something, following commands to their husbands and God, something to be curtailed by men or as beings acted upon by men. In all cases, their role is submissive. In contrast to women, men have an active role in this verse rather than passive; they are the actors and not acted upon. The only time they are recipients is only one, when God commands them to do something or refrain from doing something or when God favors some men over others.

Then there is the matter of polygamy that is though conditional but present nonetheless in the Quran (4:3) where men are allowed to have four wives, in addition to this they are allowed to have sexual access to the slave girls whom they are not married to. Regardless of the historical backgrounds and numerous interpretations, there is no denying the fact that women's sexual allowances do not even come close to the sexual allowances of men. There might be historical explanations claiming that women benefit from this, yet it is actually men who have explicit, active roles. In this verse only, men have sole permission to act upon women, and no similar verses are there that allow women the same access. Those claiming that the purpose behind this is the protection of the women, even they cannot explain why care for them comes with the price of sexual access to them.

Hidayatullah outcompetes those feminist interpretive flaws in their approach in these particular verses, where they present their arguments for the existence of an apparent tension between mutuality and hierarchy verses. Their much concern on this tensivity may be well understood by shuffling the discourses of Asma Barlas and Amin Wadud about patriarchy. Barlas says that the politics of sexual difference favors men's domination and subdues the dignity of women.³⁹¹ While Wadud sees

³⁹¹ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 14.

Patriarchy aims at upholding superiority and authority of men, where women will be considered as an instrument and ‘recipient’ of men’s decision.³⁹² These salient features of the patriarchy, in turn give a sufficient endowment that it would match comfortably with hierarchy verses that are adamant to male dominance and dealing with women as an instrument for maintaining the superiority of men. Nevertheless, both Wadud and Barlas do not accept that the patriarchy is produced by the Quran itself, rather it is prescribed through its readings.³⁹³ Furthermore, both Wadud and Barlas approach some specific verses to serve their goals of resisting patriarchal stances in the Quran. They argue that such verses ideally are antithetical with that of Quranic ones. Barlas reduces the usage of certain verses in their full potential in order to show a contradiction with the ideal meaning.³⁹⁴ As she does not agree with the literal meaning of verse 2:223 where for man to come on their women as they want, may not qualify taking women’s body as men’s property but is just a matter of connotation. Even men cannot be allowed to have sex with their women without their consent, as it cannot be associated with the Quranic concerns about equality and mutuality.³⁹⁵ Wadud says that the verses that express polygamy, *harth*, *hūr al ayn*, (conferring privilege of men) are creating “glitches” which exist in the Quran for determining the response of social context of the Prophetic society.³⁹⁶ Wadud argues that such verses may not be understood in terms of its literal meanings.³⁹⁷ Same is the case of *daraba* verse where Barlas denies it as a license for man to quash women and make them obedient forcefully. It does not match with the feature

³⁹² Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 96.

³⁹³ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur’an*, 204.

³⁹⁴ Amina Wadud, "Islam beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Analysis", in *Wanted: Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family*, Ed. Zainah Anwer (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Musawah/Sisters in Islma, 2009), 103–6.

³⁹⁵ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur’an*, 164.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁹⁷ Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 197.

of marriage that entrusts harmonious stability.³⁹⁸ This verse can be considered as a symbolic verse, not a retributive verse for men.³⁹⁹ Wadud concludes the *daraba* spectrum to be understood holistically with other Quranic foundations and not specifically because the most paramount justice of the Quran is to interpret it in accordance with current situation.⁴⁰⁰

In this situation, both Wadud and Barlas consider the mutuality verses as primarily valuable standards of the Quran just to provide ground for the nonliteral reading of hierarchy verses. Both are of the view that the literal reading of the hierarchy verses will break the reading of the Quran holistically. This type of methodology is strongly denied by Hidayatullah. She does not agree with the notion that a literal interpretation of hierarchy verses would resist the mutuality verses. She holds the opinion that male control over women does not resist the stunt of mutuality and love, and therefore, there is no tension between mutuality and hierarchy that requires settlement. It is not appropriate to say that the Quranic framework of mutuality and love requires the absence of inequalities and hierarchies.⁴⁰¹

Hidayatullah criticizes another feminist interpretative model of male-female mutuality in contrast to hierarchy known as “triad model.” According to this model, men and women are presented to assemble in horizontal reciprocity towards God. According to Wadud, the most propitious relation between God, men, and women is the relation between God and humans. Both men and women are required to be subordinate under God in a vertical position. Both persons possess the equal potential to and no one is above on each other. The only difference between the two rests upon their pious relation with God, who judges their approach in devotion.

³⁹⁸ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 187.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁴⁰⁰ Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, 22.

⁴⁰¹ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, 134.

The feminist interpretive scholarship of the Quran solved the hierarchical difference by presenting the horizontal reciprocity grounded on the unicity of God.

Hidayatullah disagrees with this triad model because feminists and especially Wadud did not provide sufficient discourses about the complete horizontal equality of the sexes under God. It does not clarify and support the existence of both the sexes under God as same vertically. Perhaps Wadud triad model extends the cooperation of both sexes under God, but that can only be possible in Tawhīdic paradigm, not in the triad model. Both have been bestowed with equal capabilities to become completely obedient to one God. However, not as Wadud understands that to God, all humans are the same, differs just in the level of piety. The value of humans is not determined by their respective gender and class by God. While relying on Ayesha Chaudhry and Karen Bauer, Hidayatullah supports their view that “God’s authority over women is mediated through men’s authority over women.”⁴⁰² Therefore this privilege is bestowed upon the husband to be preferred over wives. This view has been supported by classical works of Quranic interpretations. There is far more difference between God’s authority and that of men, which is beyond its strength to compete with God’s authority. This difference of authority between God and men affirms the sexual hierarchy.

