
BEIJING+25



HAS THE **MASK OF**
GENDER EQUALITY
FALLEN?

**THE WOMEN'S SECTION IN THE
CENTRAL MEDIA OFFICE OF HIZB UT TAHRIR**

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Content

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Executive Summary</i>	6
<i>Is Gender Equality a Universal Value?</i>	
Dr. Nazreen Nawaz	10
..... Director of the Women’s Section in the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir	
<i>The Beijing Conference is an Integral Part of the Clash of Civilizations It is not a Woman’s Struggle with Man</i>	13
Rana Mustafa	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah LEBANON	
<i>With the Beijing Platform for Action and the Global Program for Sustainable Development All Humanity will be Left Behind</i>	18
Dorra Baccouche	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah TUNISIA	
<i>Ratification, Commitment, and then Liberalization of Family Laws This is the Situation of Arab Governments to Follow up on the Beijing International Goals and Agenda</i>	23
Rana Mustafa	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah LEBANON	
<i>Evaluating the Gender Equality Narratives</i>	
Dr. Nazreen Nawaz	27
..... Director of the Women’s Section in the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir	
<i>Women and Poverty : Gender Equality as a Means of Disguising the Truth of Capitalist Inequality</i>	35
Zehra Malik	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah TURKEY	
<i>Education and Training of Women : Educating a Woman is Obligatory in Islam, not an Imaginary Right that the Beijing Declaration Represents</i>	42
Muslima Ash-Shami	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / THE BLESSED LAND - PALESTINE	
<i>Women and Health : Are the Failures of Women’s Healthcare Provision a Matter of Gender Inequality or of the State System?</i>	48
Amanah Abed	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah AFGHANISTAN	
<i>Violence Against Women : The Need for a New Perspective to Ending Violence Against Women</i>	55
Yasmin Malik	
..... Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / THE NETHERLANDS	

<i>Women and Armed Conflict: Solutions on Paper ... but Failure on the Ground!</i>	62
Bara'ah Manasrah Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / THE BLESSED LAND – PALESTINE	
<i>Women and the Economy: Progress or Oppression from the Narrative: 'Women's Empowerment through Employment'</i>	67
Fika Komara Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / INDONESIA	
<i>Women in Power and Decision-Making : In the Swamp of Beijing, "Only Dead Fish Swim"!</i>	74
Zeina As-Samit Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah TUNISIA	
<i>Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women : Between the Existing and the Desired Mechanisms, Goals are Lost</i>	79
Hajar Al-Yaqubi Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah TUNISIA	
<i>Women's Human Rights: The Capitalist System and Women's Rights... Does the Malicious Tree offer Good Fruits?</i>	83
Zeina As-Samit Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah TUNISIA	
<i>Women and the Media : Between the Shariah Perspective and the International Charter</i>	89
Nessrine Boudhafri Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / ARAB GULF REGION	
<i>Women and the Environment: The Impact of the Environmental Crisis Upon Women Cannot be Solved by Addressing Symptoms Rather than the Cause</i>	97
Fatima Musab Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah PAKISTAN	
<i>The Female Child in the Beijing Declaration: Between Honouring and Selling Delusion</i>	104
Bayan Jamal Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir / THE BLESSED LAND – PALESTINE	
Conclusion	110

Introduction



All Praise is to Allah (swt) Who bestowed on us the blessing of Islam and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his family, companions and all those who followed him.

The year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), an extensive document that was the outcome of the UN's fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, held in Beijing, China. Its aim was to advance the rights and improve the lives of women globally through the establishment of 'Gender Equality' in all spheres of life: political, economic and social, and to incorporate gender perspectives into all policies, laws and programmes within states at all levels of society. It was hailed as the most visionary agenda for the empowerment of women and girls internationally and the "most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for action" to realize gender equality and the human rights of women and girls everywhere. It promised to revolutionize the status and lives of women for the better by eliminating gender discrimination in all its forms.

The BPfA was adopted by 189 countries, including the majority of governments in the Muslim world, who agreed to implement its provisions and commitments within their states, and to remove any systemic, cultural or religious barriers to equality between men and women within their societies, in both public and private life. The aims and agendas contained within the declaration were promoted heavily within nations and formed the basis of many subsequent international conventions and national acts and laws regarding women's rights. To mark this 25th year milestone of the BPfA, UN Women have also launched an international campaign: "Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights for an Equal Future", which aims to galvanize a new generation to call for gender equality, and to achieve it in economics, politics and family life before 2030.

Over many decades, the concept of 'Gender Equality' contained within the BPfA and other international agreements has become a marker internationally of civilized, progressive states, and a measure of how well nations treat their women. It is seen as a universal value that all people should embrace regardless of their cultural or religious beliefs, despite the concept being a Western-born construct that is founded upon the Western secular man-made doctrine. Indeed, gender equality has come to be viewed by many as the unquestionable means to empower all women, improve their quality of life, and advance the development of nations. The statement: "Gender Equality is not only a goal in itself but a means for achieving all other goals on the global agenda" has become ingrained in the psyché of the international community.

Consequently, any belief, culture or ideology at odds with gender equality is condemned and labelled as anti-women, backward and oppressive. The Islamic social and family laws have been the main target of this accusation by gender activists, secular governments and UN agencies. Hence, successive regimes in the Muslim world sought to reform or abolish these Islamic provisions in their lands, under the false guise of securing women's rights and achieving modernization and progress. However, in truth, the intensive propagation and imposition of the Western concept of gender equality within Muslim-majority states and upon Muslim communities world-wide had no relation to the betterment of the lives of Muslim women. Rather, it was simply another means employed by colonial capitalist states in their ideological struggle against Islam to prevent its rise in the Muslim world as a political system: the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood, which would challenge their hegemony and threaten their interests in the world.

This is evident in the fact that 25 years on from the BPfA and its intensive agenda to further the cause of gender equality globally, the political, economic, environmental and social problems facing Muslim women across the world, and indeed women internationally, remain dire and are worsening by the day. The promises of bringing empowerment and improvement to their lives have not been delivered. So, “**Has the Mask of Gender Equality Fallen?**”, and if so, is it right that it continue to be used as a yardstick to judge the merit or deficiencies of other cultures and systems?

This booklet seeks to challenge the dominant narratives related to ‘Gender Equality’ and its claims of advancing women’s rights and wellbeing, and the progress of nations. It examines the reasons for the failure of gender equality policies and laws in improving the lives of women, as well as explaining the true ideological and systemic root causes of the multitude of problems facing women today. It also exposes the true agenda of the BPfA and other international women’s agreements with regards to the propagation of feminism and gender equality to the Muslim lands and to Muslim communities across the world. And importantly, the booklet aims to illustrate how Islam and its political system, the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood, provides a fresh approach and alternative time-tested credible vision to truly improve the lives of women and solve the many problems they face. It will present Islam’s unique comprehensive blueprint of detailed principles, laws and systems which raise the status of women within a society, secure their rights, protect them from harm, elevate their standard of living and achieve true progress within a state.

The booklet is a compilation of articles by female members of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir from different parts of the world, and was launched as part of a global campaign organized in March 2020 by the Women’s Section in the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir entitled, “**Beijing+25: Has the Mask of Gender Equality Fallen?**”. The campaign, which enjoyed extensive international support, culminated in an international online conference with speeches by female members of Hizb ut Tahrir from Tunisia, Australia, Turkey, Lebanon, Indonesia, the Blessed Land of Palestine and Britain.

We ask that Allah (swt) rewards all those who contributed to the booklet, and those who organized and participated in the campaign and conference. We pray that their efforts help aid the swift return of the glorious Khilafah state which will truly build a brighter future for all women under its protective rule. Ameen.

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“*And We have not sent you, (O Muhammad), except as a Mercy to the worlds.*” [Al-Anbiya: 107] ■

Dr. Nazreen Nawaz
Director of the Women’s Section
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Executive Summary



In September 1995, the United Nations (UN) organized its fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. It was attended by 6000 government delegates and more than 4000 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and was described as the largest-ever gathering of gender equality advocates. The outcome of the conference was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), an extensive document, hailed by the UN as the most visionary agenda for the empowerment of women and girls internationally and the “most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for action” to realize ‘**Gender Equality**’ and the human rights of women and girls everywhere.

The BPfA was adopted by 189 countries, including the majority of governments in the Muslim world, who agreed to implement its provisions and commitments within their states and promote its agenda and ideals amongst their nations with the aim of establishing equality between men and women in all spheres of life: political, economic and social. They pledged to equalize the roles, rights and responsibilities of the genders in both public and private life by removing systemic, cultural or religious barriers to gender equality, including in the family unit. The declaration was viewed as marking a “significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality”, and indeed, formed the basis of many subsequent international conventions and national acts and laws regarding women’s rights. It promised to revolutionize the status and lives of women for the better by eliminating gender discrimination in all its forms.

The year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It also marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of UN Women as well as the 5th year milestone of the UN’s global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). The UN’s SDGs, set in 2015, also has as part of its key aims, the advancement of gender equality, viewing it as integral in realizing its goals of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development world-wide. Governments and gender activists have organized activities in states across the world to celebrate the quarter century anniversary of what was termed a landmark text. UN Women have also launched its international campaign: “Generation Equality: Realizing Women’s Rights for an Equal Future”, which states as its aim – to galvanize a new generation to call for gender equality, and to develop a program of concrete measures to promote rapid actions to achieve equality between women and men in the economic field, politics and family life before 2030.

The BPfA set strategic objectives and a catalogue of actions to be taken by governments and others at national, regional and international levels to improve the lives of women through advancing gender equality in what it termed – 12 ‘Critical Areas of Concern’: Women and Poverty, Education and the Training of Women, Women and Health, Violence Against Women, Women and Armed Conflict, Women and the Economy, Women in Power and Decision-Making, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, Human Rights of Women, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment, and The Girl-Child. The aim was gender mainstreaming and incorporation of gender perspectives into all policies, laws and programmes at all levels of society. It called for governments, public authorities, businesses, women’s organisations, NGO’s and other institutions and bodies to formulate strategies, policies and programmes, to mobilize resources and to address legislation to achieve the goals of the BPfA, emphasizing that the systemic changes to transform the structures, institutions and norms within states according to gender equality should be deep and irreversible. Consequently, the agenda of the BPfA

was promoted hugely within nations. Comprehensive national and regional five-year reviews were also conducted by governments and UN agencies to assess the progress made and to formulate further actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles and challenges and achieve full and accelerated implementation of all the provision of the BPfA.

Over the past few decades, the concept of 'Gender Equality', embodied within the BPfA, the SDG's and other international conventions, such as the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), has become a marker internationally of civilized states, and a measure of how well nations treat their women. The progress of countries is often judged by the scale of its implementation and presence within societies. And it is seen as a universal value that all people should embrace regardless of their cultural or religious beliefs. This is despite the fact that gender equality is a Western-born construct, founded upon the Western secular man-made doctrine, which emerged due to the numerous injustices and absence of basic rights that women within European and other Western states suffered under their secular systems – a history not shared by Islam nor Islamic rule.

Hence, gender equality has come to be viewed by many as the unquestionable means to empower all women, establish respect, justice and a fair life for them, improve their quality of life and achieve their full potential in society. For example, the statement: "Gender Equality is not only a goal in itself but a means for achieving all other goals on the global agenda" has become the mantra of many UN agencies and feminists, and ingrained in the psyché of the 'International Community'.

However, the intensive global propagation of gender equality as a yardstick for women's empowerment that all nations should embrace, regardless of their beliefs, should not be seen in isolation of the global political landscape, but rather within the context of an ideological struggle that has been taking place across the world for many decades between Capitalism and Islam. It is unquestionable that Western colonial states have engaged for over a century in a concerted and vigorous agenda to promote and impose secular, liberal, democratic and other capitalist ideals, lifestyles and systems in the Muslim lands and upon Muslim communities worldwide. The aim has been to preserve the hegemony of Western capitalist states in the world by preventing the spread of Islam and its rise in the Muslim world as a political system, the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood, which would pose an ideological threat to their strategic and economic interests. Entwined and integral to achieving this agenda has been the propagation of feminism and its Western ideals across the world, and in particular, the Muslim lands. Indeed, there has long been a marriage between feminism and colonialism, captured in the words of Leila Ahmed, an Egyptian American writer on feminism in the Muslim world and author of 'Women and Gender in Islam', who wrote: "Anthropology, it has often been said, served as a handmaid to colonialism. Perhaps it must also be said that feminism, or the ideas of feminism, served as its other handmaid."

Consequently, there was a politicization of the 'Women's Debate' and 'Women's Issues', which became dominated and monopolized by Western secular ideals and agendas that nations were expected to embrace and promote under the false guise of women's rights, modernization and progress, while in reality having no relation to the betterment of the lives of Muslim women. Objective study of the true causes and sound solutions to the plethora of problems women faced, as well as the true impact of different value systems upon the lives of women, family life and society was disregarded in place of the pursuit of capitalist ideological agendas. Hence, any belief, culture or ideology which was at odds with the concept of gender equality or Western liberal values was condemned and labelled as anti-women, backward and oppressive by default, without genuinely examining the soundness and credibility of these Western ideals, nor whether the impact of the implementation of these alternative cultures upon women, the family unit and society was positive or problematic. The Islamic social and family laws, such as those regarding the rights and roles of men and women in marriage, or those related to divorce, custody of children, inheritance, and polygamy, were the main targets of this charge by gender activists. Hence, there were robust calls by the UN, feminists, Western governments, women's movements and others, for the reform or abolishment of these Islamic provisions within the Muslim lands. These demands continue till today, with allegations that the Islamic social laws disempower and devalue women, are unjust towards them, prevent them from taking their full place in society and are obstacles to the development of nations. Successive regimes in the Muslim world adopted and implemented this agenda, embodied within the BPfA, CEDAW and other international agreements, to change the Islamic social and family laws within their states along secular, liberal and gender equality lines. Aided by the secular media, feminist

organisations and other secular institutions and bodies, these Muslim governments heavily promoted the equal sharing of roles and responsibilities of men and women in family life and society, claiming that this would build a better future for their women and their lands.

However, 25 years on from the BPfA, and 40 years after CEDAW, and their intensive agenda to further the cause of gender equality globally, the promises of empowerment and improvement to the lives of women contained within these international agreements has not materialized for the masses of ordinary women in the Muslim world, nor world-wide. In fact, within many countries, the scale of violence, poverty, insecurity, exploitation, sexual trafficking, injustice and oppression that women face, as well as the state of education and healthcare within their lands has worsened. It is a fact acknowledged even by the UN, as evident in a communique issued by UN women in May 2019 regarding ‘UN Women at Women Deliver 2019 Global Conference’, which stated, “Despite some progress, real change has been slow.....women continue to be discriminated against, their contributions are undervalued, they continue to work more, earn less, have fewer choices, and experience multiple forms of violence at home and in public spaces.” It is manifestly clear, therefore, that despite such intense global and national agendas to promote and implement gender equality within states, no real change has been delivered for women; rather, their problems persist or have deteriorated further. Furthermore, attempts to equalize the roles of the genders has undoubtedly brought women further strain and misery, including having to be breadwinners for their families, as well as causing tensions within marriages due to disputes over responsibilities, and devaluing women’s unique role as mothers, leading to the neglect of the rights of children. All this has had a negative impact on the integrity of the family unit, and the wellbeing of women, men and children alike, with inevitable consequences upon society.

Hence surely, the question should arise, “**Has the Mask of Gender Equality Fallen?**”. Do the narratives promoted—that gender equality is the path to the empowerment of women, the removal of oppression, the improvement of their quality of lives, and the progress of nations – truly stand up to scrutiny? Or is it the case that gender equality has served as a diversion and distraction from addressing the root ideological and systemic causes, and understanding the key solutions to the countless problems and injustices that women and girls face today, in addition to placing further burdens and dilemmas upon them? And if so, is it right that gender equality continue to be used as a yardstick to judge the merit or deficiencies of other cultures and systems?

Twenty-five years on from the BPfA, it is surely apt to sincerely evaluate the truth of the prevalent belief that achieving gender equality is the panacea to women’s problems and oppression. What is for certain is that we cannot simply follow the same recipe of failure. Therefore, there needs to be a fresh approach and alternative credible vision to secure a brighter future for women and girls in politics, economics, education, healthcare, family life and every sphere of society.

This booklet aims to illustrate how Islam and its political system, the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood, represents this alternative time-tested credible vision. The booklet was launched as part of a global campaign organized in March 2020 by the Women’s Section in the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir entitled, “**Beijing+25: Has the Mask of Gender Equality Fallen?**”. The campaign culminated in an international online conference with speeches by female members of Hizb ut Tahrir from several different countries.

In this booklet, we seek to examine the strategic objectives of the BPfA in its various ‘Critical Areas of Concern’ and to illustrate how its failures in achieving its goals are related to the inherent flaws contained within the concept of gender equality. This includes its defective approach to analyzing problems and presenting solutions from a myopic gender perspective, rather than studying their true causes objectively. We aim to show that the multitude of problems that women face today are the direct result of capitalist, socialist and other man-made beliefs, values and systems implemented in states across the world, and how gender equality has served as a veil to cover the scale of responsibility that these systemic and ideological factors carry for the woes of women globally. The booklet will also highlight the erroneous nature of the gender equality narratives related to the empowerment of women, as well as expose the insidious agenda of the BPfA to reform and abolish the Islamic social and family laws within states and the mechanisms and institutions used to achieve this aim. And finally, the booklet will present the unique Islamic vision for achieving the true empowerment of women and genuinely improving their quality of life, dismantling the lies regarding Islam’s devaluing and oppression of women. It will illustrate how the Islamic ideology as implemented by the Islamic system, the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood, provides

a comprehensive blueprint of detailed principles, laws and systems to practically, raise the status of women within society, including their role as mothers, prevent and solve the multitude of problems they face, remove injustices, provide them access to high-quality education and healthcare, enable them to have an active and productive public role within a safe environment, and achieve true progress and development within the state.

Indeed, Islam is a unique system, sent down as a guidance and mercy to the worlds by Allah (swt), the Creator of the Universe, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, Who knows best how to organize society and family life in a manner which is best, most just and provides for the needs of all human beings – male and female alike. Allah (swt) says:

﴿الرَّ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ﴾

“Alif Lam Ra. This is a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord’s permission from utter DARKNESS INTO LIGHT – to the way of the Mighty, the Praised One.” [Ibrahim: 1]

We pray that the contents of this booklet will serve as a means to distinguish the truth from the falsehood with regards to advancing the rights of women, as well as provide a clear and compelling vision for how to secure for them a brighter, prosperous and more secure future ■

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Is Gender Equality a Universal Value?

Dr. Nazreen Nawaz

Director of the Women's Section
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“Gender Equality is a shared vision of social justice and human rights.”

Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women

It is claimed that ‘Gender Equality’ is a ‘Universal Value’ that should be embraced by all nations regardless of their religious beliefs. Those who support this assertion argue that this is because it is a neutral concept that has no affiliation to a particular culture or ideological viewpoint and hence should not contravene the belief system of any people. However, this is incorrect from a number of perspectives.

It is important to firstly understand that gender equality is not simply a call for women to have the same political, economic, educational and legal rights as men, or viewing the genders as having the same worth and intellect. Rather, it is the belief that there should be equality in all aspects of society, including marital and family roles and responsibilities, as well as sexual freedoms.

Gender equality was born from the historical experience of injustice, oppression and absence of basic rights of citizenship that women within Western states faced under secular systems, which viewed them as intellectually and spiritually inferior to men. Furthermore within these societies, women were subjected to many injustices within marriage: they were viewed as the property of their husband, losing control of their wealth to him; they found it near impossible to seek a divorce, even if the husband was abusive or unfaithful; they had no custody rights over their children; and they were left unprovided for upon divorce or if widowed. Additionally, the traditional organization of roles within the family unit within Western history, with the man as the head of the family and the woman the homemaker, was rooted upon a flawed understanding of the nature of the genders. Men for example were viewed as having the capability of reasoning, action, intellectual strength and being independent in their thinking; hence, they were equipped to be the head of the family and to operate in public life. Meanwhile, women were viewed as being emotional, irrational, passive, and embodying the qualities of submission and dependence; hence, they were restricted to the private sphere. Even the so-called ‘Enlightened thinkers’ of Western secularism, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Montesquieu, found it impossible to grasp that women had the same worth and intellect as men. They described women as incapable by their nature to develop the full faculty of reasoning and depicted them as creatures of emotion and therefore unsuitable for the public sphere. Alongside such lowly views of women, the role of homemaker and child-rearing was not valued within these societies. Rather, they were viewed as burdensome and menial tasks, in contrast to the traditional male role of breadwinner of the family that was seen as an honourable duty. Hence, the call for gender equality in marriage, family life and society arose within these western secular states to elevate the status of women, improve their rights and end these many injustices.

However, Islam does not share this historical experience, because from its inception it recognized that men and women had the same worth, intellect and human nature. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا﴾

“And Allah has made for you wives of your own kind...” [An-Nahl: 72], and He (swt) says:

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا﴾

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates” [Ar-Rum: 21]. And the Prophet (saw) said,

«إنما النساء شقائق الرجال ما أكرمهن إلا كريم وما أهانهن إلا لئيم»

“Women are the twin halves of men. None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner, and none but an ignorant treats women disgracefully.” Furthermore, the Islamic texts enshrined for women the same political, economic, educational and legal rights of citizenship as men. Women were also encouraged to have an active role in public life under Islamic rule, including in the political sphere, such as expressing their political opinions and electing the ruler.

In addition, Islam never regarded the wife as the property of the husband but rather maintained that she was his companion and a legal entity on her own right. It also obliged good treatment of the wife by the husband as well as granting women the right to initiate divorce, rights of custody over their children, access to inheritance, the right to conduct their own contracts, seek judicial redress independently, and to be a master of their own wealth and property – all of which were secured for women under 1400 years of Islamic governance – evidenced by the law books and judicial records of the Khilafah (Caliphate) state. For example, the judicial registers of the Uthmani Khilafah [Ottoman Caliphate] confirm that under its Islamic rule, no one, including husbands, could sell, rent or use a woman’s property, or spend her wealth without her consent, and if they did, she could and did initiate suits against them in court.

Alongside all this, Islam gave immense value and importance to the role of being a homemaker, wife and mother, raising its status in society and assigning great rewards in the Hereafter to fulfilling these duties well. The Prophet (saw) said,

«مَهْنَةُ إِحْدَاكُنَّ فِي بَيْتِهَا تُدْرِكُ عَمَلَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ»

“The woman that does her domestic chores [cheerfully] attains the rank of those upholding Jihaad.”

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟
قَالَ: «أُمُّكَ»، قَالَ: نُمُّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: «نُمُّ أُمِّكَ»، قَالَ: نُمُّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: «نُمُّ أَبِيكَ»

A man once came to the Prophet (saw) and said, ‘O Messenger of God! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?’ The Prophet (saw) said: “Your mother.” The man said, “Then who?” The Prophet said: “Then your mother.” The man further asked, “Then who?” The Prophet said: “Then your mother.” The man asked again, “Then who?” The Prophet said: “Then your father.”

Hence, there was no need in Islam for the rise of any feminist movement calling for gender equality, or women’s rights.

Moreover, the concept of gender equality that advocates that women should define their own rights and roles in life fundamentally contradicts the Islamic belief. This is because in Islam, men and women do not define their rights, roles and duties based upon equality or their own desires and interests but upon the Laws of Allah (swt) alone. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا﴾

“It is not (fitting) for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error.” [Al-Ahzab: 36].

In addition, Islam prescribes certain clear differences in roles, duties and rights for men and women within family life and society such as in inheritance, the process of divorce, polygamy, Mahr (dowry) and the responsibilities of the husband and wife, including the duty of the man to be the guardian and provider of his family, and the woman to be the home-maker and primary caretaker of her children. For example, Allah (swt) says,

﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ﴾

“Men are the protectors and maintainers [qawwamun] of women, because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth.” [An-Nisa: 34]. And the Prophet (saw) said,

«كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْأَمِيرُ رَاعٍ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ...»

“Each of you is a guardian, and each is responsible for those under his care. A ruler is a guardian; a man is the guardian of his family; a woman is the guardian of her husband’s house and children...” Defining the woman as

the homemaker and primary caretaker of her children does not take away from her, her right to seek employment if she wishes, as long as she fulfils her home and family duties. Furthermore, Islam's prescribing of the man as the head of the family is not based upon male superiority and domination but rather upon the concept of guardianship and heavy responsibility in taking care of, protecting and providing for his wife and family. Islam's differentiation of roles, duties and rights for men and women in marriage and family life is not based upon any sense of gender hierarchy but rather what is required to effectively organize the family unit so that the needs of all family members are fulfilled effectively, and harmony is achieved in family life. Nor does Islam define one role above another but rather views all prescribed duties as complementing one another and essential for the successful functioning of the family unit. Additionally, the specific responsibilities of men are not linked to greater success and status than those prescribed upon women; rather, success and status in this world and the next are measured according to the effort placed in fulfilling those duties commanded by Allah (swt). He (swt) says,

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْتَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer verily, to him will give a good life, and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do.” [An- Nahl: 97]

Hence, the Muslim woman does not evaluate her success by measuring herself against the man and his rights and responsibilities but based upon how her Creator (swt) views her and according to her fulfillment of the duties He (swt) has prescribed for her. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾

“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing.” [An-Nisa: 32]

Finally, Islam rejects the notion of sexual freedoms. ‘Sexual Liberation’: the idea that individuals – male and female - should have the right to pursue any sexual relationship they desire, as well the right of women to have abortions at will, is a concept that is rooted firmly in secular liberal culture. Islam's strict view and laws regarding the regulation of the interaction of men and women is well known, including its prescription of a specific dress-code for women that covers the entire body except the face and hands; the prohibition of the beautification of women in the presence of non-Mahram men (men to whom marriage is valid); the prohibition of a non-Mahram man and woman to be alone together (Khulwa); the prohibition for the genders to meet except for a reason defined by the Islamic Shariah laws, such as education, medical treatment and trade; and the prohibition for any sexual relationship to take place outside of marriage. All these rules and regulations are aimed at protecting and preserving the chastity of the individual, which in turn protects the integrity of the family unit and the wellbeing and rights of men, women and children alike – all of which is of vital importance in Islam. Allah (swt) says,

﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْضُوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْيُّ لَّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾
﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ﴾

“Say to the believing men that they lower their gaze and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do. And say to the believing women that they lower the gaze and guard their private parts...” [An-Nur: 30-31]. Islam also prescribes severe Islamic punishments for fornication and adultery, and views aborting a life with a soul as a heinous crime in the eyes of Allah (swt), unless performed to save the mother's life. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ﴾

“And do not kill your children out of poverty. We will provide for you and them.” [Al-Anaam: 151]

Hence, gender equality is not a universal value; rather it is a Western secular construct that is alien to Islamic culture and history. It therefore should not be imposed upon Muslim communities and societies under the false premise that it is a culturally neutral concept based upon a shared vision of life, for this is an affront to the truth ■

The Beijing Conference is an Integral Part of the Clash of Civilizations It is not a Woman's Struggle with Man

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(Translated)

The West has formulated, through numerous international covenants and treaties, its system of inhuman values that is clashing with the system of the Islamic values, with the aim of globalizing it and imposing it in particular on the Islamic world under the guise of the United Nations and its affiliated institutions. They formulated many agreements and conferences through which they aimed to strike the concepts of Islam and Shariah rulings relating to the social system in particular, in order to bring about controversial chaos in the Muslim family, (the nucleus of society), which has become besieged by those covenants and treaties from all sides and directions, with all methods of deception and even fraud in mixing concepts and the contents of terminology.

And here is the Beijing+25 Conference, the sixth meeting to discuss the points of the Beijing Declaration, which became the main document and international reference for global policies regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, leading this vehement war, and working to follow up the implementation of what was recommended by the Kafir West in its previous conferences, starting in 1975 at the Mexico City Women's Conference, in which the first global plan related to the status of women was adopted, through to the CEDAW Conference in 1979, which produced a convention containing thirty articles, all of which bear an attack on the Islamic religion. Then came the Copenhagen Women's Conference in 1980, the Nairobi Conference in 1985, and the Population and Development Conference held in Cairo in 1994, which in its report called for access to sexual and reproductive health services, including birth control. And ending with the Beijing Conference in 1995 under the title, "Equality, Development and Peace", where it was proven to every sane person that they all seek to corrupt women and the Muslim family and spread corruption and vice and moral decadence among people under the guise of achieving gender equality.

Like many international conferences and conventions, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action includes items aimed at programming minds with ideas and concepts to break the foundations of the society and strike its fundamental beliefs, such as calling for gender equality, and targeting their malevolent arrows towards women and misleading them with terms and slogans that reinforce this equality and ridding her as they claim of the male domination, thus eliminating the very distinguishing quality that preserves the foundations of the social system in all Islamic countries.

In its details, the document talks about gender, homosexuality, religion and many ideas, most notably:

* Imposing the idea of the right of a person to change his/her sexual identity from male to female or vice versa and the subsequent official recognition of homosexuals and effeminate and to include their right to homosexuality within human rights, including their right to marry, recognize their deviant entity as a family and to obtain children by adoption or surrogacy.

* The right of women and girls to enjoy a safe sexual life with whomever they want, and at any age, and this enjoyment does not have to take place within the framework of legal or customary marriage, and giving them advice so that this enjoyment is safe (Chapter Four from articles 91 to 105).

* Urge governments to pay attention to meeting the educational and service needs of adolescents to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality (Article 267) as the signatory states are obligated to care for sexually active adolescents, and to provide sex education to children and adolescents through the media and education and to train them to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, mainly AIDS.

* Giving adolescents the right to continue their education without condemning or denouncing pregnancy that occurs through fornication (Article 80g and 83s). A woman who becomes pregnant through fornication has the right to choose between abortion or keeping the pregnancy provided that social care is committed to her care and the care of her newborn.

* Criminalization of early marriage, because it impedes women in different areas of their lives (Articles 39, 71, 93, 107a, 259, 263, 268, 274e, 275b, 277d) and the consequent need to raise the age of marriage for young men and women.

* This document does not recognize marriage as the only legal intimate relationship and considers it an injustice against women because it limits their freedom and contributions to the society. It did not use the word husband but replaced it with the word partner or couple, which confirms recognition of any bilateral relationship (a man with a man or a woman with a woman) or that which occurs outside of legal or customary marriage (Article 29 states: "In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist.").

* The document recognizes and invites homosexual families. Whenever the word "parents" is mentioned in the document, it appears next to it "or legal guardians" (Item 107e, 259, 267).

* As for the document's dealing with religion, it considers it one of the obstacles facing women. (Articles 46, 80a, 80f, 95) Article 232a states, "Give priority to promoting and protecting the full and equal enjoyment by women and men of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion". This also means endorsing the principle of sharing power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in national and international societies.

The plan to strike the structure of our societies does not have a specific ceiling at which suspicious claims end. Part of the course for corrupting and secularizing social life in order to achieve gender equality, is what is happening recently in some countries in the Islamic lands such as Tunisia, Palestine, Sudan and the Arab Gulf region and other countries that ratified the terms of such suspicious agreements, especially the CEDAW Agreement, which topped the attention of ministries that deal with women's affairs. In Sudan, for example, Minister of Labor and Social Development Lina Al-Sheikh said that Sudan will sign all agreements that guarantee human rights in all areas. And that her presence in the ministry is an opportunity to support all women's movements and their demands, and she stressed that the suspension of laws and legislations restricting freedoms is one of the most prominent priorities of the transitional government. (Khartoum Sudan Tribune 17/10/2019) The move came in line with Chapter Two Item 7 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which supports the CEDAW Convention and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, as well as relevant decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, to define a core set of priority actions to be undertaken over the next five years.

This is initiated by the procedure for lifting reservations and promoting the various agendas of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and working to accept it despite its clashing with the Islamic laws of personal status and societal cultures in Islamic countries, and implementing its provisions in accordance with Item 9 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which asserts that it is the duty of States regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms".

- In Tunisia, for example, on 23/11/2018, a law was passed in which woman's inheritance was made equal to man's inheritance, in a blatant defiance of the verses of Allah. Thus, according to this law, women in Tunisia today inherit less than their share that Allah has ordained for them! Yes, these naive people do not know that in Islamic jurisprudence there are thirty-four cases of inheritance in which women inherit in different proportions. In about eleven cases women inherit like men. In another fourteen cases, the woman inherits more than the man. In five cases, the woman hinders man and takes the entire inheritance. In only four cases, a male has twice the portion of a female.

They promote the ideas of these international women's agreements despite its clashing with the majority of the people of chastity, virtue, and purity, and those who abhor the vice, obscenity and their advocates and tools and all those who have helped in it in the Islamic lands, as in Palestine, where a large group of dignified women from Palestine (over 3,000) denounced in Diwan of Al-Harbawi the CEDAW Agreement and called to drop it and reject it with all its items. In Tunisia, too, many stands were held by the dignified women condemning the fierce attack on women and the Muslim family as a result of the implementation of these international covenants and treaties.

The great focus on corrupting the Muslim family in accordance to the Western secular concept, and the pursuit of the liberation of Muslim women and the attainment of their alleged rights according to this inhumane system, is accelerating in most Muslim countries with facilitation and support from puppet regimes and unleashing human rights and women's organizations with their suspicious programs and activities. This is in addition to a directed media that consolidates legislations and laws that duel Allah with enmity and contradict the great Islam under flimsy arguments and justifications that are rejected by reality and refuted by the Holy Book of Allah. Among these laws and justifications in support of them are:

- Promoting birth control programs in order to reduce the size and the number of family members, under the slogan of women's reproductive health and safety.
- Combating polygamy in order to prevent it under the slogan that it is an injustice to women and a denial of their rights.
- Fighting the concept of guardianship (Qiwamah) under the slogan of women achieving their self-determination and personal independence, and preventing man's control and influence over them.
- Criminalization of early marriage with the motive of addressing the problem of high divorce rates, and also with economic motives - where early marriage leads to non-productivity of Muslim women. According to the Indonesian government, early marriage may disrupt government plans for sustainable development and impede economic growth. (Compass, July 2016).
- Attacking some rulings of the social system to repeal some laws on the pretext of curbing honor crimes and stopping women's violence.

Bringing forward these justifications and flimsy pretexts is a deliberate action aimed at distorting the Shari' rulings and demonstrating that they deprive women of their rights. In addition, these loose and deceptive slogans and other misleading lies are meant to mislead people and to conceal from them the fact that the amendment of personal status laws came in proportion to the wishes of the United Nations, and in line with the provisions and platform of the Beijing Conference.

This is apart from the fact that these justifications and slogans collide with reality:

- For example, divorce rates are increasing in various regions of the Arab world, especially in Egypt, Jordan and the Arab Gulf countries, where they ranked the highest. In Jordan, it went up to 85%, most divorce cases are in the age group between 20-40 years, and in Algeria, 80% of divorce cases occur in the first months of marriage, due to the couple's wrong mindset about marriage and family formation. As for Tunisia, there are 41 divorce cases per day; Tunisian courts issued approximately 14,982 divorce rulings in 2015. The many cases of divorce that we see is not due to early marriage, but for many other reasons, including wrong upbringing of the girl, in addition to the conditions of life imposed by capitalism, which led to a life of hardship and weak capacities to meet the demands of life from housing, clothing and expenses.

As for the rates of honor crimes and cases of violence against women, they are also on the rise. In Turkey, for example, despite the Law on the Protection of the Family and the Prevention of Violence against Women, which was passed in 2012, and despite Turkey's ratification of the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe in 2011 regarding the prevention of domestic violence, women's vulnerability to violence and murder has been increasing year after year. The Hurriyet Daily News reported in May 2019 that Turkish courts have granted 856,020 protection orders to victims of domestic violence during the past 27 months. The spread of the phenomenon of violence against women is not due to the rulings of Allah, but rather, it is the atmosphere of hostility created by feminist societies between men and women, and the provisions of international covenants that consider life between them like a conflict and a relationship of injustice and persecution, and that it is they who work to end this injustice!

- As for the abolition of father's guardianship (Wilaya) over his children, we will leave you with what the Western writer David Popenoe wrote in his book, *Life without Father*: "The decline of fatherhood is a major force behind many of the most disturbing problems... and delinquency; premature sexuality and out-of-wedlock births to teenagers, depression and substance abuse." This is what they want for our families in the Muslim world, which is exactly what they warn their societies from!!

These are just a few of the numerous examples of contradictions between the imposition of the malicious covenants

and treaties and reducing the scale of problems experienced by women, as they have proven to be irrelevant to the lives of the average woman. The reason for this is because they believe that the quality of a woman's life can be improved by calling for gender equality, which is an imperfect, deficient and wrong belief, and ignores the real reasons behind women's problems, that they are the consequences of adopting and applying the systems, ideas, and man-made ideologies of this corrupt capitalist civilization.

It is not the changes in the rulings of the Islamic Shariah related to the social system - which guaranteed the decent living of the family and society and honored and preserved women from what humiliates them for nearly 13 centuries – and which will change the condition of women and find solutions to them and remove injustice from them. Rather, what will achieve this is the elimination of the liberal democratic values and the secular system which has failed to achieve anything but misery for millions of women in the world. The real danger does not exist at all in the Islamic Shari' rulings, but it exists only in the hypocritical and criminal capitalist system that allows women to be exploited for the sake of profit, promotion and celebration of the sexual freedoms that have caused the epidemic of rape and other sexual crimes from harassment to fornication (Zina).

The social system in Islam is based on the fact that there is no differentiation nor equality between men and women and each has his/her specific divine rulings. There are rulings specific to men and rulings specific to women due to the difference in their biological creation, and these rulings are issued by the Creator of the two mates, the male and female.

﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾

“Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?” [Al-Mulk: 14]. So, where did the concept of gender equality come from and how can we accept it?!

Islam honored women and placed them in a high status. Allah Almighty said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرْتُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾

“O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.” [An-Nisa: 19].

The Prophet (saw) said:

«استَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا»

“...Treat women well” (Bukhari and Muslim). And he (saw) said:

«لَا تَضْرِبُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ»

“Do not beat Allah's handmaidens.” (Ibn Majah). And the Prophet (saw) said:

«أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ»

“The most complete of the believers in faith, is the one with the best character among them. And the best of you are those who are best to your women.” (at-Tirmidhi).

It also made man's guardianship (Wilaya) over woman permanent throughout her life, whether she is a girl, a wife, a sister, or a mother, so that she does not need to go out even a day on the street in order to make a living because men are her guardians; men in general, including the father, brother, and husband. Therefore, guardianship here is not authoritarianism or dictatorship, rather the guardianship is one of providing financial maintenance (Nafaqa), care and looking after her affairs. The Almighty said:

﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِنَفْسِهِنَّ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ﴾

“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” [An-Nisa: 34]. It also made Nafaqah only obligatory on men and not upon the woman.

The supreme goals of these Shari' rulings and others can only be achieved through a state based on the Islamic Aqeedah (doctrine), which comprehensively applies all the rulings of the Islamic law. This state is the Khilafah

(Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophethood, which will organize society based on the correct view of the relationship between men and women that achieves cooperation between the sexes while protecting the unity of the family, according to a constitution emanating from Allah's rulings, because Allah Alone is the Wise, the Knowing, who knows the best way to organize the affairs of men and women, and their rights and duties in a way that achieves happiness and success for the family and all its members. Allah Almighty says:

﴿إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

"The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, "We hear and we obey." And those are the successful." [An-Nur: 51].

* The Khilafah will implement an effective judicial system to deal with crimes swiftly so that women are able to seek justice quickly and easily for any violations of their honor or rights.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُنَّ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً﴾

"And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses - lash them with eighty lashes" [An-Nur: 4].

* The Khilafah will take extensive steps to preserve the dignity of its women, including mobilizing the armies against foreign forces which deny or even threaten to attack their honor, because preserving the honor of a woman has a great place in Islam.

* The Khilafah uses its political, educational and media systems as well as all other available means to enhance the view of respect for women.

- **"The primary role of women is that she is a mother and responsible over the household and she is an honour that must be protected."** (Article 112, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir for the Khilafah State).

