

Typology of doubts of orientalists concerning the verses of Quran on women

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ABSTRACT

The issue of woman and the quality of analysis of her character and rights is one of the most important and controversial domains of Islamic thought. Some orientalists have highlighted the superficial meaning of some verses of Quran like Baqara: 222, Nisaa: 34, Yusuf: 28 and Ahzab: 53, in order to cast doubts of the authenticity of Quran as a Sacred Book and raised certain objections. They believe that Islamic religion has allowed oppression and abuse of women and neglected the dignity of this group. By referring to the works of orientalists like Leiden Encyclopedia of Quran and other works, one can summarize the doubts casted of the verses of Quran in three parts: 1- doubts of women's character, e.g. underestimation of woman and considering her as the second sex, 2- family related doubts of women, e.g. prescription of harassment of woman in Quran, 3- social doubts of women, e.g. partial share of woman from inheritance and so on and so forth. In the present essay, we discuss the typology of doubts of women from the perspective of orientalists by a descriptive method. Our studies show that these doubts as raised by the orientalists have their origin in the lack of sufficient knowledge or misunderstanding or lack of a comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of Holy Quran and Islam or in some cases, in hatred of Islam.

Key Words: Orientalists, Verses, Quran, Women, Men, Leiden Encyclopedia.

Introduction

The problem of character, status and social rights of woman in contemporary era has caught the attention of the scientific circles and societies and many doubts have also been raised as to it. Some scholars have authored works as to the totality of these doubts in various books. No independent work has been authored so far concerning this issue and the existing studies are in the form of essay and article. Among the works that have critically assayed the doubts of orientalists, one can refer to the essay by Masood Sohati entitled

“Critical Examination of Ideas of Orientalists regarding Social Rights of Woman in Quran”. There are several articles in this regard as follows: “Critical Study of Women and Quran” by Mohammad Javad Eskandarlou and Maryam Nooshin; “Critical Examination of Ideas of Orientalists regarding Hijab and Health of Woman” by Seyed Isa Mostarhami and Zahra Mohammadpur; “Woman’s Inheritance from the Perspective of Religions and Orientalists” by Fatimah Sadat Hosseini; “Analysis of Entry of Women and Quran in Encyclopedia of Quran” by Soheila Jalali and Sajedah Nabaei; “Critical Assessment of Entry of Gender in Leiden Encyclopedia of Quran” by Fathyyah Fattahizadeh and Hossein Afsardayr. The aforementioned works have studied some of the doubts of orientalists in a thematic fashion as well as some entries of Leiden Encyclopedia of Quran. But there is no work on the typology; then the present essay seeks to provide a typology of all doubts raised by the orientalists concerning the verses of Quran.

Thus, we seek to answer the following questions: who are orientalists and what is their domain of expertise? What are the doubts raised as to the verses of women from the perspective of women and foundations of these doubts? In how many types can the doubts raised by orientalists regarding women be classified? To answer these questions, we need to refer to the works authored by the orientalists and all doubts raised as to the woman should be gathered based on the existing sources and a typology of these doubts should be provided. Then, current essay is struggling to cover the typology of all doubts raised by the orientalists.

Orientalists and Their Domain of Expertise

• Meaning of Orientalism

Oriental studies or eastern studies to which in Arabic is referred to as “Esteshraq” is an equivalent of “Orientalism” (Rezaei Isfahani, n., 1: 28).

Orientalism in the sense of knowledge of east is composed of three words of “Orient”, i.e. east, eastern lands or Asia, suffix “al” for attribution, i.e. issues related to the East and eastern studies, and suffix “ism” that refers to school (Zamani, 2006: 853).

As a term, there are various definitions of “orientalism” the simple definition of which is as follows: “systematic studies conducted by westerners on different affairs of the Orient in view of geography, race, language, art, religion and etc.” (Rezvan, 1992, 1: 23). However, this definition is not desirable by all. Thus, some scientists have considered orientalism to be the scientific study of the Orient aiming at the domination over the east (Sadeqi, 2000: 28).

