

To What Extent Is Islam Misogynist?

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The essay critically evaluates if Islam is a misogynist religion by analyzing diverse perspectives. This phenomenon has been observed in recent years and different scholars have given different explanations towards this topic. The essay uses the case study method to discuss the values of Islam and links to gender relations. Through the case study of Muslims' performances on understanding misogyny, the essay hopes to have broader lessons of recognizing that Islam is a controversial religion on promoting misogynist ideas. The result of the essay reveals that binary ideas of misogyny exist in Islam, but it does not deny the worth of Islam. In conclusion, the essay deepens our understanding of Islamic doctrines on the roles of men and women based on the arguments of misogyny. To some extent, it will reveal that the notion of misogyny misrepresents most people's attitudes towards Islam. Moreover, the essay can be useful to understand how to correctly view the core values of Islam and interpret that Islam could not be underestimated in terms of redefining the norms of gender. Admittedly, the essay is limited because not all prejudices start from a misogynist perspective towards Islam, and there will also be other discourses such as factional struggle and caesaropapism in Islamic countries. Further studies can explore other factors that cause the misunderstandings of Islam.

Keywords: Islam, misogynist, Muslim, values, gender

Introduction

In 633 C.E., Islam was established by Muhammad in the Arabian Peninsula. His devotees generally perceived it and, in the end, set it up. The Qur'an was viewed as the focal text of Islam. In the Qur'an, the Shari'a played an essential rule in all Muslims' minds that they needed to follow, and see how they acted in their lives as indicated by God's desires (Sajoo, 2018, p. 3). For quite a while, the Shari'a had ensured men's social strength and higher needs over women. However, in the cutting-edge time frame, the Shari'a was constrained or proactively transformed under the positive impact of globalization and widespread qualities, which assumed an active part in working on women's status. Today, it appears that although Islamic nations think that it is provoking headed straight toward present-day women's liberation, the general pattern focuses on advancing women's rights (Badran, 2005, p. 9). In the Islamic world, women's activists have, without a doubt, turned into a fundamental power that could not be overlooked in the public arena. They make progress toward changing women's situations and promoting gender equality, despite the fact that there are different guidelines on the out of line treatment of women's freedoms in the Shari'a. It is also worth mentioning that Islamic women's rights share the central goals and upsides of equity, libertarianism, value, sympathy, and resistance in Islam, which represent the core ideas of Islamic feminism (Mirza, 2008, p. 30). Islamic feminists make great contributions to women's equal rights to challenge traditional perspectives of gender roles and the notion of

patriarchy. In this process, Badran states that Islamic feminism evolves over and over time to provide new thinking concepts and new tools (2005, p. 13). Overall, from the development of Islam through the Shari'a and Islamic feminism, although men and women have conflicts with gender equality, Islam is constantly changing and adapting to the mainstream of thinking today.

The essay's research question is regarding the assessment in case that Islam is misogynist. This research question is challenging because there are some stereotypes towards Islam due to the lack of understanding of Islam and the existence of strange rumors, and this dilemma will deteriorate the problem of misunderstanding Islam. However, this topic matters, because it provides an opportunity for people to learn about Islam and bridge the gap between the imagination and the reality of Islam, and reflects the truths behind the accusations of Islam. Therefore, this essay will focus on Muslims' performances based on three aspects: the evaluation of the Shari'a, the comparison of attitudes among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism towards women in their religious texts, and the advancement of women's liberation. It is necessary to understand how these factors interact with each other and analyze why these factors shaped the misunderstanding of misogyny in Islam. Also, this research will be a useful reference to provide audiences with a clear perception towards Islam and help them evaluate if Islam is misogynist in terms of Islamic values and perspectives on gender relations.

The essay is divided into several sections. After the introduction, the essay will discuss the role of the Shari'a in Islam and assess the Shari'a on gender norms. Next, the essay will compare the perspectives on gender relations among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The essay will then identify the achievements caused by Islamic feminist movements. Finally, the conclusion will summarize all sections, stress the significance of this research, and reveal potential limitations.

