



A Study of Various Woman-Centered Readings of the Qur'an in Contemporary Times

Marzieh Mohases

Professor in Faculty of Theology and Religion, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

The Qur'an interpretation methods have always changed and modified throughout history. Textualism is the most accepted approach among traditional exegetes, and proponents of this approach mainly analyze the linguistics of the Qur'an to discover its meaning, which is often assumed to be fixed and unchanging. Unlike textualists, the contextualists in the interpretation of the Qur'an are mostly Muslim reformists who believe that the interpretation of the text of the Qur'an should be based on information about the social and cultural conditions at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an. In other words, contextual scholars have not only resorted to linguistic analysis to understand the meaning of the Qur'an, but have resorted to various approaches. In the present study, after examining the emergence of a woman-centered approach in the interpretation of the Qur'an, the culmination of a woman-centered approach in the interpretation of the Qur'an is focused and 3 types of feminine readings of Qur'anic verses were introduced as historical contextualization, extraction of general Qur'anic principles and feminist hermeneutics.

Keywords: *Qur'an Interpretation; Women; Hermeneutics; Patriarchy; Contextualism*

1. Problem Statement

Attention to gender and its influence in many disciplines has become widespread in recent years. Some argued that it was the patriarchal structure that prevented the objectification of gender equality in the Qur'an. The patriarchy structure has also been imposed on the verses of the Qur'an due to the unique interpretation of the traditional scholars. Some Qur'anic thinkers tried to focus on the concepts that the Qur'an claims, based on gender equality and social justice by intervening in the process of understanding and reinterpreting the Qur'an. For this reason, they claim that Islam and the Qur'an are opposed to the patriarchal structure, and what the early and traditional exegetes did was their patriarchal feedback shown in their interpretations, and they called for interpretations of the Qur'an in which women's voices were heard and the overall goal of gender equality and social justice could be seen in it. In order to achieve this goal, a number of women with different approaches and different educational backgrounds presented feminine interpretations of the Qur'an that, although different in some respects, all agreed on one issue: what caused the oppression of gender inequality among Muslims, was not the word of God, rather,

patriarchal structures prevailing the interpretations imposed on the meaning of the Qur'an by traditional scholars. Hence, new feminist readings of the Qur'an were formed that offered different interpretations of Qur'anic verses related to women. The authors of these readings took advantage of intellectual's interpretive theories who have theorized about the Qur'an. So far, some researchers have partially studied in this regard:

Zainol, N. Z. N. (2018) writes in an article entitled "an overview on hermeneutics method application to the Qur'an by Muslim thinkers": The hermeneutic method is one proposed by modern thinkers to interpret the Qur'an. Among the thinkers, Fazlur Rahman, Nasser Abu Zayd and Mohammed Arkoun have used this method. It should be noted that the issue of the absence of women from the public space of monotheistic traditions in Judaism, Christianity and Islam is usually referred to as not hearing the voice of women. *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2001) refer to the general experience of women in these three monotheistic religions in struggling to have their voices heard. Muslim activists such as Barlas and Wadud in their works believe that the reason for women's silence in interpreting the Qur'an is the neglect that has existed in the history of the Islamic interpretive tradition towards women. (Jardim, 2014, p. 2)

Safet Bektovic (2016) writes in an article entitled "towards a neo-modernist Islam, Fazlur Rahman and the rethinking of Islamic tradition and modernity": Fazlur Rahman was one of the most significant Muslim intellectuals in the second half of 20th century. This is partly due to his main contribution to the rethinking of the Islamic tradition. He began a hermeneutical interpretation of the Qur'an and a critical analytical study of the tradition. A number of modern and contemporary intellectuals (including Nurchulich Majid, Amina Wadud, Muhammad Talib, Ibrahim Musa, and Abdullah Saeed) were inspired by him. His reformist ideas which were recognized and debated in Muslim intellectual circles, were widely welcomed in countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey.