The most appropriate and comprehensive definition as to orientalism is that it is of two types and there is a specific definition for every one of them:

1- Orientalism in General Sense:

Totality of research activities planned by the westerners regarding different aspects of the eastern countries except their religious dimension.

2- Orientalism in Particular Sense:

Islamic studies conducted by non-Muslims; this is the definition offered by the seminaries of religious sciences (Zamani, 2006: 50-51).

Of course, existence of different manifestations of orientalism in different historical periods and regions has led every writer to provide a particular definition of orientalism that is in accordance with his own observations and knowledge. For this reason, numerous and different definitions have been suggested by scientists in a way that some orientalists (Salim Al Hajj, 1991, 10, 20) have considered the presentation of a precise and comprehensive definition of orientalism to be impossible.

It seems that orientalism as a term is somewhat imprecise; because what it suggests is the study of Islam and Muslims. This would have its origin in the fact that Jewish and Christian scholars have made the Islamic notions to appear less colorful. While here Arab and Muslims are intended together. This was the extensive notion of orientalism but what is intended here in this context is the orientalism in the domain of study of Islamic Sharia.

Orientalism is of different branches like Islamic studies, Arab studies and Indian studies that include a set of activities related to the discovery of scientific and ancient sources, collection and protection of cultural materials, indexing and bibliography, journalism, research, translation and editing the texts and their publication (Noori, 1999, 1: 175).

• **Types of Orientalists**

Orientalists have had different goals in their oriental studies among which one can refer to colonial, commercial, religious, economic and scientific goals (cf. Hamdi, 1989, 88-89; Ali Al Saghir, 1993, 15-21; Siaei, 2002, 20-31).

Generally speaking, orientalism as a current can be divided into three groups in terms of incentive to which some refer as “schools of orientalism” (Zamani, 2006: 853).

A) Fair and Truth-seeking Orientalists:

These are people who are truly after truth and for this reason, they refer to original Islamic sources in order to find the truth and express it. One can refer to such figures as “Edward Saeed” and “Henri Corbin” among these people.

B) Missionary Orientalists:

These are the church fathers who sought to defend Christianity and cover its deficiencies in order to resist the light of Islam; then, they started to study the Islamic religion in general and Quran in particular. They translated Quran only for the sake of criticism and “Respected Peter” is one of these orientalists.

C) Colonial Orientalists:

These were the agents of colonial states like UK, France and USA who sought to collect information of the east and its people in order to identify the points of strength and weakness and give the information to the embassies of western states so that in this way they can provide the ground for the domination of the west over the east and “Regis Blachere” and “Gibb” are examples of these orientalists (Shahed, 2007: 28-31).

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi have studied the incentive of the orientalists based on other variables and divided them into five groups and added two extra groups to the aforementioned ones:

1- Uninformed Orientalists:

These represent a group of orientalists who are neither an agent nor stubborn and dogmatic. They sabotage due to their ignorance.

2- One-Sided Orientalists:

These orientalists are neither an agent nor dogmatic or stubborn rather one-sided; in other words, their whole sources belong to Sunni Muslims and they are not familiar with the Shia sources. It is natural that these would work in the interest of Sunni Muslims but this sabotages Shia Islam (Journal of Quran and Orientalists, 2007, 2, 14-16).

Typology of Doubts Raised by Orientalists concerning the Verses of Women

Upon a review of the history of the life of woman in past eras and a research on different events undertaken by woman, it becomes clear that whenever woman purifies her soul and psyche, she turns towards the spiritual spheres and whenever she purifies her own nature of carnal desires, she becomes so powerful that even the destiny of a nation would be decided based on her will.

Therefore, the role of woman as the guider of humanity cannot be formal or even contractual and it is the Lord who has given woman such a great status within the beautiful and sagacious system of creation; but in the course of history, the truth of Quran and its verses and rules are neglected and the despisers of Quran and Islam in the east and the west of world have made numerous efforts to attack Quranic doctrines;

the orientalists have not been an exception to this, and they have challenged the human, familial and social character of woman based on Quranic verses.