- **"It is prohibited for any man or woman to undertake any work which could undermine the morals, or causes corruption in the society."** (Article 119, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir for the Khilafah State).

- **"In origin men and women are segregated, and do not come together except for a need by Shar' agrees to it and agrees to their assembly for it, such as trade and the pilgrimage."** (Article 113, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir for the Khilafah State).

- **"It is not permitted for a woman to be alone with a non-Mahram. It is not permitted for her to reveal the adornments (Tabarruj) and the 'Awhrah in front of foreign men."** (Article 118, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir for the Khilafah State).

- **"Marital life is one of tranquility; and the couple should live together as companions. The guardianship (Qawwamah) of the husband over the wife is a guardianship of care and not ruling..."** (Article 120, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir for the Khilafah State)

And here comes our role; to seek to apply the rulings of Islam in our lives and our society, and to abide by all the Shariah rulings. What we need first is to cultivate the nucleus of faith in the souls so that its fruits bear the best of commitment and piety. We also have to eliminate the Kufr thoughts and their impurities from our souls and minds and keep their garnish and luster away from us, and to exert our efforts to thwart the plans of the colonialists to distort Islam and return their plot to their necks. And we, Allah willing, are able to do so if we are true in determination and sincere in the intention, for we are the Ummah of sacrifice and redemption who believe that Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for that they will have Paradise. So, know that the ultimate triumph and victory is for the Islamic civilization with the correct, divine, Shari' concepts that have brought and will bring happiness and tranquility to all who follow it. All of this requires us to go back to the start, for the end of this Ummah will not be reformed except with a remedy from the start.

Our Ummah is the carrier of civilization, guidance and light. The Almighty said:

﴿قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ۝ يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ ۝ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

"There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book. By which Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darkneses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path." [Al-Ma'ida: 15-16] ■

With the Beijing Platform for Action and the Global Program for Sustainable Development All Humanity will be Left Behind

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(Translated)

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda (2016-2030) in September 2015 under the title "Transforming our World" and was adopted by 193 countries to succeed the Eight Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) that centered around fighting poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality and securing health, universal primary education, the sustaining environment and developing global partnerships, and it focused on developing countries only. However, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development applies to all developed and developing countries of the world, and it consists of 17 goals (eradicating poverty and hunger, ensuring health, education, gender equality, clean water, renewable energy, decent work and economic growth, industry and innovation, reducing inequalities, building sustainable societies, rationalizing consumption, working for climate, life below water and life on land, and peace and strengthening partnerships to achieve the goals), and revolves around five key themes: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, and 169 targets covering the three dimensions of sustainable development, which are economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. About 230 indicators were approved to monitor the progress of the achievement of this global program for sustainable development, its goals and targets.

2030: A number, its spread has a tale

Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not legally binding, the 2030 Agenda was presented as a qualitative leap, a change project, and a global roadmap to be adopted by all countries and all actors. The year 2030 has become a reference year for any development plans such as the five-year development plan in Tunisia, or national strategies such as the Sustainable Development Strategy - Egypt Vision 2030, the UAE Economic, Environmental, and Industrial Vision 2030, or programs or projects such as the Youth City 2030 in Bahrain, or policies or legislation in various countries. This number falls between the lines of reports to visualize visions of various sectors such as health, services, agriculture, maritime fisheries, industry, trade, etc. by the year 2030, at a time when countries, in the midst of rampant corruption, are unable even to provide a near-term outlook in these areas. Rather, the majority of those who are required to prepare these reports do not realize that choosing the ceiling for the year 2030 is significant and that donations and assistance that come from donor countries in the context of development projects or budget support are conditional, and that the provision of technical support for the development of women's advancement mechanisms and training sessions on gender and their inclusion in the preparation of public budgets is well-advised.

Gender Equality in the International Agenda for Beijing and Sustainable Development

Among the most widely circulated in the definition of sustainable development is what was published in the Brundtland Report entitled "Our Common Future" issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This is almost what is portrayed in our minds when exposed to this term but it is implicitly related to gender equality. Although the issue of women and the battle for gender equality is clearly manifested in the twelve areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, as shown in the rest of the articles in this booklet, we find it disguised in the Agenda for Sustainable Development though it is placed in the purpose as a stand-alone goal, goal 5, which is concerned with "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", and as a general

goal, goal 10 on reducing inequalities. At first glance, it does not come to mind that the achievement of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development is essentially based on achieving full gender equality, but the study shows that the philosophy of this agenda is based on the same adoption as the Beijing Declaration, which is that women enjoy the same rights as men in the direction of exploiting all their potential to activate their participation in all fields. That is why we see the United Nations and its bodies have been keen to integrate the approach of "gender" in all development goals, seeing women as an element that directly or indirectly intersects with most of these goals and intertwines with them, thus laying at the heart of the interests and policies of all sectors. Consequently, sustainable development cannot be achieved unless the problems of equal opportunities for women with men are addressed in all fields. Thus, the fifth goal on achieving gender equality in the 2030 Agenda is not only a separate goal but also a critical and comprehensive development requirement for all sectors.

In this context, the success of the Beijing Plan of Action and the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 remain subject to women's empowerment and gender equality.

“Development will only be sustainable if its benefits accrue equally to both women and men; and women’s rights will only become a reality if they are part of broader efforts to protect the planet and ensure that all people can live with respect and dignity.” (From the report of Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

Thus, the success of the sustainable development agenda in any country depends on the progress made in reducing and closing gender equality gaps in that region. Hence pressures are exerted on governments to implement goal 5 under the cover of the rest of the SDGs and to take the necessary measures to align local laws and development plans with this goal, establish mechanisms for accountability, monitoring and follow-up implementation with the active involvement of civil society organizations and strengthen mechanisms for dialogue with international bodies. One of the forerunners is the Arab Women's Organization, which, just two months after the UN's adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has been quick to convene a high-level conference in collaboration with the Arab League, the regional office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Women (UN Women). The conference was held under the title “Arab Women in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”, in Cairo 29 Nov – 1st Dec. 2015, and ended with drafting a document that represented a guiding framework for countries regarding the status of Arab women within each of the 17 goals, in a way that helps the national mechanisms and government agencies to include the gender dimension in the preparation of (national / regional) periodic reports in the coming 15 years following the year 2015 on the progress made towards the implementation of the new development goals. (From Analytical Overview of the Facts of the Arab Women's Conference in the Development Agenda 2015-2030 report).

The Common Goal: Striking the Islamic Social System

The United Nations is changing its plans, which are based on the same foundation: a comprehensive integration of the principles of gender equality under the name of various programs. Paragraph 11 of the Final Document for the adoption of the "Post-2015 Development Plan: Transforming Our World" stipulated that international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (September 1994) and the Beijing Platform for Action (September 1995) have laid a **solid foundation** for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is confirmed by the clear mixing and interlinkage between the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Program, in which the targets of goal 5 of the development intersect with the twelve themes of the Beijing Plan. What was recommended in the Third International Conference on Population and the Beijing Platform for Action was copied and reaffirmed: for example, in paragraph 26 of the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda for Development and in the targets of the third development goal related to health, it was stipulated to ensure universal access to sexuality (i.e. for all age groups, including the provision of contraceptives to adolescents), and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning (including birth control and legalization of abortion), information and education (such as sexual education), and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs by 2030 in order to pass what has not been accepted or previously reserved through this international program for sustainable development. This is what is currently happening in Tunisia - for example, the Ministry of Education has included the subject of sexual education in the educational curriculum starting from the preparatory years. The continued focus of this program, was like its predecessors, on

the fact that the cause of power imbalances and the exacerbation of problems is the weak will to empower women and the discrimination they suffer, especially with regard to tenure, ownership, inheritance, traditional stereotypes that control their roles inside and outside the home, and cultural heritage that hinders their participation in all domains. This, strikes the rulings of the social system in Islam and further entrenches the promotion of the relationship of collision and conflict between women and men.

Saudi Arabia's alignment with the demands of the Development Agenda through Ibn Salman's vision of the year 2030 and the spread of dissolution and the call for obscenity and immorality in the Two Holy Mosques sparked by his achievements and programs are the best evidence of corruption in this international program.

In order to follow up the implementation of its agendas, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women will conduct a review and evaluation in March 2020 to assess the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the CEDAW Convention and identify the most important challenges that have been faced in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development based on national and regional reviews prepared on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This confirms that the 2030 Agenda is an affirmation and complement to the rest of the United Nations programs that undermine the family entity and destroy society, but are more insidious in that they exclude the provocative terms and present the environmental, economic and social interest for all to accept. They also claimed that this plan (in paragraph 5 of the final document) is **accepted by all countries and applies to everyone**, that is, it removes all cultural and religious differences and does not recognize them, and that **its aims are integral and indivisible**, i.e. there is no room for partial approval or reservation of any goal, but is taken as an integral part of its agenda. So, this agenda was created on the international scene to be imposed locally and was given a term that made its way among many contemporary terms such as globalization, modernity and other vocabularies that have become a language of communication in the world that excludes those who do not recognize it.

Will "No one be left behind"?

Most of the Millennium Development Goals have not been achieved, and in view of this failure, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and targets have been prepared in advance since 2012, as an alternative for the United Nations to save face by 2015.

Among mentioned reasons for the failure were: the failure of development goals to take into account the local context, its focus on quantity, and the neglect of the human rights-based approach. But we will not focus here on criticizing the 2030 Agenda in terms of the complexity of measuring development indicators, the weakness of monitoring and control mechanisms involved in measurement, the lack of necessary data and the fragility of the statistical system in most developing countries, nor the credibility of these indicators that give weight to the development agenda that was set in a few months while the goals and objectives were discussed for a period of 3 and a half years, but from the standpoint of the guiding principle of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which is based on the promise of not forgetting anyone "No one is left behind" and on the basis of which, efforts are focused to integrate and generalize the gender perspective and the empowerment of women in all goals and targets.

It is important to ask here whether the issue of equality and empowerment of women in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as in the Beijing Declaration is viewed in terms of rights that must be guaranteed as a human being who has the right to live with dignity and has needs which the state must fulfil, or as a as a mandatory duty that obliges them to participate to advance the wheel of development and participate in its rotation to contribute to its sustainability? This is what was answered by a World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (FY 2007-2010) report issued in 2006 under the title "**Gender Equality as Smart Economics**" which required an intensification of gender equality perspective in sectors over a four-year period under the umbrella of partnership and donor aid. And this, in essence, is that women's empowerment is nothing more than a coefficient to strengthen the economy at her expense without the effect of an improvement in her living conditions. In the same context, the British Economist Magazine published in the same year a report on women in the workforce that begins with "Forget China, India and the Internet: economic growth is driven by women."

It must be recognized that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not aimed at advancing and empowering women, as gains are not extracted with money and positions, nor at achieving a better allocation of resources, or

achieving justice, or non-exclusion of anyone, or a balance between development and human rights, or a change in the nature of the relationship between developed and developing countries by prompting the latter to move forward towards an equal economic environment and be a partner of the developed countries. This is because all this contradicts the capitalist system and its principles in which the slogans of the "comprehensive and participatory" development phase and "that do not exclude anyone" and "equality for all" collide with the interests of the great countries. "Equal Measures 2030" stated in its 2019 report on the index of gender equality in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals "there is no country taking the ambitious action needed to tackle intractable problems – even the best scoring countries." "Even countries which score highly in the index would need to take huge strides, especially on complex issues such as climate change, public services, equal representation in strong positions, gender pay gaps, and gender-based violence."

How much do we still expect from the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and how many more years are we hoping for our world to change for the better?

The Beijing agenda did not do justice to women, and the 2030 Agenda for Development that is based on the same basis will not do justice to her. The just system will not be achieved by achieving gender equality nor through work to bridge the gaps in that. And if it is achieved formally on some issues in some countries, it will not establish a just system as described in the rest of the articles, because they do not address the real causes of poverty, hunger, marginalization, the absence of health care, good education, decent work and access to water resources, lands and services. The suffering of mankind under this man-made system- that the international organizations expand its breathing with its programs that are presented in the form of regular anesthesia pills once, positive discrimination, once equality, once equity and once climate change-makes the Ummah a negative recipient in the field of experiments, which with the failure of all these titles is waiting for ready-made global solutions that do not apply to its reality and do not address it. The work of the international bodies is eloquently described by what Judge Abdul Rahim Albisani said "I saw that no one has written a book one day, but he said in the next day, if this was changed, it would have been better, if this was added it would have been preferable, if this was introduced it would have been optimal, if this was left it would have been more beautiful, and this is one of the greatest lessons in the imperfection of the entire human being". Likewise, the United Nations system representing the capitalist system cannot protect itself from human tendencies of selfishness, self-love, utilitarian and interest diseases, in addition to its temporal and spatial limitations in surrounding all dimensions. The human mind is incompetent and cannot organize its life behind the real-time space in which it lives in light of the speed of the changes and does not apprehend all environments. If their system is fit for their environment, this does not mean its suitability with other environments. Therefore, the capitalist outputs- including these developmental goals - that go against the human nature and are based on materialism can only create collision because they are enforced, and they will not advance humanity, but deepen their decline and marginalization because they rob the human being of his material and moral rights and allows every path that leads to money and tampers with human resources and their capabilities. So, there must be a stable fixed balance to which people come to, not affected by human passion and not limited by human insufficiency and ignorance?

There is no salvation for humanity except by applying the system of Islam

Sayyid Qutb says in "Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an:" [In the Shade of the Qur'an] "Establishing that constant balance requires unlimited knowledge, knowledge of what was, what is and what will be. Who knows it all ... not constrained by the limitations of time that separate one existence into past, present and future, and to a certain, suspected and unknown, and to a remarkable present and a hidden unseen... and not bound by the constraints of the place that separate one being into a near, far, visible, invisible, perceived and imperceptible, in need of a God who knows what He created and knows who He created and knows what works and what works for everyone. "

Therefore, Islam did not leave the human mind to organize his life according to what he wanted and according to assumptions based on his whims. Rather, it prescribed for man what is good for him

﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾

"Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?" [Al-Nahl: 89].

So, this Book, which Allah has revealed rightly, to rule among people established a basis for humanity, and for this reason it was the religion of mercy for all human beings, not for one race without another or for one spot of the earth

without another. The Islamic Sharia comprehends all aspects of life and does not change with time or place, and it organizes human life at all times and wherever he is, and guarantees for him a way to satisfy his needs and instincts. This is because the balance of Islam is a constant balance, and in this way the Islamic law surrounded all the actions of man and addressed his problems, regardless of the multiplicity of his actions and no matter how much the means evolved and the facts renewed. Not to mention that Islam is unique in that all its systems agree with the instinct (Fitrah), so they do not collide with it and do not eradicate it, but takes care of it according to the Shari' controls in a way that achieves human happiness. Also, one of its characteristics is to combine the reward of this world with the Hereafter, and this is what makes fear from Allah the censor in the souls of the servants, and Allah's Halal and Haram become a criterion for their actions, so self-interest disappears and materialism is not their aim that drives and directs them. Islam is, therefore, the correct path to human happiness, comfort and tranquility, and it is the only religion capable of melting all peoples. However, its application and carrying its call can only be through an executive entity represented in a state that governs the people with the justice of Islam, implementing its rulings internally and carrying it abroad, so it liberates humanity from the imprisonment of capitalism to the vastness and the light of Islam ■

Ratification, Commitment, and then Liberalization of Family Laws This is the Situation of Arab Governments to Follow up on the Beijing International Goals and Agenda

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(Translated)

In its war against the rules of Islam, it is obvious that the West uses its colonial organizations and institutions as a tool for the globalization of its false civilization that brought nothing to its people except misery, social destruction, disintegration and collapse. Subsequently there is a deficiency of family ties and kinship, and there are many other negative effects of this civilization on its own people. There is no room here to mention them all or to stop at them. What is also more obvious is that the West uses its agents, the subservient rulers of the Muslims as a tool to impose its suspicious agendas related to social life with the aim of disrupting the pillars of society in Muslim countries, the fragmentation of family ties, and ensuring women's freedom from any restriction of religion or custom, all for the sake of spreading vice and gender deviation as is the case in their Western societies. This is in order to destroy the societies in Muslim countries; and this is what they want.

And what we are witnessing today is the approval by some governments in Islamic countries of laws aimed at destroying the structure of the social system among Muslims related to the relationship of men with women and what emanates from it and its consequences. The movements of the United Nations through its multiple institutions is to increase the domination of the West by imposing its concepts, viewpoint and lifestyle on the whole world. This is alongside the successive activities of women's non-governmental organizations and their raising of misleading and bold slogans that touched all corners of the family to destroy Islamic social values and traditions. All of this falls in the context of implementing what came in the recommendations of the Beijing Conference and its Platform for Action and other international conferences supporting it for the advancement of women. Also it comes in the context of the commitment of countries to what they have signed to with temptations of grants, aid and loans to all who committed to implement these international decisions, or threats of sanctions to be imposed for all non-committed countries, according to what Dr. Omaima Kamil (Professor Assistant to Public Health at the Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University) stated: "and the state that sees some rules do not suit it because they are inconsistent with its identity, values, and morals, it cannot have reservations against them, because in the United Nations conventions there are clauses stating that these reservations must be dropped with time or otherwise these countries will be deprived of aid." This means that the signatory countries must submit after a year, two years, or five or more, and that they cannot take what suits them - if there is something in them that suits them - and leave what does not suit them because they mortgaged the countries and the people to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank loans.

The United Nations efforts intensified in recent years throughout the Islamic countries to impose the successive dictates of holding population conferences, and to spread the culture of the so-called women's emancipation through the many organizations dealing with family affairs, women's rights and the like of Western heresy. As for what we are witnessing, especially in the past few months in some Islamic countries regarding the adoption of social laws, implementation of international decisions, and the activation of women's associations; they are the result of these efforts and attempts to adopt more legislation and issuing laws that rebel against the Islamic (Shariah) law to find radical transformations in the way of achieving the false equality between Genders and women's empowerment.

And to give further insight into the progress of the Arab states in the secular (non-religious) parade and the distancing from the rules of Islam, we mention here briefly the recent legislative measures that these agent states have approved in compliance with the orders of the West and for its pleasure:

In Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, passed a law in which he set the age of marriage for both sexes at eighteen years, after a series of discussions and requests from the Council of Ministers and so-called women's societies that deal with women's rights as they claim.

Those demanding to set the age of marriage under the guise of women's freedom and rights follow the way of Western countries and institutions that aim to promote the liberation of Muslim women from their values and to violate their dignity, which Islam has preserved, under the pretext of liberation and women's rights. They also aim to encourage different relationships under the pretext of freedom and end the guardianship of the male guardian on them, and promote that they are free to make any choice they wish. Here we ask those about the illegal relationships that are spread in the countries of the West between those who they call children, and about the illegal births of girls between 12 to 18 years old, and unmarried mothers of this age!! Is this freedom acceptable and not cause physical and psychological harm to them, and not violate their rights as children, while Shariah marriage that preserves rights and dignity is claimed to be a violation of those rights and to harm their mental and physical health?! We also ask the advocates of human rights, children's rights, women rights, and the authority of shame about the swift measures they took when the martyr, Samah Mubarak, may Allah have mercy on her, was killed and she was only sixteen years old and was carrying only her books and notebooks; where were they also when the occupation courts sentenced the injured child Nourhan Awad (16 years) with 13.5 years in prison?! Girls at a young age, instead of having reassuring safety in their homes, they are in the prisons of the occupation! Instead of sitting in the classroom looking to the future, they are subjected to death and physical liquidation! What an abominable scale by which things and events are measured.

Islam has made puberty the measure of Takleef (assigned with obligation), and it has not set it at the age of 18; for male it is determined by puberty and for female it is determined by menstruation. A sane adult is charged with Shariah rulings and must adhere to them due to the reward and punishment that they entail. As for maturity, there are signs related to the mind or body. There are those who are over the age of eighteen and do not seem mature, and therefore Islam did not make maturity a condition in the validity of the marriage contract. Likewise, it did not force women to marry early, but it is permissible according to Islamic law. Islam encourages marriage, and did not specify or impose a specific age for it. Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ﴾

“*And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves.*” [An-Nur: 32].

Islam made marriage as tranquility and mercy and a preservation of chastity and the Awrah, society and individual. How is this concept seen as "outdated customs and traditions"?!

What is even more shocking is what we see in Tunisia for the first time in the Arab countries when the hands of corruption targeted children, and they were included within the circle of dictates that are imposed on the countries that deal with the European Union. After the issue of equality in inheritance and calls for tolerance of homosexuality, today comes the inclusion of the subject of sexual education specifically from the preparatory stage (5 years) to promote the values of the West of sexual freedom. This subject provides our children with information about reproductive organs, how to have sexual intercourse, ways to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and protection from harassment. The Minister of Education confirms that the aim of this subject is to “fortify students”, in light of the danger that threatens pupils whom he said: “are completely ignorant of everything that relates to sex and intuitive things that concern the sanctity of their bodies.” Here, we ask, will this subject limit the spread of fornication and rape within the educational institutions? Or will it make matters worse? Did not those who appointed themselves as guardians of our children hear that the percentage of pregnant schoolgirls from fornication in American schools and universities reached 48%?! Did they not get the news of the gang involved in sexual exploitation and abuse of at least 546 boys from six schools in a state in Afghanistan?! This news may sound appalling, but if we look in depth we will see that all this corruption is the natural product of the “ethics” of democracy and due to the spread the idea of

liberalism and the free development of desires and needs in school lessons, and due to chasing the Western vision and culture and trying to implement it within Islamic countries, and this, of course, will contribute to destroying the behaviour of children and adolescents, and not to its correction.

Islam was at the forefront of the upbringing of the child in a proper and correct way. The child is looked after according to the ways of Islam from birth with rules of fitra (human nature), such as the rulings on purity and what invalidates ablution, separation of children in bed, etiquettes of seeking permission to enter a home or room, to lower the gaze, developing chastity and purity, preventing solitude (khulwa) and mixing between non-Mahram men and women, and the rules of marriage and the foundations of the marital relationship, all of which are explained within a legal framework and according to proper education. The great Islam focused on protecting children and viewed them as the adornment of this worldly life, and ensured the child many different rights, starting from the fixed and documented lineage of the child by making marriage the only legitimate way of procreation, thus guaranteeing his/her right to have documented known parents, to his/her legitimate right in playing, medication, receiving teaching, and other rules that reinforce the radical solutions of the original care that guides the best rights of the child. These solutions will only be integrated with the method of sound Islam in accordance with the Shariah rules obliged by Allah (swt).

And in the land of Al-Haramain (the two holy mosques), the rulers of the Al Saud continue to get rid of the effects of the conservative dress with an open and civilized dress according to their new liberal view, and in line with the blind view of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, who offered loyalty and obedience to Western countries through a set of "reforms" that he undertook to spoil people's concepts, desecrate them and spread immorality and vice, implanting the rotten concepts of Western culture among the people of the Holy Land. Saudi Arabia made important societal changes and what it called economic reforms, most notably the opening of the "halal disco" and the reopening of cinemas and the organization of Formula one car racing, and many other music concerts and exhibitions that were forbidden, cultural festivals, and mixed celebrations, and for the first time holding a match for women wrestling, until we reached a decision to allow women to travel without the guardian's approval, a step to reduce the male guardianship over them.

This change and misrepresentation that adopts the exclusion of Islam from life is an implementation of an external agenda to attack the Ummah's sovereignty, independence, belonging and specificity. Responding to it is surrender, no less dangerous than surrendering to an enemy in battle, if not the most dangerous, and enabling it to control the most specific matters. They are formulating Islam with a new garment and a sparkling suit adorned with rotten ideas and fake beliefs. As Muslims, we reject the Islam that the enemies of this religion want and we adhere to the Islam that Allah (swt) has chosen for us, the rulings of Islam that He (swt) obliged on us to lead a decent life and to be dignified also in our Deen, and not be humiliated, because Islam has achieved the revival of the Ummah and provided its well-being while ensuring its stability for more than 13 centuries, and it is still able to revive the Ummah today because it came to man as a human being only, and because it is from the Lord of the worlds.

Our real problems are not in the Islamic laws - taking into account the necessity that these laws and rules should be based on the creed of the Ummah that is derived from the Shariah law, because this alone will provide justice as it is not subject to human desires and whims. Rather the fundamental and real problem is in systems that pant behind the West, and implement what they want by following man made laws, charters, and Western strategies, and blindly following a legacy that has miserably failed to care for the affairs of women and children and destroyed everything, and increased the Muslim countries decadence and backwardness. The situation can be seen for what does not need to be explained. Every country is drowning in problems of their own. The role of these suspicious agent governments has been proven time and time again in implanting concepts of the capitalist ideology based on purely utilitarian materialism, which does not establish the weight for custom, religion, morals, or ideals, but rather its basis is the separation of religion (Deen) from life.

And concepts such as this cannot be reassuring and trusted, and it is not correct to resort to them for judgment, nor to compare it to Shariah law. The Shariah weighs (it is the measure) and is not weighed; it measures and is not measured, and its right is to judge and not be judged, to monitor and not be monitored, and to correct and not to be corrected, based on his saying (saw):

«الإِسْلَامُ يَعْْلُو وَلَا يُعَالَى عَلَيْهِ»

“Islam is exalted, and nothing is more superior to it”.

There is no salvation, and no way out for us except by the Law of the Lord of the Worlds, with its rules that address human issues in an ideological state, based on the doctrine of the great Islam, applying its law and making its primary concern the removal of Muslims, and even the world, from the bottleneck of oppression that is constricted every day due to the Western civilization which is contrary to the sound human nature.

Who is entitled to protect women, the family, and society, and to safeguard their interests and safety? Hired organizations, unjust subordinate governments, or a just divine system? This is a system that can only be implemented through the Khilafah Rashida (rightly guided caliphate) state that rules by Allah’s Law and implements its rules. Who is more worthy to commit to - the Rule of the Creator or the rule of the created, the Word of Allah, who nothing on Earth or in the sky is hidden from, or man’s word from the ignorant and arrogant person?! And how can he, with his limited mind, set a system, method and legislation for people?! It is inevitably misguidance and confusion. Only Allah legislates for His worshipers because He is the Creator of man and the Creator of this universe. Allah (swt) says:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion” [Al-Ma’ida: 3]■

Evaluating the Gender Equality Narratives

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“Gender Equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

Kofi Annan Former Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006)

‘Gender Equality’ is the fundamental basis of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) as well as the UN’s 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other international women’s treaties. It has been enshrined into the constitution and laws of countries worldwide and also forms one of the key agenda aims of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 – a year pledged by the UN General Assembly to achieve gender equality globally.

The call for gender equality has become synonymous with the call for ‘Women’s Empowerment’, ‘Women’s Liberation’, justice for women and the securing of their political, economic, educational and judicial rights within states. It has come to be seen as the panacea for women’s problems, and its absence as a cause of injustice, oppression and suffering. It is viewed as one of the qualities of a civilized, progressive society and a measure of how well states treat their women. Those who champion it argue that it is the pathway to achieving respect, security, happiness, fulfilment, a higher status and a fair life for women as well as securing stronger marriages and family units, happier children and progress for societies: politically, economically and socially in order to improve the living standards of women and men alike. Feminism and gender equality also shaped the view of the successful woman: one who is financially independent, has a successful career and shares the duties and roles of men in family life and society, rather than the woman who makes her primary vocation her domestic and child-rearing responsibilities. It is unsurprising therefore, that those who opposed the ideal of gender equality were labelled as misogynists, backward, anti-women’s rights and supporting injustice against women.

Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.

Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well-being and that of their families as well as to the consolidation of democracy.” **Articles 13 and 15 - 1995 Beijing Declaration**

However, it is surely important that these narratives related with this concept whose advocacy occupies the time, energies and aspirations of so many, and which is championed globally as the means to lift women from lives of injustice and oppression, should be subjected to a level of scrutiny and evaluated objectively with regards to their validity and soundness. The question surely needs to be asked: is gender equality truly the path to elevating the lives of women and should it be used as the yardstick to measure the credibility and correctness of alternative ideologies, cultures and systems?

To accurately evaluate these gender equality narratives, it is first imperative to understand that gender equality is not simply viewing men and women as having the same worth and intellect, or ascribing women full legal, political, economic, educational and healthcare rights. Rather, it is the belief that all laws, rights, roles, duties and choices

should be the same for the genders in marriage, family life and society. This includes equal sharing of wage-earning, domestic chores and childrearing between men and women within the family unit. For example, Article 245(a) of the BPfA states: “Promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities through media campaigns that emphasize gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family.” Gender equality is also a call for the sexual freedoms of women to be guaranteed, enabling them to engage in any relationship they wish, whether within or outside marriage. It is also the belief that the woman should have full reproductive control, including access to abortion without restriction. The Preparatory Document from the Beijing +5 UN’s Women’s conference 2000 includes the statement: “Ensure that women of all ages can fully realize their sexuality, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, by developing legislation, disseminating information, and promoting accessible and affordable services.”

On this basis, discrimination and injustice against women became to be defined as any belief, practice or law which did not conform to the equalizing of the rights, roles and responsibilities of the genders, regardless of whether this gender differentiation had a positive impact upon women, family life, children and society or not. Consequently, the Islamic Shariah laws related to women were branded as discriminatory, unjust and oppressive due to gender differences in various prescribed rights, duties and provisions. So the Islamic inheritance, divorce, polygamy and custody laws were attacked, as well as Islam’s definition of distinct marital and family responsibilities of the genders, such as the role of the man as the guardian and provider of the family, and the woman’s obligation of obedience to her husband and her primary vocation as home-maker, wife and mother. These laws and rules were accused of preferring men over women and reflecting subservience and servitude of the woman to her husband as well as relegating her to an inferior second-class status of less worth than the man, rather than recognizing that these gender differences were a reflection of Islam’s effective means of organizing marriage, family life and society.

Over time, gender equality has become a sacred cow of secular states and international politics – almost untouchable and heretical to question. But question it we must, for if we truly wish to elevate the status, rights and wellbeing of women today, then we must ensure that the path we have embraced for change is a credible one which will truly achieve the objectives we desire, so that efforts are not exhausted in vain.

Examining the Gender Equality Narratives:

(a) Does Gender Equality Create Respect for Women?

It is a widespread belief that gender equality secures respect for women and protects them from violence and abuse. However, despite countless gender equality acts and laws being enshrined within states across the world over many decades, domestic violence, sexual harassment, abuse and rape against women are still rampant and even rising within such nations. A report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2014 based on a major survey of 28 EU member states, most of which have stringent gender equality laws, stated that around one in three women across the EU have experienced some form of physical or sexual abuse since the age of 15. Moreover, the Scandinavian countries which score amongst the highest in the World Gender Equality Index, also suffer higher rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) against women than in other parts of Europe – a reality that has been termed the ‘Nordic paradox’. For example, in the World Economic Forum’s 2015 Gender Gap Index which measures equality between the sexes in education, economic opportunity, health and political representation, the top four spots were taken by Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden. Denmark was the highest-ranking country in the 2019 SDG Gender Index which measures the state of gender equality aligned to 14 of the 17 UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 129 countries. However, figures from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights show that Sweden, Finland and Denmark may experience more Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) than the EU average. A 2016 report published in the *Social Science and Medicine* journal also echoed this finding, stating that the lifetime prevalence of violence against women perpetrated by partners in Denmark is 32%, Finland is 30% and Sweden is 28%. One of the authors of the report, Enrique Gracia of the University of Valencia, Spain stated, “High prevalence IPV against women and high levels of gender equality would appear contradictory, but these apparently opposite statements appear to be true in Nordic countries, producing what could be called the ‘Nordic paradox’.....Despite this paradox being one of the most puzzling issues in the field, interestingly, this is a research question rarely asked and one that remains unanswered.”

In the Muslim world, Tunisia and Turkey, which are hailed as leaders in gender equality in the region also demonstrate

this paradox with their high levels of violence against women. Tunisia for example introduced its Personal Status Code in 1956 which reformed many of its family and social laws along secular and gender equality lines; it legalized abortion in 1973; in 2011 it lifted all reservations to CEDAW; and in 2014 it established full gender equality in its new constitution. However, the country continues to have one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the world. In 2016, the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood reported that 60% of Tunisian women were victims of domestic violence, and 50% of women said they had experienced aggression in a public area at least once in their life.

Alongside the high levels of IPV in states which have actively embraced gender equality, the huge support for the global #MeToo Movement revealed the extent to which sexual harassment and other sexual crimes against women are rife within these societies too – affecting those from all professions and levels of society. According to data published by the global research firm IPSOS in 2018, 81% of Swedish women, 80% of Danish women; 75% of French women; and 68% of British women have experienced sexual harassment. A study, published by the Center for Research, Study, Documentation and Information on Women (a Tunisian group in cooperation with the UN), found that 70 – 90 percent of women in Tunisia had been victims of sexual harassment from 2011 to 2015. In the US, one in five women have been raped in their lifetime (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention), while in Australia, one in five women have experienced sexual violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics). And in England and Wales, an estimated 144,000 women were raped in the 12 months up to March 2017 – equivalent to one every 3.5 minutes, while more than half a million women experienced some type of sexual assault between 2017-2018 (Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

What is clear is that ensuring equality between men and women in society is not a recipe for respect and the protection of women. The treatment of women depends on the views and values that are propagated within any society of the worth and honour of the woman. In capitalist liberal societies, a contradiction exists between the call for respect of the woman and the concept of personal and sexual freedom that nurtures a mindset within many men of viewing and treating women as their desires dictate, with no sense of accountability to a Creator for their actions. Furthermore, within such states, license has been given for businesses to objectify and sexualize the bodies of women for profit, whether in advertising, entertainment or pornography. This inevitably devalues the status of women, contributing to violence and other crimes against them.

(b) How True is the Gender Equality Narrative: Empowerment Through Employment?

A dominant feminist narrative is that to elevate the status of women and achieve genuine gender equality and ensure financial security, women should become financially independent through entering the workforce and adopt the role of shared breadwinners to men in the family unit. Susan Okin, for example, a well-known 20th century feminist, wrote in her book, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, that, “any just and fair solution to the urgent problem of women’s and children’s vulnerability must encourage and facilitate the equal sharing by men and women of paid and unpaid work, of productive and reproductive labour. We must work toward a future in which all will be likely to choose this mode of life.” Hence, women’s empowerment through employment became the mantra promoted by the UN and most governments of the world. The successful woman became defined as the one who earned her own income and pursued a career rather than the one who made her primary vocation a home-maker and mother in order to successfully raise her children.

The consequence was the creation of societies where women no longer have the option to work but are expected to due to social or economic pressures. This is the case even if they are single mothers with sole responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children. Women were therefore often forced to adopt the man’s role as breadwinner for their family, even if they wished to stay at home and look after their children. In 2013, the UK Guardian published an article under the title, “The rise of ‘breadwinner moms’ is less a win for equality than it looks” in which it cited statistics from a report by the PEW Research Center that in 40% of all US households with children, mothers are the sole or primary breadwinners. The article described how the majority of the 40% - two thirds – were single mothers, many of whom were struggling with the task of juggling home and childcare responsibilities. It stated, “For single moms, in particular, the reality of primary breadwinner status feels like less of a feminist victory than simply being overworked, under-supported and broadly stigmatized.”

The link of women’s success with employment resulted in the worth of women to be valued on paid work, which inevitably devalued their unique status as mothers and the child-bearers of humanity. It also caused many women to

delay having children in order to pursue a successful career, or avoid a reduction in earnings, or even to keep a job. This resulted in higher risk pregnancies or losing out on children due to reduced fertility, increased miscarriages, or pregnancy related complications. Others avoided having children altogether. All this caused a lot of heartache for women as well as contributing to the 'baby gap' population crisis in various states due to the reduced birth rate. Hence, this gender equality narrative, which equated women's empowerment with employment, cheated many women out of motherhood, and nations out of a well-populated, strong future generation. Its call for 'equal representation of women in the workforce' ignored the reality of women's lives which includes pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, and other general responsibilities of motherhood which all impact the woman's participation in the workplace. Alongside this, full-time mothers became disrespected, and made to feel ashamed as if they were betraying 'women's liberation' and not contributing fully to society. These women were presented as a lower class of 'non-persons' who were less successful and of less value to society. Hence, women's natural instinct to be mothers and to give quality time and attention in caring for and raising their children effectively, was frowned upon and suppressed. All this was far from the paradise of empowerment that employment and becoming equal wage earners to men promised women.

Furthermore, the idea that employment would bring the woman a higher status in society and economic security was an illusion, for most working women entered low paid, poor quality, and often dangerous and exploitative jobs – for example in sweat shops, poorly maintained factories and as migrant workers who have to travel thousands of miles away from their children and families to earn a basic wage. This is a reality that remains unchanged today. For example, an analysis by the International Labour Organisation of 142 countries, published in their 2016 'Women at Work Trends' report, showed that women remain overrepresented (compared to their share in total employment) as "Clerical, service and sales workers" and in "Elementary occupations" – the lowest paid occupations. In the UK, 62% of those earning less than the real living wage are women, and nearly one third of all working women in the UK do not earn a wage they can live on (Living Wage Foundation, 2017). Hence, the promises heralded by gender equality policies for which women sacrificed motherhood and valuable time with their children to enter employment and become equal wage earners to men, in the belief that this would elevate their status, did not even deliver in the economic sphere of their lives. Large numbers of women were not more well-off, rather, they were working simply to pay for others to look after and raise their children.

(c) Does Gender Equality Create Stronger Marriages and Happier Families?

Feminism narratives regarding marriage being an oppressive and patriarchal structure due to the inequality of rights and roles between the genders, created an aversion towards marriage amongst many women. Additionally, as a result of the feminist movement with its call for gender equality, the traditional male role of breadwinner came to be viewed as above that of the woman's traditional role as homemaker and primary caretaker of the children. Consequently, many women began to view the status of being a wife and mother as a second-class role, inferior to pursuing a career and employment. All this led to significant numbers of women delaying or rejecting marriage or motherhood, reducing marriage and birth rates within populations, resulting in demographic problems for various states, with fewer individuals to care for ageing populations. According to Eurostat, between 1965 and 2013, the crude marriage rate in the EU-28 countries declined close to 50% in relative terms. In Egypt, the marriage rate has decreased by 70% between 2004 and 2016 (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt).

The call for gender equality in marriage and family life also resulted in confusion and discord with regards to marital and parental responsibilities. The erosion of clearly defined roles and duties within marriage for the man and the woman with regards to providing for the family, domestic chores, and looking after the children, led to frequent disputes within many family units. Marriage therefore became an institution dominated by competition between the genders over roles and duties rather than a harmonious union shaped upon the husband and wife fulfilling their defined and complementary marital and family obligations. It also became a battlefield over personal choices and rights rather than a bond of companionship defined by love, mercy and responsibilities of the spouses towards one another. Furthermore, with many men and women working often long and demanding jobs, there is often less time and energy spent on making marriages work, weakening the marital bond. For example, in a PEW Research Center survey on the US published in 2013, half of the adults surveyed said that the increasing numbers of women working had made marriages harder to succeed. This marital discord also increased violence within marriages, undermined the harmony of family life and led to a rise in divorce. For example, according to Eurostat, between 1965 to 2013 the

crude divorce rate doubled in the EU-28 countries. In the US 53% of marriages end in divorce, in Sweden it's 64%, and in Belgium it's an eye-watering 70% (Business Insider). With regards to the Muslim world, the divorce rate has increased from 7% to 40% in Egypt during the past 50 years (UN and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization), while in Turkey it has increased a shocking 82% between 2006 and 2016 (General Directorate of Criminal Records and Statistics).

These high levels of divorce have also been caused by the promotion of sexual freedoms which are also associated with the call for gender equality. This liberal approach to sexual relationships spurred a huge rise in extramarital relationships which decimated the family structure, creating heartache and misery for millions of women, many of whom were left as single mothers, struggling to raise their children alone. It also devastated the lives of countless children abandoned by their fathers who had no role in their upbringing or their financial provision. This epidemic of broken families and absentee fathers generated a mountain of social problems for many societies.