Farid Panjwani (2015) in an article entitled "Fazlur Rahman and the Search for Authentic Islamic Education: A Critical Appreciation of Fazlur Rahman's Thought", a leading figure in 20th-century Muslim modernism, expresses a critical perception. The author argues that Fazlur Rahman based his life and work in the history of the Muslim societies' reform. The article highlights distinct elements of his thinking. The relationship between the philosophy of education from the perspective of Fazlur Rahman and his proposal for the interpretation of the Qur'an has been studied and evaluated. In this article, the widespread effect of Fazlur Rahman's perspective on reform in many Islamic fields is reminded. Finally, Fazlur Rahman's theory and its basic assumptions are evaluated, which in particular has created a tension between his scientific and reformist goals.

Irfa, Emi (2015) writes in an article entitled "The Concept of Battle against non-Muslim, in the Holy Qur'an, (Application of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Method), scholars such as Fazlur Rahman developed theories that mixed hermeneutics and the rules of the Islamic sciences to advance the Islamic sciences. He has done critical studies on the socio-historical conditions of the Arabs before and after Islam to simultaneously understand the relationship between the Qur'an and the socio-cultural conditions of society. We examine the Qur'an in the past to understand the relationship between the verses and the difference between moral and legal verses. The main purpose of this theory is to find the relationship between the verses of the Qur'an and the current modern era.

Hedayatullah (2014) in his book "Feminist Edges of the Qur'an", which is a study on feminist interpretations of the Qur'an, emphasizes the classical Islamic interpretive tradition and feminist readings of the Qur'an. He studies the works of Muslim female exegetes who have worked in the field of Qur'anic interpretation. These women from different languages, nationalities, cultures, and educational backgrounds have done so and despite their differences, the result of this research is a common theme, the "challenge on exclusive male interpretations of the Qur'an." On the one hand, however, these scholars were confronted with the hostility of fanatical traditionalists, on the other hand, were supported by

activists of the Western feminist tradition, who made hasty comments and unscientific views from all sides, but continued to assert their views and continued their work.

Hedayatullah highlights the views and ideas of feminist exegetes by presenting a brief history of them and expresses their disputes. This group of feminist exegetes has been formed under the influence of thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman and Hamed Abu Zayd.

Salek, Mohammed Val Mohammed (2013) in an article entitled “Rethinking the Qiwāmah: A Qur’āno-centric Evaluation of Modern Women Exegetes’ Perspectives”, examines the Qur’anic concept of Qiwāmah with regard to the interpretive views of modern women exegetes. First, from the theoretical framework of Fazlur Rahman, Abid al-Jabiri and Mohamed Arkoun and then argues that the issue of Qiwāmah in the standard interpretations of female exegetes such as Fawkiyah Sherbini and Fatma Kariman Hamzah can be reconsidered both by using the socio- historical and hermeneutic methods of the above-mentioned researchers and by considering the continuous and unique performance of the Qur’an in various political-economic and socio-cultural contexts. What is most remarkable is that such works shadow the feminist discourse within Islam as well, such discourses occur more frequently among Muslim female exegetes such as Wadud and Barlas. The core of such controversies is more about the two important issues of “authority” and “legitimacy.”

Wagner (2013) writes in an article entitled “Methodological Opportunity: Christians in the United States interpreting the Qur’ān, Christians have been interpreting the Muslims’ holy book since the 8th century. Three negative interpretive schemas of John of Damascus (676-749) in the 7th century, Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) in the 15th century, and Martin Luther (1483-1546) in the 15th century provided Western views on Muslims and their books. Some Christians also base their views on introductions to the translation of the Qur’an. Many also have innumerable questions about the Qur’an and Muslims. One of the essential needs today is to write interpretations of the Qur’an for non-Muslims without the author having Eastern biases. In this article, the author offers a methodological approach based on his teaching experiences with Christian students in the United States and then explains the interpretive space in Western society.