To encompassing the tension between male-female mutuality and hierarchy, Hidayatullah moves forward to raise a point that if mutuality of verses is seen by feminists in coordination with hierarchy verses. It will lead to the point that Quran does not present a full glimpse of equality between men and women. Perhaps feminist insistence on equality resides over ontological equality; however, this does not compete with the notion of functional inequality of men and women. The Quran may indicate the functional inequality of their being in their individual capacity. To preserve their ontological equality stance feminist gives two famous arguments: One pertains to the creation of men and women from one single source and other to the *tawhid*-based argument where all human are equal except for their different

⁴⁰² Chaudhry, “Wife Beating,” 418.

level of degree in *taqwa*. These arguments empower the ontological level of equality of the sexes in which no one has been given any essential quality over another. Hidayatullah gives an answer to these arguments by saying that functional inequality cannot exist without the effect of ontological inequality. Functional inequality is correlated with inequality of being. The function is a role richly linked to them being in what he is. Yes, there are certain cases where functional inequality where it is not related to ontological equality, but it does not remain constant and essential to one's being. Functional inequality may remain in harmony with ontological equality just if it does not pertain to a particular being.⁴⁰³ Nevertheless, functional inequality if remains permanent, would obviously be related to inequality of being. ⁴⁰⁴ As a result, function as possessed by being functional inequality originates from ontological inequality. To me, Hidayatullah wants to say that this ontological-functional is absolute and situational and relevant to one's innate capability.

5.3 - Analysis of Nature of Hermeneutical Approach to Holy Texts

The western scholarship has developed hermeneutics for the study of the Bible that basically determines general principles designed for the study of any literature and historical text. This study at its kind often initiates the study of the content of the Bible, covers, to a large extent, literature material configuring systematic tools of academic scholarship, as it contained historical elements developed in various courses of history. Historicity degenerates in the contemporary scholarships to an extent that critics explain the work of the author in the light of his or her life history and build their view of the author on psychological, social, and political facts to

⁴⁰³ Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, "Equal in Being, Unequal in Role': Exploring the Logic of Women's Subordination", in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, Ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 316.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 418.

which every corner is specified in the history. So, every text should be subjected to this view whatever the book might pertain to.

This scholarship, with the aforementioned intent, attempts to study the Quran as a text composed of language and literature. Quran has been assumed as a product of literature which alludes to its study in historical and philological prospect.⁴⁰⁵

From the academic point of view, discourses pertaining to one subject should be liable to one method. Studying any religious text by the philological or historical method through other literature or historical text must be passed through the acknowledgment of its text. Otherwise, generalization without inducement is against the spirit and nature of knowledge. In other sense, this version of the method treats holy text of all religions with one stick counting them as sufficient texts of language and history. In this case, it is ensured that all text commonly contains one element of subjectivity that leads towards one conducive method. Otherwise, adopting any method in the study of the Quran may not be workable. Certainly, such methodological treatment would be considered deficient and inappropriate, which would definitely be contradicted with the ethics of knowledge.⁴⁰⁶

There are some certain significant qualities of the Quran which necessarily be put under consideration before employing any method of study or at least such qualities must be discussed comprehensively, which deliberately provides space for making a judgment about methodology perceiving the reading of the text.

The very ultra-dynamic quality of the Quran is its divine source framed in human language and demonstrates human framework, but maintains its transcendental source. Being a divine text, the Quran offers the opportunity to be studied according

⁴⁰⁵ Fawad Zakariyya, *Afāq al-Falsafah*, 1st edition (Beirut: Dār al -Tanvīr wa al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi, 1988).

⁴⁰⁶ Maurice Bucaille, "The Bible, The Quran and Science", Ed. Dr. Abu Aminah Bilal Philip (al-Falah Foundation), 34.

to certain principles framed from within and without.. Otherwise, any method employed against the nature of the Quran would lead to incomplete understating.

Hermeneutical science says that the understanding of the interpreter and his interpretation is important and not the text itself. According to it everyone is free to develop/create his understanding of a text. It gives the opportunity to reconstruct the text. They did not just question the sacred text; the Bible, the Torah, or the Quran, but they also undermined their holiness and sacredness.⁴⁰⁷

When the scholars looked at the sacred texts, they experienced the same things; every sacred text is written in some kind of language which exemplifies the literature, and the other thing is that it is written systematically and historically. So they said that why should they not treat them as same? Why shouldn't they study these texts just like the ordinary text? The impact of such a kind of approach is that they negated the sacredness of the sacred scriptures, including the Quran.⁴⁰⁸

Due to the influence of western hermeneutics, many modern Muslim scholars equated the Quran up to the understanding of human beings.⁴⁰⁹ To understand the Quran in lieu of contemporary time and history, whether it is pre-modern or modern, is itself not suitable to the standard of the Quranic ethics of knowledge and research. The modern Muslim thinkers availed the concept of history in the account of time in a sense that is authored by human beings. In the modern literary sciences, a view has been generalized that time can only be experienced through human-made/compiled history.⁴¹⁰ It is in this sense in the text has been interpreted in modern western-Islamic scholarship where authorship would be an integral part of the event experienced through history. According to the view, every text produced

⁴⁰⁷ Nabil al-Fouly Muhammed, "Khusūsiyāt al-Quran (The Characteristic of the Quran)", 2015, 2-3.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Peter Mathews Wright, "Modern Quranic Hermeneutics" (PhD Diss, University of North California, 2008), 87.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

in any course of time will afford the character of the historical environment of their authorship. The same view has been adopted while treating the Quran as a text by modernist thinkers. In other words, it means the Quran was not only created in time but also in history. This also precludes a view that the scientific status of *asbāb al nuzūl* is just a sign of occasion of the revelation as understood by pre-modern scholars, as there are occasions and circumstances which provide meanings to the Quran.