As discussed, the drive to push women into the workplace in the name of gender equality also devalued motherhood, disempowered women to fulfil their vital role as mothers and ignored the needs of children, leading to the neglect of their rights. This is despite the fact that successfully caring for and raising a child is one of the most valuable assets of a society. With both parents as breadwinners, it impacted the ability of many to effectively raise their children with inevitable consequences. In fact, in the same 2013 PEW Research Center survey on the US cited above, almost 75% of adults said that the increasing numbers of women working have made it harder for parents to raise children, while over half of the respondents stated that children were better-off with mothers who didn't hold jobs and were home full-time. Brenda Almond, Professor of Moral and Social Philosophy at the University of Hull in the UK, and author of the book, *The Fragmenting Family*, writes that for the majority of working mothers, they have to accept "the inevitability of the absence of both parents from the home for the whole of the working day, and the financial impracticability of providing a substitute in the home. The feminist movement in both the USA and Europe did a disservice to the vast majority of working-class women in failing to appreciate this fact or to register its implications." In the UK, almost three-fourths of mothers with dependent children (4.9 million mothers) go out to work (ONS, 2017), and almost 70% of single mothers are also in employment (ONS), while in the US, almost 70% of mothers with children under 6 are in the labour force (Population Reference Bureau). Furthermore, in many countries, millions of women are forced financially to travel abroad for work, leaving their children behind. The shortness of time that working mothers often experience in nurturing their children has also been attributed by many as a major cause of dysfunctional parent-child relationships. This, alongside the epidemic of broken families that many liberal states suffer, has been blamed for the high levels of delinquent and criminal behaviour amongst the youth that plagues these societies today, as well as affecting the mental wellbeing and educational performance of children. This is hardly a mark of progress.

Hence, gender equality, where the same responsibilities are prescribed for men and women in family life and society, and where the man and woman define selfishly what is in their own best interests, overlooks what is best for a strong marriage, for children, for family life and for society overall.

(d) Has Gender Equality Created Fairer and more Contented Lives for Women?

Gender equality's ideal of equalizing two beings who by their nature are physically different, and that burdened women by essentially forcing them to adopt the roles of men, in particular being shared breadwinners for their families, has in reality acted as a form of injustice upon them. This is because it ignored and undervalued their nature as the ones who are the child-bearers of society and generally the primary caretakers of children as well as those who have the main responsibility for domestic chores. The strain of having to struggle the pressures of work with the responsibilities of home and family life has been attributed to the significant rise in stress, anxiety and depressive disorders in women. In a study of 30 European countries, published in 2011 by the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology, researchers found that depression amongst women in Europe had doubled over the last 40 years due to the 'tremendous burden' of having to juggle family duties with the demands of work. In 2016, researchers from Cambridge University published figures based on 48 studies around the world that revealed that women were twice as likely as men to suffer from severe stress and anxiety, which they attributed to the pressures of having to often juggle work, family and child-care responsibilities. Dr. Judith Mohring, a leading psychiatrist based in the UK's renowned Priory Wellbeing Centre in central London, stated that the spike in cases of workplace stress

amongst women in their 30's and 40's underlined the pressure on the so-called "do-it-all" generation of women. Sociologist, Caitlyn Collins who spent five years studying parenthood in four wealthy Western countries for her book, *Making Motherhood Work: How Women Manage Careers and Caregiving*, found that US mothers are drowning from stress, work-family conflict and crushing guilt and heartache. This is often due to the limited quality time that full-time working mothers are able to spend with their children; a reality that is even worse for those who are migrant workers. This is far from being a paradise of fairness, contentment and justice for women.

Furthermore, the placing of the man's roles, duties and rights as the gold standard that women were expected to aspire to, in effect, made women devalue and at times even scorn their own unique biological nature as the child-bearers of the human race, demeaning their status as women. In society, women were not valued and respected as those who had a vital and distinct role and position to men to fulfil within their nation but rather as those who had to work harder to catch up to the role and responsibilities of men, and whose 'wombs' were holding them back from this warped gold standard of success. In such an environment, it is hardly surprising that many employers and workplaces failed to appreciate the importance of women's role as mothers, and hence, inevitably failed to accommodate for their family responsibilities, expecting them instead to sacrifice their duties to their children for the sake of keeping their jobs. It also contributed to the high levels of discrimination that pregnant women or those with young children face in the workplace, who are often penalized for not being able to keep up with their male colleagues. In the UK, 54,000 women a year are pushed out of their jobs due to pregnancy or maternity leave, and 77% of working mothers have encountered negative or discriminatory treatment at work (UK Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016). Therefore, the call for gender equality failed to recognize that attempts to erase the appreciation of gender differences and to push aside as irrelevant the biological nature of women inevitably leads to disrespect of the distinct qualities of women and lack of recognition and support given to them to fulfil their unique position within the human race.

In the Muslim world, burdening women with the responsibilities of men, also deprived them of the privilege of always being financially maintained by their husband or male relatives which Islam affords them. Many were forced to fend for themselves and their children, some turning to exploitative jobs or resorting to begging for financial survival within states who carried the belief that women should earn their own living, rather than be provided for. It is bizarre, therefore, that Islam's prescription of gender roles in family life, such as obliging men to be the breadwinner for their family, is labeled as unjust to the woman, while abandoning her under the guise of 'Gender Equality' to earn for herself is hailed as fair and liberating. It is an irrational view that ignores the real injustice placed upon women by this feminist ideal.

(e) Does Gender Equality Achieve Progress within Societies?

There is no empirical evidence that shows any correlation between the scale of gender equality policies and laws implemented within a state and the level of progress and development achieved. In Rwanda, women have outnumbered men within its parliament for over a decade. Currently, over 60% of its MP's are women (Inter-Parliamentary Union). However, the poverty rate in the country stands at around 40% (World Bank, 2019). Similarly, Mexico and South Africa have had high numbers of female parliamentarians for many years (currently 48% and 42% respectively). Yet the economic situation in these countries remains dire. Furthermore, according to the World Economic Forum 2013 Report, some of the highest female labour participation rates in the world are in Malawi, Mozambique and Burundi where women make up a larger portion of the workforce than men. However, these countries are hardly role models for liberation from poverty and financial hardship, nor world leaders in provision of high-quality public services such as health care and education. In Afghanistan, a country which was subjected to a fierce feminist agenda following the US occupation of the country in 2001, and where numerous gender equality bills were signed into law, the state of education and health care remains dismal. 41% of all schools in Afghanistan do not have buildings, an estimated two-thirds of Afghan girls do not go to school (Human Rights Watch, 2017) and 84% of women in the country are illiterate (Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2017). Even within states such as Britain, from where the call for gender equality arose over a century ago, and where there is extensive gender equality legislation and policies in force, 14.3 million people are in poverty (around 20% of the population), 4.5 million of whom are in extreme poverty – meaning their income is at least 50% below the official breadline (Social Metrics Commission, 2019).

As will be explored further in the other articles in this booklet, the political, economic, education, health care, environmental and social problems afflicting women within states across the world do not stem from the lack or

absence of 'gender equality' but from the nature of the ideology and system governing the land. The Industrial Revolution and subsequent economic, technological and other advancements made in various Western nations, was not a result of the birth and implementation of gender equality laws and policies. Rather, it was due to the adoption of the capitalist ideology which gave these states a unified direction of movement, vision and process by which to organise their affairs. However, as evident in the countless political, economic, moral and social problems faced by capitalist states today, such progress was not in all areas of life, nor did it benefit all citizens within their countries or the world at large. Achieving the correct and comprehensive progress within a state depends upon the adoption of the correct ideology and system. This was achieved with the implementation of Islam under the Khilafah (Caliphate) system which achieved advancement in all areas of life. It eradicated poverty from lands, established excellence in education and health care - enjoyed by men and women alike, led the world in scientific research, discoveries and development, and established a society where the dignity and rights of women were secured, crime was low and that was world-renown for its scale of morality. All this it achieved without the presence of gender equality laws or policies.

Gender Equality is an Irrational and Flawed Concept:

Dale O'Leary, a freelance US journalist, lecturer and author of the book, *The Gender Agenda*, stated, "The search for authentic womanhood begins with the truth about the human person.....that men and women are different by design and that these designs are a blessing." The concept of gender equality is based upon a fundamentally flawed and irrational premise which ignores this undeniable truth of gender differences. It fails to appreciate the unique biological nature of women as the child bearers of the human race, disregarding it as irrelevant in the organization of a state, while it should be a central factor in defining the roles and rights within marriage, family life and society for the genders. It also rejected the central position that a mother has in a child's life. This is probably why the well-known French writer and feminist, Simone de Beauvoir, once stated, "No woman should be authorized to stay at home to raise her children... Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice too many women will make that one." Hence, the ideal of gender equality will never be able to present a credible vision for authentic womanhood that truly values this distinct nature of the woman while also defining rights, roles and responsibilities for the man and woman which are complementary and achieve contentment, harmony and happiness for both genders, as well as ensuring strong family units which are a source of goodness for children and society overall.

Furthermore, it is irrational to try and equalize two beings by defining for them the same roles and responsibilities, while they are biologically distinct. Dale O'Leary also stated, "Radical Feminists have declared a war on human nature because they reject the truth of sex difference". A goal that defies reality will never be met. Moreover, attempting to organize nations upon this flawed premise, will inevitably have a harmful impact on the family unit, children and the general society. The lack of acknowledgement of gender differences can also breed injustice and oppression for women, by expecting them to adopt the same duties as men and compete with them on the same level, while pregnancy, childbirth and nursing affects the genders differently, and will inevitably affect the way men and women organize their lives. Therefore, the vision of achieving equal numbers of men and women in various professions or sectors of public life is an irrational and unachievable goal.

Hence, gender equality did not deliver on its promise of providing a fairer and happier life for women. Rather it burdened them with extra responsibilities, deprived them of the privilege of financial provision, caused conflict in their marriages and cheated them of motherhood. The idea of women defining their own rights and roles did not liberate them from oppression but rather subjected them to different forms of injustice. Furthermore, how can women call for equality which believes gender is irrelevant in public life but at the same time expect privileges such as pregnancy or maternity rights, or flexible working hours or favorable employment conditions that respect their responsibilities as mothers, based on sex difference? It is also ironic that a concept aimed at elevating the status of women, led to devaluing their unique, vital and precious position as the mothers of their nation, by placing the roles and responsibilities of men as the gold standard that they were expected to aspire to.

Importantly, the call for gender equality will never solve the countless problems that women face today. This is because its flawed myopic approach to studying all issues from a gender perspective fails to examine the true root causes and solutions to these problems in an objective and enlightened manner. Rather, it diverts attention from the blatant fact that it is the values, ideologies and systems present within states which define the status, rights and

wellbeing of women rather than gender inequalities. Furthermore, it irrationally labels any belief or law which is at odds with equality between the genders as discriminatory or unjust towards women by default, regardless of whether it has a positive impact upon the lives of women, children, family life and society, or not.

In conclusion, the call for gender equality is not a credible path to empower women, lift them from lives of oppression and injustice or secure for them happy, safe and contented lives. The narratives related to the concept do not hold up to scrutiny. Hence, it is a false and misleading standard for evaluating the progress and improvement of women's lives. Therefore, if we truly wish to build a brighter future for the women of this world, the first step is to rid ourselves of the gender equality illusions.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَقَّاهُ حِسَابُهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ﴾

“But the Unbelievers - their deeds are like a mirage in sandy deserts which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water, until when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing, and there he finds Allah, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full; and Allah is quick in reckoning.” [An-Nur: 39] ■

Women and Poverty : Gender Equality as a Means of Disguising the Truth of Capitalist Inequality

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Wilayah TURKEY



“Women and Poverty” is one of the most important Critical Areas of Concern in the Beijing Declaration (BD) and Platform for Action. This is because economic policies constitute the main artery of capitalism and provide the lifeblood for the colonialist capitalist Western countries’ existence and survival.

Strategic Objectives and Actions on “Women and Poverty” Briefly Explained¹ :

The essential part and starting point of the Critical Area “Women and Poverty” is the “**Feminization of Poverty**” (disproportionate increase in the number of women living in poverty to the number of men), which is claimed to be intensified due to the “**rigidity of socially ascribed gender roles and women's limited access to power, education, training and productive resources** (like credit, land ownership and inheritance)”; “**gender division of labour**” and women’s “**responsibilities for household welfare**”; insufficient social welfare systems; unbalanced distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work; obstacles to labour-market re-entry (in particular for older women); wage discrimination; occupational segregation patterns in the labour market and other gender-based barriers. Thus, “**gender disparities in economic power-sharing**” and “**the failure to adequately mainstream a gender perspective in all economic analysis and planning**” are assumed to constitute an “**important contributing factor to the poverty of women**”. Consequently, the main perspective in combatting poverty is expressed through the following concepts:

- The “**Empowerment**” of women as a “critical factor in the eradication of poverty” and “a necessary foundation for sustainable development” (BD, Point 49 and 56);
- The “**release of women's productive potential**” as “pivotal to breaking the cycle of poverty” (BD, Point 55);
- The “**participation and leadership**” of the half of humanity that is female as “essential for development, peace, security, and assuring people-centred sustainable development”;
- Women as “**key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty**” through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home in the community and in the workplace (BD, Point 21).

Accordingly the **main path to eliminating poverty** is purported to lead through “**supporting or strengthening the promotion of gender equality**” in domestic and public roles, and in economic policies and programmes, such as access to resources, opportunities and public services and should be “based on the integration of the gender perspective in general policies relating to all spheres of society...” (BD, Point 57)

In 2015, the World Bank (WB), which is part of the United Nations (UN) system, which produced the Beijing Declaration, set the ambitious target to end “extreme” poverty by 2030. The UN, and in particular UN Women, serves this target through providing the intellectual, cultural, linguistic and political framework, asserting that “**Empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**” and that “**Economies grow, when more women work**”, claiming that, “...increasing the female employment rates in OECD countries to match that of Sweden could boost GDP by over USD 6 trillion [...] Conversely, it is estimated that gender gaps cost the economy some 15 percent of GDP². The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) emphasized that without fulfilling SDG 5 (Sustainable Development Goal Gender Equality), “no other SDG will be achieved by 2030.”³

1 <https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/Field Office Beijing Plus/Attachments/BeijingDeclarationAndPlatformForAction-en.pdf>

2 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures#notes>

3 <http://www.unece.org/beijing25.html>

Facts and Figures about Poverty:

In October 2019, the World Bank published its most recent Poverty Overview⁴. It stated that “Despite the progress made in reducing poverty, the number of people living in extreme poverty globally remains unacceptably high. And given global growth forecasts, poverty reduction may not be fast enough to reach the target of ending extreme poverty by 2030.” Extreme poverty rate is defined as the fraction of the population living at or below \$1.90 per day. More than half of the extreme poor live in Sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, the number of poor in the region increased by 9 million, with 413 million people living on less than US\$1.90 a day in 2015, more than all the other regions combined. If the trend continues, **by 2030, nearly 9 out of 10 extreme poor will be in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

According to the **charity foundation Oxfam**, the 26 richest billionaires own as many assets as the 3.8 billion poorest people of the planet’s population. The wealth of the world’s **richest 1% is equal to the total wealth of the remaining 99%**. In the 10 years since the financial crisis, the number of billionaires has nearly doubled. The wealth of the billionaires increased by \$900bn in 2018. The world’s richest man, Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, saw his fortune increase to \$112bn. Just 1% of his fortune is equivalent to the whole health budget for Ethiopia, a country of 105 million people. The poorest are paying a higher effective tax rate than the richest. About 10,000 people per day die for lack of healthcare and 262 million children are not in school, because their parents are unable to afford the fees, uniforms or textbooks. Women are dying for lack of decent maternity care and children are being denied education. Oxfam’s director of campaigns and policy, Matthew Spencer, said: “The way our economies are organised means wealth is increasingly and unfairly concentrated among a privileged few while millions of people are barely subsisting.”⁵

Around **40 million Americans**, representing one out of eight households, including nearly 13 million children, are food insecure⁶. In 2018, 10.6% of men, and 12.9% of women lived in poverty in the USA; the poverty rate for married couples in 2018 was 4.7% - but the poverty rate for single-parent families with no wife present was 12.7%, and for single-parent families with no husband present was 24.9%⁷. This is in the midst of the longest period of sustained GDP growth in U.S. history⁸.

As for 2018, more than **14 million people in the UK** (around 20% of the UK population), including 4.5 million children, and almost 2 million pensioners are living below the breadline, despite the UK being the fifth largest economy in the world⁹. Figures in March 2019 show that women in UK continue to be more likely to live in poverty than men (20% compared to 18%). Nearly a quarter (23%) of single female pensioners are poor, the highest figure in 15 years. 45% of single parents – the vast majority (90%) of which are women – are living in poverty. Almost half of children living with a single parent (47%) are now in poverty¹⁰. According to the charity organisation, **Feeding Britain**, 1.6 million people in the UK have to make the impossible choice between putting food on the table or heating their homes. Fuel Banks and Food Banks are often the only access to support¹¹. Even nurses, teachers, police officers and workers in other sectors, and many single parents use food banks. 1 in 7 people at food banks are in employment, or live with someone who is...¹²

So what happened to “poverty reduction” through the “employment and empowerment of women” in the rich and gender-equal West? The cause for the failure of ‘gender-equality’ policies and programmes to tackle female poverty effectively is due to the lack of recognition that poverty affecting women does not have its roots in unequal gender roles, nor in the absence of implementing gender perspectives in economic planning. Rather, it is due in main to the flawed capitalist system which rules states today and which dominates the global political and economic landscape. Capitalism does not consider the poverty of the individual as a problem to be resolved. Rather, it strives to achieve the highest possible level of production (commodities and services), based on the principle that resources are “scarce” and needs are infinite. Hence, it aims at increasing a country’s wealth as a whole, which it measures through its gross national product. Whether the individual is or is not able to satisfy his/her needs is not of concern to the capitalist economy as long as the production of goods continues to grow, and the wealth of the state continues to increase. The improvement of the GDP

4 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

5 <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/jan/21/world-26-richest-people-own-as-much-as-poorest-50-per-cent-oxfam-report>

6 <https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/>

7 <https://www.povertyusa.org/facts>

8 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/economy/2018/04/23/cities-hit-hardest-extreme-poverty/528514002/>

9 <https://fullfact.org/economy/uk-sixth-or-ninth-richest-country/>

10 <https://wbg.org.uk/blog/dwp-data-reveals-women-continue-to-be-worst-affected-by-poverty/>

11 <https://www.endhungeruk.org/2018/08/03/heat-eat-choice-no-one-make/>

12 <https://www.trusselltrust.org/2019/11/06/working-people-at-food-banks/>

is superior to the well-being of the human being. At the same time it is a means to higher profits for the capital owners in the West, and their puppet rulers and elites in their colonies in the developing world to ensure their obedience to their colonialist masters.

Debunked: The Truth of Capitalist Development and the Beijing Declaration:

It is important to mention that the **International Monetary Fund** and the **World Bank** are the **financial arm and most important institutions of the UN system**, which was founded in 1945 by the Second World War's 5 principal victors – **China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States**. These five states are not only the main and permanent members of the UN Security Council, but they are **the world's true capitalists**. Both of these institutions have systematically forced states to take high-interest loans which are impossible to be repaid. In doing so, they utilized indebtedness as a means of imposing their crippling economic policies and subordinating states to their will.

The capitalist hegemony over nations ensured and imposed free-market policies, the privatization of natural and agricultural resources, the selling of infrastructure, industry and technology to foreign investors, corruption, inhumane impoverishing tax-policies, aided monopolies and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few capitalist owners while exploiting the masses in order to maintain capitalist ruling systems. Subjugating world-trade to the US-Dollar instead of gold and silver and the heavily interest-based loans imposed by the IMF and World Bank under the pretext of development support have enabled the capitalist power states to exploit resources and the manpower of nations. Environmental destruction, conflicts, wars, and migration are the primary results of capitalist policies and agendas to secure political and economic interests within countries, irrespective of the detrimental impact on human life and wellbeing. All of this is the reason for the growing inequality between the rich and poor, the increasing unemployment, and inadequate wages for men to maintain their families, the exploitation of femininity, and thus indelible poverty – affecting men and women alike - both in the West and across the world.

Today's global food crisis, as admitted by former US President Bill Clinton in a UN gathering on World Food Day 2008, is the result of “US, WB, IMF and all big foundations and governments” policies, who treated “food like some other product in international trade”¹³ – i.e., as a commodity instead of a vital right of the world's poor. Decades of WB and IMF economic “**structural adjustment**” policies, encouraged by the US, pressured particularly African countries to import hybrid seeds and fertilizer from US-Biotech-Companies, eliminating domestic seeds and arable crops. In addition, these politics led to the forced relocation of local farmers and large scale land-transformations due to corrupt governments, who leased out huge tracts of land (arable, pasture, woodland, forests, wetland, water sources, and wildlife habitats). They literally “grabbed” land from the peasant farmers, pastoralists, and their communities in order to shift small-scale agrarian systems to large-scale, foreign-dominated production. These not only bereft locals from their basic rights of ownership, maintenance, and work for their livelihood, but also caused immense harm to ecosystems, wildlife habitats, biodiversity and water resources¹⁴. Within 10 years the Ethiopian government leased out more than 3.5 million hectares of land. The largest foreign holding is the Indian company “Karuturi”, which secured 300,000 hectares of land for 50 years in order to produce rice, cane sugar and oil palms for cheap export only. Another actor of this category is the “Saudi Star” company, who secured 139,000 hectares of land in the province of Gambella, forcing locals to relocate into camps, exploiting and polluting water resources.¹⁵ Food became a privilege of the aristocracy, who seized it when they needed it, additionally creating famines. In some countries, like Ethiopia and Sudan, the government ultimately decides who receives the food. Additionally international aid is actually a means to benefit the donor country and is often referred to as “tied aid.” Over half of the world's bilateral aid comes in this form; money is given or lent to a country, but on the condition that the country uses it to purchase goods or services from the donor country. A 2010 report from the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia alleged that the lucrative Somali contracts for distributing food aid were dominated by three individuals, saying they had become “some of the wealthiest and most influential individuals in Somalia” through this business. Furthermore charities, mainly under the umbrella of the UN, are rather competing entities with commercial interests than philanthropists, who profit from the famine and the aid programs¹⁶. This is how Africa's food self-sufficiency declines and how food imports and prices rise, leading into an infinite increase in hunger, and dooming Africa to be the world's poorest continent despite its huge and immense raw material and mineral resources.

13 Endless Appetites: How the Commodities Casino Creates Hunger and Unrest; Alan Bjerga, Bloomberg News, New Jersey, 2011)

14 (Land to Investors: Large-scale Land Transfers in Ethiopia, Dessalegn Rahmato, Forum for Social Studies, Addis Abeba, 2011)

15 Mordshunger: Wer profitiert vom Elend der armen Länder? | Jean Feyder, Westend Verlag, Frankfurt/Main, 2014

16 <https://www.dw.com/en/the-business-of-famine/a-15514858>

Another example for devastating IMF and WB policies leading a country to the brink of complete collapse is **Lebanon**. At \$86bn, Lebanon's sovereign debt is the world's third-highest relative to gross domestic product (GDP). The country's debt-to-GDP ratio is 152 percent, and the interest on debt uses almost half of the state's revenues" (BBC 28/10/2019), and produces "a high rate of unemployment at 37 percent for those under 35 years old..." (BBC 26/11/2019). In the face of this economic devastation brought on to the people by the political class, the spark of a WhatsApp Tax on 17/10/2019 ignited the streets in Lebanon, and massive demonstrations came out.¹⁷

Alongside the crippling impact of capitalist policies, half the population of **Pakistan** is food insecure directly as a result of spending on fighting the 'War on Terror'. Additionally electricity is more and more becoming a disappearing luxury with consistent blackouts due to the circular debt crisis which has ruined industry and caused many to lose their jobs. Thanks to the IMF packages and policies the government uses almost half of its revenues to service debt. Currently every Pakistani man, woman and child is a debtor owing \$616, just over half of the total annual GDP per person. Still Pakistan's entire defence budget is increased by more than 5 billion Dollars a year, whilst total education spending amounts to only 465 million dollars. The IMF loan package demands to reduce and eventually eliminate all government subsidies, and to push through new tax hikes. Nearly everything and everyone in Pakistan is taxed except the rich and powerful who are either not legislated to be taxed or simply flout the law.¹⁸ This explains why over recent years, gas, electricity, petrol, CNG, diesel, wheat and other basic staples prices sky rocketed, becoming unaffordable to the majority of the population.¹⁹ So how could women be exempt from all of this destruction?!

The Beijing Declaration – A Means to Restore Capitalist Societies' Faith in Capitalism

As stated at the very beginning of this article: "Economic policies constitute the main artery of capitalism, and provide the lifeblood for the colonialist capitalist Western countries' existence and survival." **In fact, poverty poses a realistic, tangible threat to the survival of capitalism.**

British Professor Sir Angus Deaton, Nobel Laureate and Chair of IFS Deaton Review²⁰ admitted that -across the rich world and not only in America- "today's **inequalities** are signs that **democratic capitalism is under threat...** Across the rich world, not only in America, **large groups of people are currently questioning whether their economies are working for them. The same can be said of politics.**" Opinion makers and activists in the West repeatedly point out capitalism's failure as a social system, as the most extreme inequality in human history, and a planetary ecological "death spiral".²¹ According to Jerry Z. Muller²², Professor of history at the Catholic University of America, Washington, "Inequality is an inevitable product of capitalist activity, [...] **rising inequality and economic insecurity can erode social order and generate a populist backlash against the capitalist system at large.**"

Hence, the problem of the world today is not the lack of GENDER-EQUALITY and women's lack of economic capacities; rather it is the existence of CAPITALIST INEQUALITY!!!

Women's empowerment through the hymn of gender-equality is distorting the reality. **And this is the truth about "gender-equality" and "women's empowerment" promoted through the Beijing Declaration, and all other international agreements!**

The Islamic Path to Eradicating Poverty, and Restoring Women's Dignified High Status²³

The Islamic view on poverty is best summarized by the statement of Omar bin Al-Khattab (ra), the second Khalifah in

17 <http://www.khilafah.com/qa-popular-movements-in-iraq-lebanon-and-iran/>

18 https://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/19/world/asia/19taxes.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=a1

19 <http://www.khilafah.com/a-radical-approach-to-pakistans-economic-crisis/>

20 IFS Deaton Review, a comprehensive five-year study of inequalities in society funded by the Nuffield Foundation, that will draw on a range of diverse perspectives to understand inequalities in income, wealth, health, social mobility, political participation and more.

21 George Monbiot, "The Earth Is in a Death Spiral. It will Take Radical Action to Save Us," Guardian, November 14, 2018; Leonid Bershidsky, "Underemployment is the New Unemployment," Bloomberg, September 26, 2018.

22 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2013-02-11/capitalism-and-inequality>

23 Sources for detailed Economy Politics under Islam:

The Economic System of Islam; Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, Hizb ut Tahrir;

Economic Crises: Their Reality and Solutions from the Viewpoint of Islam Sheikh Ata' Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah

The Draft Constitution or The Necessary Evidences for it – Part 2 - (The Economic System, The Education Policy, Foreign Policy) by Hizb ut Tahrir

Pakistan's Economy under the Khilafah by Hizb ut Tahrir / Wilayah Pakistan (http://www.hizbut-tahrir.org/PDF/EN/en_books_pdf/PK_Revival_of_the_Economy_in_Pakistan_EN_22.06_2013_.pdf)

Islam, “If poverty were a man, I would kill it.” This and more statements signify the level of intolerance for poverty and hunger in Islam. The Messenger Muhammad (saw) rejected the slightest possibility that one person should go hungry while the neighbourhood he lives in has plenty. He (saw) said, that

«لَيْسَ الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يَشْبَعُ وَجَارُهُ جَائِعٌ»

“He who resorts to his bed with full stomach while his neighbour is hungry is not a true believer.”

Islam definitely regards the elimination of poverty as a matter of faith. Poverty is defined as the inability to satisfy one’s basic needs, which are food, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare. The Prophet (saw) stated that every individual – male and female - has the right for their basic needs to be fulfilled:

«ليس لابن آدم حق في سوى هذه الخصال: بيت يسكنه، وثوب يُؤاري عورته، وجلف الخبز، والماء»

“The Son of Adam has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live, a piece of clothing whereby he may hide his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water.” [Tirmidhi]

Hence, as long as there is even one hungry man or woman or child, the community, and above all the leadership of the state is obliged to struggle until every single individual’s basic needs are met. Therefore, Islam clearly defines a myriad of subjects related to the sources of wealth, the nature of wealth, the methods of increasing wealth, and the methods of distributing wealth. It has defined clear and efficient tools to eradicate poverty from its roots, including detailed rules on property ownership, currency, exchange rates, the gold standard, Riba (usury), hoarding of wealth, trade and commerce, corporations, agriculture and the utilisation of land, human labour, and satisfaction of human basic needs. However, this economic system can only function within the comprehensive implementation of every Islamic rule and system under the Khilafah State upon the Method of Prophethood, and not within the existing non-Islamic systems. Hizb ut Tahrir enshrined these provisions as laws with their related detailed Islamic evidences in its Draft Constitution for the Khilafah . Here is a brief overview of the means by which Islam and the Khilafah²⁴ will eradicate poverty:

- **The first and foremost rule in eradicating poverty is the effective distribution of wealth**, for this is an order by Allah (swt):

«كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ»

“So that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you.” [Al-Hashr 7] Islam’s economic system does not allow the accumulation of wealth and resources in the hands of a few. It also categorically prohibits Riba (usury) in any form. This prevents the one direction flow of money to the wealthy in society as well as the indebtedness of the state to other nations which can cripple the economy. Allah (swt) says:

«الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا»

“Those who consume interest cannot stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except as one stands who is being beaten by Shaytan into insanity. That is because they say, ‘Trade is (just) like interest.’ But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest.” [Al-Baqara: 275]. The Khilafah will therefore not take any interest-based loans from any country. Furthermore, Islam forbids the hoarding of wealth and has made obligatory the Zakah in order to ensure that wealth is distributed among the people. Allah (swt) warns in this respect:

«وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ»

“And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah -give them tidings of a painful punishment.” [At-Tawbah 34] The gross inequality, that mankind witnesses today under capitalism, will therefore be eradicated swiftly and smoothly through the Islamic economic policies.

- What we face on **mismanagement and lack of infrastructure today will not exist under the Khilafah**. Under the Khilafah, Islam will uniquely unleash great funds from the economy to fuel agricultural and industrial development, without crippling taxation, through a radical restructuring of state, public and private ownership amongst other measures.

- Islam mandates the building of a powerful heavy industrial base, supported by world leading research, to propel the Khilafah in its role as a leading state. Islam will link the ownership of land with its practical cultivation, and will remove foreign ownership of agricultural land as well as heavy taxation on agricultural inputs. This will be an immense boost to food security as well as employment and prosperity as the Muslim Ummah enjoyed for centuries under Islamic rule.

Thus, the Khilafah will prioritize the crops that allow its citizens to have their basic needs of food and clothing met completely, with excess production being used for foreign trade. It will establish strong pastures to support a surge in livestock availability.

- If any piece of derelict land is cultivated by a person, he will become owner of that land. This came in a hadith of the Prophet (saw),

«مَنْ أَعْمَرَ أَرْضًا لَيْسَتْ لِأَحَدٍ فَهُوَ أَحَقُّ»

“Whoever cultivated a land that is not owned by anybody, then he deserves it more.” Furthermore, the Shariah mandates that landowners utilise their agricultural land and ordains that any land left unused for more than 3 years is confiscated and reallocated to those who will farm it. These rules will change the agricultural landscape of the Muslim world fundamentally. Africa, for example, was far away from being the poorest and hungriest part of this world during the times of Khalifah Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, because he did not apply anything other than the rules and principles of the Deen of Islam. It has been narrated by Yahya bin Said, who was governor at the time during the reign of Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz (ra), that he said: “I was sent by Umar bin Abdul Aziz to collect zakat from Africa. After collecting it, I intended to give it to the poor people. However, I did not find one. Umar bin Abdul Aziz has made all the people rich during that time.”²⁵

- Presently, electricity, coal, oil and natural gas are sold at extortionate prices in many states, mainly due to capitalist privatization. The Islamic economic system will remove the energy resources as well as water supplies from private ownership and return them to public ownership, and the revenue generated would be administered for the benefit of all citizens, so that power and clean water are provided readily as well as cheaply. This means that there are no taxes and burdening fees on any kind of energy which inflate the prices. This is derived from the hadith of the Prophet (saw)

«الْمُسْلِمُونَ شُرَكَاءُ فِي ثَلَاثٍ فِي الْمَاءِ وَالْكَلْبِ وَالنَّارِ»

“Muslims are partners in three things: in water, pastures and fire”.

- In Islam **neither income tax nor sales tax exists, because private property in origin is inviolable.** Taxation occurs on surplus wealth beyond that which is needed to secure basic needs, as well as upon the productive capacity of land (Kharaj tax). This low taxation system drastically reduces the tax burden on individuals as well as encourages enterprise, investment and wealth generation which increases employment opportunities. What allows this low taxation policy is the fact that the Khilafah has abundant sources of revenues from public and state property, as well as a unique set of laws for revenue generation from agriculture and industry.

- The ever increasing inflation in our lands is due to the repayments for the interest based IMF, WB and other loans from the kafir colonialists, as well as currencies that reduce their values constantly, as they are not based on gold and silver as obliged by Shariah. The currency of the Khilafah will be established on the gold and silver standard again which is the sure footing for the elimination of inflation from its root. The Khilafah will issue its own independent currency, which is backed up by gold and silver, and it will not be linked to any foreign currency in any way.

- The Khilafah is obliged to provide high quality free public services such as education and healthcare for all its citizens – male and female – and to those in the cities and rural areas alike. This includes good quality maternal and infant care. This will prevent individuals from having to spend a large proportion of their income on such basic needs as is the case today.

- Under Islam, the capable man has the duty to work in order to satisfy his needs and that of his family. As for women, women are free to enter employment and pursue a career if they wish so. However, the financial maintenance of women - regardless of their wealth - is a duty upon the capable men of the family and upon the State if the male guardians are unable to do so. The Prophet (saw) said,

«مَنْ تَرَكَ مَالًا فَلْأَهْلِهِ وَمَنْ تَرَكَ دَيْنًا أَوْ ضِيَاعًا فَإِنِّي وَعَلَيَّ»

“If somebody dies (among the Muslims) leaving some property, the property will go to his heirs; and if he leaves a debt or dependents, we will take care of them.” The Khilafah is therefore obliged to ensure sufficient employment opportunities for men to support their families adequately. This includes providing the required education, training and funds if needed for individuals to set up businesses or pursue other means to earn a living and become self-sufficient.

[Draft Constitution, Articles: 153 and following]

- The Khilafah will return our Muslim lands back to prosperity and abundance like in former times under the rule of Islam. Rasulallah's (saw) words are not only evidence for the responsibilities and obligations of the Khilafah; they are a promise and a glad tiding

«الإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

“The Imam is a guardian and he is responsible for his subjects”

In conclusion, it is clear that the UN Beijing Declaration's claim of the “feminization of poverty” with its focus on gender equality as a means to solving the problem of poverty is nothing more than a desperate life-sustaining measure of capitalism and a futile attempt to maintain its own peoples' belief in the capitalist way of life. Since it is the capitalist system which is the main cause of the severe poverty affecting millions of women globally, all of the strategic aims and objectives cited in the declaration will fail to solve the problem of poverty. It is the Islamic system implemented by the Khilafah that offers a truly credible path to lifting women, men and children from lives of economic hardship and impoverishment ■

Education and Training of Women: Educating a Woman is Obligatory in Islam, not an Imaginary Right that the Beijing Declaration Represents

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THE BLESSED LAND – PALESTINE



(Translated)

In order to make its civilization a model and to spread its concepts to be global for the world's countries to follow its path, the West turned towards the issue of women's liberation, empowerment and equality with men and emphasized the necessity of changing the stereotypical view of women and their role in the family and society. So it employed the governments of these countries and their associations and organizations for this task, and spent money to finance them to pass these concepts and bring them closer to people's minds under attractive and deceptive titles. Therefore, came the interest in the issue of women and education and focusing on education being the only path for women to take in order to defend themselves and regain their diminished rights. So, the concepts of women's liberation and empowerment spread in societies, which left a deep impact on some and they considered themselves in a battle with men and knowledge as their weapon.

The education of women is one of the most important topics discussed, such that international conferences and agreements have affirmed on the need to implement it in order to obtain women's rights and be equal to men. Therefore, the Beijing Declaration - for example - obligated the governments of Muslim countries to take the necessary measures to achieve this. In the wake of the women's liberation movement and the call that accompanied it for girls' education, schools were established and the movement for modernization of education increased in order to keep pace with the scientific development and technological progress achieved by the West. These governments sent missions to the countries of the West, which encouraged this to allow them to absorb its culture, thereby ensuring a graduated batch of well-known and smitten by the West thinkers who staunchly defended the West (and their culture) and spread their concepts in their societies. They have been forced to take several measures, including changing traditional stereotypes that they claim degrade women and replacing them with what they term new, and fair concepts.

The West also obliged them to make the education of the girl compulsory in its constitutions and policies, given that she shares with the boy the character of citizenship and humanity and there is no difference between her and him, and especially since she plays an important role, for she educates the generations and revives the family and society in general. Mixed education was also imposed on them (the government), so they sought to make schools, institutes, and colleges mixed with both sexes and eliminate all distinctions between them. Education curricula have been devoted to the implementation of these goals, which work first to change the habits, customs and traditions that stand in the way of equality in education between men and women. According to the report of the Human Development Index issued by the United Nations Development Program, "Inequality, especially in the field of education, is a major cause of uneven opportunities and different experiences of the Arab world, as the level of inequality in education reached 38.9% compared to the global average of 26.8%." Secondly, science replaces these so-called "obsolete" traditions and the place of religion that the capitalist system seeks to keep out of life, and this is the banner carried by the United Nations and it led a war under the pretext of combating "terrorism" to implement it, so that the rules of Islam are struck and replaced by the concepts of Western culture, to penetrate into these societies, dominate them and steer them to the direction it desires.

Women in the West have been presented as role models, and women in Muslim countries in particular must follow their example. Therefore, international agreements and conferences have called on the governments of these countries to change the patriarchal discourse dominating their societies and to make this change in their educational

policies, leaving no room for differentiation in the roles between the sexes (and the orientation: where the girl studies educational professions and handicrafts, as for the boy, he turns to the engineering and mechanical professions... Sports games: The boy plays football and the girls other games).

Accordingly, they viewed it as necessary to change the teaching curricula, integrate the concept of gender in school textbooks, and reinforce the idea of the importance of a woman's employment in providing a decent life, in order for the educated girl to make work an important goal in her life so that she will not yield, and until she is certain that she has the capabilities and aspirations no less than the boy, and that the qualities of boldness and the proactivity is not limited to him.

The call for the liberation of women, their education and equality with men, and the creation of "**The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas**" (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Article 10) is one of the most important Beijing's policies and other international agreements. They have worked to generalize it in all countries of the world, especially in Muslim countries, so that it changes the lifestyle of their societies and makes them like the Western lifestyle. However, it met obstacles and failures, making it reconsider its actions and develop them in order to achieve its goals.

The Beijing document, for example, attributed the failure to implement its policies regarding the education of women to the concepts of "Retroactivity" prevailing in Muslim countries, which still considers the education of women a definite loss, as they will eventually marry and therefore do not need this education. Dr. Ilham Mansour, a lecturer of Philosophy at a Lebanon University and novelist and researcher, said: "If we ask parents about the benefit of education for a girl, we often hear the following answer; that the first woman's duty is to marry and if the woman does not succeed with a husband as she wants or if this husband became poor or if he stops work for some reason, then the educated woman can work to secure life only..." As you can see, their form of education will make the girl less subject to the orders of her guardian, so she will rebel and disobey him. This is in addition to these traditions standing in front of equality between the boy and the girl, widening the chasm between them, and making the male society dominant that abhors and diminishes her abilities.