Harrison, S. Victoria (2010) in an article entitled “Hermeneutics, Religious Language and the Qur’an”, asks, “Do religious propositions make sense?” which formed thinking about religious language in the mid-twentieth century. Thinkers familiar with hermeneutic philosophy quickly began to understand language. Instead of debating whether religious language is meaningful, philosophers and theologians have explored a variety of methods that make sense through the creative interaction of readers and texts. After describing the roots of modern hermeneutics in the works of F. D. F. Schumacher, this article discusses the most important developments in 20th century hermeneutic philosophy, how some important Muslim theologians applied the ideas developed in hermeneutic philosophy to new perspectives on the Qur’an. After highlighting the connection between this new approach to religious language and the innovative understanding of the nature of revelation that has emerged from it, this article examines how the text of the Qur’an corresponds to a number of different interpretations and leads us to the issue that there are different equally legitimate forms of Islam. Finally, this article examines Arkoun’s efforts to explain the unity that exists within the multiplicity of interpretations. Arkoun attributes this unity to the existence of a source which he calls “Qur’anic truth.”

The innovative aspect of the present study is that no woman-centered readings of the Qur’an have been categorized so far.

2. The Emergence of Woman-Centered Approaches in Interpretation of the Qur’an

Social tendencies did not exist in the works of exegetes before the last century. The introduction of technology and science into Islamic societies and the influence of theories contrary to the teachings of

the Qur'an posed a fundamental challenge in Islamic societies. Some reformers decided to provide a healing version of the Qur'an by rereading the verses of revelation. Mohamed Abdu was the first leader of this interpretive approach and opened the door to *ijtihad* after several centuries. The growth of rationalism has not been ineffective either. Rationalism is used during *Shari'a* and revelation to use *ijtihad* and reason to analyze verses. Rationalism allows the exegete to express the message of the verse in relation to social conditions upon discovering the meaning of the verse.

There is currently a wide field for studying and developing a kind of interpretations with a modernist approach. For example, Amina Wadud in the introduction of the book "Qur'an and Woman" directly places her works among Qur'anic interpretations. Qur'anic interpretations are the central source of science and knowledge in Islamic thought. These are among the textualist interpretations that use new methods to interpret verses. On the other hand, feminist approaches have not been ineffective in the perceptions of the authors of these readings.

The modern Islamic movement over time has certainly brought about fundamental changes in the field of interpretation. Islamic modernism is an intellectual movement that originated in the late 19th century with the aim of harmonizing modern values and systems on the one hand and Islamic and primitive systems and values on the other. Its advocates are often called intellectual Muslims who strive to reconcile Islam with modern values such as rationality, science and democracy, categories that Muslims necessarily discuss as a result of colonialism and certain interactions with the Western world. Contrary to the views of pioneer Muslims who may not have tolerated trust in reason, and considered that the reliance on reason led to the emergence of "heresy" and ultimately polytheism, Muslim intellectuals welcome changes based on reason and logic. In fact, they argue that Islam is compatible with the concepts of rationality endorsed by European intellectuals and modern science and in no way opposed to modern advanced views. In addition, intellectuals support the "rational" interpretation of Islamic texts. One of the views of intellectuals was that they were convinced that their method was in accordance with Islam and was valid (Hedayatullah, 2014, 28).

The modern trend in the interpretation of the Qur'an dates back to the time of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (1176) in India. He changed the situation of the Muslims of India with his reforming movement. He rejected imitation and defended *ijtihad* and welcomed the use of new ideas in the interpretation of the Qur'an. He rejected some of the principles of interpretation in the interpretation of the Qur'an. He believed that if the companions or followers consider a particular verse to belong to a particular situation, it does not mean that that verse gives the same meaning anywhere else with similar conditions. Another attempt at interpretation in the contemporary period was the efforts of Ahmad Khan (1898), who published six volumes of books on the Qur'an. He believed that Muslims needed to reconsider their Islamic tradition with the help of more dynamic ways of thinking. There is a deep gap between the ideological view of Islam and the West, and he thinks that Muslims who study in the West and are influenced by Western culture cannot understand the religious discourses of their scholars. In the late nineteenth century, Mohammed Abda (1905) expressed his views on the interpretation of the Qur'an. He gave several lectures on interpretation, which were later written and published by his student Mohammad Rashid Rida (1935). Although *Tafsir Al-Manar* is not extremist like the works of Ahmad Khan, it has interpreted the Qur'an with a new approach. Abda has criticized the approaches and methods of interpretation used in traditional interpretations and has refrained from focusing on rhetorical and philosophical features. He also did not pay attention to the legal content of Qur'an which was done by jurists and believed that the most important function of the Qur'an is not its legal function. He considered thinking about the legal subject to be the last to address.