Feminist scholarship followed the footsteps of such modernist thoughts and applied them to the Quran. Feminists are one step ahead from the modernists in this view that the text of the Quran is produced in history, but the Quran is always ready to be revisited once read and reflected the intent of the author.⁴¹¹ It is upon this view that feminists open their way of understanding the Quran by actively taking part in establishing the meaning that cannot be restored just on objective reading.⁴¹² Feminist scholars criticize the efforts of traditional scholars to interpret the Quran to know the objective accessed meaning of the Quran, which perhaps does not confine to just the process of historicity.⁴¹³ Nonetheless, when traditional scholars are not able to differentiate between Quranic text and their interpretations posing to set a course for God-like knowledge, which obviously leads towards indulgence in the form of *shirk*.

Considering this feminist pronouncement that well engaged the *tawhidic* paradigm or holistic approach for revisiting the Quran degrade the objective reading of the Quran by male scholars, this eventually is not sustainable. Objective reading is not something to do equation with God's knowledge. It is against the logic but, in turn, replicates the notion that once the objective reading is acquired, it left no room for revisiting.

⁴¹¹ Duderija, "Constructing", 34.

⁴¹² Wright, "Modern Quranic Hermeneutics," 106-7.

⁴¹³ Duderija, "A Paradigm Shift," 125.

The Modern hermeneutical western scholarship does not consider the sacred attributes of the Quran. They say that although it is revealed it gained the sacredness & holiness from the people with the passage of time. It was not holy in the beginning. Quran does not claim its sacredness. The reason is that if they believe in the sacredness of the Quran, they cannot criticize it, because sacredness prevents the use of hermeneutical principles on it.

5.4 - Critical Analysis of the Methodology of Riffat Hassan

We present here an account of critical analysis about the theological assumptions of Riffat Hassan, who brought it to academia after nullifying the traditional methods of interpretation of the Holy Quran. She argues that both Islam and the Quran have associated with traditional negative intent of interpretations that influenced the understanding of true Islam badly and hence the suppression of women. She generates three theological assumptions that entrust the superiority of men over women that are interpreted with heavy dependence of *Ahādīth*, and as a result, the entire tradition became misogynistic and biased.

Like Wadud and Barlas, she also probes the concept of equality through her own reading of the Quran. She starts with her assumptions about the linguistic examination of the word “Adam” by employing her methodology of linguistic accuracy.

5.4.1 - The word “Adam”

We present here some of the flaws in her methodology regarding her method of linguistic accuracy. This method by oneself has no harm in it and perhaps suits the decorum of the Quranic science of interpretation. Nevertheless, Riffat means by linguistic accuracy to trace back the original spectrum of the Aramaic languages and implement the context of that on the Quran. Therefore, she examined the gender of the word “*Nafs*” in her theology in detail, as discussed in chapter 3. So, he categorically states that traditional literature of the Quran has condoned the feminine character of the word of “*Nafs*” and accorded to Adam as masculine.

The holy Quran mentions “*Nafs*” in different directions. The Quran feminizes the masculine preceding or masculinizes the feminine preceding according to different

contexts. For example, in Qaaf:11 uses the word “*mayta*” after having exercised a feminine noun “*Baldah*” applied by the masculine character that raised from the accord of “*baldah*” in the meaning of “*Makan*” in the realm of a place which presents the attribute of masculinity in the Arabic language.⁴¹⁴ In the same manner in Surah Yaseen: 78, the usage of “*hiya*” of feminine character turns in use to the noun of “*rameen*” as masculine.⁴¹⁵

The word “*Nafs*” is used in a feminine direction in verse 4:1 allocated to Adam as referred by Al-Zarkashī. Therefore “*wahidatin*” occurred feminine due to “*Nafs*.”⁴¹⁶ The word “Adam” appropriately as a proper noun occurred 16 times in the Holy Quran.⁴¹⁷ These verses precede that Adam was male and the first human being on earth. Riffat negates this description and exerts that the case of first creation has been left unclear by the Quran, although she establishes the opinion that the first creation that took place was a female. For this purpose, she asks for coherent reading the Quran but using a linguistic accuracy method to show that entire patriarchal interpretation work is biased and deceptive. In the light of the following verse, we see how she used her linguistic accuracy, the Quran says:

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (35)

It is clear from this verse that Adam is addressed with the word “*Ya*” than his helpmate “*Zawj*.”

The pronoun “*anta*” is masculine, which addresses a masculine person, and again the word “*zawjuka*” in which “*ka*” is used for males. “*Wakulā*” both of you are free to eat at your comforts but except the one tree. Here *Kul* is exercised in a manner of order which is ordained just to one addressee and as *Kula* for two persons, which convinces the reader that the first pair consisted of two people in

⁴¹⁴ Imam Badruddin Al-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān fī Ulūm-ul-Quran*, Ed. Muhammed Abou al-Fadl Ibrahim, Volume, 3, (Dār al-Turāth, 1988), 412–18.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., vol.3, 421.

⁴¹⁷ 2:31,33,34,35,37. 3:33,59. 7:11,19. 17:61. 18:50.20:115.20:117.20:120,121.

pair. It is yet not clear why Riffat holds the opinion that the creation story of the Quran is ambiguous.