The Evaluation of the Shari'a on Gender Relations

Most importantly, it is crucial to find out with regards to the center thoughts of the Shari'a and see how the Shari'a interprets if Islam neglects women. Islam as a religion, its adherents could be male or female. Among nations where Islam is the state religion, practically all women are practically female Muslims. The Shari'a exhibits that women should wear a veil to show their humility; female Muslims not just incorporate conventional women who wear a veil and stringently comply with each of the guidelines and statutes (Bowering, 2015, p. 290), yet additionally include more women in a more extensive territory. Nevertheless, some women claim that it should not be compulsory for women to wear a veil or have no justice and equality in the Shari'a. For example, Mir-Hosseini argues that 1978-1979 Iranian revolution made her believe the justice in Islam, but the Shari'a did not take responsibility in maintaining people's justice and advocating patriarchal social norm as a law, which was a shame for her as a Muslim woman (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 629). On the one hand, her arguments are controversial based on the debates of feminist movements in the Islamic world. On the other hand, her example could not interpret the status-quo of female Muslims.

Nowadays, the more significant part of female Muslims in Malaysia and China do not cover their faces anymore. In terms of traditions, the Qur'an advocates gender equality among males and females (Badran, 2005, p. 12). This shows the possibility of balance and the regular division of individuals into people, whereas it is doubtful that those female Muslims could have the same status as men. This sort of correspondence is a tremendous amount of uniformity in the idea of the Qur'an, rather than the fairness in the whole society. As per Offenbauer (2005, p. 31), the Qur'an indeed did not mention the subordinate role of women, except for others' interpretations. Under the historical and sociological framework, it has explained how the Qur'an and the

Shari'a reveal the big picture of misogyny by emphasizing the values of powerful men (Offenhauer, 2005, p. 31). Similarly, Smith outlines that female Muslims have similar low status as women in most traditional countries (1979, p. 518). So, the reality of women is crueler than what the Qur'an describes. Moreover, it is not adequate for women to get material privileges and status enhancements. The Shari'a characterizes marriage as an arrangement among males and females, like a settlement. The Qur'an uncovers that if women would send their wedding gifts to men, then men could acknowledge and appreciate women (Rippin, 2012, p. 281). For this situation, women are viewed as sex commodities, so they need to pay the price to transfer this value. It is not difficult to track down that women are not equal to men, and in some countries, men can be in a relationship with several women simultaneously, which is absolutely unfair to women. Subsequently, the clarification of the Shari'a is controversial in judging misogyny and unequal gender relations in Islam. It is ironic that women and men are equal, but marriage is unfair to women.

Compare Islam With Christianity and Judaism: Attitudes Towards Women

Furthermore, it would be flippant to blame Islam for misogyny by taking out specific sentences from the Qur'an, except if contrasting the perspectives of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity towards women in their strict messages. There is a groundbreaking thought that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam had previously affected and continuously framed the present existence where women are somewhat second. The Bible says that the dad's misfortune brings forth a girl (The Morality 22, 3). This perspective on girls as a disgrace is like the perspective on Arabs who buried their young child women alive before the introduction of Islam. The Qur'an seriously denounces this conduct. The Qur'an accepts that the introduction of a young lady resembles the introduction of a kid. It is a gift from Allah (Qur'an 16, 58-59). At the beginning of Islam, to dispose of the wrongdoing of covering young child women alive, the Prophet Muhammad guaranteed incredible prizes to the people who were given to their little girls and raised them well. Alternately, Jewish people focused on traditional gender roles, especially in marriage, which showed the influences of religion in daily life (Ridley, 2004, p. 30). However, Ridley illustrates that women do not have feelings of subordination and oppression in this process (2004, p. 8) because they thought their domestic responsibility seemed more important. It implied that women were indoctrinated by religion about how they behaved as a mother or wife. Islam is different from this point of view. A male should pay more attention to his family. He needs to care about his wife's emotions, and protect and support his wife (Ridley, 2004, p. 20).

In early Jewish society, women were not permitted to be witnesses. It was one of the nine curses that had been brought about by people and removed from Paradise. Indeed, even in Israel today, women are not permitted to give proof in strict Jewish courts. Rabbinism has clarified that this was on the grounds that the spouse of Abraham Sarah lied in the Bible (The Book of Genesis 18, 9-16). This story is referenced more than once in the Qur'an. However, there is no record of Sarah lying in the Qur'an (Qur'an 11, 69-74, 51, 24-30). In Christian culture, both church and common law also disallowed women from giving any testimony, and this circumstance remained until the end of the 19th century. Additionally, the Bible states that women are excluded from ordination and theological education, because they are not theologically prepared (Malhotra, 2002, p. 100). Later, female students of theology realize that the traditional religious texts and practices existed prejudices towards women and spread the patriarchal values, so they begin to apply their theological materials into the reinterpretation of the traditional texts, in order to recognize the significance of women's contributions to the understanding of Christianity.