Along this line of thought, a number of 20th-century Muslims and scholars have revised the moral and social verses of the Qur'an in their interpretations. These new interpretations on the subject of moral-social verses showed the great interest of the exegetes in the issues of the contemporary Muslim society, while considering the general message of the text of the Qur'an, which is the value and belief system of the Qur'an. Reformist thinkers such as Muhammad Abda (1905), Muhammad Iqbal (1938), Hassan Bana

(1946), Abul A'la Maududi (1979), and Fazlur Rahman (1988) paid attention to the text of the Qur'an in view of modern changes. (Ibid.)

Many intellectuals consider the reason for the backwardness of Islamic societies as “intellectual petrification” and that they have replaced grace and perfection based on principled thinking with the thinking of an individual who has interpreted in the original Islamic texts. This replacement uninsightfully accompanied the historical context of the Qur'an created the “old laws”, which led to the inability of Muslims to address the challenges of the modern world and hindered the freshness and dynamism of Islam. As a reformer, Fazlur Rahman sought to distinguish between the legal and moral verses of the Qur'an, as well as between its conditional and unconditional aspects. According to al-Rahman and other Muslim intellectual thinkers, pre-modern jurists and exegetes of the Qur'an neglected the “latent moral purposes of the text” and mistakenly treated the language of the text as spoken legal law (Hedayatullah, 2014, 30).

In short, the main principles of modernist views of the Qur'an include an invitation to reconsider the Qur'an using logical and scientific interpretation. In particular, it can be a way to combat the superstitious meanings of the text, using metaphorical interpretation, emphasizing the historical context of the Qur'an, availability of the interpretation of the Qur'an for all Muslims and not only for the scholars and the explanation of the problems of understanding the Qur'an due to human limitations and not the text itself which has remained unchanged (Hedayatullah, 2014, 31).

3. The Culmination of Woman-Centered Approaches in Interpretation of the Qur'an

In modern times, many thinkers criticize “men-centered” readings of the Qur'an. They see earlier interpretations as a kind of prejudice against women, as well as a kind of historical injustice against women. They believe that although the Qur'an promoted the status of women in seventh-century Saudi Arabia, these reforms were not included in the interpretations in the following centuries to improve the women's status, and their status in Islamic history has gotten worse than any other time. (Ibid.)

Wadud is a Muslim who demands to return to the main message of the text of the Qur'an. She uses the view of Fazlur Rahman in interpreting the Qur'an and says: “I try to apply the method Fazlur Rahman used in interpreting Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman says all the Qur'anic messages were revealed at a specific time in history and in special and unique circumstances, which depend entirely on the same circumstances. However, the Divine message is not limited to time, place and historical circumstances, the reader must understand the use of Qur'anic terms at the time stated to better understand the meaning. The same meaning states the purpose of law and principles in certain verses. Believers in the Qur'an in a period other than the period of revelation should also be able to achieve the practical application of verses according to the intention of the speaker in the revelation in the seventh century. This is what the spirit of the Qur'an means in contemporary times.” She criticizes the non-textual views of Fazlur Rahman, who sees the Qur'an as separate verses. She questions atomistic views and considers hermeneutic approaches in the Qur'an to be sufficient and correct.

After examining the works of Mernissi, Stowasser, Spellberg, and others, Asma Barlas concludes that an egalitarian reading of the Qur'an is necessary. She argues that oppressive readings against women are the product of a religious and social structure that is often imposed on the Qur'an from outside. Instead of such oppressive readings, one can use egalitarian views on the subject of gender, which is confirmed by the text of the Qur'an (Jardim, 2014, p. 9).

Among the intellectual efforts to re-evaluate the role of women, some Muslim intellectuals have focused specifically on women's issues in the text of the Qur'an. These scientific efforts have focused on “gender equality and social justice” as fundamental principles contained in the Qur'an.

The main idea of contemporary readings on gender in Islam is that the text of the Qur'an offers an egalitarian view of women and spirituality, a kind of medieval misogyny of the Islamic tradition added to interpretations in later centuries. Muslim feminists believe that the egalitarian ethics of the Qur'an remained obscure later due to the entry of hierarchical gender relations in the interpretations of the classical period.