Did the educated woman really achieve the gains promised by these agreements and raised in the slogans of the associations? Did education enable women to overcome poverty and actually contribute to economic development, or did unemployment that increased refute these allegations? Its proportion among females is twice that of males. During the year 2018, the unemployment rate in Palestine, for example, reached 40% for males and 73% for females (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics)

Did the woman actually achieve her self-worth and become independent from man, or did she suffer from more problems as a result of the calls for emancipation from his authority, and her continuous pursuit of equality with him. She was exposed to sexual harassment by mixing with him, as indicated by the statistics issued by the Sawa Center specializing in dealing with issues of violence against women, which show an increase in the number of sexual harassment incidents every year, which are reported on the dedicated hotlines in the center (Arab Regional Resource Center on Violence against Women- Aman)... Physical violence has spread, differences have increased and divorce rates have increased in the societies as a result of the spread of concepts that differ from the Islamic culture of these societies. The relationship between spouses is no longer of love and mercy but rather a struggle and competition, and the woman's perception of her job and her relationship with the man has changed and she is working to be "truly liberated" so she rejects any measure that is incompatible with the completion of her personality and achieving her independence. When choosing between independence and marriage, the conscious woman who is aware chooses independence even if she sacrifices her marital life because she knows that her current life is a life that does not bear the constituents of its continuation only in terms of the instinctive (physical) aspect only (Towards the Liberation of Women in Lebanon - Dr. Ilham Mansour).

In order for you to be free and march on the path of the Western woman, Muslim woman, you must refuse your natural job that is natural to you as a "wife and mother", reject it and even despise it and live for yourself only and do not think of a family and if you formed one, let your ambition be achieving your success at the top of your interests.

Thus, feminist societies managed to penetrate into societies to blow the toxins of these malicious ideas into the

daughters of Muslims to make them reject marriage and pant behind the illusion of success and self-realization to find themselves as new figures in unmarried women's rates. These associations and organizations raise slogans defending the woman and the girl, and demand that the age of marriage is raised on the pretext that early marriage is unfair to her and a violation of her right to education and to achieve her self's worth. In reality, it is a pursuit of birth control and a reduction in the fertility rate.

The West is betting on this issue in order to make the Muslim woman a woman of a Western-style, free, who does not see in her mixing with men a sin, and calls for equality with men, so there are no biological differences that prevent her from education, working and proving herself. She views it as her right to learn and reach the highest ranks and positions, to be equal with him in opportunities, to achieve herself and her independence and to get rid of the restrictions that hindered her. With her education, she believes that she does not have to raise her young brothers and does not marry early and have children, but she will focus in studying and achieving her dreams and hopes, so she succeeds, works, and becomes active in her family and society and feels her entity and "humanity".

In this way, educated working women have an important role in economic and human development because, of their preoccupation with their studies. They will marry at a later age, which will lead to a reduction in population growth and explosion, as well as being more responsive to family planning programs that the West employs to destroy and limit the number of Muslims (in order to win its civilization war against Islam. One of the priorities of its programs is to compel governments to take the necessary measures to prolong the period of women's education and to prevent them from leaving and dropping out of education.

The policies on the surface are good and a mercy for Muslim women, but within them there is torture and loss that has no way out. They will chase after the mirage of freedom and the delusion of equality with men, and forget their nature and innate needs to form a family and have children.

Can the West commit the governments of Muslim countries to what is best for them while leading a war of civilization against Islam and Muslims? Is it expected that the enemy brings goodness?!

The most prominent thing that surfaces the West's sordid goals is its endeavor to reduce the number of people and inflict societies in these countries with the epidemic of an aging population and eliminate their future, by dictating policies that raise the age of marriage, as illustrated by a decree of a law issued by the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, to raise the age of marriage for both genders to 18-years-old and to impose birth control claiming it is necessary to preserve the health of the mother, and implement family planning reduce the population explosion. What angered the West is the population density of Muslims and the increase in their number, because that is a danger to the existence of its western civilization, as it is certain that the Ummah of Islam is asleep and there will come a day when it wakes up and regains its position. Therefore it strives to fight it with a dangerous weapon, and it is the woman by targeting her in order to change her concepts and instill in her self-love and a feeling that she is wronged and that she should get her rights even if her family and society are wronged. It established its Western concepts, and was helped by the suspicious funded feminists and civil society organizations, and false ideas that stipulated that the woman's barriers to education are external barriers, including customs and religious rules that stand in the way of women's right to education.

This is what the policies of the West have worked on in Muslim countries and in the world in general to make it a small village that is run by one system and implements all the concepts of its civilization. It called on governments to "ensure respect for the rights of women and girls in educational institutions by abolishing any discriminatory laws or legislation based on religion, race or culture" and "promote equality, cooperation, mutual respect and sharing of responsibilities between girls and boys from the pre-school level onwards." Perhaps one of the most prominent concepts that it advocated its consolidation in schools and universities and among housewives and working women is the concept of gender, and employed educational and media curricula for that and prepared programs and activities to install it in societies through various women's organizations and societies funded by the West which boast a significant development in the number of educated women in the Arab world. "During the 25 years since the Beijing Conference for Women, Arab women have achieved the fastest rates of increase in levels of education, so now in 2019, the majority of those enrolled in Arab universities are girls" (Moez Doraid: Director of the Regional Office for the Arab States at the United Nations Women)

What is the result of this great achievement? Did the woman eliminate illiteracy in her land? Did she eliminate poverty? Did it end the wars that claims women's lives the most? Have the number of unmarried women shrunk in these countries, and have problems been solved?

The West poisoned the educational curricula, corrupted the media, and made them all work to polish the image of the Western women as a model that Muslim women should follow. In reading texts, they abolished everything related to the role of the mother, the home, and the raising of children, so the difference in gender roles in the curricula of education was not taken into account and they sought to mix and make them one. Alexis Karel, a French surgeon and biologist and 1912 Nobel Prize winner in Medicine, said, "It is ridiculous to make women deny motherhood and therefore girls must be mentally and materially trained, they must not be taught the ambitions that boys receive and are taught to them... Educators must pay close attention to the organic and mental characteristics of the male and the female." There has been an imposition of the model of the liberal woman who does not care for the husband nor the children. If there is a conflict between their interests and work and achieving her self's worth, she will not hesitate to oppress them all and perhaps even abandon them if they represented a danger to her work in order to achieve her success. It made her a distorted version of the Western woman and made her rebel against her instinct.

In such measures, there is a great danger to societies where roles overlap, intertwine and the scales are disrupted, so that the world becomes one gender, which would eliminate the human species. Many in the West and the East recognized the seriousness of that. For example, Gorbachev wrote in his book *Perestroika*, "We recognize the services provided by the Russian woman to the socialist revolution, but we must remember also the defects in the Russian society that occurred in the family as a result of the fact that they left the house and left the generations, and we must note that the crime rate increased because the generations became dysfunctional... There are social issues and problems that we began to feel and suffer from..." The Western civilization - by eliminating the difference between the sexes - is a civilization that annihilates mankind and eliminates humanity... a civilization of a few that possesses and controls most of the world's wealth, so it has no concern except achieving its interests... it is a civilization that leads a war of survival or death that seeks to destroy the concepts it opposes. Therefore it dilutes the doctrines and empties the minds of sons of all meanings and values that they were brought up with in order to prepare a growing generation devoid of religion, astray and at loss, for whom the West is its example, and hence it follows the West in everything it does.

Today, they made Muslim girls question their religion and they raised the status of education to make it their new, developed and modern religion, by which they can live a strong, free and empowered life. It is their weapon "against the treachery of time" by which she overcomes all difficulties, and through which she feels she does not need a man and dispenses of his guardianship, whether he is her father, brother or husband. She trusts in education blindly, so there is no doubt about its ability to protect her... So what will she do today? She is old and unemployment is widespread in all countries, so there is neither marriage nor work? Who will protect her, while she starts to feel a sense of independence and self-realization, and while she dispensed of the man and announced that she does not need him? Will she throw all that out, return to what she was created for, and recognize with certainty that she needs him as he needs her, and that their relationship is one of complementarity and harmony, not conflict and rivalry?

These measures implemented by these governments, as dictated by the agreements and treaties, have failed and did not achieve the desired and expected success because they are foreign to the belief of societies. They are wrong solutions to worsening real problems. Solutions that cannot get these societies and women in particular out of the problems of life that increase every day because they are solutions proposed by a corrupt system that only brought misery, hardship, poverty, wars and unemployment.

A system that raises the slogan of literacy eradication and disseminates it with its education policies that it imposes and the curricula that it obliges governments to implement. These aim to produce ignorant generations and stuff their brains with useless information. It tries the failed policies on them, out of hate and hostility, so that they are lost and the nation whose future is lost by their loss. It is a system that encourages the privatization of education in light of the evasion of countries, especially in Islamic countries, from spending on this sector, where in 41 countries in the Islamic world, the spending rate was 6% of the budget in 2011, and in 25 countries less than 3% of the gross national product in 2011.

It is a system in which Islamic perceptions have changed and was replaced by some social traditions, customs and

traditions that prevent women from education and have no connection with Islam. It is a system in which wars and conflicts abounded, and the fear of parents overwhelmed them over the safety of their children, especially for girls, so they prevent them from education for fear of abuse, such as what is happening in Palestine from the occupation soldiers; terrorizing children and killing girls is not invisible! So where are these women's associations that claim to defend women's rights and enable them to access education from these terrible crimes committed by the Jewish entity against these female students? Why do we not see them raising slogans of condemnation and calling for their protection from these criminals?!

The capitalist system did not give justice to the Western woman, but was the cause of her agonies and calamities, and she lives under its shadow in all forms of oppression, violence and marginalization. A simple look at the terrifying numbers issued by its human rights organizations, governmental or non-governmental, are enough to convey a clear and real picture of this woman's suffering. How can a person who does not provide rights to a woman under him, gift it to the Muslim women? Or do you see a gift with a deadly poison in its fold? Didn't the Muslim woman realize that the West is only working to restrict it to the net of its corrupt concepts and drown her in the seas of its false kaffir civilization, claiming to deliver her salvation and defending her?!!

Does she still have any doubts that the law of her Lord, who warned her against the malice and deception of this West, is the only one that can guarantee her rights and a decent life?

What they claim are lies and falsehood! Islam did not deprive a woman of education nor does it view it as just a right, but rather it is an obligation on her. Islam urged her to seek knowledge and did not associate this with a specific age.

«طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ»

“To seek knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim.” And encouraged her to learn from the various forms of Islamic law and education in order to understand her Deen and learn what is necessary to raise her children and build her society.

Education and learning are necessary for a woman to gain the knowledge based on her Islamic belief, to follow in her life and her family's life and contribute to the development of her society. Islam permitted her to reach the highest levels of knowledge, adhering to the necessary Shariah rules and it opened the door for her to innovate and participate in various fields of life.

Among them were the hard-working scholars, the mother of the believers, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and the scholar Karima Al-Maroiuziah, who was described by Al Hafith Az-Zahabi in Siyar A'lam An-Nubala as Sheikha, the scholar with transmission.

As for the worldly sciences, the distinguished scholar Amatulwahid Sutayta Al Mahamli excelled in mathematical studies. And in the field of medicine and nursing, Rufaida Bint Ka'b Al Aslamiya (ra) was the first nurse in history. Women held important positions, for example in the judiciary, such as Al-Shifa: a female Hisba judge during the Khilafah (caliphate) of Omar Bin Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him.

Women were scholars, inventors, astronomers, and designers, like the legendary "Astrolabe" inventor, Mariam Al-Astrolabiya Al Ajeela... This is just the tip of the iceberg of the history of Islam, which is filled with the names of thousands of female jurists, politicians, and scientists in language, literature, mathematics, astronomy, and various sciences, doctors, nurses, military, heroines, and mujahideen. ["I thought I might find 20 or 30 women," says Muhammad Akram Nadwai, a Muslim scholar from India. To date, 8,000 have been found over 1,400 years, and his dictionary now fills 40 volumes.] (Excerpt from Secret History published by Carla Power in The New York Times, February 25, 2007).

Islam obligated the state to provide high-quality education to every one of its citizens (including girls and women) as a basic right regardless of their religion, race, gender, or level of wealth. It is obligated to provide enough primary and secondary schools for all citizens of the state and provide them with everything they need to achieve the goals of the education policy free of charge, which allows everyone, who wants to gain education, to do so.

Therefore, upon the establishment of the Khilafah state (Caliphate), it will be obligated to organize methods of education to provide girls and women with this knowledge, and it will strive to remove all traditional attitudes or cultural barriers that undermine female education or prevent girls from exercising their educational rights. It will not

allow women to live in fear or according to obsolete customs and traditions. This will improve people's perception of women. In light of the justice of Islam, women's prestige and dignity will be restored.

Also, there will be no mixing between males and females in schools and places of education, whether between students or teachers, and whether in state schools or private schools. Mixed education will disappear with all its negative and corrupting consequences that we see now, and which the West imposes on us by all means, even though many voices in the West advocate the importance of separating boys and girls in education. Supporters of this trend are increasing day by day due to the social and moral suffering caused by the mixing of the genders in schools.

The Khilafah will also provide postgraduate studies for free - because it is necessary for the state - such as in Islamic sciences, medicine, engineering, and other general and military sciences. "It is an obligation upon the State to teach every individual those matters that are necessary for the mainstream of life, male and female, in the primary and secondary levels of education. This must be provided free of charge to everyone, and the state should, to the best of its ability, provide the opportunity for everyone to continue higher education free of charge." (Article 178 of the Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State of Hizb ut Tahrir).

In order for the Khilafah State to be a world leader in science, medicine, technology, industry, and other fields, as required by Islam, it must search for excellence in education. It will encourage women to enter postgraduate studies and facilitate their specialization in various fields, including Islamic specializations, medicine, science, languages and engineering, which will ensure the educational aspirations of girls and women.

This atmosphere of learning and study emanating from the implementation of the Islamic system ensured the prosperity of women's education under the Khilafah and it will return, Allah willing. When it is established again and the Islamic system to run life according to Allah's law returns, it will guarantee women and men their rights and will restore to them the relationship of kindness and mercy and make them compete to obtain goodness and obedience of the Lord of the heavens and Earth.

O Allah, make its establishment soon so that we both, women and men, may enjoy its glory in all fields ■

Women and Health : Are the Failures of Women's Healthcare Provision a Matter of Gender Inequality or of the State System?

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Strategic Aims and Narratives Regarding Women and Health:

The aim of the UN Beijing Declaration (BD) and Platform for Action (PFA) critical area "**Women and Health**" was to ensure high quality health care provision for women and to fight against inequality and discrimination effecting women in the field of health. The PFA defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It says further that equitable access by women to health care and services is essential for their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life. In addition, it states that sexual and reproductive rights and health are essential for the enhancement of life and personal relations between women and men, and that equal relations between women and men in reproduction and sexuality require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility. It adds that sexual and reproductive rights depend on the recognition of basic human rights of all individuals and couples to decide freely and responsibly if, and how many, children they want, and when. This includes the right to obtain information and make decisions free of discrimination, coercion and violence. ¹

With regards to the reasons for women's lack of access to high quality health care, the PFA states the following: "A major barrier for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health is **inequality**, both between men and women and among women in different geographical regions, social classes and indigenous and ethnic groups." It adds that: "Women's health...is determined by the social, political and economic context of their lives" and that "to attain optimal health throughout the life cycle, **equality**, including the sharing of family responsibilities, development and peace are necessary conditions" (Article 89). Examples cited regarding women's inequality of treatment in health affairs today include: different and unequal access to health goods and health services; unequal opportunities to protect, maintain and promote their health; no social, psychological and economic support from the countries; degenerate social reality of women in developing countries; lack of knowledge and influence about sexuality and sexual transmitted diseases; lack of choice in sexuality and reproductive health; and inadequate research and statistics on women. The main focus of the strategic objectives and proposed actions in the BD and PFA was the removal of these stated obstacles and achieving equality for women in all health aspects.

Unravelling Equality Narratives on the Causes of Poor Health Care Provision for Women:

Over the past 25 years, governments claim to have taken steps towards implementing the commitments made in Beijing. However, despite this, societies are still failing women abysmally in relation to health. According to the World Health Organization, Maternal Mortality Ratios remain unacceptably high until today. Every day in 2017, approximately 810 women died from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. About 295, 000 women died during and following pregnancy in 2017. The vast majority of these deaths (94%) occurred in low-resource settings, and most could have been prevented. ²

For example, the United States (US) 2015 Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action mentioned that the US is preventing insurance companies from denying coverage or raising premiums based on gender or pre-existing conditions, including pregnancy³. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) aimed to ensure that

1 [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DAC/DAC/WID\(99\)4&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DAC/DAC/WID(99)4&docLanguage=En)

2 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

3 http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/USA_Report_on_the_Implementation_of_the_Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf

every American could have access to high-quality, affordable coverage, by providing health insurance to millions of Americans. However, despite what the report states, each year, more than 700 women die in the US due to pregnancy or causes related to childbirth. According to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 2011 and 2015 more than 31% of maternal deaths occurred during pregnancy, 36% during delivery or within the week after birth, and 33% occurred one week to a year after birth.⁴ Nearly 60% of all maternal deaths in the United States are preventable. Many have attributed such failures in preventing maternal deaths to the country's health insurance system, stating that this health care model has failed its citizens dismally.⁵ A study published by the American Journal of Public Health in 2009 found that nearly 45,000 Americans die each year as a direct result of being uninsured. Harvard economist David Cutler states that drug costs are one of the main reasons for the astronomical costs of health care provision in the US which has resulted in health insurance being unaffordable for millions of American women and men.⁶ This high cost of medication is related to the patenting and monopolising of drugs by pharmaceutical companies. According to a June 2018 article by the US media agency CNBC, Americans continue to suffer the highest prescription drug costs of anyone in the world; one in four Americans are unable to fill prescriptions due to high prices; and "today's drug patent monopolies are stronger than at any point in the last century, raising prescription prices." These high drug costs resulting from patency laws have also resulted in medical treatments being unaffordable for millions of ordinary citizens in developing countries – female and male alike. The truth about America's health care system, as in many capitalist states, is that those who can afford good health care get it and those who cannot are denied it. It is clear, therefore, that inadequate provision of medical care for women in capitalist countries, such as the US, is not related to being male or female, or deficiencies in gender equality, but rather due to the unjust and flawed health care system, supported and championed by the capitalist political system, which views health not as a basic right but as a privilege.

Taking another example, the report of Afghanistan on the Application of the Beijing Declaration mentions that the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) developed its National Health Strategy for 2016-2020 and National Gender and Human Rights Strategy for the health sector. The main goal of the National Health Strategy was to improve access, strengthen and develop beneficial and sustainable health practices to ensure better and just access to quality health care services. It was based on providing available funding for improving the health and nutrition conditions of all citizens, particularly women, children and vulnerable groups.⁷ A 2017 report issued by the MoPH revealed that more than 50% of pregnant women in Afghanistan did not have access to essential health services and more than 50% of births took place without nursing facilities. Meanwhile, the acting head of reproductive health at the ministry of public health Zulaikha Anwari said that the quality of health services in the country is very low and also the health distribution programs are unbalanced. She stated: "Investments have been conducted on the health services, but..... quality of health is not satisfactory for us due to the lack of budget and resources". Attaullah Sayedzai from the MoPH said: "40% of mothers are suffering from anemia, 95% of mothers are lacking vitamin D while another 1% of mothers lack iodine, these are among the items which we need to focus on before and after births".⁸ The Afghan government lacks funds to operate and sustain its health care facilities; hospitals are unable to provide adequate care; health care facilities lack qualified staff and corruption throughout the system remains a concern. Clearly, endemic corruption, mass poverty, a flawed economic system, huge amounts of wastage and misuse of government funds, inadequate training of medical workers, decades of war and the ongoing conflict in the country are the key causes of the dire state of the health system and insufficient spending on health care in Afghanistan and in other countries. It is all this which has deprived millions of women of basic medical treatment and care rather than gender inequality.

The horrendous scale of poverty in many countries also results in women suffering from ill health due to malnutrition caused by poor diet, substandard living conditions, lack of access to clean water, poor sanitation, and unhygienic environments which predispose to disease, and the general stresses and hardships of economic deprivation as well as gross underinvestment in preventative public health. Furthermore, social factors such as drug and alcohol consumption and abuse, promiscuity and family breakdown caused by the liberal lifestyle and sexual freedoms have also resulted in physical and psychological problems and the spread of HIV and other Sexually Transmitted

4 <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2019/08/failing-american-women-alarming-trends-u-s-maternal-mortality/>

5 https://www.ipi.org/ipi_issues/detail/how-health-insurance-failed-america

6 <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/080615/6-reasons-healthcare-so-expensive-us.asp>

7 <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/afghanistan.pdf?la=en&vs=5251>

8 <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/50-pregnant-women-lack-access-basic-health-care>

Diseases (STD's) which affect the health of women. These political, economic, social and environmental issues are the fundamental causes that impact women's health and that need addressing rather than gender stereotyping or gender bias in the delivery of health care. It is flawed and failed capitalist, socialist and other man-made political, economic and health care systems in lands rather than gender inequalities which bear primary responsibility for the poor provision of good quality health care for women and girls worldwide. This is in addition to the existence of rulers and regimes that hold no genuine concern for the wellbeing of their citizens, only their seats of power and personal financial gains, and are bereft of any clear vision of how to secure the people's needs.

The Misleading Link Between Family Planning and Women's Health:

A significant proportion of 'Women and Health' in the BD and PFA is related to the sexual and reproductive lives of women. Article 92 for example states, "the limited power many women have over their sexual and reproductive lives and lack of influence in decision-making are social realities which have an adverse impact on their health." It is argued therefore that early marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, bearing many children, and lack of access to safe abortions all impact women's health negatively and are major causes of high maternal morbidity and mortality. Hence, the PFA calls for improved family planning policies and programmes, and greater access of women and girls to sexual and reproductive health information, services and safe abortions as a means of improving their health.

In Pakistan, for example, a new World Bank report states that the country needs to focus on reproduction as part of a comprehensive health care approach that would raise the status of women's health in the state. The level of women's health in Pakistan is amongst the lowest in the world. "If action is not taken swiftly, Pakistan will fall further behind its Asian neighbors in human capital development and jeopardize future opportunities for economic growth," says the study, 'Improving Women's Health in Pakistan', adding, "High fertility and women's poor health not only seriously reduce family well-being and productive capacity in Pakistan, but also the development potential of tomorrow."⁹ In 2012, at the Family Planning London Summit, the Pakistan government committed to working towards achieving universal access to reproductive health and raising the contraceptive prevalence rate to 55% by 2020 as well as ensuring all public and private health facilities in its provinces offered birth spacing services. It also expressed its desire to reach 6.7million additional users by 2020. The country spent an estimated US \$151 million on family planning in 2011/12 which they increased in subsequent years. The government also aimed to make family planning a priority for over 100,000 female health workers, who covered 70% of rural areas. In Pakistan FP2020 Commitment Self-reporting Questionnaire 2014 stated that with USAID support, the country received \$52 million in contraceptive commodities alone in the previous 3 years (Family Planning 2020).

Undoubtedly, the scale of maternal mortality and morbidity rates as well as poor health amongst many mothers, babies and infants in Pakistan as in many other Muslim countries is unacceptable. However, this is not due to inadequacies in family planning, nor early pregnancy, or bearing many children. Rather, it is a direct result of economic and environmental conditions in these countries, as well as inadequate health care services and poor government regulation and oversight of health care provision in these states. We see for example, that in most developed countries, teenage births and women choosing to have multiple pregnancies is not associated with the same maternal mortality, morbidity and poor health nor neonatal deaths as in developing countries due to good quality obstetric and neonatal medical care. However, in Pakistan, as with many other Muslim countries, many citizens avoid using state-provided medical facilities because of their "poor quality" and "unreliability." A survey of Pakistani government hospitals suggested that the behavior of hospital administration, the irresponsible attitudes of health care professionals (HCPs), and the illiteracy as well as poverty of citizens deter the Pakistani people from using state and public hospitals for treatment.¹⁰ Meanwhile, there has been an exponential growth in private hospitals. Currently, the private sector in Pakistan accounts for around 80% of all outpatient visits. The domination of the health system by the private sector in many countries has made health care a business and luxury rather than a service and right. High costs of private doctors' fees, medicines and diagnostic tests have made treatment unaffordable for millions of women and men in Pakistan and across the world. Governments and big businesses are essentially exploiting the sick and pregnant women to make huge profits or revenue. Additionally, poor investment in clinical training, lack of an integrated health system with primary, secondary and tertiary facilities, as well as corruption in

9 <http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00811/WEB/OTHER/85063066.HTM?OpenDocument>
10 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6058414/>

the health sector are other key problems. A 2009 report by Transparency International claimed that the health sector continues to be the third most corrupt state department in Pakistan.

Others argue that improved family planning is important to counter the global epidemic in HIV, Aids and other STD's which affect millions of girls and women worldwide. However, 25 years following the BD, and despite huge investments and countless national family planning programmes, the spread of STD's and HIV continues to be a major global public health issue. In 2018 an estimated 37.9 million people were living with HIV.¹¹ Young women are especially at risk, with around 6,200 new infections each week among young people aged 15-24 occurring among this group. In sub-Saharan Africa, four in five new infections are among girls aged 15-19 years, and young women aged 15-24 years are twice as likely to be living with HIV as men.¹² The main cause of this continuing epidemic is the high levels of extramarital relationships and promiscuity as well as drug consumption that exists within Muslim and non-Muslim countries alike due to the promotion of liberal sexual and personal freedoms. This liberal approach to sexuality is also that which underpins the high demand for abortions in many lands, which inevitably leads many women to undergoing unsafe abortions, often out of desperation. This reality is exacerbated by the strategic objectives of the BD and PFA which also promote sexual freedoms within nations, stating, "The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality." (Article 96). Hence, the emphasis on family planning within the declaration distracts from the fact that it is the liberal lifestyle and culture that bears primary responsibility for these sexual health issues affecting women. In fact, the intensive promotion of such family planning programmes in lands across the world has less to do with a genuine concern for the health of women, and more to do with a Western capitalist agenda of spreading liberal values, reducing populations in order to reduce competition for resources and limiting the size of Muslim populations to curtail the spread of Islam such that it does not pose a threat to global capitalism, and to increase the economic growth of nations by restricting any factor, including early pregnancy or bearing many children, which could impact a woman's ability to enter employment and drive the engine of the country's economy, as evident in the quote from the World Bank report on Pakistan cited above.

The Islamic Approach to Protecting the Health of Women and Providing a First-Class Public Health Care System

Islam is a unique system, whose values and provisions provide tranquility for the individual, meeting his organic needs and correctly satisfying his instincts in a manner that brings physical and mental wellbeing. It does not allow the human desires free reign in contrast to liberal freedoms. Rather, it regulates them such that the instincts are fulfilled in a way that brings comfort for the human being, while also being beneficial for society. Hence, it prevents the consumption of alcohol and drugs, and the engagement in extramarital relationships and promiscuity, and other harmful lifestyles which negatively impact the physical and psychological wellbeing of people. This also guards against various social problems such as family breakdown which can have a huge toll on the mental health of men, women and children alike. Allah (swt) says,

﴿فَأَمَّا يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ فَمَنْ آتَبَعْهُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ۗ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى﴾

"Whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery. But whoever turns away from My Reminder, verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection." [TMQ Ta-Ha: 123-124]. The System of Islam, the Khilafah, seeks to guarantee the mental health of its citizens through its implementation of the Islamic provisions and the focus of the Islamic concepts and feelings within the members of its community through the education curricula and media.

The Khilafah is obliged by the Islamic Shariah to provide the basic needs of its citizens. Ensuring health is viewed by Islam as one of those basic necessities, and as a right of every citizen, male and female, rather than a luxury for those who can afford it. Hence, the Khilafah must ensure high quality and free public health care to all its people, regardless of gender, race, religion or country of origin in cities and rural areas alike. The state should therefore provide sufficient well-equipped hospitals and clinics, as well as medicines, doctors and nurses to serve all those it governs. This is provided for from its Baytul-Mal (State Treasury), as specified in Article 164 of Hizb ut Tahrir's Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State, which states that the Khilafah must, "provide all health services free of charge to all".

11 <https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics>

12 <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/women>

In its Introduction to the Constitution, Hizb ut Tahrir has adopted, "Health and medical care are from the obligations of the State such that they must be readily available for the citizens, from the angle of clinics and hospitals, and public utilities...in accordance with the words of the Messenger:

«الإمام رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

"The Imam (ruler) is a guardian, and responsible (and will be questioned) for his subjects." (reported by Al-Bukhari from Abdullah Bin Umar). This text is general regarding the responsibility of the State for health and medical care since they are part of the obligatory responsibilities of the State... In his capacity as a ruler, the Messenger sent a doctor to Ubay, and Umar (ra), the second righteous Khalifah, called a doctor for Aslam to treat him, which are two evidences that health and medical care are from the essential needs of the citizens that the State must make sure are readily available for whoever needs them." Although it provides care, free of charge, the state did not prevent doctors and other medical workers from being paid for their job.

The ideas of Islam and its provisions had a great impact on the development of the most fundamental pillars of health care. The Messenger of Allah (saw) established through his words and actions the basis of health and medical care. The first century of Islamic rule witnessed the establishment of Bimaristan (public hospitals) and clinics of various types. "In conclusion, the Prophet's health and medical directives represent the main pillars of the medical and health renaissance witnessed by the world later. These directives are considered the spring from which doctors have consumed generation after generation, and which served as the keys that facilitated the research and investigation in the health and medical fields, as science proves every day the greatness of these directives and their scientific credibility." (Health and Medical Care in the First Century AH: Thesis of Professor Asma Yousef Ahmed Al Diab).

The Khilafah will be able to fund a first-class free health care system due to its sound and credible Islamic economic system that has a time-tested approach to creating prosperity, eradicating poverty and providing exceptional public services to its people, as evidenced in Islamic history. For example, it will restructure its revenue generation according to the Shariah rules, including generating huge revenues from public properties such as energy, minerals and state enterprises such as large-scale construction. Funding for health care will also come from the Kharaj (land tax), while rejecting payments of the extortionate interest based loans from Western and other nations, which currently eat a high proportion of the expenses of the Muslim lands, and that will also create more wealth for state investment in the people's needs. If there are insufficient funds, then an emergency tax is levied upon those with excess wealth to meet the budget deficit for health care spending.

The Khilafah, during its centuries of rule, was blessed with many first-class hospitals and doctors in several of its cities: Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Cordova, Samarqand and many more, treating men and women without distinction in the level of care. Under the Abbasid Khilafah, Baghdad alone had sixty hospitals with in-patient and out-patient departments and over 1,000 physicians. The large hospitals had medical schools attached to them. Public hospitals like the Bimaristan al-Mansuri Hospital, established in Cairo in 1283, had accommodation for 8,000 patients. There were two attendants for each patient who did everything for his/her comfort and convenience and every patient had his/her own bed, bedding and vessel for eating. It treated in-patients and out-patients giving them free food and medicine. There were also mobile dispensaries and clinics for the proper medical care of the disabled and those living in the remote areas. The 10th century Khalifah, Al-Muqtadir Billah, ordered that every mobile unit should visit each village and remain there for some days before moving to the next.

The Muslim hospitals served as models for the hospitals established in different parts of Europe, particularly in Italy and France during the 14th century. The Crusaders were inspired by the magnificent hospitals of the Seljuq ruler Nur al-Din in Damascus and those of the Mamluk Sultan al-Mansur Qala'unin Cairo.¹³ The 1284 al-Mansuri was built with four entrances, each having a fountain in the centre. The Khalifah made sure it was properly staffed with physicians and fully equipped for the care of the sick. He appointed male and female attendants to serve male and female patients who were housed in separate wards. Beds had mattresses and specialized areas were maintained. Running water was provided in all areas of the hospital. In one part of the building the physician-in-chief was given a room for teaching and lecturing. There were no limits to the number of patients that could be treated, and the in-

house dispensary provided medicines for patients to take home.¹⁴ The constitution upon which al-Mansuri Hospital was established read, “It’s [the hospital’s] duty is to give care to the ill, poor, men and women until they recover. It is at the service of the powerful and the weak, the poor and the rich, of the subject and the prince, of the citizen and the brigand, without demand for any form of payment, but only for the sake of God, the Provider.”¹⁵ Gomar, one of Napoleon’s scholars during France’s campaign (1798-1801) to occupy Egypt, described the health care services and 600-year-old health facilities that he saw in the Muslim lands as follows: “all sick people used to go the Bimaristan (i.e. hospital) poor and rich, without distinction. Doctors were hired from everywhere in the east, and they were well paid. There was a pharmacy stocked with medicine and instrumentations. Two nursing personnel were serving every patient. Those with psychological disorders were isolated in a separate section and were taken care of. They were entertained by storytelling among other things. Those who recovered (from either physical or psychological illness) would spend some time in the rehabilitation section. When discharged, each patient would be given five pieces of gold so the patient would not need to work as soon as he/she left”. Will Durant an American philosopher, historian and writer stated: “Islam lead the whole world in creating good hospitals and supplying them with their needs.”

In Islam, the Khalifah, the leader of the state, is responsible for his people and accountable to them and to Allah (swt) for looking after their affairs sincerely and taking care of their needs, including health care. This means that he must monitor, maintain and manage the health of his people effectively. This requires governing in a manner which not only provides every citizen good quality medical treatment but also protects them as much as possible from ill-health and contracting diseases. Hence, he is obliged to ensure access to clean water for the people, safe living conditions, clean environments, good sanitation, appropriate vaccinations and good quality food. The Khalifahs of the past understood their duty of taking care of the health of their people. Al-Hakim reported in Al-Mustadrak from Zaid bin Aslam, from his father who said: “I became very sick at the time of (the Khilafah of) Umar bin Al-Khattab, so Umar brought for me a doctor who put me on a diet, that I used to suck on the date-seed because of the strict diet.” The 8th century Khalifah, Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, was once asked by his servant why he looked so sad and worried. Umar replied, “Anyone in my shoes should be so; I must deliver and grant all the nation’s citizens all their rights, whether they demand them or not.”

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

«مَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ شَيْئًا فَأَحْتَجَبَ دُونَ حَاجَتِهِمْ وَفَاقَتِهِمْ وَفَقَّرَهُمْ أَحْتَجَبَ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَنْ خَلَّتِهِ وَحَاجَتِهِ وَفَقَّرَهُ وَفَاقَتِهِ»

“Whoever is put in charge of any of the affairs of the Muslims and remains aloof from them and pays no attention to their needs and poverty, Allah will remain aloof from him on the Day of Resurrection, and will pay no attention to his needs and poverty.” [Abu Dawood, Ibn Maajah, Al-Haakim]. The Khalifah must therefore also ensure that every citizen enjoys a good standard of living, alleviating individuals from the mental distress and physical struggles of economic hardship which can negatively impact health. All this is again achieved through the provisions of the Islamic economic system. Additionally, the Khalifah is obliged to provide for the specific health needs of women, for example, ensuring that they have sufficient access to well-equipped female-only wards, hospitals and maternity units as well as well-trained female physicians, surgeons, gynaecologists, obstetricians, nurses and other medical staff. Unlike capitalist states which aim to restrict population growth, Islam encourages early marriage as well as bearing many children, with the belief that it is the responsibility of the state and ruler to ensure that women enjoy a healthy pregnancy and delivery with minimal complications, and that families are supported in providing and caring for their children in an optimal way. The Prophet (saw) said,

«تَزَوَّجُوا الْوُدُودَ الْوُلُودَ إِنِّي مَكَاثِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

“Get married to the tender and fertile (women), for indeed I will vie with the Prophets in your great numbers on the day of judgement.” [Reported by Ahmad]

Historically under the Khilafah, its hospitals were the first to employ female physicians, most famous of whom were two female physicians from the Banu Zuhri family who served the 12th century Khalifah, Abu Yusuf Ya’qub al-Mansur. 15th century Turkish surgeon Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu also describes female surgeons in Anatolia performing surgical operations on female patients, in particular gynaecological and obstetric procedures. Additionally, numerous physicians wrote treatises specifically on fields related to women such as midwifery and gynaecological and

14 1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World

15 The constitution upon which al-Mansuri Hospital was established – from “1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World

obstetric conditions, including uterine and cervical tumours and contraceptive drugs for women at risk of death due to pregnancy – all of which reflect the level of concern and care amongst doctors and the state alike over the health and wellbeing of women.

As guardian over the people, the Khilafah must also guarantee sufficient attention and investment in research and development in science, public health and medicine, including in ailments specific to women in order that it can deliver the best treatment for patients and according to local and provincial requirements. The tremendous contribution that the Khilafah made to development in the medical field, including treatments for various health conditions and diseases, is well-known. Article 162 of Hizb ut Tahrir's Draft Constitution of the Khilafah states: **“All members of society have the right to establish scientific laboratories related to all matters of life, and the State itself should establish such laboratories.”** Additionally, the state must ensure effective supervision, auditing and regulation of the training of medical staff, medical procedures, the operation of hospitals and the entire health care system, for the Khalifah is Islamically responsible and accountable for any neglect of duty that could cause harm upon his citizens.

And finally, Islam prohibits the privatization of knowledge and hence also patency and copyright over medicines and medical information that leads to the monopolisation of drugs which results in the weak and poor being deprived of appropriate treatment for their illnesses. According to the Shariah, an individual or company has the right to payment for imparting their knowledge to the public; however, once their ideas have been transferred to others, they have no right to sole ownership over their inventions or discoveries. In addition to allowing for easily affordable drugs, this principle will also facilitate great development in medical research.

Conclusion:

The focus on gender inequality in the BD and PFA as the source of women's poor health and inadequate access to good quality health care has served as a veil to obscure the true underlying causes of these problems: capitalist political systems which emphasize profit over people's needs, and view health care as a luxury rather than a basic right; defunct capitalist and socialist economic systems which have created mass poverty in lands and underinvestment in health care and prevention of disease; the domination of the health system by the private sector which has transformed medical treatment into an exploitative business; failed and corrupt governments and regimes who care little for the necessities of their people and misuse and waste their wealth; and the liberal culture and lifestyles which generate a mountain of social problems which impact the health of nations. It is these root causes that need addressing if we sincerely wish to improve the health of women and their access to good quality medical care. This requires a radically alternative political system based purely upon the unique and distinct ideology of Islam which truly cares for the needs and wellbeing of humanity – men and women alike – and that genuinely views the provision of health care to every citizen as a basic right, while also embodying the political, economic and social principles and laws to build a first-class health care system, accessible to all – rich and poor – without distinction. This radically alternative political system is the Khilafah. Under its centuries of rule, it created a distinct and unrivalled health system which gained the admiration of nations and will do again upon its return ■

Violence Against Women : The Need for a New Perspective to Ending Violence Against Women

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The Failure of Current Approaches in Preventing Violence Against Women:

The UN's Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reads: "Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of violence against women is a matter of concern to all States and should be addressed." For this reason, ending violence against women was one of the Declaration and Platform for Action's key priorities with a range of programmes detailed to address the pandemic globally.

International conventions, protocols, national laws, guidance policies and action plans were advocated to improve prevention of the crime by addressing factors viewed as its root causes. This included enacting and/or reinforcing penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs done to women and girls who are subjected to any form of violence, as well as implementing programmes aimed at increasing understanding of the causes and consequences of violence against women, and committing governments to ensure women's access to free or low-cost legal services designed to reach women living in poverty. The formulation of the international Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its ratification by governments globally was yet another action taken by the UN to try and address this subject.

The Beijing Declaration also detailed what the UN viewed as the underlying causes of abuse and violence targeted at women. It stated that: "Violence against women is a manifestation of **the historically unequal power relations between men and women**, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement. Also that violence against women throughout the life cycle derives essentially from **cultural patterns, in particular the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices and all acts of extremism linked to race, sex, language or religion** that perpetuate the lower status accorded to women in the family, the workplace, the community and society."

The Declaration also concluded that: "Violence against women is exacerbated by social pressures, notably the shame of denouncing certain acts that have been perpetrated against women; women's lack of access to legal information, aid or protection; **the lack of laws that effectively prohibit violence against women**; failure to reform existing laws; inadequate efforts on the part of public authorities to promote awareness of and enforce existing laws; and the absence of educational and other means to address the causes and consequences of violence. Also, the low social and economic status of women can be both a cause and a consequence of violence against women."