Riffat also declares her implausible opinion of obscurity about the first verse of *Al-Nisā* where two words “*Nafs*” and “*Zawj*” are mentioned. Riffat translates the word “*Nafs*” in the meaning of soul. Both are feminine words and represent the soul and can be used for both genders without any difference. She asks other feminists to jointly insist on the feminality of the words “*Nafs*” and “*Zawj*” in support of their feminist voice for actualization of the woman’s status. The holy Quran talks about three verses entailing the same matter, along with some little difference. But feminists do not pay any attention to it. Firstly, the 4:1 is to be pondered upon by before the feminists serve their forcible opinion. Secondly, 7:189 that brings the word “*khalāqa*” wherein 4:1 is “*Ja’ala*.” In this verse, *li-yaskuna* means that *nafs* was male because of its relevance to Adam created from single soul that stems her mate.

Verse 38:6 foregoes a decisive expression that “*zawj*” was created after the *Nafs*. Here the word “*Thumma*” demonstrates delay in the process of creation where “*zawj*” came into being after the soul.

Another critique she pointed to is the word “*zawj*” that it ordained literally just by the people of *Hijaz* who refer it to wife. She endorses here the statements of *Tājul Arūs* in this aspect aZubaidi mentions that preferably the people of *Hijaz* were using this word for both masculine and feminine. Prestigiously they applied it for husband and wife both.⁴¹⁸ Being the immediate recipient of the Quran, the people of *Hijaz* have the privilege of understating the expression of the word. It is not just confined to the people of *Hijaz* because the word has been used in both senses at several places in the Holy Quran. For instance, in (Q.2:230) is used for husband and in (Q.4:20) for the wife.

⁴¹⁸ Sayed Murtada al-Hussiani Az-Zubaidi, *Tāj-ul-Arūs Min Jawahir-el-Qamūs*, Volume 6 (Kuwait: Matba’ah Hukumat-ul-Kuwait, 1969), 20.

Riffat Hassan looks decisive to speculate about *Hadīth* literature that is developed under the shades of external factors. She argues that Islamic tradition was influenced by Christianity, Judaism, Greek Hellenism, and Pagan Arabs. According to Stowasser, some stories reported around 10th century C.E., about the creation mode of Adam and Eve on the basis of tradition are not familiar to Islam. Mecca was situated in that time around diverse cultures and religions. Pagans, Jews, and Christian were living in that area and the trade caravans used to travel in between southeast Europe, east Africa and western Asia.⁴¹⁹ Riffat views discriminatory trends against women entered into Islamic thoughts from external cultures and religions in *Hadīth* literature.⁴²⁰ She quoted six *Ahādīths* to prove her assumption of creation of women from crooked rib without giving their chain of transmitter (*isnād*). However, she provides her judgment that these *Hadīths* are weak from the aspect of transmitters, and quite irrelevant from the aspect of contents (*matn*) to the account of creation in the Quran.⁴²¹ She calls for reading the Quran in isolation to pursue an appropriate justice and equality, which is not possible if it is read with tools of tradition.⁴²²

We contend here the crucial weakness of Riffat Hassan's examination of the transmitters of Rib's *Hadīth* narrations that establishes a nuance between her opinion and the traditional Islamic interpretations.

She explicitly gives her three judgments about those *Hadīth*' narrations that their transmitters are not trustworthy, narrations are (*Ahād*) and *Gharīb*. Nevertheless, she did not provide complete detail of her observance. Among the chain of transmitters are *Maisarah Al- Ashja'i*, *Harmalah bin Yahyā*, *Za'adah*, and *Abu*

⁴¹⁹ Barbara Freyer Stowasser, "Women in the Quran: Tradition and Interpretation", in *Islam, Gender, and Social Change*, Ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 40-44.

⁴²⁰ Riffat Hassan, "Women in Muslim Culture: Some Critical Theological Reflections", *Dialogue in Alliance* 9, Number, 1 (1995): 124-127.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.* 129.

⁴²² *Ibid.* 134.

Zinād. All of them are regarded as reliable (*Thiqāt-Wāthiq*), and trustworthy, credible, and capable of having good values.⁴²³

The six-different narrations she referred to (mentioned in Chapter 3) are considered as weak (*Gharīb*) and (*Āhād*) by her.

Imam Muslim in his *Sahīh* has quoted the *Hadīth* thrice in the book of "Rida'a Chapter "Al-Wasiyya bin Nisa," while *Tirmidhī* once in his book of Divorce chapter "*Al-Madārāh ma'a Nisā*," Imam Ahmed in his *Musnad* has mentioned twice and Imam al-Darāmī in his *Sunan* mentioned twice these narrations that women either are created from the rib or like as rib.

Riffat's assumption is that the crooked rib *hadīth* narrations are strange (*Gahrīb*) in degree and do not match the philosophical consistency of the Quran about the creation story, but the scholars of *Hadīth* attributed this term of creation from rib respective status and relative meanings. However, the classification of *hadīth* scholars shows that even *Gharīb* may not be considered as nullified.

5.5 - Interpretation of "and created from its mate-pair":

Allah Almighty has stated in the first verse of "Surah An-Nisa"

O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; - reverence God, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for God ever watches over you. (Q.4:1)

According to the majority of exegetists; "single soul" means Adam "his mate or pair" refers to his wife Eve (*Hawwā*) And "from it" denotes "from that soul," however, the scholars are being divided into two groups while interpreting the creation of mankind from Adam (Peace Be Upon Him). The opinion of the majority

⁴²³ Ibne Hajr al-Asqalanī, *Tahdhīb-ut-Tahdhīb*, Volume,10 (Hyeder Abad: Matba'ah Majlis Dāi'ratul-Ma'rifan-Nizāmīyah, 1328), 386.