These approaches can be divided into 3 important types:

➤ 3-1. Historical Contextualization

Historical contextualization includes searching for the location of a verse revelation, distinguishing between descriptive and prescriptive verses (describing the behavior and actions of seventh-century Arabs and verses describing Islamic rules and customs) and distinguishing between general and specific verses (i.e., distinguishing between verses that apply only in certain circumstances and verses that are always applicable). Finding gender discrimination and biological requirements throughout history also fall within the realm of traditional interpretations of the Qur'an. Descriptive verses mean that some verses only describe the conditions of the revelation of the Qur'an, while traditional exegetes and scholars have interpreted those verses transhistorically and prescribe their legal meanings for all times, ignoring the place of revelation of the verses leads to a lack of distinction between descriptive and prescriptive verses and this distorts the function of Qur'anic verses in contemporary times. While prescriptive verses can have general use and function in all eras and are not limited to the time of revelation. (Hedayatullah, 2014, 16)

The subject of expanding and reusing the meaning of a verse according to the main concepts of the verse, is the basic hypothesis of the proposed model of Fazlur Rahman for interpreting the Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman wants to link history and the Qur'an by the historical contextualization method that scholars of Qur'anic exegesis have repeatedly used to recite the Qur'an. The Qur'an and the emergence of Islamic society have taken place in the light of history and in the socio-historical background. The Qur'an is a reaction to that situation and in most parts contains moral, religious and social statements that are the answer to certain problems in the face of unchangeable historical conditions. Also, in most cases, the verses of the Qur'an are a response to historical situations. It should be considered in order to understand the meaning of the verses well. Therefore, in Fazlur Rahman's view, one should understand the meaning of the verse by studying its historical situation or examine a situation in which a question has been answered. (Ibid. 68)

Historical contextualization means paying attention to the socio-cultural situation at the time of the verse revelation to understand the verse more deeply and examine its applicability to other eras. According to this theory, the readings that are emerged due to the historical contextualization not only make the readings universal, but also provide a more precise reading of the verses. Because ignoring the historical context of a verse for understanding its meaning might attribute a general meaning to a specific verse that only express a special and limited situation. In Wadud's view, the principles intended by specific verses must be understood. Then these eternal principles can be applied in various social contexts. The concept of expanding and reusing the meaning of a verse is based on the meaning of the verse, which is a very basic hypothesis of the model presented by Fazlur Rahman for interpreting the Qur'an. (Hedayatullah, 2014, 66-71)

Wadud explains that while some general verses offer a general meaning, they do not necessarily offer a universal meaning. She argues that because there is no universal pluralism at the time of the revelation, the general principles are limited to the original time and place of the revelation. Consequently, universality was not comprehensive at the time of revelation. Therefore, not only specific verses but also general ones must be understood in a way that they depend on their historical context. Wadud argues that since general concepts can be related to the general context of the time of its revelation, it is possible to recite general verses outside its historical context outside the seventh-century

Arabian Peninsula. In fact, if the careful historical study of specific verses is not done on general verses, scholars will be confused and the general meanings can violate or misinterpret the Qur'an or, conversely, the general meanings of the verses can be lost due to the type of expression (Hedayatullah, 2014; 66-71).

Wadud uses historical contextualization in describing the words of verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa, the first part of the verse says: “الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ” These verses are often translated as “Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth.” Most of this verse shows the superiority and absolute dominance of the men over women. Wadud does not consider this verse to be general and but also a special one. She considers its realization necessary for men with two conditions, the first is the condition of enjoying more inheritance and the second is the husband's support of his wife and children.

Wadud considers the historical context of this verse is related to the share of men's inheritance. In the contemporary era, due to the change in family relationships, the meaning of charge changes in accordance with the new conditions (Javad, 2003, 114).

Another verse used by male exegetes to support the superiority of the status men over women is verse 228 of Surah Al-Baqarah. In reference to divorced women, the main part of the verse says: “وَلَهُنَّ وَ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَىٰ عِلِّيِّينَ دَرَجَةٌ” which is often translated as: “And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. [88] But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority].”