- **Doubts of Woman's Character**

The discussion of woman in Islam has caught the attention of the proponents and opponents of Islam since time immemorial. Among the opponents of Islam, the orientalist scholars and researchers have highlighted the idea and thought of oppression of woman's rights and attributed this claim to Quran. Among these orientalists, one can refer to Ruth Roded who in her contribution to Leiden Encyclopedia entitled "Women and Quran" has thoroughly challenged some verses of women's issues. Nabia Abbott, Clara Rice, Rousseau, Margot Badran and other orientalists believe that in Quran, the laws are legislated against the women. The doubts of women's character are of two types:

- ✓ **Doubts of Woman's Creation**

As some of the despisers and opponents of Islam have raised doubts of the type of creation of woman and her existential differences, some orientalists have challenged the existence and creation of woman under their influence and raised certain doubts, e.g.

- **Menstruation as a Source of Illness and Existential Weakness of Woman**

Ruth Roded in her contribution to Leiden Encyclopedia suggests that in Quran, menstruation is considered to be a disease and impurity (Roded, n., 524). She has referred to two Quranic verses as regards menstruation:

1. "And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is harm, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are pure. And when they have purified themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you. Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves." (Baqara, 222).
2. "And if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and your hands [with it]. Indeed, Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving" (Nisaa, 43).

- **Comparison of Woman with a Farm as a Sign of Her Being Weak and a Property**

The comparison of woman with a farm is indeed one of those cases that is not desirable for Mrs. Roded and she considers it to be an expression of lower status of woman as compared to the man. She refers to the following verse of Quran to substantiate her stance: "Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers" (Baqara, 223). Since humans are the owners of farms and lands, Roded suggests, such a comparison turns the woman into a property (Roded, n., 524).

- **Superiority of Man over the Woman as a Second Sex and Their Humiliation**

Violation of women's rights in many human societies is a result of the idea of superiority of man over the woman. Many cultural beliefs without having any relationship with a special religion permeated into different religions and grounded this superiority for the men. Meanwhile, in addition to the oppositions of religions, orientalist researchers and scholars have also highlighted the idea of superiority of man over the woman and attributed this claim to Quran.

Roded contends that according to verse 228 of Surah Al Baqara, man is superior to woman. The verse 34 of Surah Al Nisaa has also been used for many centuries in order to defend the idea of superiority of men over the women. Mentioning women alongside the orphans, children and weak men who do not have the ability to take part in the war is itself an expression of the lower status of the women (Roded, n., 524). Moreover, based on the verse 16 of Surah Al Shua'ra, "women have been created for their husbands" (ibid, 526).

Nabia Abott is also of the belief that Quran based on the verses 228 of Baqara and 34 of Nisaa allocates a lower status to woman in order to humiliate her before the man. According to Abott, by revelation of the aforementioned verses, Islam has paved the ground for humiliation of the women (Abott, n., 107).

Rousseau the French orientalist believes that in Islam, men are the first sex while the women are the second sex. Woman has been created for perfection of man and providing his interests (Mortazavi, Pakzad, 2016, 49-74). He believes that woman's creation is for satisfaction of man and is a requirement of his nature. Woman only exists for the man. Accordingly, he also believes in the superiority of the man over the woman (Rousseau, 2014, 333).

Therefore, among the doubts raised of Quran by orientalists of the superiority of man over the woman, many doubts are based on the verses of Surah Al Nisaa and Surah Al Baqara where man is described as the patron of woman and it is man indeed who has the right to divorce.