of exegetists is that it means that Allah Almighty has created Eve from the ribs of Adam, which is rationally and legally possible. Rationally, because creating a Man from the clay, rib, and sperm is equally possible for Allah Almighty, and legally it is not wrong because the daughter is the one who is born through the common method of reproduction. Nevertheless, the term "from it" does not explicitly denote the meaning of creating from the rib bone, and it is also not elaborated through an authentic narration or explicit evidence. However, this statement is narrated by the possessors of divine books (*Ahl al-Kitāb*), and is expressly mentioned in Torah. Ibne Jarīr at-Tabarī (died on 310 AD) has narrated from Mohammad bin Ishāq (d. 1050) that:

It has reached to us through the narration of Ibn-e-Abbās and the like, through the people of Torah and other people of knowledge that doze was inflicted upon Adam and a rib from his left side ribs was taken and then the space was filled, Adam had not yet awakened when Allah created his wife Eve from his extracted rib during his doze.⁴²⁴

It is known from this narration of Ibne Ishāq that the presumption of creation from rib bone is, in fact, the (*Israelites*) that are transmitted by Ibne Abbās, Mujāhid and other of his followers (*Tābi'een*) and conveying the narrations of the possessors of divine books (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) in the form of anecdotes is not prohibited, however, the verification of corroboration of these narration can only be confirmed if the Qura'n and Prophetic Narrations (*Hadīth*) has certified it, nevertheless, this narration is neither verified by the Qur'an nor by the Prophetic narration (*Hadīth*). In Quran it is termed as "and we have created from it" which is not an explicit evidence of creation from rib bone. Moreover, there is no such report of *Hadīth* which states that Adam's wife was created by Allah Almighty from his rib bone. Though, it is still written in Torah that:

-"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which

⁴²⁴ al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 224-25.

the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man"- 425

Since it is not the 'authentic Torah' rather it is the interpolated form of Torah by Jews, so it could not be decisively declared on the basis of it that the narration is true. However, there exists a possibility of this narration being true as there is no logical or legal objection that occurs upon it.

The question that arises here is that it is mentioned and narrated in the authentic narrations of *Bukhārī* and Muslim that: women are created from the rib bone. Consequently, how could it be said that this matter is not reiterated or explained in the *Hadīth* of the Prophet, peace be upon him? The answer to this question is that indication of Eve's creation from the rib cannot be found in the narrations of *Bukhārī* and Muslim, rather the description of nature of women is being described that they inhere inflection and curve similar to that of a rib. The narrations that discuss this issue are mentioned in *Bukhārī* on three occasions.

- 1: The book of Prophets, chapter "creation of Adam and his offspring."
- 2: The book of Marriage (*Nikāh*) Chapter: "To be polite and kind to the women."
- 3: The book of Marriage (*Nikāh*) Chapter: "The exhortation of taking care of the women."

The stated words in the chapter of "creation of Adam and his offspring" and the chapter "The exhortation of taking care of the women" is:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "اسْتَوْضُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ فَإِنَّ النِّسَاءَ خُلِقْنَ مِنَ التَّرَائِءِ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلَعٍ وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّلَامِ أَعْلَاهُ فَإِنَّ ذَهَبَتْ نَتِيجَةُ كَسْرَتِهِ وَإِنْ بَرَكَتْهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ فَاسْتَوْضُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ"

Abu Huryrah reported The Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) said, "I advise you to take care of the women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked

⁴²⁵ Book of Genesis (2:22-23).

portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so I urge you to take care of the women.⁴²⁶

No trace of Adam nor Eve 's reference can be found in this narration, and rather it is a general narration including the gender of women, which can be understood by words 'Woman' and the pronoun for female (*fa'innahunna*). It is obvious that all women are not born from rib bones, then what do the words "from the rib" in this narration mean? The answer to this exists in the word of the The Book of Marriage (*Nikāh*) Chapter: To be polite and kind to the women: as Narrated Abu Huraira: "Allah's Messenger (Peace be Upon Him) said, "The woman is like a rib; if you try to straighten her, she will break. So, if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness."⁴²⁷

In this narration, the mention of "like a rib" comes which clearly show that the words "from the rib" of the previous narration also means to present simile, which points towards the existence of inflection and fluctuation in the moods of women that demands to be treated with kind-heartedness instead of animosity and harshness, if not, the matters will worsen leading to divorce. The meaning of the words "from the rib" can be understood from the Holy Qur'an, chapter "The Prophets," in which Allah Almighty says: "Man was created of haste" (Q. 20: 37). It is evident that man is created from sperm, so hurry is not the basic element of his creation, so "of haste" refers to the hurriedness and haste that are being deposited in the nature of human beings. Likewise, "from the rib" denotes the inflection in the mood and nature of women vested in her by birth. On the other hand, the actual meaning of (ضلع) is "inflection," therefore rib is called (ضلع) for the inflection it has.

Ibn-al-Asīr Jazarī (d. 606AD) wrote in his book *Al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb Al-Hadīth*:

⁴²⁶ Sahīh al-Bukāhri, Kitāb al-nikāh (Book of Marriage), of "Bab al-Madārah ma'al-nisā" Hadīth no. 5186, vol. 7, 26.

⁴²⁷ Sahīh al-Bukāhri, Kitāb al-nikāh (Book of Marriage), Hadīth no. 5184, vol. 7, 26.