Wadud says that this phrase is strictly limited to a significant context called divorce, and “degree” refers only to the superiority of men over women at the time of divorce. Of course, the historical context limits this tradition. The Qur'an gives this right to men because at the time of revelation, men generally had this right, and they did not take this right from women, because the dissolution of marriage was not done by women at that time. Therefore, instead of considering this verse as universal, she considered it special and interpreted it based on the context of the age of revelation. She considers it as descriptive rather than prescriptive (Javad, 2003, 114).

In verse 3 of Surah Nisa “ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَنِّي وَتَلَّتْ وَرُبِعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْلُوا فَوَاحِشَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ آتَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْلُوا ” “And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hands possess [i.e., slaves]. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice].”

According to the historical contextualization, Wadud justifies polygamy and describes the model of how to treat certain orphans. In the previous verse, the Qur'an describes the guardianship of orphaned girls. Orphaned girls who need a legal guardian after the war to protect their wealth within the legal framework. Men were allowed to marry four orphaned girls on the condition of establishing financial justice. This is unique to the period when women were not financially independent. The historical context severely limits unauthorized polygamy (Javad, 2003, 114).

By reinterpreting verse 282, which discusses the testimony of two women equal to one man, Wadud believes that this verse goes back to a specific historical context in which women at that time could be forced to testify falsely. Two female witnesses is because one helps the other to prevent her from greed and false testimony. Wadud in the Qur'anic statements of Hur al-Ain, which is the reward of the heavenly beings, and that most of the verses of the Qur'an address men more than women, also speaks of historical contextualization and considers it limited to the same social conditions of the revelation and that men at that time were more powerful than women in establishing social justice. Utilizing the historical contextualization, she interprets the word “wadribuhunna” in verse 34 of An-Nisa as follows. Due to the excessive violence against women in the history and biography of the Companions (such as burying girls), which the Qur'an condemns, this verse prohibits the use of uncontrolled violence against women.

Wadud believes that this verse doesn't allow violence, but also places many restrictions on the common violence of that period (Javad, 2003, 113)

In general, the Qur'an does not even use the concept of gender to distinguish between human beings, let alone use it to discriminate against women. If, according to the verses of the Qur'an, men and women are equal in worship and faith, how is there no such thing as equality in the realm of society and the rule of law? Wadud interprets Qawamun as the breadwinner of the house, not the women's protection by men and the rule over them. Her interpretation from "Qanat" (obedient) also refers to the moral status of obedience of men and women to God, and neither refers to the moral status of marriage, nor to the disobedience of women, and *ضَرَبَ* is to limit the misbehavior against the wife, nor to allow it.

She believes that the general verses of the Qur'an do not mean verses that are applicable at all times, even the general verses should be considered to examine its historical contextualization because there was no such thing as universality at the time of the revelation.

In his numerous articles and writings, Al-Habari discusses verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa. He revises this verse in parallel with other interpretive works and with a slight difference. Al-Habari considers Qawamiyah has a counseling position that is formed under certain circumstances, and that a man is allowed to advise his wife, Al-Habari's reading of "Qawamiyah" is not related to the subject of "inheritance", while it was present in Wadud's reading. According to Al-Habari, the first condition of Qawamiyah is that a man should have characteristics such as economic intelligence and having specialized information, so that in the position of counselor, he can be trusted by his wife and be effective in decision-making. (Wadud, 2006, 73)

The second condition is that in the verse, man is considered the provider of livelihood in life. So if a man does not have this God-given superiority (grace) in science and expertise, he cannot take over the Qawamiyah of the family. Therefore, due to the conditional context in the verse, men have no Qawamiyah over women who are financially independent. Also, men who lack knowledge have no Qawamiyah over educated women. Al-Habari therefore claims that in this verse, the Qur'an directly addresses the historical context of the time of the revelation, in which women were not financially independent and were vulnerable to poverty in the patriarchal society of the time. So the Qur'an has supported the women who were in this situation and thus provided them with financing. In addition, Al-Habari believes that this verse describes (not recommends and prescribes) conditions with the help of historical contextualization and responds to some verses that are completely in line with Fazlur Rahman's theories.