It is indisputable that effectively addressing such a grave world-wide problem is an absolute and urgent necessity, especially when confronted with the sobering and highly disturbing reality that: **one in three women worldwide will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly from an intimate partner** (World Health Organization, 2013). We should of course recognise that this global figure masks regional and national disparities, for in some countries, the statistics related to this crime are shockingly even higher. For example, according to the 2018 Crime Against Women in South Africa Report by Statistics SA, between 2000 and 2015, femicide (the murder of women on the basis of their gender) was five times higher in South Africa than the global average. In South Sudan, as many as 70% of women and girls who had been in a relationship said they had experienced some form of violence

(The Global Women's Institute Summary Report 2017, "No Safe Place"). In Egypt, 62% of women are reported to have been sexually harassed, whether verbally or physically (The Arab Barometer 2019), and in Afghanistan 51% of women will experience physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner according to figures from the Central Statistics Organization.

Over many decades, the UN and its various agencies as well as national governments, non-government organisations and women's movements world-wide have given extensive time, attention, and efforts, as well as formulated countless campaigns, conferences, policies and legislation to address this subject. Many countries have placed the prevention of the problem high on their agenda, while international agreements such as CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action made it mandatory for signatory states to engage in various actions at both government level and civil society to tackle the issue. However, despite 70 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights having passed, 40 years of CEDAW, 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and a host of other international and national initiatives, the epidemic of this crime within states continues globally. This should surely give cause for reflection as to why all these policies, laws and actions have proven incapable of solving the problem.

Even when examining those countries which many would argue have focussed intensively on changing those patterns of behaviour or realities which are presumed by the UN and others to lie at the basis of violence against women, for example, gender inequality within society, low female employment or economic status and cultural patterns related to the traditional roles of men and women within the family structure, progress remains slow or non-existent. In fact, in some cases the problem is worsening. France for instance, a country which is described as having a progressive record on gender equality at work, in the family and within society, has among the highest rates of domestic violence in Europe. On average, a woman is killed in France every three days by a partner or former partner, while marital violence affects 220,000 French women every year (The Guardian, 2019). In the UK, a country which also prides itself on its gender equality legislation and anti-domestic violence laws - which includes the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 - domestic abuse rose by 24% from March 2018-2019 according to figures by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) such that police recorded an average of one incident of domestic abuse per minute during this period - representing 1.6 million women aged 16 to 74, while two women are killed each week in England and Wales alone at the hands of a current or former partner (ONS). In the US, nearly 3 women are killed every day by domestic violence (Bureau of Justice), and the number of victims killed by an intimate partner in the country rose to 2,237 in 2017 - a 19 percent increase from 2014, according to James Alan Fox, a criminologist and professor of criminal justice at North-Eastern University (Boston, USA). In Australia, a woman is hospitalized every three hours due to domestic abuse (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare). Furthermore, in the US, one in five women have been raped in their lifetime (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention), while in Australia and in England and Wales, one in five women have experienced sexual violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics and ONS respectively).

The lack of existing laws within countries to protect women or ensure gender equality is often given as a cause of the continuing high levels of violence against women. However, the examples cited above negate this claim as does the reality in various Muslim countries. Turkey, for instance, has been an active participant in almost every international gender equality agreement or convention regarding women. It endorsed CEDAW in 1986 and established the General Directorate on the Status of Women (GDSW) as a national mechanism in 1990 that greatly contributed to the active participation of Turkey in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women's rights' processes in 1995. It was also the first country who signed the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence on May 11th 2011 and became the first country to ratify it on November 25th, 2011. Combating violence against women was recognized as a state policy and embraced by many organs of the state since 1995. Yet despite all these actions, efforts and initiatives to promote and implement gender equality within the country and prevent domestic violence, the state has the **fastest increasing rates of violence against women in the world**. Four out of ten women in the country suffer from domestic violence (Turkish Statistical Institute), and according to the Turkish Ministry of Justice, from 2003 - 2014, there was a 1,400 percent increase in the number of murders of women. Tunisia too, a country hailed as a leader in gender equality legislation in the Muslim world, is also unfortunately one of the world leaders in the scale of domestic violence afflicting its society. In 2007, its government announced a national strategy for combating violent behavior within the family and the society, and its implementation was

supervised by the Women and Family's Affairs Ministry with the participation of several public, organizational, and media institutions. However, despite all this, in 2016, the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood reported that 60% of Tunisian women were victims of domestic violence.

Elucidating the Root Causes of Violence Against Women:

The continuing epidemic of violence affecting millions of women globally indicates the failure of current perspectives, approaches and legislative means of addressing the problem. This, in large part, is a result of the adoption of an incorrect diagnosis of the real causes of the problem. Gender-based violence is assumed to be the by-product of inequality between men and women in rights, roles or laws within family life or society or due to restrictions on liberal freedoms. Hence any belief or practice which curbs personal or sexual freedoms, or that reflects gender differences in responsibilities or provisions, is presumed by default to be discriminatory and to represent the devaluing of the woman, or her lack of power, control or agency over choices in family life, society or life in general. It is argued that this could serve as a causal factor for violence.

Consequently, Islamic laws which are at odds with liberal freedoms and gender equality have been accused of contributing to gender-based violence. This includes Islam's prohibition of: fornication, mixing between non-Mahram men and women (those to whom marriage is valid) without a need defined by the Shariah, a Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim man, and the beautification of the woman in the presence of non-Mahram men. It also includes Islam's prescription of distinct roles and duties of men and women within family life, for example, ascribing the man as the head and financial provider of the family, and the woman as the home-maker and primary care-taker of the children, who is obliged to obey the husband in that which is his right, including seeking permission to leave the home. Hence, reforming or abolishing such Islamic family and social laws became the target of those seeking to prevent violence against women and consumed the energies and efforts of many.

However, Islam's rejection of liberal personal and sexual freedoms are a means to protect the sanctity and integrity of the family unit, as well as to protect women from the violation of their honour arising from the actions of men pursuing their desires. Additionally, differences in gender roles and rights within marriage and family life in Islam are not founded upon any Islamic doctrinal-defined hierarchy of position, preference or worth of men over women. Rather, they reflect the distribution of roles and responsibilities between the genders in a fair, just and complementary manner and according to their unique nature and specialities. This is in order to effectively organise the functioning of the family unit to achieve harmony and to ensure the rights of all family members are met – men, women, and children alike. It is therefore not surprising that this flawed diagnosis of the causal link between the absence of liberal freedoms and gender inequality and gender-based violence, along with the erroneous approach of attacking the Islamic Shariah laws in order to prevent such violence, failed to even dent the scale of abuse suffered by women worldwide, including those in Muslim countries, such as Turkey and Tunisia, that abandoned various Islamic family laws and adopted gender-equality based secular liberal ones in their place.

All this surely merits embracing a new perspective on the real causes and solutions to violence against women. For those who wish to genuinely address this grievous problem, it necessitates firstly a clear and impartial definition of what this scourge entails, which is physical, verbal or psychological harm upon the woman rather than adopting definitions which are culturally loaded from a secular, liberal and anti-Islamic viewpoint. It also requires a fresh and objective examination of those factors that truly lead to the lowering of the status of women within societies which are precursors to abuse, or those factors which have the potential of nurturing a dangerous mindset or behaviour within men which compromises the safety of women. These key factors are as follows:

Firstly, the adoption of liberal personal and sexual freedoms encourages individuals to act upon the pursuit of their own individualistic whims and desires rather than nurturing a mindset based upon accountability to a Creator (swt) and adherence to His (swt) Commands and Laws, which includes respect, good treatment and protection of women. This can lead many men to use and abuse women as they wish. These liberal concepts which sanctify the pursuit of pleasure also promote hedonistic lifestyles, including the consumption of alcohol and drugs which intoxicate the mind and are strong causal factors of violence against women. They also encourage loose intimate relationships and infidelity which causes distrust and uncontrolled jealousy in marriage that often leads to violence. Additionally, films, dramas and music videos promoted by the liberal culture have desensitized violence against women through the frequent portrayal of their abuse in storylines, exacerbating the problem further.

Secondly, the devaluing of the status of women by permitting their objectification and sexualization in advertising as well as in the beauty, fashion, entertainment and even pornography and prostitution industries under capitalist systems which value profit and wealth production over preserving the dignity of women, has also contributed to their mistreatment and abuse, including sexual crimes and sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Thirdly, under secular and other non-Islamic regimes and systems, where the human mind is promoted as the arbiter of actions and traditions rather than the dictates of God, oppressive, misogynistic non-Islamic traditions, cultures and customs have flourished. These rotten inherited traditional practices and beliefs, which have no relation to Islam whatsoever, often promote a lowly view of women, as well encourage acts such as forced marriages, unjust dowry customs and other incorrect expectations in marriage. This includes the idea that the man's role as head of the family should be domineering and authoritarian rather than one shaped upon guardianship, kindness and care. This is alongside the belief that the wife is the possession of the husband and can be treated as he wishes. All of this has also contributed hugely to violence against women.

And finally, the absence of clear provisions regarding the rights and responsibilities of men and women within marriage and family life, and the absence of a system which distributes gender roles in a manner which is complementary and achieves harmony in the family unit, has created confusion in marital duties and parental responsibilities as well as generating competition and conflict between the husband and wife in their roles and rights. Inevitably, such a hostile atmosphere, which has been exacerbated by the concept of gender equality, will often lead to violence. Additionally, the lack of convincing and satisfying rules and laws to regulate the interaction between men and women as well as the lack of adequate punishment for any transgressions against the honour and dignity of women have led to the ungovernable escalation of violence against women.

Hence, as long as states continue to be governed by the capitalist system; as long as liberal freedoms and lifestyles continue to be promoted within societies; as long as there is an absence of clear rules and regulations to shape the interaction of men and women in order to prevent the violation of the honour of both; as long as the rights, roles and duties of the genders remain ill-defined or competitive within marriage and family life; and as long as punishments for the abuse of women lack sufficient severity, then the scale of violence against women will continue unabated and most likely worsen.

The Islamic Perspective to Addressing Violence Against Women:

To effectively address the problem of violence against women, we need to cease looking for solutions within failed existing frameworks such as calling for more or better implementation of gender equality policies, or a few new laws to protect the wellbeing of women. Rather, we need to embrace a radically alternative perspective to dealing with the issue. This radically alternative method of preventing violence, abuse and exploitation of women is presented by Islam which embodies a multi-level approach to countering this problem. Through a host of principles and social laws, as well as its various systems – education, media, judicial and otherwise, all implemented under its political system (the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood), Islam has the means to build a fence of immunity against violence and other crimes targeted at women, as well as to ensure harmony within the family unit. This is in order to guarantee that women enjoy a safe, respected and productive life within marriage, the family and society, free from harassment and abuse.

Firstly, Islam promotes Taqwa (God-consciousness) within individuals which nurtures a mentality of accountability and responsibility in the manner by which men view and treat women whether in private or public. Allah (swt) says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلِتَنْظُرَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do.” [TMQ Al-Hashr: 18]

Taqwa is the frontline defence against the violation of the honour and wellbeing of women, for Taqwa is the ultimate regulator of inclinations, whims, and desires. The Muslim who is constantly conscious of his Creator (swt) and of His (swt) reward or punishment for every action he performs will take care to deal with women and those he has responsibility over in a manner which is pleasing to His Rabb (swt). So for example, it inspires the man to treat his wife well and fulfil his role as a guardian over the family with love, care, kindness and mercy rather than fear and violence. Taqwa is also the most vital ingredient for creating tranquillity within marriage and harmony within the

family unit, for it drives men and women alike to fulfil their duties and the rights of others with patience, diligence and compassion, shunning selfishness and individualism and instead acting on what is best for their marital and family life. All this protect against mistreatment and violence. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Islam outrightly rejects liberal freedoms or any other harmful concepts which encourage individuals to act on their whims and desires.

Secondly, Islam demands a prestigious status of great honour for women. Numerous Islamic evidences oblige men and society to view and treat women with respect and protect their dignity always. Allah (swt) says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرْتُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾

“O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will; and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr (dowry) you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse; and live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you dislike them, it maybe that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.” [TMQ An-Nisa: 19]

The Prophet (saw) said,

«إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ مَا أَكْرَمَهُنَّ إِلَّا كَرِيمٌ وَمَا أَهَانَهُنَّ إِلَّا لَيْتِيمٌ»

“Women are the twin halves of men. None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner, and none but an ignorant treats women disgracefully.” [Abu Dawood]. He (saw) also said,

«أَلَا وَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا»

“Treat women well” [Bukhari and Muslim] and made the good treatment of the wife from the best deeds which define the best of people

«أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا، وَخِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ»

stating, “The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and the best of you are those who are best to their wives.” [Tirmidhi]. Islam also prioritised caring for the woman since her birth, so it made the good upbringing and her nurturing a door for her parents to enter Jannah (Paradise), as reported by Abdullah ibn Abbas (ra) who said, the Prophet (saw) said:

«مَنْ وُلِدَتْ لَهُ ابْنَةٌ فَلَمْ يَبْدُهَا وَلَمْ يَهْنُهَا، وَلَمْ يُؤْتِرْ وَلَدَهُ عَلَيْهَا - يَعْنِي الذَّكَرَ - أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا الْجَنَّةَ»

“Whoever has a daughter born to him and he has not buried her nor insulted her, and did not favor his son over her, Allah will allow him to enter Jannah due to her.” [Narrated by Ahmad]. As a daughter, wife or mother, the woman is protected and taken care of by her guardian, for example, her father, husband, brother or uncle. If she gets married, she is valued and honoured and her husband is commanded to treat her well and with gentleness and kindness. Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾

“And live with them in kindness.” [An-Nisa: 19]. The Prophet (saw) also called upon the husband to be patient with the wife, to overlook her shortcomings, and to appreciate her virtues which help to achieve tranquility in the marriage and to protect against abuse:

«لَا يَفْرَكُ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ»

“A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.” [Narrated by Muslim].

Thirdly, Islam unequivocally prohibits any form of abuse or violence towards women. The Prophet (saw) said:

«لَا يَجْلِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَتَهُ جَلْدَ الْعَبْدِ ثُمَّ يَجَامِعُهَا فِي آخِرِ الْيَوْمِ»

“None of you should flog his wife as he flogs a slave and then have sexual intercourse with her in the last part of the day.” [Narrated by Bukhari]. The Shariah also outrightly prohibits any action that degrades or humiliates the woman or lowers her great status in society, which as discussed is a causal factor for violence. So, it forbids her sexualization and objectification in society or engagement in any work or service which exploits her beauty and body and that reduces her to a mere commodity used for profit. Rafi bin Rifa'a (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

«وَنَهَانَا عَنْ كَسْبِ الْأَمَةِ إِلَّا مَا عَمِلَتْ يَدَيْهَا وَقَالَ هَكَذَا بِأَصَابِعِهِ نَحْوَ الْخَبْرِ وَالْعَزْلِ وَالنَّفْسِ»

“The Prophet (saw) forbade us from the earnings of the slave-girl except that which she earned with her two hands

and said ‘in this manner’ with his fingers, such as bread-making, sewing, and inscribing.” [Abu Dawud]

Fourthly, the comprehensive Islamic social system places the protection of the dignity of women at the very core of its laws and plays a central role in establishing respect for women as a key principle of the society. These Islamic social laws, such as the segregation of the sexes except for a need defined by the Shariah; the obligation of the man and woman to lower their gaze and avoid the look of lust towards anyone except their wife or husband; the prescription of a specific dress code for the woman which conceals her beauty; the prohibition of the beautification of the woman in the presence of non-Mahram men; the prohibition of a non-Mahram man and woman to be alone (Khulwa) with one another; and the obligation to preserve chastity – all help to regulate the interaction between men and women, directing sexual relationships to marriage alone. Hence, this Islamic social system provides a framework by which to practically protect the dignity of women: firstly, by re-enforcing the principle that women are not objects to be displayed for male gratification, but also to preserve a pure relationship between the genders that ensures their interaction is not cheapened or hindered through sexual distractions; this establishes a productive, healthy cooperation between men and women in all fields of life. Secondly, it creates a chaste and pure environment where sexual desires are fulfilled in a manner that brings goodness to society rather than harm. And finally, organising the relationship between men and women in this manner seeks to prevent secret meetings and any situation that may lead to extramarital relationships or doubtful behaviours which could lead to inciting jealousy and undermine trust within a marriage, which could result in violence. All this helps to maintain an atmosphere of immense respect towards women, minimising abuse and other crimes against them.

Fifthly, Islam organises the rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women within marriage and family life in a detailed manner which is complementary and not competitive between the genders. So, for example, it defines the man as the guardian, head and financial provider of the family, while the woman is prescribed the role as the homemaker and nurturer of the children. Organising the family unit in this way ensures that the rights and needs of all its members are fulfilled, creating harmony and minimising disputes and conflicts. This is another means of preventing domestic violence. Furthermore, Islam states that marriage should be based upon repose, amity and mercy, and that the spouses should seek tranquillity in their marital life. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

“*And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.*” [Ar-Rum: 21]. The wife is the sanctuary of the husband where he finds comfort and feels safety with, and vice versa. If the husband loves her, he will treat her nicely, and if he dislikes her, he will still treat her with mercy rather than oppressing her. However, if there is no way to salvage an unhappy marriage and all methods for reconciliation have been exhausted, then Islam permits divorce as a path for separation between the spouses in a good manner without harshness and abuse.

And **finally**, the Khilafah will place the protection of women’s dignity and security as a key pillar of state policy. Article 112 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of Al-Khilafah states: “She (the woman) is an honour (‘ird) that must be protected.” The state will achieve this through many means. It will nurture the vital concept of Taqwa as well as the high status deserving of women within the society through its various systems, such as its education system and media policy, which will also promote the correct understanding of the Islamic social values, laws and obligations within its citizens which protects women. It will also ensure the complete and correct implementation of all the Shariah laws, which will surround its citizens with Islam’s sublime beliefs and values, which will also safeguards the dignity and wellbeing of women. In addition, the Khilafah will implement and enforce comprehensively the Islamic social system laws, such that its fruits are enjoyed within the society. This includes ensuring that the woman’s dignity is not compromised in any manner, for example through their sexualization or exploitation. Article 119 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of Al-Khilafah reads: “Men and women must not practice any work that poses a danger to the morals or causes corruption in society.” Through its educational and judicial system, the state would also strive to eradicate cultural attitudes that devalue women or rob them of their Islamic rights, as well as eliminate oppressive traditional practices such as forced marriages and honour killings. And finally, the Khilafah will implement Islam’s harsh punishments for any form of abuse against women including for violence and sexual crimes. These penal laws include the death-penalty for murder or rape. Court records from the Uthmani Khilafah show that husbands

who were violent towards their wives were punished by the state, including being imprisoned at times. Judges often made the husband accept the condition that if he was violent towards his wife again, then they would be divorced without the wife having to give up her marital financial rights. Furthermore, the state is obliged to have an efficient judicial system to deal with crimes swiftly such that women will be able to seek justice promptly and with ease for any violations of their honour or rights.

All this creates a society under the Khilafah upon the method of the Prophethood where women will feel respected and safe within their homes and in public life, and where they will be able to study, work and travel in a protected environment. Therefore, the solution to violence against women lies in the principles, laws and system of the one Who is Al-Alim, The All-Knowing – Allah (swt), who alone has knowledge about how to organise a state to ensure a healthy, safe and productive relationship between men and women, whether in family life or society. Hence, addressing this grave problem in an effective and serious way requires for us to look beyond current failed models and approaches to dealing with the issue, and to instead raise greater understanding of the values, great responsibilities and system by which Islam prevents and treats this grievous subject. Allah (swt) says,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ﴾

“Verily Allah does not change the circumstances of any people, until they have changed what is within themselves.”
[TMQ Ra'd: 11] ■

Women and Armed Conflict: Solutions on Paper ... but Failure on the Ground!

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THE BLESSED LAND – PALESTINE



(Translated)

When talking about areas of armed conflict, it jumps to mind images of destruction, blood and bodies, tears of bereaved mothers and orphaned children, separation and dispersal of families, painful scenes of displacement and seeking refuge, suffering from torture, captivity and enforced disappearance, and physical and psychological effects whose impact is lifelong and continues for successive generations as a result of the use of destructive chemical and nuclear weapons, as well as other effects affecting all aspects of economic, living and political life. In this regard, we will discuss, with Allah's permission, the objectives and mechanisms set by the Beijing Declaration to improve the lives of women in areas of armed conflict, and we will judge these objectives and mechanisms and the extent of their success in reality and in theory.

First: The objectives to be achieved in the field of women and armed conflict and the mechanisms for their implementation:

The Beijing Declaration outlined six objectives it seeks to achieve to improve women's lives in areas of armed conflict. These objectives are: 1. Increase women's participation in conflict resolution, decision-making and protection of women who live under conditions of armed and other conflicts or who live under foreign occupation. 2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments. 3. Promote nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations. 4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace. 5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. 6. Provide assistance to the women of colonies and non-self-governing territories.

The document laid out a set of actions that governments and international and regional organizations must implement to achieve these goals. In compliance with these measures, many countries have increased women's participation in decision-making positions and increased their representation in peace missions, such as Jordan which also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the active participation of women in security and peacekeeping operations. Many countries rushed to ratify Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, where in September 2019 the Lebanese government approved the Lebanon's first national action plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, while the Ministerial Council in Tunisia and the Jordanian Government endorsed the national plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2018 to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for the implementation of the commitments to peace, women and security.

Second: Women and Armed Conflict (Failures and Delusions)

By considering the objectives set by the Beijing Platform for Action in the area of Women and Armed Conflict and the actions that have been developed to implement them, we find the following:

1. This Declaration makes gender equality and women's empowerment by her access to decision-making positions in war-related bodies, organizations and committees related to the field of war and peace negotiations, a focus of its goals and proposes them as a solution to alleviate the suffering of women in areas of armed conflict. Article 134 of the document states: "If women are to play an equal part in securing and maintaining peace, they must be empowered

politically and economically and represented adequately at all levels of decision-making.” By this, they mislead women and burden them beyond their ability instead of relieving them of their suffering, thus, making them run behind the mirage. Gender equality is a flimsy idea that does not take into account the differences between male and female that Allah has created within both and distributed duties and rights accordingly, thereby He (swt) oppressed neither of them and did not burden them with anything over their capacity. The Almighty says:

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity” [Al-Baqara: 286]. Moreover, it is an idea that its people have recognized as failing and unattainable so far or even in the near future. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 24 September 2019, stated in his speech on gender equality: “At present trends, it will take two centuries to close the gap in economic empowerment.” adding, “I do not accept a world that tells my granddaughters that economic equality can wait for their granddaughter's granddaughters”.

As for women's access to decision-making positions and their participation in negotiation or reconstruction committees or international courts to try war crimes perpetrators or any other decision-making position, they will not have a real impact on ending wars and alleviating the suffering of civilians in general and women in particular, because the system on which these committees are based and the laws that govern them come out of the niche of the capitalist system embraced by the colonial states, the ignitors of wars and conflicts. These committees and institutions are removed from the power of change, and whoever accesses these positions (man or woman) is shackled and ruled by these policies and the will and interests of the major countries. Moreover, the idea that women's access to decision-making positions will improve the condition of women in that country has proven to be a failure on the ground, for instance, look at the situation of Bangladesh and its women under Hasina's rule.

2- The Beijing Declaration requires governments to reduce military expenditures and allocate funds for social and economic development, especially for the advancement of women, but we do not know which advancement they want and on what basis it will be? We know with certainty that no significant progress will be made in this area, because we are talking about colonial capitalist states that give value only to material, and also the ruling regimes in the world today, the “dependent” and those which are “followed,” are taxation regimes, not regimes of care, and this is supported by what Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who said: “Feminist organizations have repeatedly called for disarmament, arms control and shifting military spending to social investment. Still these calls have gone unanswered (by the international community)”. And according to the report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Global military spending rose in 2018 to the highest level in the past 30 years, and according to the Institute's data, World spending is now 76 per cent higher than the post-cold war low in 1998.

3- The Beijing Declaration requires countries to sign non-proliferation treaties, especially nuclear weapons, but the major countries do not sign or abide by them, because these countries have no interest in human safety or the environment or any false slogan they raise, as their criterion for actions is only benefit. So, we find them using all ways and means to achieve that benefit and even if this leads to committing the most heinous crimes against peoples, for they have used this weapon in Iraq, Japan, Vietnam and Syria without any regard for the agreements or protocols related to the prohibition of destructive weapons or related to the rights of civilians such as the Geneva Convention. These countries use these agreements as the Trojan horse to carry out their plans and achieve their interests, and as a tool to pressure countries, while also condoning others as required by their interests. One of the paradoxes that clarify the greed of these countries and their duplicity is that America invaded Iraq in 2003 under the pretext of searching for weapons of mass destruction, but soon it caused total destruction in the country from which its people continue to suffer its effects to this day. According to a study published by The Intercept in 2019, children born today suffer from horrific birth defects linked to an ongoing American military presence there. The writer, Morteza Hussein, noted that the report issued by a team of independent medical researchers has confirmed the congenital abnormalities recorded among Iraqi children born near Talil Air Base, a base run by the US-led foreign military coalition.

4- The Beijing Declaration stipulates that action to be taken to investigate and punish members of the police, security and armed forces and others who perpetrate acts of violence against women, violations of international

humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict, but the truth is that the perpetrators of these crimes have not been punished, nor have they been curbed, but rather the United Nations, the sponsor of this conference (the Beijing conference), has committed crimes on a large scale in the world under the legal immunity enjoyed by its employees. So, is it above the law and accountability?! On 12/12/2018, the Turkish Anatolia Agency published a report stating, "The past two years have witnessed an alarming increase in the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers." In addition to widespread hunger and insecurity in conflict areas, sexual violence committed by "Peacekeepers" exacerbated the harsh conditions for victims in countries such as Haiti, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, more recently, in the Central African Republic. After the commissions of inquiry into these crimes were set up, the most common punishment was to return the accused to his country! How can we expect from those who violated human rights and violated the honors of women and abused children to be trustworthy for women, and form commissions of inquiry to issue sanctions against the perpetrators?

The matter is not limited to condoning the crimes committed by its employees, but rather the United Nations and its affiliated institutions deal with great duplicity and stand on the side of the oppressors, not on the side of the oppressed. Since its inception it has been a tool in the hands of the major powers, and evidences of the complicity and duality of the United Nations are too numerous to be accommodated here, but of which we mention is its support for the Jewish entity since its inception and issuance of resolutions that recognize it and its existence and condoning its crimes against the people of Palestine; the American occupation and destruction of Iraq under the umbrella of the United Nations resolutions; the slaughter of more than 800 thousand Tutsis during 100 days in Rwanda in 1994 with previous knowledge of the United Nations forces of these plans, and later in Srebrenica in 1995, the massacre of more than 10 thousand Muslims by Serbs and in an area that was under the protection of the United Nations forces; and its support for the criminal Bashar and its silence on his crime and his use of the chemical weapon in Ghouta and elsewhere, while still investigating whether these constitute war crimes or not?!

5- The document provides for providing international protection, assistance and training for refugee and displaced women, but on the ground the support and assistance that was provided did not match the magnitude of the wars and conflicts that were ignited and ensuing devastation and problems, and even the crumbs that have been provided were from the pockets of the peoples of the countries that donated their money in Donor conferences. Negligence and failure to provide protection and care to refugees have affected host countries as well as the UN organizations, so refugee women have lived in camps named death camps due to their poor living conditions. Also, there have been reports of abuse and exploitation of refugee women in order to have access to food and basic services. According to a report published by the BBC on 27 February 2018 under the title "Voices from Syria 2018", many Syrian refugee women are forced to provide sexual services in exchange for food from the United Nations, and that abuse is widespread throughout the provinces in southern Syria. Aid workers described how humanitarian aid is often prevented from these women unless they respond to these demands, and that the problem is so deeply rooted to the point that some Syrian women refuse to go to aid distribution centers for fear that people will assume that they have given their bodies in return for the aid they received. There is no power and no strength save except from Allah.

Third: Islam is a mercy and guidance in legislation and a State that guarantees justice of implementation

The provisions and laws of Islam have brought mercy, guidance and life for humankind even with regard to wars and fighting. Islam has ensured the achievement of this through the State, and here are some broad lines that explain this:

1- Islam is a religion of mercy, guidance, and life, and it came to make humanity prosperous, not to make it suffer or to threaten its security and stability, and Allah Almighty addressed His Prophet (saw) by saying:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds" [Al-Anbiya: 107].

And jihad in Islam is to revive human beings by spreading Islam between them, not to destroy and abolish them. Fighting in the Muslim's perception is defined and bound by Allah's orders and prohibitions and its goal is linked to the goal set by the legislator, which is removing physical barriers that stand in the way of the call and carrying it to the world, on the authority of Ibn Omar (ra), from Rasulullah (saw) who said:

«أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ، فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ»

“I have been commanded to fight against people, till they testify Laa ilaha illa Allah Muhammadur Rasulallah. And when they do it, their blood and riches are guaranteed protection on my behalf except where it is justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.” (Agreed up on, the words by Al-Bukhari)

This is in terms of legislation, but in terms of implementation, the Khilafah State (Caliphate) is not a colonial state that lives on sucking the blood of peoples and plundering their wealth, and does not fight for the domination of oil wells, or coal mines, gold, diamonds, etc., nor to dominate strategic places that enable it to unjustly control everywhere, history has witnessed the justice of the Khilafah State with the peoples of the countries it conquered, and how it was calling them to Islam first, but if they rejected, it offered them to pay Jizyah and enter the authority of Islam, and if they rejected it fought them.

2- Islam’s policy in jihad is not a policy of extermination of civilians, trees, and stones, and fighting in Islam does not mean the destruction of crops and animals by means that the colonial states and their agents have used unchecked, such as poisonous gases, nuclear, biological and other weapons. Islam regards the killing of one soul as the killing of all people, as Allah Almighty said:

﴿مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾

“whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely.” [Al-Ma’ida: 32]. Our Messenger (saw) used to advise the armies set out to fight, as Muslim and Abu Dawood narrated from Suleiman bin Buraydah, from his father: that the Prophet (saw) said:

«اغْرُزُوا بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ، وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَقَاتِلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ، اغْرُزُوا وَلَا تَغْدِرُوا، وَلَا تَغْلُوا وَلَا تَمْتَلُوا، وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا وِلْدَانًا»

“Fight in the name of Allah, and in the cause of Allah. Fight those who disbelieve in Allah, Fight do not be treacherous, do not steal from the spoils of war, do not mutilate and do not kill children.” And the caliphs followed his approach after him. Among the commandments of Abu Bakr to the army commanders are:

“لا تقتلوا امرأة، ولا صبياً، ولا كبيراً هرمًا، ولا تقطعوا شجرًا مثمرًا، ولا تخربن عامرًا، ولا تعقرن شاة ولا بعيراً إلا لماكلة، ولا تغرقن نخلًا ولا تحرقنه، ولا تغلل، ولا تجبن”

“Do not kill women or children or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter sheep or camels except for food. Do not burn palm trees and do not scatter them. Do not steal from the booty, and do not be cowardly.”

3- Islam set rules for security (musta’min) and asylum seekers and preserved them and their money, and established the rights of the refugees before the United Nations set them. The Almighty said:

﴿وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.” [At-Tawba: 6].

The Khilafah State was opened to them and its armies moved in support of all the oppressed and overpowered Muslims or the citizens of the state or others who sought its help, and the incident of Sultan Bayezid II saving the Jews who fled from the Inquisition in Spain is a witness to this.

4- The Khilafah State makes defending and protecting the honor of women a top priority, and it does not place civilians, especially women in the midst of the fire, to achieve its goals as is the case today in Syria, Yemen, and other countries, and a single cry of distress by a Muslim woman would move a strong army to support her, as the Prophet (saw) did when he banished Bani Qainuqa, and the Caliph al-Mu’tasim did when a Muslim woman sought help in a Roman prison.

5- In the Khilafah State, there is no conflict between spending on the military aspects of the state, and spending on other sectors such as health, education, and providing basic needs for people, because taking care of people’s affairs and providing their needs is one of the state’s duties, as is the military preparation.

It has become clear to us in theory and in reality that the policies of the Beijing Declaration failed to improve the lives of women in areas of armed conflict. The problem does not lie in equality or lack thereof, or in women’s access

to decision-making positions or lack thereof, nor by joining international agreements related to arms prevention or human rights, but rather the problem is in the ideology adopted by the controlling states in the international community and its policies, and what it produced of ideas, policies and colonial ambitions that sparked the conflicts and wars that consumed everything on land and caused catastrophic consequences for the countries in which they ignited, especially for women and children. Then these countries came and offered solutions through international institutions, so the remedy was corrupt because it was taken from the source of the disease. So, the problem is the problem of a corrupt man-made system, and the problem of states that give no value except to the material things, and therefore it is necessary to replace it with the divine ideology from One who is Wise and Acquainted:

﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾

“Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?” [Al-Mulk: 14].

This ideology is al-Islam, and it is imperative to establish a state that implements it in the reality of life so it provides the practical solutions for those problems rather than mere solutions on paper and futile agreements, and this State is the second Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood, that is coming soon Bi'ithnillah ■

Women and the Economy: Progress or Oppression from the Narrative: 'Women's Empowerment through Employment'

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Critics to the Promises of the Beijing+25 Declaration in the Economic Field:

"We are angry. 25 years since Beijing, we are far from reaching gender equality. Inequalities of wealth, power and resources are greater than ever before."

This decisive statement was expressed by young women and feminists from across the Asia Pacific who gathered at the youth civil society and feminist forum in Bangkok on 22-26 November 2019, organized by the UN Special Agency for Social Economy in the Asia Pacific or UNESCAP. The forum was organized by UNESCAP to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, often called the Beijing+25 BPfA. In the economic field of the BPfA, there are several strategic objectives which aim to promote self-reliance and economic rights of women, including equal access to employment, feasibility of work environment, as well as to promote harmonization of the responsibilities between work and family life for women and men. In fact, **'Women's Empowerment through Employment'** is a major running theme through much of the BPfA, and is addressed in various 'areas of concern'.

It is argued that increasing women's employment and equalizing their presence in the workplace with men will help lift women and nations out of poverty, facilitate economic growth, enable women to have full participation in society and greater access to opportunities, and contribute heavily to sustainable development in lands and the progress of states. Article 16 of the Beijing Declaration for example reads: "Eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development, equal opportunities and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centred sustainable development." Consequently, in order to achieve these strategic objectives, the BPfA calls for, among other things, a change to the division of labour, away from the man being the breadwinner for the family and the woman the homemaker and primary caretaker of the children, and towards greater sharing of responsibilities of the genders within the family unit. It also calls for women to have greater power over the economic structures in societies and better representation in economic decision-making, including the formulation of financial policies, the tax system and the rules governing pay. However, the question is: Is it true that after twenty-five years of the BPfA that women internationally have really been empowered and achieved prosperity through its provisions and through greater employment?

In the midst of the BPfA's 25th anniversary campaign to realize women's rights, the Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2019 found insufficient progress in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets to achieve gender equality even within dozen of years. Furthermore, the Asia Pacific region, which is currently the biggest market for capitalism, has experienced a wave of feminization of migration that began four decades ago. Data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2013) shows that the largest percentage of female domestic workers totaling 21.4 million are from the Asia Pacific. In Indonesia alone the percentage of Indonesian women migrating abroad began to increase since the 1980's. Feminization of migration occurred because the destination countries of migrant workers needed female workers to replace jobs in the domestic realm. Nowadays women are increasingly free to move or migrate independently and are no longer under the supervision of family or under the supervision of men. According to records from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), around 48 percent of total migrants are women.

After a Quarter of a Century, the Exploitation of Women Continues to be Endemic:

The anger of women activists at the UNESCAP forum is a form of despair with clear reason that we need to understand.

Such sentiments are expressed despite many doors having been opened: women today are farmers, factory workers, CEOs of companies, scientists, engineers, doctors, and hold many other jobs that may have been considered unthinkable in the past. However, opening access to the world of employment for women through the slogan of 'employment for empowerment' did not change the standard of living of millions of women nor did it lift them from economic hardship and poverty but instead resulted in more widespread exploitation of them.

A quarter of a century after the Beijing Declaration in 1995, women continue to be subjected to modern day slavery at epidemic levels. Reported by the Guardian in 2017, Cambodian women workers who work in sweatshop factories of world-renowned sports brands suffered repeated mass fainting from exhaustion. More than 500 workers in four factories supplying to Nike, Puma, Asics and VF Corporation were hospitalised. The most serious episode, recorded over three days in November, saw 360 workers collapse. The brands confirmed the incidents as part of a pattern of faintings that has dogged the 600,000-strong mostly female garment workforce for years. The women who collapsed worked 10-hour days, six days a week and reported feeling exhausted and hungry. Excessive heat was also an issue in three factories, with temperatures of 37°C. While some have viewed the 'feminisation' of the garment sector as a positive step towards women's emancipation, this has only happened in a highly exploitative context.

In Bangladesh, there are 4,825 garment factories, employing over three million people, 85% of whom are women. Reported by War on Want, the growth of Bangladesh's garment industry has been characterised by low wages, poor enforcement of labour legislation and the availability of a large pool of unskilled women workers. Women workers perform poorly paid jobs, face severe labour rights violations and do not enjoy their legal entitlements. Statutory maternity rights are rarely provided, overtime is compulsory and excessively long working hours deny women sufficient rest periods and adequate time with their children. Many female garment workers have also been the victims of factory fires or the collapse of factory buildings due to substandard building regulations. The Rana Plaza factory complex collapse in April 2013 for example killed over 1,100 people, most of whom were women and girls. Furthermore, 83,000 Bangladeshi women migrated for work to the Middle East in 2017 - a four-fold increase in two years, following the signing of a labour agreement between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia in 2015, government data shows. An increasing number of women has also returned home, claiming mistreatment, according to the charity BRAC, which recorded 1,300 returns in 2018 and over 900 in 2019, all of whom said they were tortured or abused.

In Africa, women are exploited at work in the agricultural sector which is predominantly comprised of small-scale farming, with more than 50% of the agricultural activity performed by women, producing about 60-70% of the food in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Women have been greatly burdened in agricultural production, which is back-breaking, exhaustive work, involving long-hours, and often performed under the hot sun. Furthermore, their access and control over production resources is also often greatly constrained.

The nature of capitalism is indeed very exploitative to women and children, as the fundamental values of capitalism, which inherently values wealth creation over the wellbeing of individuals, contributes a great deal to building an exploitative mindset upon the poor and vulnerable people. Capitalism with its basic principles - secularism, pragmatism, materialism and hedonism - as well as the economic principle of freedom of ownership has nurtured a selfish and exploitative society. Many members of this kind of society will always calculate the 'cost' and 'profit' of any social relations and practices of the life they lead, including in the economic field, superseding all other values, whether it is humanitarian, moral or spiritual values.

Toxic Investment in the Idea of Feminism and Gender Equality:

Women entering the workforce in droves was one of the greatest achievements of the feminism movement. All feminist schools agree that women should be encouraged to engage more of their time in employment and the public sphere to achieve empowerment. Liberal feminism continues to make women aware that they are oppressed if they are not financially independent and in paid work. Work carried out by women in domestic life, such as looking after the home and childrearing, was campaigned against as unproductive, unimportant, a waste of their energies and talents and placed women in a sub-ordinate position. Hence, they were led out of the house and encouraged to pursue careers and conditioned not to depend on men anymore.