➤ **Dependence of Woman on Man**

One of the other disdainful ideas of woman is thinking of woman as a premise of the existence of man. In other words, it is argued that woman has been created for man. This type of perspective still exists among some orientalist scholars. Of course, dependence of woman on man is conceivable in two forms:

A: Existential Dependence

B: Destiny Dependence

In her article, Roded writes: "dependency of women is not only voiced by the fact that there is no name of them in Quran rather they are mentioned merely as the mother, wife or woman of men. Women by their nature are dependent upon men" (Roded, n.: 524). She continues to note that "Destiny of women in their otherworldly life depends on their husband". She refers to the verses 55-56 of Surah Yasin and 22 of Surah Al Safaat (ibid, 524).

Rousseau the French orientalist also believes that woman only exists for the sake of man; women need the men for continuation of their life more than man do (Rousseau, 2010, 337).

➤ **Women as Less Reasonable Creatures**

One of the other doubts that has been continuously raised as to woman and her character is that of the deficiency of woman's reason. Rousseau the French orientalist though is one of the founders of equality in the world, has taken a different stance as regards the women and promoted gender inequality. He believes that women cannot reach true moral virtue; because they are rationally lower than men. Therefore, man's rationality and reasonableness has made him entitled to enter the public domain (politics and social life) while the lack of reason in women has made them more proper for emotional life (private domain) (Mortazavi, Pakzad, 2016, 53). According to Rousseau, it is the men who cultivate women's reason. Women cannot understand the theoretical sciences and they should not have practical education (Rousseau, 2014: 346).

➤ **Deception of Man by Woman as a Source of Evil and Sin**

One of the other humiliating theories of woman that has left undesirable effects in the world literature is the idea that woman is the source of sin. Woman's existence is the rise of evil and temptation. Woman is the minor devil. Man is essentially purified of sin and it is the woman who leads the man to sin. Satan persuades the woman to deceive the man. It was through the woman that Satan succeeded to deceive Adam and deprives him of Paradise; Satan deceived Eve and the latter did the same to Adam (Motahari, 2003, 117-118).

This idea has always existed in different religions insofar as some orientalists have endorsed it too. As Ruth Roded in her article "Women and Quran" notes, Eve represents the evil in the stories of Quran and prophetic traditions, because she is depicted as the one who is responsible for intentional deception of Adam. Having reviewed the negative and disdainful ideas of Eve, Roded proceeds to argue that Eve is not only a danger for her husband rather a potential threat for the whole human society (Roded, n., 528). On the other hand, she contends that Islamic events and stories of prophets are full of the narrations of uncontrollable sexual desires of woman and her guile (ibid, 530).

✓ **Doubts of Existential Value of Woman**

In the course of history and despite the development of civilization and science, there are still some people who attack woman's character and claim that woman is existentially weak and valueless and use Quranic verses as a basis to challenge her character. It is needless to say that there are still ignorant thoughts among the seemingly civilized people and this has its origin in their ignorance of Quran and Islamic doctrines. Orientalists have raised doubts in this regard, e.g.

➤ **Characterlessness and Valuelessness of Woman**

In the age of ignorance, woman was considered to be a creature between animal and man the occasion of creation of whom was just the reproduction of generation and serving the man. Burying the girls alive was considered to be a legitimate right of the parents of the girls. History is a witness to the fact that before Islam, woman lived in a very humiliating condition. In conditions that people lived with different values, the perspective of woman was negative and they considered them as a matter of distress, pain and disgrace. In such an atmosphere, woman lived in the margin and had no value; rather this state was a function of the will of man (Fazlullah, n., 106).

Roded considers woman to be a weak and passive creature, according to Quran (Roded, n.: 524). On the other hand, Clara Coliver Rice, the British orientalist, believes that woman from the perspective of Quran, is a secluded, humiliated and illiterate entity (Coliver Rice, 1987: 77-78). Rousseau the French orientalist has shown the woman as a weak and dependent creature who is considered to be part of the properties of the man and is at the service of family insofar as even the women are not regarded as citizens (Rousseau, 2010: 364).

Needless to say, despite countless scientific and industrial developments, there are still ignorant ideas among the seemingly civilized people and this has its origin in their ignorance of the domain of Quran and Islamic teachings.