Asma Barlas comment on the hijab and the interpretation of related verses using the method of historical contextualization. In the translation of verse 59 of Surah Al-Ahzab, we read: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allāh Forgiving and Merciful." Barlas believes that the type of hijab and what part of a woman's body should be covered goes back to the norms of the time of revelation. She considers the hijab to belong to the period of slavery and sexual assault on women during the revelation. According to Barlas, in the context of slavery society governed by pre-Islamic sexual norms, the Qur'an considers the jilbab be a symbol for Muslim women to keep them out of the reach of men sexually and to be distinguished from non-Muslim slaves who were sexually available to men according to the age of ignorance. In such an environment where sexuality exists, the hijab or jilbab means "identifying Muslim women against men of the age of ignorance as a way to protect women." Barlas believes that only in a sexually corrupted slavery society can the hijab protect women and this shows that they are not sexually available. Barlas's conclusion is that outside of such special social conditions, the instructions given in verse 59 of Surah Al-Ahzab can no longer work as a protection for women. Therefore, the meaning of this verse is special and it is related only to its own context and it can be used only in similar social conditions. This verse addresses the same

period and cannot be extended to all times (Barlas, 2002, 50-51). Thus, Barlas has reinterpreted the verses on the subject of women with the help of the historical contextualization method.

➤ 3-2. Extraction of the General Principles of the Qur'an

In addition to the historical contextualization of Qur'anic expressions, the extraction of universal principles and general meanings of Qur'anic verses is an important method. According to this model, not only the true meaning of the Qur'anic verse must be considered and the conditions of social necessity related to the time of revelation considered, we must then move on to general principles that can be universalized and extract a general meaning that is relevant to the current socio-historical position of the text.

Wadud reviews verse 34 of Surah Nisa where God says, “فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَ “، “So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allāh would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them [lightly]. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them.” After reviewing the textual content of verse 34 of An-Nisa, Wadud states that although verse 34 of An-Nisa helped to eliminate violence against women in the early centuries, this approach will not reduce violence against women in the 21st century. According to Wadud, achieving the general goals of the Qur'an in relation to this verse is not just restricting and reducing violence against women, but also banning violence altogether. She writes that any kind of beating with any intention, according to the verse, in order to justify this behavior, violates the principles of the text of the Qur'an itself, which is based on human dignity. (Javad, 2003, 112)

Barlas does not see the text of the Qur'an as a dual gendered text that has both a masculine and a feminine voice. Because, according to her Muslim belief, the Qur'an is the word of Allah, not a human product, and Allah speaks beyond sex/gender. When she says that the Qur'an is not a patriarchal text, she means that the teachings of this holy book challenges the presuppositions that result in patriarchy survival in two traditional and modern forms. When she refers to the egalitarian voice of the Qur'an, she does not mean the feminine voices that only she can hear from the Qur'an, but tendencies that are hidden by the patriarchal nature of interpretations and the gendered nature of human language. She focuses not only on what the Qur'an says, but also on what the Qur'an does not say, and she wants to interpret the silences of the Qur'an in the light of its stated teachings (Barlas, *ibid.* 21-23).

Wadud believes that wherever the interpretations induce the meanings of gender discrimination or superiority of men over women, is not consistent with the general spirit of monotheism that runs throughout the Qur'an and leads to the polytheistic interpretation of the Qur'an. To apply the simple meaning of a verse, one should refer to other verses to create a general framework that has a systematic logic to create solidarity and can sufficiently show the solidarity of different parts of the Qur'an with each other (Wadud, 1999)

Referring to the verses, Wadud states the principle of mutual love and affection between men and women and does not accept any interpretation that contradicts these general principles of equality between men and women and the principle of peace and love. If we study the Islamic view on gender relations especially in the family, we do not reach domestic violence in this context at all. But the case is not so simple. Apparently, God has allowed women to be beaten by their husbands in a verse of the Qur'an. Many male scholars have used this verse in favor of men and give them the right to strike. In my opinion this reading of the verse is wrong. A simple argument proves my claim. The concepts of the Qur'an are internally compatible because it is the Divine word. The Qur'an repeatedly mentions the relations between human beings and husband and wife on the basis of love and peace. Domestic violence is completely contrary to the Qur'anic views and ideals expressed in various verses of the Qur'an. The