However, what is clear is that in most countries, for the masses of women who entered employment, hoping to improve their standard of living, it was not empowerment and financial security that they gained, but rather exploitation and

oppression, as significant numbers entered jobs with low paid work, often working for long hours in poor conditions, with few if any employment rights, and little job security. Additionally, millions of employed women continued to suffer economic hardship or even dire poverty, while others were forced to leave their families and children in search of work abroad for financial survival, again often for miserly incomes. Undoubtedly, some women have succeeded in improving their economic standing through employment. However, this is a small proportion compared to the masses of employed women whose financial woes continue to be dire. In Western states for example, such as the UK and America, there has been a large increase in women entering the workplace over the past few decades. However, levels of poverty affecting working women in these countries continues to be shockingly high. In the UK, government austerity cuts have caused significant numbers of female teachers, nurses and other low-paid female workers to rely on foodbanks to feed their families. Additionally, although the number of employed single parents in the country, the vast majority of whom are women, is at a record high, the risk of child poverty among these families has risen to 1/3 - the highest in 20 years (Gingerbread Charity, 2018).

This spectacular failure of the Beijing Declaration and dozens of other international conventions in meeting women's economic rights is due to (1) the adoption of the secular idea of gender equality which has a tunnel vision and illusionary approach to solving women's problems, diverting attention from their true causes and solutions and placing the blame misleadingly on inequality between men and women; and (2) being blinded to the scale of the hegemony and toxicity of the system and ideology of Capitalism which is the root source of and carries primary responsibility for the financial, environmental and humanitarian disasters that have paralyzed the Muslim countries and crippled their economies as well as those of other lands. It is this capitalist system that has generated mass poverty and deprivation of basic rights of millions of women, as well as leading them to the abyss of exploitation and human trafficking networks due to its defining characteristic of placing 'profit over people'.

Gender equality activists need to reflect on the fact that since the beginning of capitalism it viewed women in a lowly manner: as just workers or tools of production. The peak role of women is translated solely in the language of economics, namely, how to produce material gain and profits for capitalist businesses and revenue for governments. The degenerate interests of capitalism were initially wrapped by feminist ideas so that they looked sweet and disguised behind the mask of women's empowerment. Feminists struggled for women's rights to work as well as financial freedom for women under the capitalist and feminist narrative of 'Women's empowerment through employment'. However, they fail to see that such a slogan has in reality disempowered women on so many levels: it has deprived them of valuable time with their children; it has devalued and demeaned their unique role as mothers; it has often strained marriages and denied women a happy marital and family life due to strenuous working hours and tasks; and it has burdened women with the responsibilities of men to earn a living, creating tremendous stresses upon them, while also failing to protect them from economic hardship. Furthermore, feminist activists often accuse patriarchal culture originating from religion of placing shackles on women, but they close their eyes to the shackles of economic exploitation in the world of work, and silence their voices to the utter injustice of millions of women being forced to work as migrant workers, or exhausting themselves to the point of collapse in sweatshops, or performing back-breaking work on farmlands – for economic survival. These oppressed women are living proof of the capitalist, feminist lie of 'women's empowerment through employment', and victims of the exploitative and tyrannical labor policies of capitalism, as well as the absence of the state's role in protecting their rights as workers and citizens.

Islam and the Empowerment of Women:

Islam is diametrically different from the capitalist ideology and has a unique view and approach to the empowerment of women, which is addressed in the following points.

(1) In Islam, Empowerment is Defined by Taqwa (God-Consciousness) and not Wealth:

In Islam, the empowerment of women, as with any individual is defined by their level of Taqwa (God-consciousness) and fulfillment of the Commands of their Rabb, Allah (swt), rather than their wealth, social status or profession. Allah (swt) says,

﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ﴾

“Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is the one who has At-Taqwa (the pious)” [Al-Hujurat: 13]

Hence, women are not valued based upon whether they are employed, or the level of taxes they pay, or amount of revenue

they can bring a business or government but upon their character and obedience to the tenets of their Deen and fulfilment of the duties that have been prescribed upon them, including the weighty and vital responsibilities of being a wife and mother. Furthermore, true happiness and success in Islam is not defined by material gain but by seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾

“...the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme success.” [At-Taubah: 72] These Islamic beliefs also create a distinctive identity in a society, which defines the status of people upon their Taqwa, and not their wealth or career.

(2) Islam Organises the Values in Society in a Harmonious Manner:

Islam as an ideology does not place the pursuit of material gain over the seeking of other important values within society, such as the spiritual, humanitarian and moral values. Rather, it organises the society in a way where all of these values are achieved and exist in a harmonious manner which is beneficial for human beings – male and female alike. Therefore, it would never put the material value above morality, or place money above the dignity of human beings, regardless of the scale of economic gain. It also strongly rejects the values of materialism and hedonism that come from the viewpoint of Capitalism and seeks to break the materialistic personality whose focus is only on material matters regardless of the consequences upon others. This minimizes exploitative and unjust behaviour towards others. Islam also rejects the capitalist philosophy of placing financial interests over the integrity of the family unit, reflected in the pressures placed on women to enter employment that has devalued motherhood, strained marriages, neglected the rights of children and placed untold burden upon women to become breadwinners of their families – all in the name of making them engine drivers of the economy. In contrast to capitalism, Islam does not view women as tools of production or cheap labour, but rather values them as a human beings who should have a high status in society, where they are protected from exploitation in any form, where their honor and wellbeing are preserved always, and where they are supported to fulfil their vital roles as mothers.

(3) Islam has the Correct Political and Economic System that Can Truly Lift Women out of Poverty:

The Islamic political system, the Khilafah (Caliphate), and its society are based purely upon the Islamic beliefs and laws. As the system revealed by the Creator of the Worlds, Allah (swt), it caters for the needs and interests of the whole of humanity, and without advantage or bias towards the man or woman. It also organises society for the benefit of all, rather than just the rich and powerful, and places great emphasis in its values, policies and laws on looking after the needs of the poor, weak and vulnerable. The Khilafah state places the fulfilment of the basic needs of the people as one of its top priorities, alongside creating prosperity for the society and enabling individuals to have a good standard of living and access luxuries. This is achieved through the comprehensive application of the Shariah that includes its sound Islamic economic system. This Islamic economic system rejects the flawed capitalist interest-based financial model that generates huge debt for individuals and states alike and results in wealth flowing from the poor to the rich. It also bans hoarding of wealth and prohibits the privatization of natural resources which are also causes of poverty, as well as preventing foreign party heavy investment in the development of infrastructure, agriculture, industry and technology which can also negatively impact the economy of nations. The foundation of its policies is directed to creating an effective distribution of wealth in order to secure the basic needs of all citizens and to lift them out of poverty, and at the same time create economic productivity to solve mass unemployment as well as allow individuals to obtain luxuries. In the book of al-Amwaa of Abu Ubaid, it is told that Khalifah Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) once told his employees in charge of distributing sadaqah (charity): "If you do give, make it sufficient," then said again, "Give alms to them repeatedly even though one of them had a hundred camel." He also funded the marriage of Muslims who could not afford to get married, paid their debts, and provided financial support to farmers to cultivate their lands. Thus, the Khilafah will provide a comprehensive provision guarantee for every woman and man.

(4) Islam Ensures that the Woman is Always Provided For:

In Islam, women are provided the privilege of always being financially maintained by their husband, father, brother or other male relatives, removing the burden of having to provide for themselves or their families. Allah (swt) says,

﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ﴾

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means.” [An-Nisa: 34]

He (swt) also says,

﴿وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا نُضَارُّ وَالِدَةً بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ...﴾

“...the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother’s food and clothing on a reasonable basis. No person shall have a burden laid on him greater than he can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child, nor father on account of his child. And on the (father’s) heir is incumbent the like of that (which was incumbent on the father).” [Al-Baqarah: 233]

In Islam, women are allowed to seek employment and pursue a career, for the Prophet (saw) said:

﴿قَدْ أُذِنَ لَكُنَّ أَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ لِحَوَائِكُنَّ﴾

“O women! You have been allowed by Allah (swt) to go out for your needs.” [Bukhari]. However, they should not be coerced or forced, either through social or economic pressures to enter employment to provide for themselves and their families such that they compromise their vital duty of caring for, nurturing and raising their children to become exemplary Islamic personalities and citizens of the state. Furthermore, the Khilafah is responsible for the financial maintenance of any woman within the state who has no male provider, or for any man who is unable to provide for himself and his family. The Prophet (saw), as leader of the state in Madinah said:

﴿مَنْ تَرَكَ مَالًا فَلِأَهْلِهِ وَمَنْ تَرَكَ دَيْنًا أَوْ ضِيَاعًا فَإِلَيَّ وَعَلَيَّ﴾

“If somebody dies (among the Muslims) leaving some property, the property will go to his heirs; and if he leaves a debt or dependents, we will take care of them.” [Muslim]. Article 156 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution for the Khilafah reads: “The State is to guarantee the living expenses of the one who has no money, no work and no relatives responsible for his financial maintenance. The State is responsible for housing and maintaining the disabled and handicapped people.”

In addition, Islam establishes a belief in Rizq (set provision from Allah (swt)) so that fear of poverty or economic hardship does not undermine the division of gender roles in the family through the idea that both the husband and wife should be breadwinners to ensure financial security and prosperity, rather than understanding that the man is responsible for providing for his family. Allah (swt) says:

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

“Do they not know that Allah extends provision for which He wills and restricts [it]? Indeed in that are signs for a people who believe.” [Az-Zumar: 52]

Hence, Islam empowers women by lifting them from the burden of having to fend for themselves, while the Khilafah ensures that they are never abandoned by their family or the state to struggle for financial survival.

(5) Islam Grants Women the Same Economic Rights as Men:

Islam grants women the same economic rights as men. For example, they can trade, be land and property owners, invest their wealth, run a business, be an employer and employee, independently engage in contracts, work within state bodies as a civil servant or judge, be a doctor, lecturer, journalist, engineer, a director of a company or any other profession, and undertake other societal transactions and manage their wealth independently. Article 114 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution for the Khilafah reads: “Women have the same rights and obligations as men, except for those specified by the Shar’i evidences to be for him or her. Thus, she has the right to practice in trading, farming, and industry, to partake in contracts and transactions, to possess all forms of property, to invest her funds by herself (or by others), and to conduct all of life’s affairs by herself.” However, in contrast to capitalist and socialist states, women have no duty to provide for their families with the wealth they gain, nor can they be employed in any job which sexualises them or exploits their bodies or beauty or devalues their status in any way. Rafi bin Rifaa (ra) narrated:

﴿وَنَهَانَا عَنْ كَسْبِ الْأَمَةِ إِلَّا مَا عَمِلَتْ بِيَدِهَا وَقَالَ هَكَذَا بِأَصَابِعِهِ نَحْوَ الْخَبْرِ وَالْعَزْلِ وَالنَّفْسِ﴾

“The Prophet (saw) forbade us from the earnings of the slave-girl except that which she earned with her two hands and said ‘in this manner’ with his fingers, such as bread-making, sewing, and inscribing.” [Abu Dawud] Article 112 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of Al-Khilafah states: “She (the woman) is an honour (‘ird) that must be protected”, while Article 119 reads: “Men and women must not practice any work that poses a danger to the morals or causes corruption in society.”

(6) Islam Enables Women to Have Happy Family Lives:

Islam rejects feminism which calls for equal and shared roles and responsibilities of men and women in private and public life. Instead, it defines a set of family laws that organize the division of roles between the husband and wife in a manner which is complementary rather than competitive, and ensures the needs and rights of all family members are fulfilled, including the children. So as mentioned, with regards to organising family life, Islam has prescribed the man the role of guardian and provider of the family, while the woman is the homemaker and primary caretaker of the children. Ibn Umar narrated that the Messenger (saw) said:

«كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، الْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَمَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْؤُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَمَسْؤُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا...»

“All of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects, the man is a guardian of his family, the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects.” [Bukhari and Muslim]. Article 120 of Hizb ut Tahrir's Draft Constitution for the Khilafah states: “The responsibility of the husband over his wife (qiwaamah) is one of taking care, and not ruling. She is obligated to obey her husband and he is obligated to meet the costs of her livelihood according to a fair standard of living (ma'roof).” Additionally, the woman should not be pressured into employment, minimizing the strain on marriages and family life that often results from both spouses working long working hours or strenuous demanding jobs. Furthermore, Allah (swt) has commanded the man and woman not to envy one another over their roles, rights and responsibilities, for each will be rewarded appropriately for fulfilling their specific duties. He (swt) says:

﴿وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا وَإِسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾

“And covet not for the things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is allotted from what they have earned, (and likewise) from women there is allotted for what they have earned. (Envy not one another) but ask Allah of his bounty. Indeed Allah is ever Knower of all things.” [An- Nisa: 32]. All this helps to achieve tranquillity in marriage and harmony in the family unit.

(7) Islam Empowers Women to Fulfil their Vital Role as Mothers:

In contrast to secular states, motherhood has a prestigious and highly valued status in Islam, which views the role as integral in the raising of righteous and successful children and future generations. Furthermore, motherhood is a role which is in line with the woman's unique nature as the child-bearer of humanity, and therefore, ascribing this as her primary role is the true embodiment of empowerment.

جاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟ قَالَ: «أُمُّكَ»، قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: «ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ»، قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: «ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ»، قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قَالَ: «ثُمَّ أَبُوك»

A man once came to the Prophet (saw) and said, ‘O Messenger of God! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?’ The Prophet (saw) said: “*Your mother.*” The man said, ‘Then who?’ The Prophet said: “*Then your mother.*” The man further asked, ‘Then who?’ The Prophet said: “*Then your mother.*” The man asked again, ‘Then who?’ The Prophet said: “*Then your father.*” [Bukhari and Muslim]. Article 112 of Hizb ut Tahrir's Draft Constitution for the Khilafah states: “The primary role of a woman is that of a mother and housewife.” Hence, the Khilafah would empower women to fulfil their primary role as mothers by promoting its important status in society and the workplace, and ensuring that they are financially maintained always and never forced to compromise their vital duties to their children due to the economic pressure to gain employment. The Khilafah's courts would therefore support any woman whose husband fails to provide for her and her children, forcing him to fulfil this obligation according to his capacity or face punishment if he refused. Writings from the law books of Islamic scholars during the Abbassid Khilafah, for example, describe how women would file complaints to judges against husbands who did not provide them with sufficient maintenance and how the judge would enforce payment. This primary role of women does not take away their right to work if they wish. Rather it provides them with the privilege of Nafaqa (financial maintenance) such that they are not forced to earn a living. The nurturing within women of the vital importance of the responsibilities of motherhood will also mean that they will avoid seeking jobs which may impact fulfilling their duties to their children.

(8) Islam Protects Women from Exploitation and Injustice in Employment:

The role of the state is vital in Islam in taking care of the needs of the people. Its main task is to serve and take care of the

needs of every citizen, protect the vulnerable, and prevent any injustice. This fundamental principle ensures that labor problems will be minimal under the Khilafah and resolved swiftly through the application of the Shariah rules upon any employment problem if they do arise. Under this system, the migrant labor problem that victimizes millions of women will not be tolerated and the state will seek to eradicate it. The Prophet (saw) said,

«فَالْإِمَامُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

“An Imam is a shepherd (ra’in) and he is responsible for those in his care.” [Bukhari]

Regarding employment, Islam has a distinctive approach to the issue, different to any other ideology in the world. Some of Islam’s most important principles of labor policies that addresses the problem of exploitation of workers include:

1. Protection for women and the vulnerable
2. The unique equal relationship between employers and workers
3. The work to be performed should be strictly halal
4. No workers stratification
5. Determination of fair wages

Islamic employment or labor policies is reflected in the composition of the Islamic society that has never split into two classes, the working class and business class, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the patron with the client, etc. No, Islam does not recognize this at all. It builds a unique equal relationship between the worker and the employer, which is based upon the sense of responsibility to fulfill the rights and obligations of each other as Islam ordered. According to the Islamic view, partnership between the employer and employee is a relationship that should be mutually beneficial. It is not allowed for a party to wrong or to be wronged by the other party. Imam Bukhari narrated from Abu Hurairah (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, Allah (swt) said:

«ثَلَاثَةٌ أَنَا خَصْمُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ أَعْطَى بِي نَفْسًا وَرَجُلٌ بَاعَ حُرًّا فَأَكَلَ ثَمَنَهُ وَرَجُلٌ اسْتَأْجَرَ أَجِيرًا فَاسْتَوْفَى مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُعْطِ أَجْرَهُ»

“Allah said: There are three persons whom I will oppose on the Day of Resurrection: a man who gives his word by Me but proves treacherous; a man who sells a free person and consumes the price; and a man who employs a worker and receives a completed job but he does not pay him his wages.” [Bukhari] In order to maintain the good partnership and ensure that all parties involved are mutually benefited, Islam organizes the employer-employee relationship in a clear and detailed way with the laws related to ijarat al-ajir (the employment contract). In fact, Islam states that unclear agreement points within an ijarat transaction qualifies it as a fasid (broken) agreement. With clear and detailed provisions in the ijarat al-ajir transaction, each party understands their rights and obligations, and is a protection against tyrannical employers forcing workers to work outside their defined hours. Furthermore, the provisions of Islam subject the functioning of business life upon the principle of halal and haram, without exploitation or taking advantage of others' suffering.

The Khilafah is responsible for preventing injustice in all its forms. Specifically in the area of employment, Islam enforces strict laws upon anyone who enacts injustice, whether employers or employees. Creating a safe and non-exploitative work environment for workers is also the responsibility of the state. The Shariah laws ensure that there should be no injustice of one party against another and the state is obliged to remove any oppressive act, whether it is committed by employers against workers or vice versa. Letting injustice happen is a sin and immoral, and is forbidden by Allah (swt). If the state allows injustice to take place, then it is an obligation upon all Muslims to account the ruler in order to rectify the situation and get rid of the injustice. If people are not able to correct their ruler, the matter is transferred to the Mukhamat Al-Madhalim (the court of unjust acts) that will force the ruler to remove the corruption, injustice, or oppression from the state.

Conclusion:

Hence, Islam and the Khilafah provide a comprehensive blueprint for the empowerment of women, protecting them from exploitation and poverty, enabling them to seek safe and dignified employment from their own volition, facilitating happy and fulfilled marriages and family lives and raising the status of their unique and vital role as the child-bearers and mothers of humanity, empowering them to fulfil their essential duties to their children – all of which will bring true progress and development within the state ■

Women in Power and Decision-Making: In the Swamp of Beijing, "Only Dead Fish Swim"!

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(Translated)

One of the most important goals set by the West when dealing with the issue of empowering women and equality with men is to disseminate its laws and values. So it sought to organize its conferences and concluded its agreements to secularize the concept of empowering women, claiming that the values of its capitalist system are the way to rid women of their suffering and that in its laws are solutions to their problems and will achieve their dignity and freedom that were violated and stolen under the laws and other legislations that have insulted and despised them and made them inferior to men.

So what are these "universal" laws that are just and save women? What are the policies followed to implement them? Has the West really succeeded in removing women from the corridors of injustice and oppression and achieved a better world for them?

The West has adopted specific policies in which it made clear its goal of empowering women and involving them with men in decision-making in order to restore their dignity and be able to prove themselves, stressing that equality between them and men is a fundamental and necessary condition to achieve their interests, so they revive society and contribute to its development, pointing to two important things that this empowerment process cannot be achieved without:

First: It is necessary to remove all obstacles (legislative, administrative, social, economic, etc.) that prevent the participation of women in society, and secondly: to take the necessary political measures that support and encourage this participation and provide them with opportunities to form and employ capabilities.

To implement these two matters, the West has recruited governments, encouraged organizations and societies, and provided them with huge funds to call for the implementation of the articles of its agreements and conferences, and it strives to spread them in societies, especially Muslim ones. It directed its 'reforms' towards Muslim women specifically because it regards them as the most oppressed women, as they suffer all forms of oppression and injustice from legislations, laws and what they term "outdated" traditions. It focused on the concept of gender, which influences changing the stereotypical view of the role of women in society.

It saw that women in Muslim countries are deprived of their political rights, absent and ineffective in their society, so it made it obligatory for governments and international institutions to take all measures to be fair to them and involve them in society in order to equate them with men in the conduct of their private and public lives. The West stressed the necessity of amending the laws of personal status according to its values, which it believes deliver freedom and justice for women. It called for giving the girl the right to marry without a guardian, and the mother the right to give her children her surname and nationality, and to take care of their travel, and to make the same decisions as the man in life to be equal with him in opportunities and get important positions and jobs that will raise her status and thus prove her being and personality.

The West raised the slogan of the liberation of women to free them from the restrictions that hindered them and did not give them the chance to prove their worthiness, competence and ability to be like men in the highest positions and ranks and to compete with them and even surpasses them so as to achieve for society its development, advancement and peace, "There is no peace without women". The West stressed that there is no difference between men and women; both are citizens and have the right to participate in all fields. The Tunisian Republic's report on the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action plus 25 years stated that "The Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and the Elderly has developed this program from 2016 to 2020 and it aims to empower women politically by enhancing their participation in public and political life to improve their presence in the decision making and leadership posts through training, capacity building, support and awareness campaigns, especially empowering women who lack national identification cards to obtain them and exercise their right in elections".

Therefore, it was necessary to bridge the gender gap between men and women and deal with them as one, so it demanded that governments and parties spread these concepts, stressing the need to adopt the principle of quota in order for women to obtain quotas in parliament and local councils and in the structures of the executive power, as it emphasized on them and all its elements, as well as civil society actors and women's associations, to cooperate with it by submitting reports on the extent of their success in implementing its policies and mentioning the reasons for their failure and to explain it! In his speech, Youssef El-Shahed, the head of the Tunisian government, during the first session of the Peer Council for Equality and Equal Opportunities between women and men, affirmed that they are "Fully aware of the small presence of women in decision-making positions and in the management of public affairs and in the executive offices of elected bodies and councils, despite the absence in Tunisian legislation of discrimination between women and men in areas related to employment or membership of elected councils or access to decision-making posts."

Reports are sent from time to time to reveal the legislations enacted by governments and the changes that have been made to their countries' constitutions, and to provide explanations about the reasons for their failure to implement what is dictated in the agreements and conferences, confirming that societal culture and "obsolete" traditions and the stereotypical view of the role of women in society still represents basic obstacles in front of the path of desired change. In its report, the Jordanian National Commission for Women Affairs affirms the progress made towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years that: "There remains an urgent need to continue to implement the quota system as a temporary and positive measure in policies and legislation, and to meet the challenge of negative societal culture that still reduces the relevance and necessity of the participation of women in public life and in leadership."

In addition to these obstacles, the woman herself opposes the presence of women in important positions and in government. Rather, the matter has gone beyond this and women question their abilities and do not trust that they are worthy of these positions and posts. It was imperative to work to educate the generations about the status of women and their effective role in the advancement of societies and contribution to their development and the necessity of empowering them so that they participate in society in a comprehensive and not partial manner so that they have a decision in their home, family and in the society at large, and work to advance and develop this since she is the first victim of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy and to protect them from wars because they claim the lives of women the most. For this, governments have sought, with all the means they have, following dictates from the West through agreements and conferences - including Beijing - to work to radically change the prevailing concepts in their societies, so that media, education, civil society organizations, and women's groups are harnessed to spread new and different concepts, and to strive to highlight women who have taken positions of decision-making and amplify their achievement in the media in order to make them an example for women to follow, "The institutions run by women are the most productive" Omar El-Bahi (Tunisian Minister of Trade). Hence they promote the idea that society must work to accept and encourage women in these jobs.

However, the results refute these allegations and reveal the media's inflating and marketing of these accomplishments, which reflect a different reality in which women live miserable lives; they live in hardship and unemployment. This is exposed by the miserable rural women's eyes and exposed by the groaning of women who despise the promises of politicians and successive governments that do not remember them until the election days. The situation for women in Tunisia, for example, did not improve despite reaching a number of women in parliament seats, which did not change anything from their reality. The situation of women continues to deteriorate, dominated by unemployment, poverty, oppression and exploitation!

Reports on the media on women and what women's groups spread about what women have achieved in Tunisia, for example, are nothing but allegations and falsifications of reality. These organizations and what they call for were imposed on society forcefully. Women of these associations and organizations changed their skins and became

outcast and rejected women, who cowardly work in fear of clashing with the reality that rejects their founding initiatives that have no roots and no history in Muslim countries. These organizations work in the dark and hide behind masks, one after the other dissolving once they clash with societies, their culture and Deen. They return and work tirelessly and are not ashamed by people's rejection, defying this difficulty to achieve their goals. Feminists appear in the media and profess their contempt for the Muslim people who still adhere to their Islamic culture and reject these corrupting Western laws. So they face rejection and hatred, but the hired media imposes their presence and polishes their images as educated women who have an opinion and decision that can influence society and the woman in particular.

The West monitored and pursued the conditions of Muslim women, under the prominent claim of being oppressed, deprived of their rights, and deprived of their freedoms. So it rushed and presented its programs and policies as effective solutions to restore their dignity and grant them their "humanity", which they assert was stolen from them to become a servant of the man, satisfying his needs and raising his children. It worked – as it claims - to raise awareness of women's rights in society through the media and educational curricula, with the aim of altering the inferior perception of women throughout the ages, that establishes woman's inability to take important positions and make decisions.

When it exported the idea of liberation of women to the world, especially to the Muslim countries, the West spent huge amounts of money to spread them and spread its concepts of women and encouraged societies to present this idea in an attractive way, so that the people would accept it and the Muslim woman would then be deceived. It showed the emancipated, challenging and liberal Western woman as an example and considered her the role model. However, the painful reality of Western women and the failure of governments to implement measures in their societies to solve their problems revealed the falsehood of these assertions and demonstrated the West's inability to make Muslim women a distorted version of Western women. How can the West take care of the Muslim woman and seek to solve her problems and issues, while women in its countries are grappling with a cycle of problems and concerns? How can it advocate equality with men, when women do not enjoy this in its countries and did not attain from these rights except crumbs; rather "achieving equality between the sexes may take a century" (as stated by the President of the United Nations General Assembly Mrs. Maria Fernanda Espinoza at a high-level meeting on a map of representation of women in political life for 2019)?!! Is it not necessary for someone who has medicine to treat his illness before giving it to others?!

Did the Western woman really obtain her rights, manage to make fundamental decisions, assume important positions, have the final say in her society, change it and contribute to its development and progress, or is it just a matter of trading in her cause and exploiting her to achieve other goals of a global system that works on domination, control, extension of power and fighting other civilizations that threaten its existence?

They are not better than others! Women in the West suffer from several problems, the most important of which is violence and harassment (from 50 to 80% of women are subjected to sexual harassment at work and exploitation in America, according to the American Federation of Labor and the Conference of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)) and because she is scared to lose her job, or for the harassment to turn into physical violence, she remains silent about what she was exposed to and accepts it! They do not find any one to defend or protect them, even the laws that have been passed are nothing but ink on paper, because she finds herself as the victim of the legislators of these laws and their executors. There have been many harassment cases in Western parliaments. Media outlets have circulated scandals of politicians, who sing about women's freedom, equality and empowerment in their speeches, while they are in fact exploiting and harassing them in their offices and departments, (US President Donald Trump has 15 charges of harassment).

This is not the example that a Muslim woman should follow. The liberal Western woman suffers from carrying out work that contradicts her physical characteristics as a female and she pays for her pursuit of equality with men, so she exhausts herself and endures what she cannot tolerate to demonstrate her efficiency and ability. Those who liberated her sought to appoint her to important positions and posts so that she is empowered and her sense of this grows and is deceived by the "illusion of equality" with the man. We wonder, then, why does this woman not feel her strength and gain unless she becomes like the man, meaning if she imitates the man in her clothes and pretends roughness? Look at Margaret Thatcher - the Iron Woman - she was "taking lessons in the art of public speaking to

deepen her voice and she preferred to wear trousers to be at the level of the man". Isn't that a recognition that the man is her standard and she should only be like him to become an influential actor over those around her? Doesn't she, therefore, prove her abandonment of her femininity and being ashamed from it and consider it a hindrance to her and her ambitions?

She is not a role model and a Muslim woman cannot become a distorted version of her! The Western woman was unable-in light of these international laws and covenants- to change her reality and prove herself and impose her worthiness to remove injustice from her, and remove from her society what it suffers from of corruption and exploitation. There are many women who held administrative and political positions, but they did not change anything in reality, for example, what has Benazir Bhutto offered to Pakistan and women in it? Was she able to stop violence against them? Did she succeed in sparing them the life of poverty, unemployment and the tragedies of war? In Bangladesh, what are the successes achieved by Sheikh Hasina in improving the situation of women and the advancement of society? Was she the influential actor affected by the suffering of women and sought to change their status and support them, or did she follow a path that was drawn for her as a policy that she could not deviate from and should implement, even if that forced her to kill women or children or send them to death? (Like the Rohingya fleeing the oppression of the Myanmar government)

How can they achieve real change for women and their societies while they are subject to the laws of the Western capitalist system, which is based on achieving interests and profits through wars and colonialism of peoples, so they find themselves bound after they were fooled by freedom? The West deluded the woman that she had reaped many rewards, but in reality, it was the one who attacked her and used her case to make it a sharp weapon in its existential battle: its battle against the present and absent Islamic civilization that threatens its existence and entity by its return. The West traded with the issue of women's liberation and sought to make its Western concepts and values universal so that it encompasses Muslim women, changing their perception, diverting them from their Deen, making them question its justice to them, so that they may enter the net of its Western civilization and drink its toxins, and in that is their destruction and the destruction of their family and society!

A few months ago, in a demonstration in the country of freedoms, France, the voices of women rose, calling for their protection from the conditions they live in: they raised the slogan "Stop killing" to reveal the failure of the West and its laws in protecting women, and exposing its inability to even preserve their lives! Shouldn't the Western woman follow the steps of the Muslim woman who, under the rules of Islam, was dignified, honoured and protected? Doesn't the whole world live in real loss due to the loss of Islamic rules in it? Didn't Muslim women realize that pride is in their Deen and that they should be the example for the women of the worlds?

The accomplishment of women's empowerment and realization of their humanity that the capitalist system prides itself in are nothing but lies that brought down the West's masks and conferences. It exposed the falsehood of Beijing's promises, which are renewed every five years and showed the main and fundamental goal behind these slogans, namely that it demolishes the last bulwark of the Muslim family by changing the concepts of women and making them puppets that are moved by the fingers of the enemy which throw them in the swamp of its corrupt civilization! A quagmire in which only dead fish swim! The Islamic belief still represents a reference point for Muslims, especially in matters of family and personal status, which is what worries the United Nations and the West. Due to this they strive to make Western values as policies applied on the ground to strike a blow at the core of the Islamic Ummah and to eliminate its identity completely by challenging the rulings and validity of Islam, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by decorating the rules stipulated in its agreements and documents with claims of the good, fairness and equality that women will achieve with men.

Will women find their rights outside the rulings of their Creator? Are there laws that can guarantee and do justice to them better than the ones that Allah blessed them with?

Misleading misconceptions about women in Islam and the extent of their contribution to life have spread, and that isolated them almost from their duties, role and place in their societies, and made them imprisoned in the name of religion, so that they are no longer active or involved in society. But this does not negate the bright true reality of the status of women in Islam, as they are educators of generations and makers of heroes (such as Salahudin al-Ayyubi and Muhammad al-Fatih) and with their participation in public life, they have achieved impressive successes in all fields, as witnessed in the records of history. The Muslim woman was not active with the aim of appearance and

fame, but worked to obtain the pleasure of her Lord, adhering to His rules, participating with the man and competing with him in the good; she supported her Deen, spread its concepts, and raised her children by them! She did not abandon the rulings of her Lord in which in them are protection for her honour and her dignity, so she adhered to her head scarf (Hijab), avoided Tabaruj (showing her beauty) and mixing, and saved herself from harassment and exploitation.

Allah (swt) revealed Islam as a mercy to the worlds. He (swt) gave women rights that protected them from the injustices of ignorance. He (swt) gave them the right to life and the right to participate as a man in electing who rules them by the Rulings of her Lord. She enjoined the good and forbade the evil and she accounted and stood in the face of the rulers (like Asma bint Abi Bakr with Al-Hajaj ibn Yusuf after he killed her son Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr). The woman has the right to account and a "Holding rulers accountable by Muslims is one of their rights and an obligation of sufficiency on them." (Article 20, The Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State, Hizb ut Tahrir). And she has the right to express her political views and to elect her representatives and those who govern her. "It is permissible for a woman ... to elect the members of the Ummah Council and be a member of it, and to participate in the election and Bay'ah of the caliph." (Article 115, The Draft Constitution of the Khilafah State, Hizb ut Tahrir). Islam has given women the right to work in all jobs and contribute to the conduct of life's affairs, but it is not permissible for them to be a ruler and this is a Shariah ruling that cannot be rejected or debated. When Kisra (Chosorus) perished, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked:

«مَنْ اسْتَخْلَفُوا؟»

"Who succeeded him?" They said his daughter, He (saw) said:

«لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ.»

"No people will be successful if they are ruled by a woman." The matter is for Allah, we hear and obey, and Allah is Al Khabeer Al A'leem.

While Islam prevented a woman from being a ruler, she participated in all other jobs and achieved successes that were not attained by the women of the worlds. She practiced Hisba judiciary in public markets (like Al-Shifa during the reign of Umar bin Al-Khattab) and excelled in medicine, science, taught scholars, and jurists from men and women. What women have enjoyed in Islam is not found in other laws. It is a revelation from a Compassionate Expert and Merciful who created women and men, and He knows best what He has created and what works for their lives.

Islam is Allah's Deen, which He has chosen for His servants and it is the truth, and other than Islam is falsehood. Islam alone has justice and mercy, as it is a set of related and linked Shariah rules in which is the good of all people (women and men alike), in which women are fully involved according to them in the policies of their society, even if they are not ruling in it.

Allah (swt) created the human being from a male and a female to ensure their survival and preserve mankind, because the preservation of the offspring does not take place with one without the other. So He (swt) gave for each of them rights and duties suited with their nature "as a human being" or according to their gender (female or male) according to what this requires. And He (swt) sent down Shariah rules to regulate life better and achieve happiness for humanity, for it is the light which is directed at lifting mankind from the darkness of ignorance

﴿فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى * وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى﴾

"And if there should come to you guidance from Me - then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter] * And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind." [Ta-Ha: 123-124]

How can the Ummah of Islam be satisfied without the rules of the Lord and surrender to its enemy and accept its laws that bring it back to darkness?!

It is only the Khilafah (Caliphate) that will enable women to fully participate in society and ensure their effective participation in it. It will constitute a true model for obtaining their rights. Only the rulings revealed by Allah will achieve justice, security and stability for women, so that they can live in peace and contentment with what their Creator chose for them, not indifferent to the myths and allegations brought by the man-made constitutions! ■

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women : Between the Existing and the Desired Mechanisms, Goals are Lost

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(Translated)



International, regional and national institutions have been established with the aim of advancing women, putting their issues at the top of the global agenda, and continuing to move forward in enhancing their gains throughout the world. These institutions include offices, committees, agencies and ministries on the status of women. The first institutions created for this purpose were in the wake of the first United Nations International Conference on Women in 1975. The primary mandate for these structures was to increase women's participation in the education and politics sectors. These include, for example, the Office of Women's Services in Chile, the Office for Equal Opportunities in Public Office in Britain, the Commission for Gender Equality in South Africa and others. The first women's office was also established in the early twentieth century by the League of Nations and the International Women's Alliance. This was in America in the 1920s as part of the Ministry of Labor, and its stated goal at that time was to “formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.”

As for the oldest regional agency for the same purpose, the Inter-American Women's Committee, a specialized unit of the Organization of American States, was established in 1928 as a forum for setting policy aimed at advancing the civil and political rights of women in the western hemisphere. (Women in the World Today issued by the US Department of State).

Since the Beijing Declaration, the United Nations has attached more importance to the issue of establishing institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in member states and has requested that progress made in the matter be included in national reports issued as one of the twelve goals and strategies to be seriously implemented. The Beijing Declaration also appointed specific bodies responsible for following up on the implementation of global agendas and called on the world to support them to reach their goals and they are:

On an international level:

1- The United Nations:

The United Nations system is considered the most important global structure concerned with women and gender equality with its four specialized offices in the matter, namely the Commission for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Equality (OSAGI). These offices work with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1946. The United Nations has installed its own multiple arms as the main global champion of women and girls' issues, and has attributed its establishment for the purpose of accelerating progress in meeting their needs globally.

It assists UN member states in setting global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programs and services needed to ensure implementation of those standards.

The Beijing Declaration stated in Item 307, “The institutional capacity of the United Nations system to carry out and coordinate its responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action, as well as its expertise and working methods to promote the advancement of women, should be improved.”

In Item 308, “Responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Platform for Action and the integration of a

gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system must rest at the highest levels.”

The United Nations has included the issue of women in its economic, development, cultural and environmental institutions, namely the FAO, UNICEF and UNESCO, and committed the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others to support the platform of work by increasing the number of women in senior positions, establishing policies and guidelines and linking the loans they support to the equality agendas. Countries implement reforms that are part of the Beijing strategies.

2. Other international institutions and organization:

We also find international organizations active in the context of developing strategies aimed at consolidating equality, including the World Council of Women Leaders, and in this regard we do not forget human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and others that consider women's issues among their work plans and operate on them.

On the regional level, we find the United Nations regional branches and the European Institute for Gender Equality, which was established in 2006 and many other organizations, including a coalition of women parliamentarians from Arab countries: the Arab Women Organization, the African Center for Women, the Center for Arab Women for Training and Research, Kawthar and the Federation of Women's Rights, and the list goes on.

On the national level, all governments endorsing the Beijing Platform for Action have established institutions for the advancement of women and the achievement of equality, and these institutional mechanisms are characterized by plurality, diversity, and exclusivity in some cases; the framework does not fit all of them here, so we will include excerpts from the Master's thesis issued by Birzeit University, which summarizes what was established in Europe and the Arab world as an example. At the level of European governments, the following was formed for example:

- Special Ministries for Equality between Women and Men (Denmark, Sweden, and Britain).
- Ministries of Equal Opportunities for Gender (Italy).
- Consultative committees of the Cabinet Office to provide consultations in the field of achieving gender equality and equal opportunities (France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal, and Romania).
- Joint ministerial committees for equality (Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Britain).

Some countries have assigned the task of achieving gender equality and equal opportunities to pre-established ministries such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Ministry of Welfare (Bulgaria, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovakia), or a national committee for equal opportunities (Malta, Britain, Ireland).

To support the work of national mechanisms in fulfilling their role and achieving their goals, support mechanisms have also been established for national mechanisms such as gender units within institutions and government ministries to oversee institutions in the application of gender equality. Equal opportunity units have also been established that are concerned with monitoring equal opportunities in the area of work and employment as in Austria, Belgium, Germany and others.

Parliamentary committees were formed that play a legislative and supervisory role, working to ensure that equality between women and men is incorporated into the laws issued by Parliament, and to amend existing ones to achieve equality and equal opportunities, and these committees were found in Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia.

As for Arab countries, the following were established:

- A higher or national council for women, as in Bahrain, Qatar, and Egypt.
- A national body or committee concerned with advancing the status of women, as is the case in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen
- A ministry charged with women's issues as one of the files that this ministry deals with, as is the case in Algeria and Morocco.
- The Ministry of State that is concerned with women's issues and advancement as is the case in Tunisia, Iraq and Palestine.

- An equal and anti-discrimination body (Morocco).
- Establishment of the Foundation for Protection and Social Rehabilitation (Qatar).
- Establishment of the Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry of Development, the Family Development Department in the governorates, and the Rural Women Development Department in the Ministry of Agriculture (Amman).
- Creation of regional delegations for women's affairs (Tunisia), etc.

To sum up, the institutional mechanisms established in various parts of the world are very many and even multiple in one country. In France, for example, it exceeded six institutions. So did the Beijing Declaration achieve its goals in this area???

According to reports issued by the United Nations, the proliferation of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women did not bear fruit due to many obstacles, according to their claim. On the national level they attributed the matter to the fact that financial and human resources were not sufficient and that the national mechanisms were characterized by limited, marginalized and lack of clarity of tasks in addition to the absence of detailed information, research and statistics on gender for use in the planning and evaluation process.

As for the international and regional levels, as mentioned in the report in Item 197 - they attributed this to the absence of a commitment from the highest levels and in Item 199 - to the limited available resources; and in Item 200 - they referred it to the failure to implement policies regularly.