➤ **Allocation of Paradise to Men and Ban of Entrance of Women into It**

Religious teachings have sought for the most important human perfection in nearness to God and achievement of pure faith, divine intimacy and acquisition of prosperity and no difference exists between man and woman in this regard. Nevertheless, existence of doubts that consider the capability of woman in reaching to the truth of faith to be defected or introduce the women incompetent of touching the truth of faith is noteworthy. One of the humiliating theories that have existed concerning woman is concerned with the spiritual potentialities of the woman; it was said that woman would never enter paradise, the woman fails to undergo through the spiritual and divine stations; woman is not able to touch the station of nearness to God which is already touched by men. In addition to the despisers of Quran and Islam, the orientalists also claim that paradise is restricted to men and the women do not have any place in paradise.

The British Poet Lord Byron claims that the paradise introduced by Quran and the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) is exclusively for men and nothing is allocated to women; rather it is only the men who will sleep with the beautiful women in paradise (Samimi, 2003, 390).

• **Familial Doubts of Woman**

Islam has described woman as a significant issue of life and the complementing part of human life as a whole in the domain of social, moral and legal issues. Thus conceived, woman is an effective member of the society and different laws have been legislated concerning the place of women. These laws are related to the individual, familial and social domains. In all orders, human interests of woman are taken into account; although they are seemingly against the human character of woman. Here we discuss the familial doubts of woman as raised by the orientalists.

✓ **Beating Woman as a Sign of Her Humiliation and Characterlessness**

The initial orientation of the Islamic prescriptions is the recommendation of compassion and mercy on others, tolerance, forgiveness of mistakes and avoidance of violence particularly as to the wife and Holy Quran in numerous occasions has insisted on the observation of the rights of women in family; but some

scholars have declared the rule of the unfaithful woman in the verse 34 of Surah Al Nisaa as promotion of violence.

Accordingly, some orientalists have highlighted the word “beat them” in the verse “Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah 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. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand” and do not pay any further attention to other verses of Quran and use this to be a reason for calling Islam the religion of violence against the women (Ibn Amer, 2004, 542).

Thus, Muslim jurists and exegetes of Holy Quran have precisely studied the criminal judgement of the unfaithfulness of women, on the one hand, in order to outline its conditions and limits, while the despisers have used it as a means to attack Islam.

✓ **Dependence of Woman’s Exit from House on the Permission of the Husband**

One of the laws related to marriage is the rule of the exit of woman from house without the permission of the husband. Ruth Roded believes that seclusion of pious Muslim women and their separation from the men who are not their relatives have their origin in the exegeses of a number of relatively ambiguous verses of Quran. The wives of Holy Prophet are ordered to stay at home (Ahzab, 33). Most jurists have inferred certain laws from this verse to the effect that the women are not allowed to travel to a destination that would take three days by walk without the permission of their masculine elders. Even with their permission, there should be a guard. The latter interpretation has its origin in the recommendation made to the wives of the Prophet of Islam whom are expected to stay at home. This verse continues to recommend the women to wear humble clothes, read their prayers, pay their alms and follow the orders of God and His prophet (Roded, n., 525).

✓ **Restriction of Man’s Supervision to the Period of Pregnancy and Child Upbringing**

Since family is a small social unit, it is natural that like a large society, it requires a unique leadership and presidency. Therefore, this responsibility has been assigned to man due to the features that exist in men, e.g. domination of the power of thinking of man over his emotion and feelings, having further physical power for defense of the family, financial commitment before the woman and children and paying the costs of their life.

Holy Quran has permitted the man to be a protector of woman within the circle of justice and divine satisfaction. The only measure for nobility before God is piety not gender. In Quranic culture, man’s status as the protector of family does not clear any room for the domination, supremacy and violence. No doubt, men are more prepared to take care of the women and family. But this verse is the source of many doubts raised by the orientalists for a long time now.