-"(الضلع) Means inflection and warp unto that the person of "inflicted mood" is excluded from moderation inclines towards one side"-.⁴²⁸

Shamsud-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 786), the interpreter of Sahih Bukhārī, writes in the explanation of this narration: "As if they (women) were created from the origin of the inflection, such as the rib, perhaps, so it is not possible to get benefit of them except with patience for their inflection".⁴²⁹

Abou Hayyān al-Undalusī (d. 745AD) has also mentioned the possible rationale of this narration to be:

This is likely to be on the representative side for their moral disorder, and the fact that they do not prove on one case, it is like the inflected rib such as the creation of man from the haste, and supports this interpretation saying: The woman, refers conclusively to the gender, and did not say: Eve.⁴³⁰

Although some of the interpreters have said that this narration signifies the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, but the mentioned research verifies that this interpretation is not correct, as this narration is related to the general nature and temperament of 'common women' and the birth of Eve has no relevance to it. There is no reference of birth from the rib in Qur'an and Prophetic narration (*Hadīth*), however, the term 'created from it; its pair' could possibly mean that Eve was born from Adam's body, as it is mentioned in Torah, but, it cannot be accepted as a certain fact.

2- In the interpretation of "and created from it its mate," the second opinion is that, from it (*minhā*) refers to the creation of Eve, for Adam was from his own species/genus, i.e., from the same mud. In lexicography it is known as "*Istekhdām*" which denotes that things give specific meanings when they are mentioned in the

⁴²⁸ al-Shaibani al-Jazari Ibne Asir, *al-Nihaya fi Gharib al-Hadith wal Athar*, Volume,3 (Beirut: al-Matabah al-Ilmiyyah, 1979), 96.

⁴²⁹ Shams ud Dīn al-Kirmānī, *Sharh Kirmānī Alā Sahīh Al-Bukhārī (Al-Kawākib Al Darārī fi Sharh Sahīh Al-Bukhārī)*, vol. 13 (Beirut: Dārul Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1981). 228.

⁴³⁰ Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, *Al-Baḥral-Muḥīt*, 145.

form of ‘Words,’ while when the same things are referred to pronouns, they should be taken as the kind/genus of that specific thing, an example of this can be noticed in the holy Qur’an:

“Wa laqad zayyan nassmā al dunyā bi masabīh wa ja’alnā ha rūjūman li shayātīn”(Q.67:5)

And we have certainly beautified the nearest heaven with stars and have made [from] them what is thrown at the devils and have prepared for them the punishment of the Blaze.⁴³¹

In this very verse (*masābīh*) indicates “the stars,” but when it is referred to the pronoun (*Hā*) in the word (*wa ja’alnāhā*) it denotes not the stars but Leonid (*Shahāb-e-sāqib*), which are not ‘stars’ in actual, but consist their attribute of shining, the reason of the different interpretation is that the stars are not thrown over the devils but the Leonid, which are lightening flames like stars. Likewise, this rule can be applied to the verse under discussion that the term (*nafsin wāhidatin*) undoubtedly states to Adam, but when the pronoun (*Hā*) is referred in (*wa khalqa minhā*) to (*nafsin wāhidatin*) the meaning changes from the ‘from Adam’ to ‘from the genus of Adam’ which is “the clay,” the Holy Qur’an has stated its examples many times, for instance:

Wallāhu ja’ala lakūm min anfusikum azwajān (Q. 16:72)

“And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates.”

Khla lakum min anfusikum azwājan (Q.30:21)

“He created for you from yourselves mates”

The Quran used word of Adam in twenty-five chapters with expansion up to ten chapters (*Sūrahs*) in immediate forms and in two other in in-immediate form. It is very often that the Quran describes any figurative name except the Holy Prophets.

Nevertheless, in the case of Adam, along with the narration of his story of creation, it is slightly different. Such valuable attention of the Quran indicates the worth of Adam not only as a prophet but an “archetype human being.”⁴³²

Therefore, the creation of humankind started from Adam, as mentioned in the Quran from single soul, and from two souls, as Eve (*Hawwā*) created after Adam. Both Adam and Eve (*Hawwā*) are parents of humankind.

⁴³² Rehman, *Tafheem-Ul-Mas'ail*, 109-10.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In order to give the final conclusion, it would be appropriate to draw a summary of the core findings of the study in connection to the questions mentioned in the introduction. I started with a number of historical and cultural circumstances that gave birth to feminism and its various discourses. It is found that western feminism has emerged to fulfill the requirements of social change that occurred due to modernity. It can also be finally concluded that Islamic feminism also developed due to the cultural and religious context of modernity. The new Muslim debates over modernity have paved the way for initiating Muslim women activism in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In Muslim societies, feminism is limited to those who study in western institutions or want to see Islam through western lenses. A specific effort has been made in this study to highlight the crucial importance of feminist interpretation of equality and its underlying theological assumptions, which are not plausible according to the authoritative interpretations of Islam as established in the third part of the thesis.

In the purview of the second question, that deals with various hermeneutical methodologies of feminist interpretations, intense and heated debates over the nature of religious tradition has been highlighted. It is observed that feminists of the three prophetic faiths commonly consider the historical background and patriarchal nature of their respective religious traditions responsible for the suppression of the women's voice. They also share the historical accounts of Sarah-Hagar stories in which both are assigned a marginal position through patriarchal interpretations. It is noted, especially in the writings of Jewish-Christian feminists, who situate a text as un-divine if it establishes any norm of inequality between men and women under the hermeneutics of suspicion.