So in short, the reasons for the failure to achieve the goals and strategies in the field of institutional mechanisms in the United Nations perspective, are the failure of governments and the weak financial and human resources.

The large number of institutions and mechanisms do not solve the problems experienced by women, and the stark reality, especially in countries that have activated ministries, agencies, departments and committees to ignite women and their affairs, confirms that the solution does not lie in the large number; and that efficiency does not come without a responsible political will to overcome obstacles and material difficulties; and that the approach that was placed in Beijing and then developed is a wrong approach because it is based on a wrong understanding of the problem and its solutions.

As we pointed out in previous points in the booklet, the catastrophic failure that the United Nations and the member states faced in the various fields that they worked on for the previous twenty-five years was due only to wrong solutions due to the lack of identification of the source of the disease. Failure to identify the disease and its causes leads, of course, to delayed recovery, even if some symptoms are present.

For example, in Denmark, which they rank as the first country in the world in terms of gender equality, and the country with the largest happiness index in the world, figures from the country reveal the extent of its failure to eliminate the problems experienced by women. Although women in Denmark have been in decision-making positions as members of Parliament since 1918, where there were 12 women in these posts, 4 in the Lower House and 8 in the Upper House, they could not eliminate poverty, violence, and women's problems!

The number of poor people in Denmark doubled between 2002 and 2015 from 18,650 to 44,141. As for violence against women, Amnesty revealed that it is very prevalent in Denmark, and according to BBC reports, several studies say that Denmark has the highest prevalence of sexual violence in Europe.

Yes, women in Denmark reached decision-making positions and were next to men in most state departments and its administration, but their arrival at such positions did not enrich the rest of the women, nor did it eliminate poverty, violence, and many other problems. Yes, Denmark gave women decision-making positions, but they reached them, handcuffed, without the ability to create real change for women.

The Beijing Declaration linked the elimination of women's suffering to the achievement of equality and gender and marched in its path, imparting solutions that, according to its claim, guarantee the achievement of its goal, but it was in all its stages and reviews bringing the same justifications for its failures and did not use the true facts from reality to judge its accomplishments.

Do the results achieved in Denmark, as well as in Sweden, Norway and the first countries in achieving equality in general, promise a bright future for the world to sharpen its attention and increase the march towards that goal?

On the ground, the figures and statistics emphasize the exacerbation of problems at times, and staying the same at other times without any resolution, even in the leading countries in gender. However, supervisors and advocates of the declaration justified its failure to achieve its goals with the reasons of lack of institutions, true political will, and representation at the highest levels without objectivity or a deep serious research.

The real reason for the failure of the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women that the Beijing Declaration prompted to create is that these institutions were born from the womb of the greedy Capitalism; the womb of the world order imposed by America, and through which it wanted to globalize Western concepts and solutions of life.

Capitalism is based on materialism and utilitarianism. Do these values correspond to the goal of fairness for women and restitution of their rights?

The value of utilitarianism does not recognize rights and does not value them, let alone make them a target!

The United Nations did not adopt the slogans of equality, gender, and others to do justice to women, but rather adopted it because it has the interest of the capitalist system at heart in order to be able to tighten its control over the world by spreading its concepts and laws. Hence, women under capitalism have obtained only fragments of rights and will never be able to recover the rest in its entirety because the interest of the system is contradictory to their interest and the change will always remain partial here or there and never satisfying. Linking the restoration of women's rights to the achievement of equality and gender and the establishment of institutions seeking to achieve this goal is like providing sedative drugs for a cancer patient in its final stages, as this may ease some symptoms but with the impossibility of achieving recovery?!

And here they themselves have stated that achieving equality may need another century in the leading countries in this field, so what about the other countries? Would they preach to us the continuity of the tragedies of women today for another century?!

“It will take 99.5 years to achieve full equality between men and women, according to the current rate of change.”
Rosamund Hutt, Senior Writer at Formative Content, a journalist-led content marketing agency.

In the past, the Khilafah (Caliphate) sufficed women, guaranteed their rights, and revived them in a decent and peaceful life. It did not need many institutions and many mechanisms, but only the existence of the true political will and a just system capable of guaranteeing the needs of men and women.

The Islamic system is based on patronage and restitution of rights to its owners because the spiritual value is present in every action the state hopes for: Allah's pleasure, and there is no particular interest or benefit, so the change that the Khilafah carried in the past and which will be carried in the future was a fundamental change that changes the reality completely, the goal is clear, the values are constant and do not change. Equity for a woman will not be only achieved by fulfilling the duty of providing her the rights that Allah has given her, but also the state will be held accountable for any shortcomings.

The fundamental difference between capitalism and its solutions and Islam and its solutions lies in the fact that capitalism is made by human beings who seek hegemony while Islam is made by the Lord of humankind, and there is a huge difference between the former and the latter.

The values in capitalism are governed by utility, and they keep changing. As for Islam, it is fixed, with a balance of justice. The goal of the capitalists and their target is to be victorious, profitable and even colonial, while the goal of Islam is for people to live under the shade of Allah's rules in safety and contentment.

The sincerity and efficacy of the Khilafah system is its guarantee from the Lord of the Worlds, and history books abound with examples of the manifestations of honouring and revering women, giving them their rights, and the scarcity of the problems that they experienced. The reality of the world today in light of America's domination and leadership of the world screams in pain and mourns its suffering. This, alongside the failures after failures since the issuance of the Beijing Declaration to solve women's problems affirm beyond any doubt the need to change course and replace what is inferior (Capitalism) with what is better: Islam ■

Women's Human Rights: The Capitalist System and Women's Rights... Does the Malicious Tree offer Good Fruits?

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(Translated)

Women's rights are indivisible and inseparable from human rights. This is included in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and what was confirmed in the framework of the Beijing+20 campaign, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated, "Let's be clear about this, it is very basic: You have to be a defender of women's rights to be counted as a defender of human rights."

And since the defense of human rights was among the goals of globalization and one of the most important items that the Beijing Declaration circulated and disseminated in the world, the attention was on women's rights, which have become the focus of all United Nations actions, conventions and conferences, where women and their rights have become among the most important concerns.

The West presents itself as a reference for human rights. It promoted optimistic images of Western women, while simultaneously showing the lives women at lower status than them, especially Muslim women, whose rights are diminished, and are oppressed, suffering from illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, and marginalization. So the West called for the necessity of defending them and promoting their human rights in order to combat all forms of violence against them and to ensure the continuity of their development and peace process. "The advancement and equality of women with men are related to a human rights issue and a condition for social justice and they should not be viewed in isolation and as a woman's issue." (Article 41 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action)

Therefore, the West imposed upon governments in Muslim countries, in particular, to work to prevent violations of the human rights of women, and to promote, protect, and entrench these rights in its laws and constitutions in implementation of the international signed agreements dictated to it to comply with its clauses. This is what is stipulated in Article Two - Paragraph F - of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: "States must take all appropriate measures, including legislation to amend or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against women" to accelerate equality between men and women and to take urgent steps to amend the social and cultural patterns that distinguish between the sexes. And it called for nullifying the work of religious legislation and replacing them with international laws. So women's rights have become a priority for the actions of these governments and among the things that are indispensable for the advancement of women and society.

These agent governments were quick to conclude international agreements despite the opposition and rejection from their peoples of this action since it is a flagrant challenge to their culture and religion (Deen), to call for equality between men and women in all fields and to enact laws prohibiting discrimination against women (making a distinction between men and women). They called for the amendment of personal status laws and the development of new laws (preventing polygamy and raising the age of marriage and equality in inheritance...) through sordid conferences that renew their actions and policies every year (such as the Beijing Declaration) and malicious agreements that infiltrate all occasions (like the CEDAW agreement). They adopted in that capitalist and Western values and sought to implement them by imposing them in the laws and by spreading them as an alternative culture to the culture prevailing in their communities through civil society organizations and women's associations. They did not divert their approach from the path drawn by the West for the globalization of its values and concepts.

For example, in 2015, Tunisia took a "new step towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against women"

through the revision of Law No. 40 of 1975 on passports and documents that “allow a woman to travel with her minor children without the need to obtain permission from their father” which was described as “it reflects the desire and political and legislative will to install stronger protection to women's rights”. These amendments to the laws were also described as “the culmination of the struggles of Tunisian women and a victory for the progressive forces against all forms of violence against women...” What culmination is this and what victory?! Indeed, the reality of women in Tunisia contradicts this and it is exposed by the rural woman's life in particular, as she lives a life of misery that causes her to ride the death trucks that transport her to work in harsh conditions that are beyond imagination. She is a fifteen-year-old girl who has not completed her education or is working to help her parents with her education expenses. She is the old woman of the seventh or eighth decade, who is pushed by poverty to spend the days left of her life between the fields or the care of sheep. What victory is this that they are talking about?!

A working woman spends her day outside her home working to help provide for the needs of her family, as the father is no longer able to afford them in light of the high cost of living and prices, so she returns home exhausted and cannot perform her job as a wife or a mother. If she is widowed or divorced, she would have to double the work effort in order to support herself and her family. What culmination is this?! Even in falsehoods and allegations that they spread, they follow the West! They follow its path in claiming that it gives women their rights and equality with men and their happiness in laws that they enacted.

They said that a Muslim woman is oppressed and deprived, and we, by these laws, will restore her rights and provide her with the freedoms that the “male” societies have deprived her. They demanded the repeal of several Shariah rules that they see as obstacles to a woman's fulfillment of her demands and equality with men, so that they lift restrictions that curbed her. In 2017, the Tunisian government “abolished all the leaflets related to limiting the freedom of Tunisians to choose their partners”. Rather, it dared to undermine known rules by necessity and called in its framework for achieving gender equality, equality between the genders in inheritance; “that women and men have the right to inherit the property of their parents in equitable shares.” (Second paragraph of Article 21 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights)

Where are these laws - which they consider to be the culmination - in regards to what the woman and girl suffer after abandoning the guardianship (wilaya) of her father and her brother, and while she is running after the realization of her being - as they have deluded her - so she marries a non-Muslim to disobey her Lord and runs after the passions and the facade of liberties and the delusion of wealth and luxury, forgetting the rule of her Lord?! Where is she from what happens to husbands after the woman gains power and becomes a match for the man who abandons his financial responsibilities (qiwama)? Where are these constitutions in regards to divorce rates that increase every year leading to the destruction of families and lost children?

When we consider the condition of Muslim women under this capitalist system, we find that they are marginalized, suffer from poverty and unemployment, and do not find anyone to bring them relief. Politicians do not rush to help them except in their election campaigns, highlighting them and showing their accomplishments and promises to them by sending projects and economically empowering them, using media in that... and ignoring them otherwise. Therefore we see them as a wandering seller or working in the fields all day and for long hours to collect some dinars to help provide needs to her family - sometimes we see a woman destitute asking people for sufficient food for her and her hungry children.

Muslim women suffer from murder and abuse in Burma, China and Palestine, and their only sin is that they say, “There is no god but Allah.” Where are the human rights of these people?! Where are the women's associations from what faces the chaste girls in Bashar's and Al-Sisi's prisons; they are tortured while wolves violate their honour? Why don't these societies convey the suffering of Muslim women in conflict areas or depict their miserable lives? They are without food, shelter, or medicine; subjected to all kinds of exploitation. Where are they in regards to the woman suffering from wars and conflicts while the world is witness to this? She is the bereaved widow who witnessed the killing of her children and her husband. If they resort to those they think will be their supporters, they let them down and even exploit and humiliate them more. It has become clear to the International Committee of the Red Cross during its work in societies affected by armed conflict that sexual violence is the most important concern faced by young women in particular. Why do they keep silent about their violated “human” rights and the lack of health care for them; instead, they hold seminars and conferences for redemption and talk about reproductive and sexual health

and raise slogans of the woman's right to live in a "safe" sexual relationship and her right to abortion and denounce what they call "marital rape"? Isn't there a selection of topics in their work of topics that serve their agendas and support the war of the West against the rules of Islam? They do not miss an opportunity to talk about the injustice to women, belittling them and raising the profile of men, and calling for the replacement with new concepts presented by the prevailing world order with these rules while pinning them to Islam.

The West sought to spread its corrupt culture among Muslim women to make them copies of the liberated Western woman, as if she is the example that must be followed. Feminist societies and suspicious organizations contributed to spreading these concepts, so the girl was encouraged to reject early marriage and they convinced her that it was wrong and unfair to her and that she had to live freely, and she can engage in unlawful relationships and her body is her property. They made her deny her instinct, and throw behind her marriage and motherhood, and run after study and work because they are the only way to achieve herself's worth and become financially independent so that she does not need a man. She forgot herself, her instinct and nature, so she woke up to a bitter truth: a new number on the list of unmarried women. This is what feminists advocate: the liberation of Muslim women so that they are like Western women, who do not see the relationship with men as complementarity and in harmony, but the man is seen as her match and competitor. So has the West really managed to give women their rights? Was the West able to make women happy, dignified and active in their society?

If we shed some light on women in the West, then we will discover at the first glance their suffering due to the man-made applied laws on them, that are only concerned with the interests of the ruling capitalist class in the world and view women as an important resource for providing profits. How is the situation of women in the West?

She is threatened with violence, death and assault. Every 9 seconds a woman is mistreated in the United States and every day, 3 women are killed by their husbands or lovers. At least 126 women victims of marital violence were killed in the country of freedoms, France, in 2019.

She is humiliated and suffers from the consequences of how she is viewed, as a sexual being. She is he is treated as a commodity in the capitalist slave market, and there is no consideration for her humanity, which they boast of its defence, as is the case in Germany, which is considered the brothel of Europe; it abolished the criminalization of prostitution.

And if the West presents another side of the Western woman that it takes pride of, then it is a degradation of her value. It views her as a female, and uses her body and beauty in its media and advertisements and in the workplace to bring profits to capital owners. This made her view her body and beauty as a guarantee, which made her become obsessed with preserving them. If she loses her beauty or charm, she will suffer anxiety and depression, which may cause her to commit suicide.

This is the situation of Western women in the most prominent countries that call for their freedom and rights! These are the conditions that led many Western women to flee from this rotten civilization to a civilization of goodness, dignity and peace. They fled and converted to Islam! They embraced the religion (Deen) of human nature (fitra) in which they found what they missed in the laws of their country.

Then, after all this, governments, societies and organizations in Muslim countries come to falsify the facts and pay lip service to the gains of Muslim women in light of the laws of the West, from which Western women fled and quickly sought help from the rulings of their Lord after Allah (swt) guided them to the path of guidance. How can a Muslim woman forsake the rulings of her Deen and be deceived by the falsehoods and slanders of the West? How can she see its corrupt concepts as salvation for her while the Muslim woman - even in the home of the West - lives under pressure and is prevented from practicing the rules of her Deen? Can anyone who describes Muslims and Islam as terrorism defend Muslim women?! How can those who spread Islamophobia in their societies because of their policies that led to many attacks on Muslim women claim to defend their rights and call for their liberation through the concepts of their society?! The person deprived of a thing cannot provide it, and the West did not provide the Western woman, or the Muslim woman who lives in its land, security or decent living and did not provide her with her rights, so how would he give women in Muslim countries their rights?!

These governments announced their adoption of the values of the West, worked hard to establish them in their societies, and took the necessary measures to be in harmony with the West's goal to secularize and spread its values.

They raised the slogan of liberating a Muslim woman, not with the aim of giving her rights or liberating her, but with the aim of targeting her and distracting her away from her Deen, so that she would slip into the spiral of the corrupt civilization of the West. She learns from it and strays from the path of truth. This is what Joanna Francis, an American author and journalist warned the Muslim woman about in "To the Muslim Sister". She said to her, "Do not allow them to deceive you, and let the women remain chaste and pure." She added, "We need you to set an example for us because we have lost the way... hold onto your purity, and remember that it is not possible to return toothpaste inside the tube. Therefore, women must be sure to take care of this paste." Does the Muslim woman still have doubts that her Deen is the only guarantor of her rights and dignity? Does she still have a doubt that women in the world - and in the West in particular - should make the Muslim woman an example to follow?

Since the beginning of the article, we have pointed out that "women's rights" are inseparable from human rights, which are closely related to the correct belief that they embrace. If this doctrine is corrupt, then all the solutions that emanate from it are corrupt. The capitalist doctrine is invalid; it is built on guaranteeing the interests of the powerful and killing the weak, and it does not care for women, children, or the elderly and it deals with covenants, that on the surface show mercy but hide suffering within. A man-made doctrine that legitimizes the annihilation of people by wars (Afghanistan - Iraq - Yemen...) and by extermination weapons (explosive barrels – chemical weapons in Syria). The sovereign capitalist state - which possesses material power - is able to obtain those natural rights from its "enemies" and has the right to plunder the bounties of other peoples and colonize them.

But the doctrine of Islam, which the prevailing world system fights by all means and works to suppress and remove from the legislative system in the laws of Muslim countries and strives to distance its concepts from the life of the Muslim and marginalize it, is the true and only guarantor of human rights (for Muslim women and others; rather for all human beings) for it is a revelation from the Lord, the Knowing and Merciful.

Human rights in the Shariah are based on "universal concepts that are rooted in Islamic law and provide a realistic perspective of human rights consistent with human nature and consistent in perception" (from The Study of Human Rights in Western Political Thought and Islamic Law) in contrast to man-made human rights that do not emerge in reality and remain as myths that are not consistent with the human nature and changes according to whims and interests.

Allah (swt) honoured the human being and made him a successor on earth.

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ﴾

"And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth" [Al-An'am: 165].

He (swt) included women and men together in this honour because they are described as "human", so there is no consideration of colour, race or homeland. This honour has been linked to the servitude of a person to his Lord, so if he disbelieves or has turned away from the method of truth, this honour, will fall from him.

﴿أَمْ حَسِبَ أَنْ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا﴾

"Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are not except like livestock. Rather, they are [even] more astray in [their] way" [Al-Furqan: 44]

In its legislation, Islam provided a realistic perspective on women's rights and made it compatible with human nature, so it defined her rights with its commands and prohibitions and specified the method and guarantees to implement these rights. This is contrary to what the Western thought did, which linked the source of rights and its legislations to the principle of freedom, which it then restricted with imaginary restrictions, "My freedom ends when someone else's freedom begins", which makes rights a theoretical matter that cannot be achieved. The interests of people conflict and the tendency of selfishness is overwhelming, which makes the strong dominate the weak and enact laws accordingly to ensuring the survival of their control and dominance. They are human laws that are incapable of managing the affairs of life! As for Islamic rulings, they have guaranteed Shar'i rights and made them universal rights for mankind.

Allah (swt) has legislated general rules for men and women:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً﴾

"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of

them many men and women” [An-Nisa: 1].

And legislated for women's rights that man-made laws are unable to provide. The Prophet (saw) encouraged his companions to take care of women

«...استَوْضُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا»

“...*Treat women well*” He (saw) emphasized this to his Ummah on the farewell pilgrimage (Hajj),

«النِّسَاءُ شَفَائِقُ الرَّجَالِ»

“*Women are part of men*”.

-Allah (swt) preserved her right to life after she was killed in the days of ignorance

﴿وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ * بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ﴾

“And when the girl [who was] buried alive is asked (8) For what sin she was killed” [At-Takweer: 8-9] and urged men to be kind to them

«مَنْ يَلِي مِنْ هَذِهِ الْبَنَاتِ شَيْئًا فَأَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهِنَّ؛ كُنَّ لَهُ سِتْرًا مِنَ النَّارِ»

«*If one became a guardian (in a matter) of one of these girls and treats them well; they will be a protection for him from Hellfire.*»

«أَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ وَلِيدَةٌ فَعَلَّمَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمَهَا، وَأَدَّبَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبَهَا... فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ»

“*Any man (father) who has a female infant, he educates her well and teaches her good morals, he gets double reward*”, and gave her the right to choose her husband

«الْأَيِّمُ أَحَقُّ بِنَفْسِهَا مِنْ وَلِيِّهَا، وَالْبِكْرُ تُسْتَأْذَنُ فِي نَفْسِهَا، وَإِذْنُهَا صَمَاتُهَا»

“*A woman who has been previously married is more entitled to her person than her guardian, and a virgin must be asked for her consent for herself, and her consent is her silence*”. Islam also urged the husband to have a good relationship with his wife and treat her well:

«إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ إِذَا سَقَى امْرَأَتَهُ مِنَ الْمَاءِ أُجِرَ»

“*When a man gives his wife water, he will be rewarded.*”

Women have the right to have an independent financial liability and have the right to dispose of their money. They can sell, buy, rent, lease, trust, and donate, and there is no restriction on them as long as they are reasonable and rational. If she spends on her home and her children and her husband, it will be an act of charity by her and she will be rewarded for it.

Islam gave the woman a high status and did not differentiate between her and the man in human characteristics and gave her rights. It honoured and preserved her and preserved her freedom from fear and surrounded her rights with a solid fence from the Noble Qur'an and the pure prophetic Sunnah. Therefore, one of the most important things that the Khilafah (caliphate) state - which we ask Allah to accelerate its establishment - will do is to preserve the dignity and security of women and make this an essential pillar of the state's policies. "The primary role of women is that she is a mother and responsible over the household and she is an honour that must be protected" (Article 112, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir of the Khilafah State). It will work to spread awareness of Allah's rulings within societies so that the view of women and their treatment is in accordance with the rules of Islam, and it will employ its political, educational and media systems and all other means available to it to enhance the view of respect for women. And it will prohibit any form of violence against them at home or outside, the Prophet (saw) said:

«لَا تَضْرِبُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ»

“*Do not strike the female slaves of Allah.*”

It will prohibit everything that would impart a sexual character to society and prevent all forms of exposure and exploitation of women and will not allow women to engage in any act that would exploit their beauty or body or degrades their dignity, "It is prohibited for any man or woman to undertake any work which could undermine the morals, or causes corruption in the society" (Article 119, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir of the Khilafah (Caliphate) State). Preserving the dignity of women is at the heart of the rules of the Islamic social system that regulates the relationship between men and women, and restricts the sexual relations between them to marriage only. This system will practically preserve women, not theoretically, and make the man's relationship with the woman a

pure relationship that ensures they stay away from sexual deviations, and so they cooperate fruitfully, in which they maintain the integrity of society and live in a pure, chaste environment away from achieving sexual desires in ways that bring harm to them, to the family, and the society at large. Thus creating a society that enables women to study, work and travel in a safe environment, and where there is less violence and fewer other crimes against them.

Islam also established rules to regulate the relationship between the two spouses so that they do not deviate from what it should be, of affection and mercy, so the relationship between them is not corrupted, because “Marital life is one of tranquillity; and the couple should live together as companions. The guardianship (Qawwamah) of the husband over the wife is a guardianship of care and not ruling...” (Article 120, Draft Constitution of Hizb ut Tahrir of the Khilafah State)

This is our great Islam. Our Wise Lord, All-Knowing and Most Wise, has prescribed what is good for a woman and for her decent life. A steadfast law that is not replaced by whims or interests, and in which there is goodness and prosperity, so how can women search elsewhere for their rights and greater good?

﴿أَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ﴾

“*Would you exchange what is better for what is less.*” [Al-Baqara: 61]

How do you make a judgement?

Islam elevated the status of women and gave them a high rank and brought them out of the humiliation of slavery and the injustice of ignorance, but when it was excluded from life and they were governed by man-made laws – and the corrupt capitalist system was presented as a model - she returned to slavery, injustice and violations that are not worthy of her humanity and being! These man-made laws pass the plans of the West and spread the concepts of their civilization, taking advantage of the slogan of "women's rights" as a dangerous weapon against Islam ■

Women and the Media: Between the Shariah Perspective and the International Charter

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(Translated)

Feminist thought in the West has become a historical intellectual heritage that enjoys legislative, political and media protection and immunity, as it is not possible to question or discuss and outweigh it on the right and wrong balance. This is because its opposition is seen as a direct rejection of the capitalist ideology that monopolizes thought, rights and science and is intolerant to any other opinion, and even fights it and considers it terrorism; with the pretext that it protects its intellectual and legislative system, which it promotes as the highest and elevated possible level the human mind can reach! As for attempts to rise up against feminist ideas and explain its falsehood, it is besieged and narrowed, and it is quickly covered up by the dominant feminist trend, even by the West themselves. Therefore, when the United Nations reviews its documents and agreements, they are made binding on the signatory countries, as if they were a revelation from the sky, regardless of the different cultures, religions and customs, creating a high status for these legislative agreements, in the light of issues discussed and solutions provided. When speaking of the Beijing Declaration, we must talk about the media, its relationship with women, its impact on their intellectual and psychological structure, the focus of feminist thought, the concept of gender and equality through the media materials presented and its various means: print, visual and audio.

This article is not enough to address a huge topic such as "the role of the media in creating opinion", so we will limit ourselves to focusing on media policy and its dealings with the Beijing Declaration and methodology, while recalling the information that the media, whether governmental or independent, adopts a view that it believes in and works by it as well as adhering to its intellectual and value controls. Even if it tries to blend in with the identity of societies and keep pace with their issues, it does not deviate from the global Capitalist policy line that dominates the world. If the influence of the media and its commitment to the Beijing Declaration approach is uneven and different from one society to another due to the specificity of each society, the idea is one and the means and methods of its implementation is what constitutes the difference.

What were the Beijing Declaration recommendations regarding women and the media, and what were the means of the media and level in implementing these decisions?

In the fourth chapter of the Beijing Declaration, in paragraph J, it states: women and the media means:

- 236: The continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications - electronic, print, visual and audio - must be changed. Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world. In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are also negatively affecting women and their participation in society. Programming that reinforces women's traditional roles can be equally limiting. The world-wide trend towards consumerism has created a climate in which advertisements and commercial messages often portray women primarily as consumers and target girls and women of all ages inappropriately.

This means that the concept of gender and equality adopted by the Beijing Declaration is against the concept of stereotypical (traditional) women, which they see as an unjust and insulting perception of women because it promotes violence and discrimination against them.

The woman who is a mother, housewife and child bearer, who looks after the affairs of her home, and cares for her family and husband, is considered a typical woman who expresses a traditional mindset and contradicts the

radical feminist thought, because the work of the woman in her home as a mother, and housewife is considered by the Beijing Declaration to be unpaid work, and because these typical responsibilities will not allow her to advance or have empowerment and independence. Hence, on their basis they are seen as an obstacle to the empowerment of women, so the distribution of roles should not be according to gender, but according to skills! The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) explicitly stipulated the necessity of eliminating stereotypical roles (a reference to women's role in motherhood, and male's role of guardianship within the family), and also stipulated that maternity is a "social function", that is, it is not specific to women, rather, it can be assigned to anyone, not necessarily the mother. Thus, the concept of empowering women economically and politically accompanies the concept of gender.

If the idea of allocating the role according to gender is abolished, the woman is freed from the male complex and the roles are equal between her and the man, and all her work becomes paid without the need for the man to help and support her. As for marital life, it is the sharing of responsibilities in applying the (proportional quotas) i.e. half - half, the 50/50 slogan. But the woman takes a step over the man, as she has control over her fertility and is independent in the decision to have children or not, or to have an abortion or not and therefore she is the one who guarantees the right of control over population and human development! This is another indication of the empowerment of women, their domination over men and their ability to equalize themselves, if they come out of the theory of their gender, body, and innate makeup! Therefore, the recommendations of the Beijing Media Declaration came against the stereotypical image of women who perpetuate their reproductive and female role without being productive to society and politics, so the media work was directed to distort the image of the mother and housewife by depicting her as a woman who does not have a life and a neglected gender and backward from the world and what is going on in it.

A follower of media affairs for the past ten years will notice the presence of women-specific media and media materials targeted at them; targeting different age groups and enhancing the image of an independent, rebellious, strong woman who does not consider the male component important in her life and continuity, but rather it is a plus and optional part! This is through cultural television or radio programs, or through the press or through drama that monopolizes the largest part of creating this "feminist intellectual extremism", by various and renewed means and in smart and flowery methods. The idea of gender, gender equality and opposing all forms of violence against women may not resonate with these mentioned terms, which are considered somewhat strange and coded in our Islamic countries, but the power of influence in communicating this media message with explicit or implicit connotations is what is taken in the end and is considered a gain and a point to the balance of feminist thought!

It is a common image in the media, especially the Arab media, to present a negative image of the woman who lives her normal life - as a mother, wife and housewife and cares for the family and children - in a broken, weak and sad way because she did not work and did not earn her money by herself and did not achieve her scientific, material and cognitive ambitions. So often, Arab women appear traditionally, under an authoritarian father, a husband, a jailer, or an arrogant brother who all engage in physical and moral violence against her, and the victim is usually deprived of the will and rights and does not have authority to decide, because she is dependant on the man as a father, husband or son. Childbearing and motherhood are imposed on her; the societal role as a mother, a carer of children, confirming the stereotypical image about her. Or she is portrayed as a lover and an emotional woman who does not dispense of a man whom she shares feelings and emotions with, which makes her a naive party in the relationship in which she searches for eternal love, and she abandons herself and trashes her dignity and personality for the sake of the man! Or we also find the image of the wealthy woman who is indulging in luxury and excessive extravagance, which is often imitated by Gulf drama and which dramatizes the image of the woman, her problems, interests, and form, and this all contributed to fixing the traditional image of women and diminishing her status and her responsibilities. Such a negative image is passed on a daily basis through television and radio dramas or hosts in dialogue and cultural programs or live interviews or presented as cases affected by "male violence", and the frequent talk about honour crimes in newspapers and magazines and the problems of increased childbearing and the negative impact of the mother who is not educated and not working on the education of the young, and charging the woman with a passive hostile energy towards the man and towards herself, which causes her to belittle herself and degrade her value and respond with shame (when asked) if she is a housewife or she is married at the age of eighteen or she is

a mother of six and she did not exceed the age of thirty! Yes, having many children has become a shame.

Maternity and housekeeping jobs have become embarrassing compared to work outside the home, and a woman who obeys her husband and serves her family is a weak, broken woman without a personality. This is in contrast to the heroes of serials and films, or venerated female guests in the programs, who challenge the "traditional" reality and break the restrictions in the face of the father, husband and children, and dealt with the man, as an equal partner and equal in every penny with a full force, arrogance and rebellion! Because a woman has a right in life, her life will never be linked to a father, husband and son, but it is she who creates her surroundings and her environment and she chooses her life, and all of this is presented in an impressive and flowery way that enjoys the sympathy and support of the recipient! Many malicious ideas have forcibly entered into our homes that our screens display, about the single mother, the independent woman who relies on herself, the rebellious teenager, and the minor who refuses to marry and the young girl who abhors circumcision in an abhorrent attempt to distort the Shariah rules and legislative heritage in a hostile and vicious way. In addition, it depicts the Western woman as the iron woman whose life does not stop at men, but rather continues and grows without him. The bold and strong woman whose femininity does not prevent her from being a soldier and a fighter and carrying heavy weapons, or a federal investigator or works in intelligence and crowds men in every place, and she who eats from what she earns and does not need a man as much as he needs her.

The Beijing Declaration also called for opposing the stereotype of women through the uprising against the media material addressed to them that ridicules their interests and confines them to kitchen appliances, decor, fashion and fitness, which made feminists puzzled between the idea of "body and sex in the capitalist mindset" which is closely related to women. So they called to raise the forms of discrimination and equality with men, especially with regards to the use of the image of the female body that makes it an aesthetic value which cannot be dispensed with and this appears in the field of advertising and marketing of products and goods even that pertain to men, and linking her charms to the product and to marketing in this way is an unfair exploitation of the woman's body and in it is insulting and humiliating. This is what makes a woman a "thing" that equates her with things in complete absence of her humanity and her mental and professional capabilities and confining her to the covers of magazines, newspapers, televised advertisements, and employing the body and sound until the woman became a first-rate source of profit for the media. However, it made the value of the woman wasted and deepened the gap between her and the man, which reinforced her inferior and instinctive view. This is in addition to appreciating female singers, artists, and actors, considering them icons in their societies, and exporting their news and achievements as tremendous efforts and honorable work!

Finding the equation between feminist thought that calls for full equality with men and the rejection of any male superiority and the Western capitalist thought that considers women inferior as consumer material availability, has confused the media and made it in a state of contradiction. Does it promote the feminist trend that wants to remove sexual differences or the greedy capitalist thought that considers sex a cornerstone of its culture and concept of freedom? The media's bias towards capitalist thought was clear with attempts to satisfy the feminist side by providing advertisements and advertisements on the kitchen, decoration, and fashion with men's faces and trying to avoid displaying house products and cleaning in the form of femininity such as "for you my lady" so not promoting the idea of the woman belongs in the house, or with regard to caring for children, changing diapers, and preparing breakfast. The image of the father who carries out these matters has become common, and we notice this in advertisements! Even the beauty and beauty industry has come out of the female monopoly, to be directed by men, especially in the field of fashion and beauty.

As for why feminist thought refuses to exploit women as a consumer value (an objectified being), this does not demonstrate their respect for the woman and her being, otherwise they would have respected their instinct and nature as a mother, housewife and wife as a priority. Rather, it is because it contradicts their thought which is based on opposing male superiority and distinguishing between them and men, such as rejecting the stereotype of the female body that existed only to satisfy the man and his service materially or sexually, which strengthens her inferiority and proves his supremacy! Therefore, the Committee on Women's Issues to the United Nations expressed after concluding its fourth report that the media has not yet lived up to the transformations that feminist thought has witnessed and that it is experiencing chaos and negative dealing in dealing with women's issues, but the achieved

result cannot be underestimated.

As for the image of women in the war and besieged areas, they were not adequately presented in the media, and their coverage was weak and limited, but the online media formed pressure on the broadcasted, radio and print media. The result was the displayed image became dominated by poverty, deprivation, privatization, and weakness, and the demolition of homes, cries of the bereaved, and the tears of widows, and the pictures of the camps, refugee and mothers of the martyrs which became a feminist trade that the United Nations and human rights societies thrive on and are eager to uphold and use to distort the issues of women in war zones from their causes, until the talk became about the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty and the feminization of school dropouts and illiteracy. Meanwhile poverty and illiteracy are rampant in war zones between males and females, but the malicious feminist trend is trying to take advantage of such a cruel human circumstance to leak its ideas about gender and equality even through offering financial offers or loans to affected women to support their families and provide them with some opportunities, when a man from the same family does not receive such support and does not have these opportunities!

And this is the policy of feminist thought: a wedge beats in the woman's body and a hand that is raised to comfort and console her, claiming that this aid is charitable and international. On the surface it shows compassion while its inner goal reinforces the idea of women's economic empowerment and material independence from men, even in the most difficult circumstances! Some may think that the media works professionally in war zones by credibly transmitting the reality - but covering it exclusively in regions and criminalizing people involved in these tragedies over others and obscuring the sacrifices and struggles of certain women while excluding others, until it produced a fake industry of what they called the icons of struggle and leaders of the movement to provide feminist personalities who are unsuccessful or traitorous, or who carry the feminist thought totally and polish their images and the highest levels of struggle they reached - makes us realize that the coverage is selective and media work in this aspect is not pure nor fair at all!

As for Article 235 of Paragraph J for women and the media, it talks about the scarcity of job opportunities and their support mechanisms, and it says the following:

235. More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations.

Talking about media opportunities according to the Beijing document is subject to the idea of relative quotas (50% versus 50%), meaning intensifying female media presence equal to male presence. Thus it is said that women are present and are equal to men, so their presence in what benefits and what does not benefit is compulsory. This explains that the large number of women's attraction to the screens in the programs, pamphlets and commercials in recent times, is not because of the importance of the media material that they display, but to intensify the number and record the attendance.

Sometimes, the female presence may seem unnecessary and does not need a female element in presenting and promoting it, but the mentality of competing with the male in every matter and going into all issues without exception knowingly or ignorantly even in the issues that raise the reservations of some women (especially about sex). They present it with great insolence and openness, to promote the concept of lifting all forms of discrimination and violence against them, including the right to express opinion and expression without differentiating between the sexes. Therefore, it may be deliberate that in the media, women are given more space to speak than men or a privileged media position, not because of their competence, but to establish their empowerment and domination!

The Beijing document was also concerned with the positioning of women in media sites and centers that directly affect the media in terms of material creation or control in the media organization or establishment, and the constant and persistent urge to occupy sensitive and prestigious positions in the media to allow more opportunities for women to spread feminist thought and penetrate it within society. Despite the increasing number of women in the means of communication as news broadcasters and directors of political and awareness-raising programs, the media-making and decision-making affecting the media and its trends remains modest, and this explains the poor media handling

of women's issues because they have not yet been able to reach positions that enable them to present their issues more deeply and more maturely. This is expressed in the Beijing Declaration on lack of media opportunities, which it states through its slogan "Lifting forms of discrimination against women".

Beijing's Plan to Support Women's Issues in the Media

The first issues stipulated in the Beijing Declaration, is the access of women to decision-making positions in the media field and the intensification of their presence in the media scene in its entirety, although the presence of women is declining and rising according to countries, for example, in Yemen, Palestine and Afghanistan it is considered low and in the Gulf countries it is considered modest and in countries like Egypt, Lebanon or Tunisia it is considered advanced compared to others. The work on the presence of the female component is changing and trying to control women Media material through its uniqueness in selecting issues, how to present them, direct and produce them, with intensifying training courses that develop verbal and visual communication skills, and increasing local and international meetings that deal with women's issues, especially in the Arab world, and monitoring reports and news, and rushing feminist societies on training workshops to reformulate the concept of role distribution in a manner that guarantees gender equality. Recent international reports monitored that religion is an obstacle to the project of empowering women, so the plan was to activate the role of Islamic organizations to be the interface through which all the contents contained in international covenants are presented, but within an Islamic framework, this is the recommendation issued at the Beijing +10 Conference held in March 2005 for eastern societies in particular.

For its part, the new media plan calls for rejecting the stereotype as we previously reviewed and presenting successful female models away from art and fashion, but in the political, scientific, and economic spheres, and polishing the image of modern feminism that takes a conservative nature, contrary to what we are accustomed to from the radical feminists who depend on rudeness and attacks on men. This new type of feminism that is emerging in some media programs in a modest manner and may be practicing (of the Deen) at times, with the selection of a rhetorical and tactful style that accepts an opinion and the other opposing opinion, but not without talking about the concept of gender, women's empowerment, and the call to reject culture, customs and traditions!

On the other hand, the media's interest, in recent times has become noticeable, in girls who have revolted against societal traditions in terms of religion, clothing, paternal guardianship or traveling with a mahram, which provides an opportunity for these girls to take the lead in media platforms and attack cultural heritage. They are portrayed in the media as icons and heroines despite their intellectual weakness or absence sometimes, and psychological and behavioral imbalance, lack of maturity and cognitive deficiency, however, the media opportunities available for such personalities are noticeable.

On the drama field, working to display women in a rebellious and daring manner is to uphold behaviour of liberation, power, and the direct approach of fighting the idea of early marriage or accepting pregnancy without marriage or the right to abortion or distorting the idea of polygamy or supporting material independence from the father starting from encouraging the idea of self-reliance and narcissism and then material and intellectual independence from the husband and the view of children as an obstacle to success. All this is promoted through serials, films and reality TV programs with a focus on stories in it from hinting or declaring the promotion of homosexuality and incest or the emergence of terms such as marital rape, and unconditional family. This is not sufficient, but rather translated and dubbed films that promote the culture of Western societies, and glorify the image of women in the West and achievements are also used!

Everywhere there is a possibility that the media can make a much "greater contribution to the advancement of women," (Beijing Declaration and Document, 1995).

On this basis, it is argued that the media should be a major tool in consolidating the concept of empowering women and criminalizing the practices of all forms of violence against them, from sexual to physical violence to promoting moral and gender equality. These terms have begun to settle within our Arab societies, especially, even though they have been for years strange and mysterious, but attempts of the media in clarifying their implications and contexts began to take a practical approach. And this is what we have seen recently in lifting the reservations on the Beijing document in many countries such as Tunisia and enacting new legislation on personal status in Palestine, Jordan, Sudan and others and launching campaigns to remove the guardianship of the father and sweep away fatherhood as they expressed it.