Mrs. Margot Badran who believes in approaching Islamic rules from a new perspective, in her contribution to the Leiden Encyclopedia, has limited the time of the man’s protection of family as mentioned in the verse 34 of Surah Al Nisaa to pregnancy, child upbringing and finally the provision of material needs (Badran, n.).

✓ **Illusion of Invention of Polygamy by Holy Prophet**

One of the Islamic rules related to women is the law of polygamy that has been legislated by God based on different reasons including individual, social, economic and geographical expediencies.

But this law has been criticized by the despisers of Islam in past and present. Eastern and western authors and thinkers have proposed different views in this regard, e.g. a group of people and some orientalists have pretended that this tradition has been pioneered by Islam. This group of orientalists without paying attention to the special conditions and realities of polygamy in the society, believe that Islamic religion has turned its back to the women by issuing such a judgement.

Such orientalists as Henry Masseh and Klawdh insist on the third verse of Surah Al Nisaa in order to argue that Islamic religion ignores women and Muslim women are living like animals; because the men can marry any number of women they want (Jamal, 1992, 75).

Roded contends that polygamy is permitted in Quran and the men are allowed to have 4 wives; but its permission is considered to lead to the violation of the rights of women and trespass of their human honor (Roded, n., 529). Meanwhile some orientalists have accused the relevant verses of contradiction due to their misunderstanding.

Goldziher believes that polygamy is permissible in Islam given the verse 3 of Surah Al Nisaa that permits this action provided that man is physically and financially capable and can observe economic and emotional justice. Then he quotes Mohammad Abduh in Tafsir Al Minar (Rashid Reza, 1994, 4, 283, 285) and argues that the conditions outline in Nisaa, verse 32 are impossible to be met. It seems that God has warned against polygamy and declared it impermissible. While in the first verse, he considers it permissible. There is a type of dualism and conflict between these two verses (Goldziher, 1995, 387-388).

Zorid Honch the German orientalist believes that polygamy had been one of the requirements of the tribal life. Islam has considered marriage to be sacred and asks the men to observe justice among the women and if they fail to observe the justice, they have to suffice to one wife. Who can observe justice among the women? Then, Islamic religion does not permit indeed the polygamy and it just allows marriage with one woman; because men cannot observe justice among their own wives (Honch, 1990, 471-472).

Yusif Dareh Haddad the Lebanese priest writes, "whether the men have the power to observe justice as to their several wives or not? Because some verses give positive answers to this question while the other give negative answers" (Sadeqi, 2009, 394).

On the other hand, Margot Badran notes that some exegetes have inferred the refusal of acceptance of polygamy at the beginning of the verse 4 of Surah Ahzab, because God has not given two hearts to any man. Therefore, Islam does not accept polygamy (Badran, n., 37).

Will Durant has also claims that Medieval religious scholars thought that polygamy is an innovation of Holy Prophet of Islam (Durant, 1986, 51).

✓ **Guardianship and Right to Divorce of Man: Humiliation of Character of Woman**

Some orientalists refer to the verse 34 of Surah Al Nisaa in order to interpret the guardianship of man as humiliation of the character of woman. On the other hand, they accept divorce right given to man as a law of Islam and use this as a point of departure for attacking Islam. They have claimed that the divorce right has led to the dissipation of women's right, dignity and humanity (Ibn Amer, 2004, 542 and 547).

✓ **Allocation of Dowry to the Time of Divorce in Quran**

One of the financial rights of women in marriage within the legal system of Islam is dowry. Dowry in legal system of family is of a special status. The words and practical norms of Imams and their disciples have always insisted on this point. This is recommended to be a humble gift given by man to the woman; but in the course of time, this type of perspective has changed and dowry has increased to unbelievable portions and turned to a social problem and is faced with certain challenges and doubts.

Montgomery Watt believes that in Islamic religion, dowry is a property of woman while in Quran the issue of "dowry" is not discussed in the form of an independent and permanent rule; rather in some verses, it is discussed as a secondary problem. But the verse 34 of the fourth Surah of Quran has merely spoken of the payment of "reward" to the women that is related to the temporary marriage and has nothing to do with dowry (Montgomery Watt, 1978, 433).