Qur'an cannot encourage one thing in one verse and forbid it in another. Therefore, there is a problem in interpreting the same case that contradicts the totality of the Qur'an. (Al-Habari, 2003; 204)

➤ 3 - 3. Feminist Hermeneutics

Some contemporary exegetes use an analytical method called feminist hermeneutics in the historical study of the interpretations of scholars and traditional exegetes. Feminist hermeneutics is a theory, method or perspective for understanding the Qur'an that is very sensitive to gender discrimination. Feminist hermeneutics has reacted to any type of explicit or implicit patriarchal prejudice. It aims to review the analysis of patriarchal structures, man-centered concerns and values. (Sheikh, 4, *Exegetical Violence: Nushuz in Qur'anic Gender Ideology*, 1997)

Feminist hermeneutics does not accept interpretive traditions as truth, but expresses skepticism about those interpretive texts. From this perspective, there is an overlap between Islam and some feminist discourses. There is also a combination between a broad Qur'anic ethic on the subject of social justice and feminism's desire to achieve human equality. Its purpose is to critically evaluate patriarchal structures, masculine-centered values and concepts. This view focuses on the text as a masculine-centered ideological product. Sheikh has used a particular model of feminist hermeneutics derived from the method of Gerald West, the holy book scholar, which is called "reading behind the text." This method focuses on the socio-cultural constructs of the society behind each text. In this regard, he analyzes interpretive texts in which masculine interpretations and the perception of truth from the point of view of men definitely dominates in them. (Sheikh, 1997, 4)

With a hermeneutic approach, God never oppresses anyone, and according to the principle of Qur'anic justice, if the interpreters' interpretations are in a way that promotes hatred of women, it is practically contrary to the principle of God's justice in the Qur'an. God's justice does not deprive anyone of their rights. If God does not oppress anyone, so His speech cannot contain the teachings of oppression, so God cannot promote hatred of women. Accordingly, anything that destroys or invalidates a woman's perfect humanity cannot be considered as Qur'anic. For example, Barlas, in her attempt to present Qur'anic hermeneutics by referring to hermeneutic theorists such as Paul Ricoeur (1981), considers components such as text reading as a "cumulative holistic process" i.e. as a whole or totality, and believes that there are principles in the Qur'an that indicate the Qur'an also prefers such readings. The point that Barlas makes in interpreting verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa is that reading a verse in isolation leads to a misunderstanding, and many verses need to be explained, that is, the interpretation of a verse without consideration of general context of verses and verses before and after, deviates and distorts the interpretation, while the Qur'an has a thematic and structural order and coherence (Barlas, 2001, 30).

Conclusion

In contemporary times, the direction of interpretive studies and thinking about the category of text and their interpretation has found serious differences with the past. In the past, the main focus of interpretation and interpretive reflections was on extracting meaning from the text and searching for rules and methods to facilitate and optimize this work. It was tried to revise the proper methodology for understanding the texts, and to provide effective rules and principles for achieving the correct meaning of the text and avoiding misunderstanding. Comparative study of different interpretations of a text were made only for the purpose of seeking a correct interpretation and to refute and reject incorrect understandings.

The events that have taken place since the last century in the field of text comprehension and interpretation have opened completely new horizons towards interpretive reflections. Instead of focusing on the principles and methods governing the interpretation and evaluation of the aesthetic aspect of the text, theorists focused on describing and explaining the exegetes and recognizing the conditions and

position of the exegete. In the field of interpretive studies, reflection on different interpretations of a text gave way to a historical study of the conditions for the realization of those interpretations to achieve correct interpretation and reject incorrect interpretations. The paradigm governing this type of interpretive study is interpretive contextualism, that is, what matters is the context governing the readers and exegetes of the text. It was aimed to show that each exegete has approached the text and provided his or her own interpretation according to their own needs, questions, and cultural and social context. Therefore, this study approach sought to show the evolution of the interpretation of a text based on the evolution of the field governing the exegetes.

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