Another point to be made is about the elaboration of feminist's methodological development stages that make the Quran more speaking for the perfect dignity of women and ignores its audience of the seventh century. They retain those statements of the Quran that mentions both sexes in their designated positions. This element has been highlighted in the three theological assumptions with a special reference to Riffat Hassan. She focused on the verses related to human creation

with a complete denial of *Ahādīth* traditions to prove the dignity of women. In her search for equality, she criticizes transmitters of the *Hadīth* narrations as well as their contents. It is observed that she looks biased with regard to traditional exegetes of the Quran. Her prior assumption of the inferior position of women in traditional scholarship makes her disregard the *Hadīth* literature and employ methodological techniques to free Quran from it. She uses her own methodologies to neglect those traditions, which she sees to be against the notion of full equality of women in any way. As already observed, her major works focus on the *Hadīth* of “crooked rib.” She views that traditional Muslim exegetes took it from the Biblical accounts, which are misogynic and biased. She maintains that all Semantic religions hold the privilege of primary creation of man and then the woman. It appears that Riffat Hassan is totally unaware that her three theological assumptions are already external to Islam and irrelevant to Islamic scholarship.⁴³³ She also applies the method of “linguistic accuracy” to the verse 4:1, where she traces back the literal meanings to semantic languages. The strategy leads her to the opinion that Adam cannot be a particular person, and the word of *zawj* does not denote women only. She holds the opinion that the primacy of male’s creation is erroneous right from the early *Hadīth* traditions. To her, both genders have been created from one substance, and so are equal in all respects. Through the methodology of “philosophical consistency,” she participates with other feminists to read the Quran holistically. She also adopts the method of “ethical criterion.” She engages her study to maintain justice in its larger meaning based on the Quran being a word of God who is just for all His creatures.

A detailed account of the legitimacy of the three theological assumptions has been given in the three religions to settle the third problem of the study. It is found that both Jewish – Christian texts do favor the notion that God’s prime creation was Adam, and Eve was created from his rib. Her status is secondary and instrumental for the service of man. It is also found that in Jewish–Christian texts, women have

⁴³³ Please see for critical account Dr. Hassan Mahmood Abdul Latif Al-Shāfi, *Qawl fi Al-Tajdid* (Essay on the Renewal of Religious Discourses) Egypt: Dārul Al-Quds Al-Arabī, 2016.

been described as deceitful, cunning, and deficient by nature. In these accounts, Eve has been described as solely responsible for the improvisation of sin by eating from the forbidden tree. She also seduced Adam to eat from that tree. It was Eve who took the initiative for disobeying God and approached Adam to convince him for illegitimate eating. Adam became cursed because of Eve. She has been approached by Satan because of her weak nature. Adam's fall from Eden was the result of her deceitful act. Therefore, she has been punished for bearing the pain of pregnancy. It is upon these negative features that women are considered as a source of all guilt.

It is also observed that Israelites narrations have provided double standard in respect of women. From one side, they grace her as a prophetess and, on the other, attribute all evils symbolically to Eve. Jewish-Christian traditions have provided negative proportions to the status of women.

In this part, it is noted that the common textual interpretations of the Muslim exegetes do not support the feminists for hypothesis in three theological assumptions. It is found that the majority of the Muslim scholars tried to interpret the Quran according to its nature and through the syntactical mechanism. From the creation perspective, it is concluded that the word *nafs* occurred as a singular noun in the Quran, which refers to Adam. Eve has been created from that single *nafs* or soul. Particularly this shows that the type of human (Eve) has been originated from Adam, and the rest of humanity originated from both Adam and Eve.

Finally, it is founded that feminists try to explain their view of equality in the triad model as presented by Amina Wadud while having her mutual stances with other feminists about the substance of humankind and that all humans are equal without any distinction except *taqwa* before Allah. But they are unable to clarify the biological differences between males and females. Most probably, feminists pay much attention to the issue of rights of women and not the duty/obligations prescribed by God in the Quran. The rights of both genders can be decided in connection to their religious duties/obligations. Both genders are equally

responsible for the performance of duties/obligations to God and have equal rights in the prospect of their biological potential, which is also designed by God.

In the end, analysis has been given on the methodology of Riffat Hassan, who quests for possible perfect interpretation by freeing the Quranic narrative from the grip of *Hadīth* tradition. Again, it seems that she is unfamiliar with the nature of reading the Islamic Text within the paradigm of Islamic sciences. Certain *Ahādīth* that she refers to her work does not describe the creation of Eve from the crooked rib but the biological differences of women in comparison with man. Therefore, Muslim exegetes have described such *Hadīth* narrations while interpreting the verses related to the creation of Adam and Eve.

The study also brings to light that the contemporary Muslim feminists' approach to open new ways of reading the Quran is a product of modernity. Most probably, all feminist scholars follow western methodological patterns while reading the Quran. For them, the general passages (*a'ām*) of the Quran define the meaning of specific passages (*khās*). Therefore, their perceived general message of the Quran overshadows the specific Quranic verses that relate to gender relations. Their perceived problematic meanings of the Quran are displaced with meta-narratives of harmony, justice, and unity of God (*tawhīd*). It is also noted that feminist interpretations coincide with modernist trends in *tafsīr* that turn off the traditional body of work. The general modernist trends in the Quranic interpretation looks at the Quran afresh according to the need of the time through the tool of *ijtihād*, which is widely advocated by feminist interpreters. Modernists in general and feminists in particular both adopt an open-ended approach to the Quran and consider its interpretation for the cause of a larger interest of justice as an unfinished project. Mainly they hold a holistic approach to the essential Quranic message of justice. In the purview of rejecting traditional interpretations, they isolate the general principle of the Quran from the suspicious statements. More specifically, they treat the *Hadīth* tradition as null and void by considering it as suspicious and doubtful. For this purpose, they critically examine the historical context of language and revelation connected to the meanings of the Quran.