Social Doubts of Woman

Social status of woman in Holy Quran is one of the issues that have led to baseless accusations particularly in western societies to be leveled against Islam. Upon reflection on the verses of Holy Quran, it becomes clear that God has allocated a high stature for the women in the society and in all verses referred to the majesty and character of women in the society. Thus, woman is considered to be an effective member of the society and there is no difference between human individuals including the man and woman in

accomplishment of social affairs. Some orientalists by raising the claim of the nobility of man over the woman have sought to criticize the sacred book and make the wrong to be appeared right. Among these doubts, one can refer to the following:

- **Hijab an Obstacle before Civilizational Development:**

Hijab is one of the religious teachings that has always been criticized by some people. Among these individuals, one can refer to the orientalists who consider violation of woman's right for presence in the society, harmfulness of wearing Hijab and possible danger for her health to be the negative consequences of Hijab. It is claimed that Hijab is harmful for the health of skin and due to the shortage of Vitamin D, it can lead to skin cancer and even it is argued that Hijab causes depression in women (Mostarhami, Mohammadpur, 2016, 117).

The general approach of the orientalists and their works to the problem of Hijab should be studied in the context of their view of Eastern Muslim woman. Representation and depiction of Muslim women in west is of a long background and has played a significant role in development and strengthening of colonialism.

Moja Kahf in her work entitled "Western Representation of Muslim Women" has studied the course of development of Muslim women in different periods. She believes that the picture of eastern woman has been oscillating between tempting woman and woman behind the curtain in the course of past centuries (Kahf, 1999, 179). Accordingly, although some changes are seen in the picture presented of the Muslim woman, there is a permanent relationship between the sexual temptation of Muslim woman and her Hijab. Looking at Hijab as a prison for the Muslim woman has not changed in the course of centuries and this picture is still dominant in the works produced in west and their media.

Roded finds the verses related to Hijab full of ambiguity and believes that the division between distinguished exegetes in relation to limits of Islamic Hijab continued for centuries and concludes that general picture of woman in Quran is of two aspects; women have certain freedoms in their religious tasks and economic occasions but in the social domain the men are the subject and this function in a striking form has become manifested in women's being an otherworldly reward for the men. The details of the chastity of women have been outlined more than those of men. This is due to the further threat that lies in the sexual desires of the women as compared to the men. Thus, women need more to take care of their chastity (Roded, n., 531).

Moreover, according to Lord Kramer, Quran is responsible for Egypt's backwardness and its distance from the modern civilization otherwise it takes the Hijab from the face of woman and puts it on the face of Quran (Bandaq, 1983, 108). Margolith believes that the law of Hijab in Islam has led to the legalization of polygamy (Margolith, 1912, 137). Then, polygamy and men's right of divorce are among the serious consequences of the application of the law of Hijab in Islam and seclusion of women (ibid, 134).

- **Woman's Share of Inheritance, a Sign of Lower Value of Woman**

It is many centuries now that non-Muslim orientalists and Islamic scholars are working on the teachings and content of Quran. One of the issues related to woman is the discussion of inheritance. Despisers of Islam and orientalists have raised certain doubts.

Some orientalists argue that there is no occasion for woman's share of inheritance to be half of that of man. Dowry and allowance will not cover up this. From the very outset, woman's share of inheritance must be half of that of the man so that we should not be forced to cover it up with dowry and allowance (Hosseini, 2009, 70). Roded believes that women's partial share of the inheritance is a manifestation of her secondary status in life.

As to economic rights of women, they believe that the freedom of women in the field of right of ownership has been raised in a wonderful way in Quran and is very noteworthy. Classic Muslim scholars have explained that since the laws of inheritance are mentioned after the section related to the issue of orphans, these regulations reflect the concerns of the Muslim families whose husbands have been killed in war. Some new scholars who have conducted studies concerning the early Islam, e.g. Stern and Goitein, refer to the massive properties of Khadijeh the widow of Prophet of Islam and some other women, and argue that in a commercial city of Mecca before the dawn of Islam, women had a share of inheritance.