From the above comparison, it is not difficult to see that the disposition towards women in the Qur'an is somewhat liberal. The Qur'an could be the earliest religious text that advances equal gender relations, by contrast with the notion of exclusion and marginalization in Christianity and Judaism. Notwithstanding, in the long turn of events, since Jewish and Christian nations deserted the solidarity of governmental issues and religion, the situation with women had progressively pushed toward secularization. Despite generally expected the drawn-out solidarity of legislative issues and religion in Islam has kept it cruder for women.

The Development of Feminism in the Islamic World

In addition, the spread of women's liberation in the Islamic world could demonstrate that Islam is not misogynist. Islamic women's liberation focuses on the roles of female Muslims in the Islamic world. The Islamic women's activist development intends to promote gender equality, whether in general or remote regions (Majid, 1998, p. 333). Henning also provided an in-depth view of the issue of patriarchal explanation of Islamic teachings on equity and egalitarianism, especially on discrimination of women in education and employment (2016). These aims gradually foster the development of Islamic feminism and expand its influence over the Islamic world.

During the spread of Islam, different districts shaped their qualities because of various regular conditions, political variables, social foundations, and different elements. The advancement of Islamic women's liberation is like the improvement of Islam. The advanced Islamic women's liberation started in the late 19th century. Amin scrutinizes those specific traditions like polygamy, veils, and the veil system, as they prompted the gender isolation in Islam (1992, p. 36). He accepts that these traditions do not have anything to do with disregarding the soul of Islam (Amin, 1992, p. 83). His work has enormously affected women's political development in the Islamic world and extended Muslim women's familiarity with their privileges. Badran had similar stances with Amin on feminist movements. For instance, he emphasized that women play a vital role in nationalist movements, since women represent the central and independent symbols to the nation, when they are oppressed and start to fight against inequality (Badran, 2001, p. 49). Based on his perceptions of women in the development of Islamic feminism, the Malaysian women's association "Malaysian Sisters" distributed booklets for clarifying the arrangements of the Qur'an on uniformity among people (Badran, 2005, p. 12). The philosophical understanding of opportunity concerning hypothetical soundness adds to the advancement of woman's rights development in Islamic culture. It implies that the Qur'an can be considered and clarified by women, similarly as men can evaluate the Qur'an at the beginning (Lazreg, 1988, p. 86). In any case, this methodology has its restrictions since gender equity depends on the understanding of the Qur'an. Tough lessons limit it without the explanation of women's issues, but Mir-Hosseini emphasized the significance of advocating Islamic woman's rights and how it impacted the participation of an ever-increasing number of women in the Islamic world (2006, p. 639). More and more women defend their power through linking Islam to feminism and liberating themselves from the gender norms, which is a positive starting point on the road to gender equality, even though it still needs a long time to reconcile the relationship with men and consolidate the roles of women in society. Hence, the advancement of Islamic woman's rights might say that Islam is not completely about misogyny, but it is still difficult for women to locate their positions and persuade everyone to recognize gender equality in Islamic culture temporarily.

Conclusion

Taking everything into account, somewhat, Islam is not misogynist. The Shari'a invigorates gender uniformity and defaults to women's uncalled for treatment in marriage. Presently, this sort of articulation is very

inconsistent that women could not understand their status. According to the viewpoint of the improvement of women's liberation in the Islamic world, even though preservationists have reprimanded it, the Islamic world does not dismiss women's rights; it even permits common women's liberation in the end. Islamic women's liberation has its impediments, yet it is creating a positive way that deserves acknowledgement. To ponder the outflows of women's perspectives in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, it emerges to be that Judaism and Christianity might be more awful; the situation with women in Islamic nations is, for the most part, more in reverse on account of the effects of Judaism and Christianity and the blend of state and religion in the Islamic world. Islam is by all misogynist accounts from its traditions, yet it is anything but an issue of Islam; it is an issue of the framework in the advancement of Islam. The Islamic world is evolving gradually. Maybe soon, Islamic nations will be renewed and introduce another life.

This paper has analyzed how these variables interface with one another and investigate why these elements formed the misconception of misogyny in Islam. This paper helps to understand how to critically evaluate the role of Islam on gender relations in the future, and demonstrates that Islam is not an exceptional religion, and that is inclusive of women. At the same time, this paper deepens the academic understanding of the religious dilemma in Islam and its chain reactions caused by the notion of misogyny. To a certain extent, misogyny is representative that shows its negative consequences on misunderstanding Islam, and other factors also contribute to the biases of Islam. Thus, further research will focus on the discussion of potential factors and their roles in the development of Islam.

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