On the basis of the observations and findings of the study as mentioned above, the following general conclusion may be drawn:

1. It is concluded that feminist interpreters fail to clarify the distinct features of equality while trying to advocate the Quranic assertion about it. The Quran defines equality through acknowledgment of differences between the two genders. Most probably, the Muslim feminists distorted the connotation of equality, but they did not notice the unique sense of equality in the Quran. Feminist's edification of equality concentrates on essentialism based on an ethical and religious level that may not be overwhelmed by differences that exist on a social functional level. This debate resonates that Quran does not set a dual position for men and women on their opposite functional capabilities rather on their essential equality stems from moral strength. It is also mentioned earlier that feminists understand favorably the relationship of male-female in lieu of horizontal reciprocity and not hierarchical relationship. In this regard, Wadud uses some unclear words like "egalitarian," "equal," "equity," and "parity" to prove equality that perhaps makes the matter more problematic and unclear. The term egalitarian is flexibly adapted instead of equal, whereas equal refers to the basic and essential rights for being human. These words require more clarification to patch with the distinct concept of equality, as mentioned in the Quran. She fails to explain the relatedness between the social functional level and moral, spiritual level, where the former pertains to different treatment, and the latter pertains to equal treatment by the Quran. Furthermore, these two levels cannot provide an opportunity to be isolated so closely. The Quranic treatment of differences between men and women is also not explained well. The question if the Quran attributes power and authority in an equal sense remains unresolved.
2. It is also viewed that feminist interpretations of gender equality to entertain full mainstreaming of women or full inclusion of women in all spheres of the society leave some unclear points. Feminists try to attribute identical roles to men and women by the maximum inclusion of women in all affairs

of the society without recognizing the biological differences of men and women as admitted by the Quran. Therefore, they are unable to reach the substantial meaning of equality. Without acknowledging the obligations attributed to men and women in the Quran that constitute distinct roles albeit equal potential for devotion to God, the definition of feminist's gender justice will not fully encompass the appropriate meanings. Furthermore, the theoretical framework related to gender essentialism, distinction, and social mechanism is not considered where they ignore males in the definition of gender. It seems that feminists do not deconstruct the process in which male subjects have been universally addressed in the Quran.

3. Beside these deficient views, Muslim feminists have not succeeded in rising above the western liberal concept of equality, which is advocates the primacy of the individual. Muslim feminist approaches advocate liberal notions of equality, which is embedded in the assumption of a modern state of equal opportunity rather than to line it up with a concrete theoretical discussion in the context of Islam. Muslim feminists have developed a vague version of equality inherited from the notion of modern western thought. No debate of the Muslim feminist scholars connects neatly the current concept of equality with the one developed in the society in which the Quran was revealed. It looks unjust to impose the modern notions on the Quran or pre-modern scholars. They had a quite different social experience. Although feminists consider it a historical phenomenon that may be explored when needed, they try to present their own model of equality based on Islam, but they do not establish it as required. It is obvious that feminists scholars use some ambiguous terms (like egalitarian, equal, equity and parity) as a substitute for equality to qualify the notion of male-female equality. Conclusively Muslim feminist scholarship is yet to elaborate equality as a notion distinct from the western liberal tradition that forms total inclusion and mainstreaming.
4. Another point that is pertinent for drawing a conclusion is the lack of potential of feminist methodologies applied to the reading of the Quran.

Besides the interpretative techniques, they are even not able to prevent the Quranic reports that appear problematic for feminist discourses. Surprisingly, they are unable to elaborate on the reasons for the problematic meaning of the Quran, but rather they attribute to human interpretive faults and the linguistic troubles of human beings. In this regard, Riffat Hassan regards *Hadīth* tradition responsible for inexplicable interpretations of the Quran. Riffat Hassan asks Muslims to respond strongly to all anti-women meanings derived from the unauthentic reports of *Hadīth*. Riffat Hassan convincingly declares that post-patriarchal Islam is the exact representation of the Quranic Islam. Asma Barlas also admits that sexual meanings lie in the Quran, but it is the job of the interpreter to recover it properly from sexual interpretations. In actual traditional works, it did not happen. They have read the Quran timelessly and avoided its egalitarian aspect. Hence gender inequality got formed through errorless readings of it.⁴³⁴

5. It can also be noted that the case of historical contextualization method fell short in respect to verses that elaborate sexual relation, and it is unable to prevent its androcentric meaning while highlighting its historical context.⁴³⁵ For instance, Kecia Ali explores the weakness of the method of historical contextualization with respect to verses that illustrate the initiation of sex by males in various legitimate situations.⁴³⁶ In all cases, the male agency over women described in such a way prescribes it as a matter to be acted upon. The method of historical contextualization cannot reduce or negate the androcentric precedent of such verses. It is also concluded that that male agency over women in such verses is established so firmly that acknowledgment of the patriarchal historical context does not mitigate the effect of textual content. She adds that the descriptive and prescriptive standard of the Quran may not be overturned through historical

⁴³⁴ Wadud, *Quran and Women*, 45.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ Please see in verses 2:187 and 2:222-223.

contextualization, which supports the meaning formulation and statement settlement. Ali also denounces the use of intra-textual strategy or a holistic approach for the study of the Quran. She says that feminist adopts this method to just read and impose the fragments of their understandings upon the whole Quran. They just remain focused on convenient verses that determined the equality of both the sexes. It is unjust to ignore certain verses that are inconvenient to maintain the greater interest of the equality of humans. Especially in sexual matters, this technique is not helpful where the full agency of males is established.

6. Feminist scholarship actually wants to historicize the Quranic text according to their convenience, and undermine the subjective element of the verse to historical circumstances. Eventually, this process leads to the dissolution and alteration or reduction of the Quran to precisely self-conceived moral standards. They also mark doubt and ambiguity regarding the competence and appropriateness of the verses that favor male agency over females. Feminist analyses seem unfamiliar with the nature of the interpretation of Arabic texts. They do not bother to study traditional principles and of interpretations and methodologies, as witnessed in the case of Riffat Hassan when she explains the word "Adam." Feminists do not give attention to the Islamic sciences established for the cause of understanding the texts, its authentication, and comprehension.

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