Therefore, the social reality and time and space of the revelation of Quran would have been influential on the preparation of the economic laws for women. Indication of women along with the orphans and children in Quran implies that women are weaker social entities. Therefore, preparation of their welfare is considered to be a moral action. The share of inheritance of women is half of that of men and this is the logical result of the financial responsibility of men in return of their protection of their wife. Some have states that since women do not have economic responsibility like men, they need lesser financial possibilities. Anyway, laws of inheritance in Quran, not only provide the woman with a major part of the income, they also show the secondary status of woman well (Roded, n., 529).

- **Equality of Testimony of Two Female Witnesses with the Testimony of a Man: A Sign of Women's Weak Memory**

In Quranic verses the testimony of women is accepted and a verdict can be issued based on it. But wherever there is a discussion of the testimony of women, it is in concrete form. In other words, a woman's testimony is acceptable when it is associated with the testimony of a man or the female witnesses must be more than one. Some have challenged this idea and believe that it is humiliating.

Ruth Roded in her essay refers to the verse 282 of Surah Al Baqara and argues that the testimony of women is one of the other examples of the ambiguous issues in Quran. When we need two male witnesses, the testimony of one man and two women is sufficient and its reasons has been mentioned in Quran in a very clear fashion. This is due to the possibility of error in recollection. In other words, women in legal testimony are trustable, but their memory is not as precise and correct as that of men (Roded, n., 525).

- **Difference of Retribution of Woman and Man, a Sign of Degraded Position of Woman**

In Islam, woman is equal with man in view of human dignity and honor, but their rights and punishment are different from each other. In other words, there is equality in Islam but not similarity. To put it otherwise, Islam defends equality but it is against similarity. This Islamic perspective has caused the man and woman to have different rights, obligations and punishments.

Those who did not allocate any right to woman in past, today try to consider the different rules of Islam as degradation of woman. Meanwhile, orientalists are not an exception to this rule. Roded in her essay refers to verse 178 of Surah Al Baqara and highlight the difference of the retribution of man and woman and considers it to be a sign of the degraded status of woman as compared to man (Roded, n., 525).

Conclusion

Precise and comprehensive understanding of woman's character is based on paying attention to the descriptive system, value system and legal system of woman and each one of these three systems inside themselves contain individual, familial and social dimensions.

As to the individual, familial and social character of woman, Islam has offered different descriptions. It has not only evaluated the behaviors of woman, rather regulated certain rights and obligations for her. Perhaps one of the reasons of considering Islam's perspective discriminative as to women is failure of paying enough attention to descriptive and normative dimensions along with legal rules.

Some orientalists have not paid sufficient attention to the differences of the woman and man that has its origin in the system of evolution as well as the different behaviors of woman and man in the context of dominant culture in Islamic societies. Many of the aforementioned rules are considered to be specially for the conditions and time of revelation of Quran and for this reason, they believe in thinking of new rules related to woman and man while the Islamic regulations are legislated based on justice and they are not for a particular era or age so that they would have an expire date.

Orientalists in some occasions have sufficed to the appearance of the verses and paid no attention to the context. Moreover, they have referred to limited exegeses whether in terms of number or in view of approach and lexical and terminological meanings. This make the views of orientalists very weak. The stance of some orientalists before some jurisprudential and social issues like polygamy and Hijab is partial and the lack of extensive study concerning such discussions as share of inheritance and divorce and ignorance of the ideas of different jurists have added to the problem.

On the other hand, most of their sources are works written by western authors who would be foreign to the spirit of Islam and they do not refer to original sources. In fact, the source of all these doubts is the superficial, deviated and partial perspective of woman which has been held by all despisers in the course of history as regards women.

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