Media work cannot be limited to the audio-visual side only, because the press takes a valuable space. Therefore, articles and pamphlets condemning violence against women that are published on a daily basis, transmit facts and events with intimidation and exaggeration about the marriage of minors, circumcision, polygamy, guardianship, and honor crimes, in which they accuse Shariah rules, which they describe as the retarded "cultural heritage", while feminist narratives are popular and supported, some of which are presented in theaters and radio stations and discussed in lectures.

As for online media, it is a mix between feminist and anti-feminist thought! Some Western women who oppose the concept of gender consider that online media is an alternative media that has given them a chance to show that feminist thought is not society's thought in general, but rather is the product of experiences of some women that are generalized as experiences for all women and define the relationship with men in the framework of an eternal conflict that is internationally supported, and that the United Nations thrives on!

Media and women from the Shariah Perspective

The philosophy of Islam regarding the view on a woman cannot be placed in comparison and convergence with any other view, because the view of this valuable Deen is related to the relationship of a woman with her Creator and her Afterlife. This doctrinal constant adopted by a Muslim woman with a thought that convinces the mind, agrees with human nature (fitra) and fills her heart with tranquility, makes her respond to the rulings of her Lord naturally and in a manner which is in harmony between what she believes in and what she implements, and sees in every violation of this intellectual and spiritual harmony a violation of the human mind, her human nature and relationship with what is around her! Islam views a woman as a person with full rights and full responsibility for her deeds and choices, which are defined by Shariah without coercion or compulsion, but with mental and instinctual compatibility. Therefore, she receives either reward or punishment in the Hereafter and does not distinguish between her and the man!

And from a particular angle, the woman in Islam is a mother, wife and housewife, and on this basis, the Shariah rulings come in harmony with this view to build a balanced and disciplined personality that does not violate her human nature, does not exhaust her energy, does not enslave her body, does not belittle her mind, but rather makes her stable, firm, safe and reassured.

This intellectual, spiritual, and behavioural harmony cannot be achieved through limited human legislation based on some experiences and rivalries such as the history of feminist thought for example, as the human balance is not achieved by the perspective of some individuals, but by a system that is able to accommodate all, and guarantees happiness and stability for all and this is only found in the ideology of Islam!

As for trying to link the media with improving the position of women, improving the perception of them and ensuring their rights, it is a wrong and limited extrapolation of the role of women in the Islamic society and the role of the media as a state apparatus. This is a process of reproduction of the Western concept on women supported by the United Nations on women in the media, but in an Islamic and Shar'i way!

This explanation is not correct because Islam has its own style and unique viewpoint of life in which it appreciates the functions of individuals, groups and the state and does not depend on imitating plans and ideas, but rather it is the one that possesses the idea and the method and deserves to be a source and basis because its rules, systems and legislation are Revelation (wahi) from the Creator of man, universe and life. It is not equivalent to what the human mind can conceive and produce, but rather surpasses this finite human mind and transcends it by a just, perfect and divine legislation.

We cannot therefore talk about alternative projects for the United Nations or fall into such media recruitment for women as a simulation of western solutions with a mentality of pivotal symmetry "as the West has, we will have." Rather, Islam has a different vision and different standards; hence its treatments, solutions, and plans will be different because they are based on a different point of view and measures!

The media policy in Islam links media affairs with Shariah rules and its care accordingly, that is, it is Islam that determines the nature of information, cultures, and knowledge that the media transmits to people, and it determines the goals and objectives of its transmission, spreading, withholding and managing, according to the appropriate timings and appropriate media outlets as well. Women in Islam are individuals who live within society, and are governed by the Shariah rules that take care of their affairs, address their problems, and organize their role in a way

that achieves an intellectual, spiritual and material balance.

As for the relationship of the media with women in Islam, it is not an allocation of their sex, but rather a link to media affairs and women's affairs with Shariah rulings. The ideas, concepts, knowledge, and information that the media directs to women do not create from them a unique being. Rather, the media policy comes in the context of the Islamic policy that defines the role of women in society as a human being who has rights and duties before her Deen, her Ummah, and the environment in which she lives. She has some of the special rules that Shariah assigned to her as a female within her innate form that is approved by Islam and guaranteed by systems and rules that are in line with this nature and this particularity.

And the role of the Islamic media towards women is its role towards every member of the Islamic society, by raising awareness, guiding and promoting the Islamic identity, and preventing the spread of any corrupt or ethical thought contrary to Islamic law, as the media will be educational platforms that develop the degree of awareness among people, reveal conspiracies, clarify concepts, and mobilize public opinion towards public awareness of Islam as a belief and a system!

As for women's job opportunities in the media, it is guaranteed to the right of women to work, succeed and benefit their Ummah within the Shariah controls at work everywhere, as it is forbidden to exploit her body and femininity and it is forbidden to prevent her from work permitted by the Shariah law, as well as it is forbidden to violate her role as a mother and wife and exploitation of it for a profit value at the expense of other responsibilities.

As for her presence in the working life, including the media, she will not be a number added to the employee record unnecessarily, as is the case in the texts of the Beijing Declaration. Rather, the presence of Muslim women in the media field will be of value, benefit, and purpose that will materialize by her presence, and she will not be subject to the process of job accumulation without need or a necessity, but rather it is a fitting attendance in its time and place, as is the case in any other work of women. Her presence is to achieve an end that is not complete without her presence and not a waste of her time at the expense of her motherhood and her children! Also, her work will not be a material necessity that pushes her to give up her family and sacrifice her human nature. Her financial right is guaranteed in Islam and the state is accountable to her for providing the basic needs, including the luxuries at the highest possible level. This is the state's responsibility in Islam. This differs from the state's responsibility in Capitalism that adopts the slogan "Whoever does not have a penny is not worthy of living, and "Let him work, let him pass."

The view of women in Islam is a view of a creature whom Allah has adorned with modesty and made her presence in public life dear and worthy of her and her value, not of a "low" status. A poet once said, "O most hated than the low in various locations", meaning that you find her everywhere that you hate her and get bored of her existence, but rather in Islam, the woman is a dear and elevated worshipper in Allah's law with its rulings, which took into account her nature, human nature (fitra) and energy, and this is not a reduction in her ability, but it's a great Shariah assignment, for it is not easy for women to be in charge of great responsibilities such as raising generations that lead nations and open the world! The woman is rewarded for these tasks with the best reward by her Lord, and Islam considers it great and honorable work that emulate the actions of the Mujahideen for the sake of Allah, and not, as the Beijing Declaration considers, as unpaid work, linking all human work to material benefit and no consideration of any spiritual and human value!

And the job opportunities for women in Islam are still available to them in accordance with the Shariah controls related to them and the material and moral support provided to them by the Islamic State and the surrounding psychological safety, protection and appreciation of her effort so that she can give to her Ummah every benefit and she will be rewarded for it with the good of the world and the Hereafter.

This is a review of some of the constitutional articles presented by Hizb ut Tahrir in its Draft Constitution for the Khilafah State, which it presents to the Ummah:

Article 112 - The primary role of women is that she is a mother and responsible over the household and she is an honour that must be protected.

Article 119 - It is prohibited for any man or woman to undertake any work which could undermine the morals, or causes corruption in the society.

Article 115 - It is permitted for a woman to be appointed in civil service and positions in the judiciary apart from the

Court of Injustices. She can elect members of the Ummah's council, and be a member herself, and she can participate in the election of the Head of State and in giving him the pledge of allegiance.

Conclusion:

Empowering Women in the Islamic Shariah perspective

Empowering women from the Shariah perspective comes within the context of empowering the Ummah, as it is not possible to achieve the revival of women without achieving the revival of her Ummah in the first place. Empowering women means empowering them with their Deen, ideology and state that guarantees their rights, empowering them with the wealth of their Ummah, empowering them with knowledge, excellence and creativity, empowering them with pride in their intellectual and cultural affiliation empowering them with victory and a sense of pride. This is the concept of empowerment that Islam brings and it elevates us too, and not empowerment in the understanding of a limited human mind that created a hostile state between women and men and made empowerment to mean empowerment against him and victory in achieving some goals for the benefit of women against men!

Achieving the Ummah's revival depends on the revival of individuals, with the idea adopted by the individual and adopted by the Ummah. If a Muslim woman has revived, then her responsibility towards her Ummah is to revive it through political work by establishing an Islamic state that implements the law of Allah. And if this Ummah revives then woman's empowerment of her rights will be natural, because the state in Islam is the protector of the Muslims, women and men, and cares for their political, economic, and social affairs.

Therefore, it is sufficient for Muslim woman to adhere to her Deen and work on the revival of her Ummah on the basis of Islam and to work to resume an Islamic life by establishing the second Khilafah Rashida state (rightly guided Caliphate) on the method of Prophethood. She is absolutely in no need of international conventions to protect her rights because the revival of the human being is by the correct thoughts from the Most Wise and Powerful, and anything else can go to hell!

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

“Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient” [An-Nur: 55] ■

Women and the Environment: The Impact of the Environmental Crisis Upon Women Cannot be Solved by Addressing Symptoms Rather than the Cause

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Introduction:

In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on the 27th September 2019, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, stated that world leaders did not fully understand the urgency of the climate change problem. He said: “We have a lot of ideas; but as they say, ideas without funding is mere hallucination.” Both the ideas and funding for a solution to the huge environmental challenges that humanity faces today are important. However, if the root cause of the deteriorating environmental conditions globally is not diagnosed correctly, or attention is diverted to unrelated factors such as gender inequalities in sustainable development policies, then any proposed solution will prove to be ineffective in dealing with this pressing issue.

Today, the global community is facing an environmental crisis, of which climate change is just one aspect. The extent of the impact of this problem on different countries varies; however, all regions of the world are affected – impacting people’s health, and causing flooding, crop failure, displacement of communities, and poor quality of life, as well as exacerbating poverty within nations. The situation in Pakistan is severe with the country stated to be the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change according to the 2020 Global Climate Risk Index report, and ranking 169 out of 180 on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) list (Dawn News, 2018 report). Bangladesh is placed at 7th position in the report.

The global community claims that it is desperate to find a solution to this crisis. However, the strategic objectives and actions detailed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) has and will achieve little in addressing this issue, for they cite symptoms of the problem but ignore and side-step the true underlying cause of the emergence and deterioration of the environment crisis. To truly tackle the global environmental emergency impacting the lives of women in states world-wide, we need to not only seek to address the symptoms of the problem but recognise and target the root cause: the Capitalist System.

The Link Between the Environment and Women Made in the Beijing Declaration:

According to scientists, there is an unprecedented “environmental breakdown” affecting the whole world. Climate change, mass deforestation, destruction of ecosystems, extinction of various animal species, soil erosion, pollution, contamination of water supplies with toxic waste, and disposal of tons of plastic, clothing and other wastes are just a few examples of the problems that are affecting people across the world. The BPfA, however, focusses specifically on the link between women and the environment. In its explanation of the BPfA 12 areas of concern, UN Women states: ‘Women are among the most affected by climate change. They are often the ones gathering water, fishing or farming land affected by flooding. Meanwhile, their voices are often ignored in environmental planning and management. They also have less access to land and productive resources.’ The UN emphasized this point through releasing figures that indicated that 80% of people displaced by climate change were women (BBC News, Mar 2018).

Many others have also stated that women are amongst those who are more vulnerable to climate change, especially in developing lands. It is suggested that this, in large part, is due to the fact that the woman is often the caregiver in the developing world. They are tasked with finding water and collecting firewood; however, the supplies are decreasing and so women are forced to exert huge effort and time in finding them. UNICEF has stated that women were spending 200 million hours, every day, collecting water and according to a 2019 Oxfam study, entitled Climate

Induced Migration in Pakistan, women are having to walk an average of 2km to collect water from wells and hand pumps. Sometimes they have to make this trip multiple times a day. This intensifies their workload and exposes them to several risks such as nutritional deficiencies, harassment and abuse.

The BPfA suggested that the disproportionate impact of environmental problems upon women, caused by 'gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment', should be tackled by women having more involvement in environmental decision-making at all levels, including the development of policies and programmes for sustainable development; increasing knowledge amongst women on environmental issues and integrating gender concerns and a gender perspective in all issues related to sustainable development. Article 246 of the BPfA for example reads: "Women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management". The BPfA also called for strengthening or establishing mechanisms at the national, regional, and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women. More specific steps implemented by various states include: increasing women's access to land and other resources through legal reforms, land redistribution programs and institutional reforms, increasing women's participation in the conservation of national resources and biodiversity, mainstreaming gender perspectives in sustainable development policies related to climate change, natural disasters, desertification, water and sanitation and biogas policies and addressing gender equality in programmes on new and renewable energy sources, technologies and water resource management.

Pakistan as an example, in its 20-year BPfA review, reported that the country had done the following to achieve the aims of the declaration: conducted a range of workshops/training sessions to create awareness about vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters, made and spread documentaries, such as "Vulnerable Groups" to also raise awareness, promoted the access of women (when they were "in situations of disaster") to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation, conducted gender audits and research to understand the policy and implementation gaps to women's participation in environmental decision-making and informed the planning/development processes and participated in "Capacity building of government organisations, civil society, non-governmental organisations and media for ensuring gender mainstreaming across all provincial level climate change policies, programs and interventions".

However, despite intensive attention on achieving and implementing the strategic objectives and actions of the BPfA by UN agencies, regional organisations, national governments and non-governmental organisations over the past 25 years, the impact of environmental problems upon women across the world has not improved; rather, it has only worsened.

Root Cause of the Global Environmental Crisis:

Many have blamed the failure to reduce the impact of environmental factors upon women on the lack of accountability of governments to achieve the commitments made in international environment agreements, including the provisions of the BPfA. However, these agreements have all failed to diagnose and treat the root cause of the global environmental crisis. Hence they will continue to prove ineffective in dealing with this issue. This is because the factors which they seek to address and have been blamed for causing environmental harm- such as high fossil fuel usage, mass deforestation, high meat production, harmful agricultural policies, excessive human production and consumption, contamination of water supplies by various industries and factories, and large amounts of plastic, clothing and other waste products – are in reality symptoms of the problem rather than the root cause.

The root cause of the environmental crisis is the 'Capitalist Ideology' which dominates the politics, economics and social life of states today both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. This is an ideology which is materialistic in its basis and benefit-orientated with the belief that success and happiness are achieved through the realization of maximum sensual pleasures and material interests such as wealth, possessions and power. Its secular doctrine dictates that God should be separated from the affairs of life, hence leaving it to the desires and fickle minds of human beings to decide how they should manage the issues of the world, including the environment. It also calls for liberal freedoms to be sanctified and protected within societies, including freedom of ownership and personal freedom, allowing individuals or companies to own and often monopolise the valuable natural resources of the world, and use and abuse them as they see fit. It is this materialistic ideology and system which drives an uncontrolled consumption of goods and services by individuals, fed by a desire to own without any real need. Hence, there is

an excessive purchase and production of products, which are continually replaced by others, often simply because they are viewed as ‘out of fashion’, creating mountains of waste – all of which is fuelling the environmental crisis. Within such capitalist consumer societies, the environmental impact of this superfluous consumption is often not taken into account. Even the BPfA acknowledges that: “the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialised countries.”

Furthermore, under capitalist systems, reaching the highest level of national income and economic growth has been made the criterion of economic success, while the economic problem has been defined as the scarcity of goods and services. Hence states are driven to focus on increased production in order to reach the highest possible level of national income and to increase economic growth without paying any regards to the environment. Major industries and manufacturing companies ruthlessly exploit natural resources, build hugely polluting factories and strive for profits with boundless greed, without any regard for anything other than the material gain. These industries, such as the fossil fuel companies, or large multinational agricultural firms, or aviation, timber and fast-food businesses exert considerable influence on legislation within states, and direct it towards their own financial objectives. All this is done without regard to the dangerous consequences that affect human beings, animals or the environment. The close symbiotic relationship within capitalist democratic states between these industries and political parties and the laws they legislate for political gain is well established.

Hence, under the capitalist system, whose boundaries are defined by material interests, there is little room for morality with regards to economic activity, since it is an ideology that only aims at realizing material values, regardless of the consequences to the planet. The founder of capitalism, Adam Smith, expressed this when he stated that greed is the individual’s moral, and this moral controls the economy. According to the capitalistic belief, priorities of profit size and maximization exceed protecting the environment and human wellbeing. We see for example how the UK government recently approved its High Speed 2 rail project for what it stated were the huge economic benefits, disregarding the numerous warnings from environmentalists that it risks destroying vast swathes of ancient woodland as well as lakes, meadows and other important habitats.

Further to this, capitalist companies will also refuse to support environmental policies if they view the financial cost as too high a price to pay. Hence, environmental decisions will always be weighed against financial benefits or loss rather than the morality of protecting the planet and human life, with preserving the environment being a secondary distant thought compared to securing profits. The effects of such a corrosive philosophy can only ever bring destruction for humankind and the environment and only holds the promise of future tsunamis of disasters. Additionally, it is the capitalist system that bears primary responsibility for the severe poverty that plagues states today, which has also been identified as an important contributing factor to environmental degradation.

Undoubtedly, women have an important and shared responsibility with men to protect their environment, manage resources in a way which is in harmony with nature and ensure sustained development. However, when attention is focused on addressing gender disparities in the impact of environmental problems upon communities, or gender inequality in environmental decision-making or sustainable development policies, and attributing these issues as causal factors or solutions to environmental problems, not only will these efforts fail to achieve any significant change in environmental issues for women internationally, but they also distract from appreciating and tackling the root cause of this crisis: the capitalist ideology. It is this, rather than gender inequalities which is responsible for the terrible impact that deteriorating environmental conditions are having on the women of the world today. The focus, therefore, should surely not be on addressing the symptom of the disproportionate affect that climate change is having on women and men, nor even on just prescribing limits on CO2 production, deforestation or plastic use in states. Rather, it should be on addressing a real cure to this entire crisis: looking for an alternative ideology to capitalism. For what is for sure is that an effective solution to this environmental emergency will never be provided under the direction and governance of the capitalist system, which is the primary perpetrator of this crime, nor from the BPfA which is its child. Allah (swt) says,

﴿ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”
[Ar-Rum: 41]

The Islamic Approach to Protecting and Preserving the Environment:

1) The Islamic View of Life, Guards Against Materialism:

Islam is based upon the belief that man, life and the universe are created by a Creator, Allah (swt), Who alone knows best how to organise the affairs of humanity, including protecting and preserving the environment to achieve that which is beneficial for mankind and not harmful. The role of the human being is to fulfil His (swt)'s commands and live by His comprehensive system of regulations and rules, which will realize that which is best for humanity and the planet rather than follow the dictates of the human desires, fickle interests or flawed mind. Furthermore, Islam states that the Creator placed the world and all it contains as a trust (Amana) in the hands of humankind, which it is obliged to look after, protect and care for rather than exploit, harm and destroy. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.” They said, “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?” Allah said, “Indeed, I know that which you do not know.” [Al-Baqarah: 30]

Islam also defines the purpose of life as worshipping Allah (swt) rather than seeking sensual pleasures or acquiring wealth, possessions or power. Its view of success and happiness is achieving the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and securing the rewards of the Hereafter rather than securing the material gain of this world. Islam, of course, permits individuals to obtain wealth and luxuries but does not define the value nor status of the human being upon this basis but rather upon his or her righteous character and actions. All this helps to guard against the development of materialistic mindsets within individuals and communities, preventing the creation of consumer societies, which as discussed, leads to high consumption and production within states which harms the environment. It also helps prevent the nurturing of mentalities which view the pursuit of profit, government revenues or any other material interests as a greater priority than safeguarding the environment and people's lives. Furthermore, the criteria for action in Islam is not benefit-orientated; rather, it is based upon the Commands and Prohibitions of Allah (swt) that both the individual Muslim and the Khilafah state are obliged to adhere to, regardless of the material loss. This is another factor which protects against actions which could harm the environment. Allah (swt) says,

﴿ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيحَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“Then we made for you a Shariah, so follow it, and do not follow the low desires of those who do not know.” [Al-Jathiya: 18]

2) Islam Organises the Seeking of Different Values in Society in a Balanced Manner:

In contrast to capitalism and socialism, the Islamic doctrine takes into consideration the spiritual, humanitarian, moral and material values when organising society. It ensures that all these values are organised in a concordant manner that realizes all four values to achieve harmony in a society. Hence, the material value is not prioritized over the other values, and no value is ignored in favour of another; rather, they are all coordinated. The decisions for the society are carried out on the basis of the coordination between all four values rather than on the basis of material prosperity alone. Therefore, within a true Islamic society, ruled by the Islamic System, the Khilafah, material progress and growth are not viewed as the only or even primary criterion of progress and success. Nor can they be gained at the expense of the world's people, or at the expense of nature. Rather, economic activities must conform to the Islamic Shariah and to the moral, humanitarian and spiritual values defined by Islam, preventing economic actions from becoming a mere material activity that doesn't pay regard to anything but profit. This helps to eliminate the type of human behaviour which leads to environmental imbalance. Furthermore, Islam defines a successful society as one where all these values are existent in a balanced and harmonious manner which is in accordance to the Islamic Shariah. The balance of these four values will never be achieved if legislation is left to the human being, whether male or female, for the human being not only lacks the intellectual ability to achieve this aim, but is also influenced by his or her interests or inclinations whilst legislating. This is evident by the countless problems afflicting states the world over – the result of flawed laws and policies that have originated from the whims and desires as well as limited minds of men and women alike.

3) Islam's Economic System Helps Preserve the Environment:

Islam does not forbid the human being to enjoy Allah (swt)'s Blessings, such as gain wealth and possessions. On the

contrary, Islam views work as necessary for the progress and fulfilment of the needs of human life. It also encourages individuals to seek and enjoy the Bounties of Allah (swt). He (swt) says,

﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
كَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He has produced for his servants, and the things clean and pure (which He has provided) for sustenance? Say: These are for the believers in the life of this world, (and) purely (theirs) on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who understand.” [Al-A’raf: 32]

He (swt) also says,

﴿فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed.” [Al-Jumu’a: 10].

However, Islam does not accept that some people overconsume while others are unable to satisfy their basic needs nor that the Bounties of Allah (swt) are sought in a manner which wrecks the planet. Hence, Islam regards the economic problem as one of ensuring the correct distribution of wealth rather than due to the scarcity of goods and services. Allah (swt) states:

﴿مَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةَ بَيْنِ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ﴾

“Whatever (spoils) Allah has conceded His Messenger from the population of the towns, then it is for Allah and for the Messenger, and for the near kinsman, and the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it become not a commodity between the rich among you.” [Al-Hashr: 7] Therefore, Islam’s concern is not dedicated to the increase of production; rather, it is dedicated to the eradication of poverty, and to ensure the balance in looking after the interests and needs of the community and the individual. Article 124 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of the Khilafah states: “The fundamental economic problem is how to distribute funds and benefits/ services to all subjects of the State.”

Islam also forbids squandering, wastefulness and extravagance, for Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾

“And eat and drink and be not excessive (extravagant). Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.” [Al-Araf: 31]. And He (swt) also says:

﴿وَلَا تُبَدِّرْ تَبْدِيرًا * إِنَّ الْمُبَدِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ﴾

“And do not spend wastefully; indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils.” [Al-Isra: 26-27]. Article 132 of Hizb ut Tahrir’s Draft Constitution of the Khilafah reads: “The disposal of property is restricted by the permission of the Legislator (swt), for both spending and investment. Squandering, extravagance and miserliness are all forbidden.” Additionally, economic success in Islam is not defined by national income or growth, or superficial GDP figures which have little relation to the economic life and hardships suffered by ordinary citizens within a state. Rather, it is based upon the effective distribution of wealth such that the basic needs of all citizens are met first, while also providing people the opportunity to improve their standard of living and acquire luxuries.

Furthermore, Islam does not believe that prosperity is created simply through increased production, but rather through this effective distribution of wealth to ensure that ordinary individuals have more capital to spend or invest, as well as through other Islamic economic policies and laws. This includes the implementation of Islam’s low taxation system that taxes excess wealth in times of necessity, the management of natural resources in a manner which is in the public interest, protection against corporate monopolies, the stabilisation of money supply and prices through use of the gold standard as state currency and sound agricultural policies which ensure sustainable development within the state. In addition, Islam rejects the capitalist principle of freedom of ownership. Rather, it has detailed laws on what can and cannot be owned by individuals. This includes prohibiting the privatisation of natural resources such as oil, gas, coal and water, which come under state supervision. This enables the state to manage these vital assets in a way which is both beneficial for the people as well as safe for the environment rather than leaving them in the hands of unscrupulous private companies to exploit them as and how they wish regardless of the consequences upon people and the planet.

Hence, Islam offers humankind an economic system that can eradicate poverty and deliver real economic progress, stability and development, without being at the expense of the environment. It does not believe there needs to be a trade-off, or that a contradiction exists between economic development and environmental preservation.

4) Islam's Progressive View on the Protection of the Environment and Protection from Harm:

As a comprehensive system that has detailed principles and laws related to all areas of life, Islam also has a specific view and regulations regarding the environment and its protection. Firstly, it creates a true appreciation, value and respect for nature, for it is part of the creation of Allah (swt), and hence it should be treated with care and protected from harm. Islam views the human being's relationship with nature as mutually complementary, because Allah (swt) put the world in man's service to use and cultivate. Preventing harm to the lands, oceans and planet caused by over-consumption, excess waste or other detrimental actions and practices is a necessity for the continuing beneficial cultivation of the earth and use of its resources by humankind. Islam clarified that there is a balance and a purposeful and exact measure for all things on the earth. Allah (swt) said:

﴿وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ﴾

"And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance." [Al-Hijr: 19] These and similar verses in the Qur'an illustrate the Islamic view on nature and the environment. They indicate the necessity to preserve the environment and avoid actions or lifestyles that may harm this delicate balance. Such texts create personalities who seek personal interests within a framework that strives to preserve nature and the wellbeing of the planet.

There are many Islamic texts which provide more specific detail regarding the relationship the human being should have with nature and the environment. For example, with regards to avoiding wastage of water, in one hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Amru bin Al-Ás (ra), he said:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ بِسَعْدٍ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَقَالَ: مَا هَذَا السَّرْفُ يَا سَعْدُ؟ قَالَ: أَيْ الْوُضُوءِ سَرَفٌ؟ قَالَ: «نَعَمْ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ عَلَى نَهْرٍ جَارٍ»

"That the Messenger of Allah (saw) happened to pass by Sa'd as he was performing ablution. Whereupon he said: 'Sa'd what is this squandering?' Sa'd said: Can there be any idea of squandering (israf) in ablution? Whereupon he (saw) said: 'Yes, even if you are by the side of a flowing river.'" (Reported by Ibn Majah). With regards to the cultivation and protection of land, the Prophet (saw) said:

«مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ طَيْرٌ أَوْ بَيْهيمَةٌ إِلَّا كَانَتْ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ»

"There is no Muslim who plants a tree or grows crops, and a bird, a human or an animal eats from it, except that it will be counted as a charity for him." (Reported by Bukhari). He (saw) also said when advising his companions regarding the rules of Jihad:

«سِيرُوا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَبِاللَّهِ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ... وَلَا تَقْطَعُوا شَجَرًا إِلَّا أَنْ تَضْطَرُّوا إِلَيْهَا»

"Go forth in the name of Allah... and do not cut down any tree, except the trees which prevent you from fighting or constitute a barrier between you and the Polytheists" (Reported by Bayhaqi). With regards to the protection of animals, the Prophet (saw) said:

«مَنْ قَتَلَ عُصْفُورًا فَمَا فَوْقَهَا بَغَيْرِ حَقِّهَا سَأَلَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَنْهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ» قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَمَا حَقُّهَا قَالَ «حَقُّهَا أَنْ تَذْبَحَهَا فَتَأْكُلَهَا وَلَا تَقْطَعُ رَأْسَهَا فَيَرْمَى بِهِ»

"Whoever kills a sparrow or anything bigger than that without a just cause, Allah will hold him accountable on the Day of Judgment." The listeners asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is a just cause?" He (saw) replied, "That he will kill it to eat, not simply to chop off its head and then throw it away." (Reported by an-Nasai). Hence, Islam obliges that animals be treated with kindness and mercy, prohibiting any form of cruelty. For example, it prohibits the overloading of animals with goods which may harm them, prioritizing animal welfare over economic gain.

The Prophet (saw) also said:

«لا ضرر ولا ضرار»

"No harm and no harming." (Reported by Daraqutni). Hence, dealing with the environment should be done in a way that is not harmful or leads to harm, for example, during the process of manufacturing, economic development or extraction of natural resources, avoiding contaminating water, air and soil, with toxic chemicals or causing

destruction of the soil, or harming animals, sea life, meadows and forests.

5) The Khilafah's Role in Safeguarding the Environment:

The Khilafah is the political system of Islam, built purely upon the Islamic Aqeeda and provisions. Therefore, it embodies all the Islamic beliefs, principles and laws mentioned above, and organises the society upon this basis, implementing and enforcing all the Islamic rules and regulations which protect the environment. This includes issuing penalties for any violation of the law. Furthermore, its education system and media policy are geared towards nurturing and promoting the Islamic values to its citizens, including breaking materialistic mindsets and building a deep respect for nature and preservation of the environment based upon Taqwa (God-consciousness). Since the Khilafah is the System of the Creator (swt), it addresses all the needs of humanity and all of his creation rather than just economic growth and material gain. Additionally, legislation cannot be influenced by big business or any political or economic interests, for the laws within the state are purely from Allah (swt), and the ruler is accounted and even removed from power if he deviates from the implementation of the Shariah. In addition, the Khilafah will not allow foreign companies or powers to interfere in internal matters, including harming the environment in any way. Rather, the state, as a world power, would use its huge international standing to influence global norms with regards to protecting and preserving the environment.

Furthermore, the Khalifah, is obliged to be the guardian of his people and all he governs, for the Prophet (saw) said:

«الإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

“*The Imam is a guardian and he is responsible for his subjects*” (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim). Therefore, he must protect his citizens and his lands from any harm. This includes ensuring that industrialization, manufacturing, mining for resources or any other economic activity within the state occurs in line with environmental considerations. So, for example, the Khilafah would prohibit the construction of factories in residential areas which could harm the local residents. It would also forbid factories and businesses to dispose of their harmful waste products into rivers and oceans that could lead to poisoning wildlife or people.

Islam also obligates Muslims to account individuals and the state if there is negligence or violation of any of its laws, including those related to safeguarding the environment. The Khilafah embodies various institutions, including the judiciary, to deal effectively with such violations. The Qadi al-Hisbah (Supervisory Judge) for example, whose role is to settle violations of the community's rights, will overlook the actions of businesses to ensure they conform to the Shariah, including performing inspections for any environmental damages they cause. The Qadi al-Khusamat (Judge of Disputes) would deal with complaints brought by individuals, whether workers, residents or others, against those who cause environmental pollution which harms their lives, ensuring that the damage be cleared and that compensation be paid by the perpetrators to those affected. And the Qadi al-Madhalim (Judge of Unjust Acts) would resolve conflicts that arise between the ruler and people with regards to any environmental injustices the ruler commits, such as harm caused by state-factories. The judge would oblige the ruler to implement the Shariah laws related to the environment if there is any negligence in this matter.

Conclusion:

In an article by the UK Guardian in November 2019 by its environment editor, it states: “The planet Earth is facing a climate emergency. To secure a sustainable future, we must change how we live. [This] entails major transformations in the ways our global society functions and interacts with natural ecosystems.” Such major transformations to protect our precious environments cannot materialise through superficial gender equality initiatives, nor by addressing the symptoms of the problem. There needs to be a radical and fundamental global change, which will never be realized while the capitalist system continues to dominate world politics. Rather, it requires the establishment of a state built upon an ideology that genuinely cares about the environment and that embodies the values, laws and institutions to practically protect it. This state is the Khilafah, whose ideology Islam alone holds the solution to the grave environmental problems that women and the whole of humanity faces today.

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“*And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.*” [Al-Anbiya: 107] ■

The Female Child in the Beijing Declaration: Between Honouring and Selling Delusion

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THE BLESSED LAND – PALESTINE



(Translated)

“I was not there to enjoy my childhood ... I split into two halves and left behind a part of me in secrecy and disgrace ... It has taken me more than half a lifetime to piece myself back together. I was 52 years old and still captivated by the Catholic Church when I let the buried “secret” memories emerge.” This is what former nun Mary Dispenza, an advocate for those abused by priests, and representative of Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP) in Washington, wrote in a book titled *Split: A Child, a Priest, and the Catholic Church*.

Catholic priests are not the only perpetrators of the sexual abuse of children in the West – of both sexes. It is a crime which is unfortunately rampant within these states and beyond and committed by those of all backgrounds and professions without distinction – from celebrities to politicians, high profile businessmen to sports personalities, children’s TV presenters to workers in children’s care homes, teachers and even nursery workers.

This miserable reality of women and girls in the West confirms the existence of a crisis related to the situation of girls and their general situation. But the strange thing is that the United Nations, in light of this disgraceful reality against Western girls, does not focus upon these violations against girls in Britain, America and France, but is deeply concerned about the discrimination practiced against the girls of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Palestine and Pakistan, represented by early marriage! The proverb known to us in Palestine applies on them: “She left her husband outstretched and went to give condolence for Mahmoud” (meaning she left her deceased husband’s mourning and went to mourn a stranger).

This discrimination, rather the marginalization of women and the lowering of her status experienced by females in the West for a long period of time - which they are still suffering from - requires real efforts from Western governments and international organizations to end it. The history of females is shameful and a disgrace and it is inconsistent with the “advancement” and the calls for liberal freedoms advocated by the West!

UNESCO, UNICEF, global health and human rights organizations provide periodic statistics on the situation of children in relation to their access to education and health rights, the numbers of refugees and displaced persons and those who were born, those who died and those who were killed. The United Nations in all its bodies is productive in the field of statistics. Since 1995, i.e. 25 years after the Beijing Declaration, reviews and solutions to end discrimination against female girls in these areas have continued. More male children receive education and health care than girls. Males are usually preferred and selected as newborns before pregnancy (gender selection). Therefore, the United Nations has spared no effort to prevent discrimination against girls: which they view as the root cause of the suffering of girls around the world.

The policies of the United Nations are based on the idea of gender equality, as an anti-discrimination idea against girls. The more opportunities for girls to reach equality with men, the better the situation is, according to Melanne Verveer, first ever US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues at the Department of State. When asked about the importance of working on equality issues, she replied: “There is recognition today that we cannot possibly solve our global challenges, whether they concern the environment, governance, economic policy or security, unless women are full participants.”

The idea of equality is promoted and spread across the various United Nations organizations in many ways

including forcing governments and regimes to sign binding international agreements, like on CEDAW, in exchange for international loans and grants. And it spread the concepts emanating from the Western point of view through the media, local civil and human rights organizations that receive support from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other organizations and countries of the West. The document calls for giving broad powers to local organizations, including women's organizations, other governmental organizations, and lesbian organizations. These organizations are watchdogs on governments to monitor and pressure them to implement international agreements. An example of this is the program launched by the The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Asia Pacific, the workshops held by the National Council in Sudan in 2013 regarding child marriage, and workshops held by women's associations in their different headquarters on harassment, and seminars carried out in schools and universities on early marriage under the extracurricular activities' article, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education in Palestine. Certain personalities are polished and highlighted as role models for girls and women through which ideas of emancipation of women and empowerment of girls and women are passed, such as the Pakistani student Malala Yusufzai for whom Pakistan, in cooperation with UNESCO, established the Malala Fund to support girls' education.

The Beijing Agreement states that this program or plan is an integral part of the broader programming process that UN organizations with all their bodies and organizations will implement in the period between 1995 and 2000 (clause 305) and the work period has been extended to 2015 and then to 2030. Within the programming process that the United Nations aims to implement, work on legislating laws related to freedom of belief, thought, and religion for women in particular is carried out "in order to empower them to unleash their full potential in society by drawing their own lives" [Article 12]. The document also strives to "take all steps to ensure that religions and traditions are not taken as the basis for discrimination against girls." Perhaps the celebration of the United Nations and its representatives of the Saudi girl, Rahaf Al-Qunun, who apostatized from Islam, is a practical outcome of the implementation of the freedom of religion clauses included in the agreement, and part of the programming process that targets the Muslim society!

The results of these policies were clearly visible in the Islamic countries that signed the Beijing Agreement. We have seen shockwaves in our schools, universities and streets; we have seen schools sponsoring corrupt activities such as teaching dance and mixed dabkeh, teaching singing, performing arts, marathons and the uncovering of nakedness (Awrah) and mixing, and dance and singing festivals in the presence and with the blessing of officials, ministers, directors and mayors. Under the slogan "A festival for Al-Aqsa" or an "open day for peace", men and those unprotective of women's honour come to see girls dancing, swaying and showing their charms before them without shame or embracement. In Tunisia, work is being done to include sex education subjects for children on the pretext of combating the phenomenon of harassment, while at the same time the state is not shy about the intended harassment of children in the schools which teach the Qur'an, as they were dragged to prisons and examined anally as criminals in a clear provocation to the feelings of Muslims.

The Beijing Declaration, which makes the Rights of the Child and CEDAW Agreements its reference, considers that "harmful" trends and practices such as female circumcision, preference for boys and female infanticide, early marriage, violence against women and discrimination against girls are the real problems experienced by girls around the world, and requires the existence of strict policies to change them, including working to change the laws and legislations that regulate social and economic life, and the concepts that shape the society's view of women and the female child so that they conform to the concepts decided by the Beijing Declaration, and which emanate from the Western view of women and society in general that focuses on gender equality.

As for the severe suffering that poses a threat to the life and security of girls around the world, such as starvation as happens with the girls of Somalia and Hodeidah, or under the bombing of planes and barrel bombs as experienced by the girls of Idlib, Aleppo and Fallujah who were martyred, or the killing by the mafia gangs that children in Europe, America and Russia are subjected to, on a daily basis, a threat called by the American Psychiatric Association as, "the epidemic of violence", and the danger of falling into the hands of human trafficking gangs or global prostitution networks – is all this not dangerous but rather marginal and does not constitute discrimination against girls?!; does it not require any legal campaigns or financial funding, or media support! The West sees Arwa, who married before the age of eighteen, as a vulnerable victim, and the United Nations makes her a heroine in their brochures. But the

West is blinded to the sixteen-year-old Salha, who was beaten by Indian forces after the siege of Kashmir, and stayed in hospital for weeks before recovering. [trt world, November 2019]!!

Equality is the magic solution, which will eliminate the marginalization of girls in the fields of education, health and others. This is what the United Nations claims.

Mary Dispenza, who was raped at the age of seven by a priest, says that the church hides the facts and refuses to hand over criminals. Rather, there are aggressors who have been promoted and protected by priests and monks. She adds: "There are still many children suffering as a result of the confidentiality system in the church and its authority to protect its members and erase any evidence." After seventy years of assaults, there are still victims suffering from the Church, and it seems that Beijing +25 will leave more victims suffering throughout the world, both male and female children alike.

The idea of equality in itself, as well as its impossibility, is in fact an insult to females more than being just to them. I do not say this as a result of the dictates of policies that contradict the Deen, nor because it imposes the secular viewpoint and makes it the standard to which matters are measured by, but rather, as an idea in itself; it degrades females' status. To eliminate differences between them and the males means that it is unacceptable to have human beings different to men, and it implies that men are in a higher position so that justice for females is by being fully equal to men, an equality that eliminates the difference that distinguishes them!

After 25 years from Beijing, Rasha, 16 years old, from Al Qamishli in Syria who arrived in Izmir in August 2013, is still unable to receive her basic education because she lacks a residence permit. The same applies to about 485 thousand girls. The son of Basma, a Bidoon woman, died in Kuwait without having a birth or death certificate. Umm Walid, a widow, suffers from the absence of documents proving her relationship with her late husband. Unfortunately, they are treated like those who have had an illegal relationship. Indeed, fornicators, may Allah protect us, and female fornicators have the right to register their newborns in the name of the family they want, but under oppressive regimes, Muslims in Muslim countries are not recognized!

In Yemen, for example, the United Nations initiative cooperated with the Ministry of Education and the private sector to launch an awareness campaign targeting parents. It aims to increase girls' enrollment in schools through billboards, posters and promotional messages in urban and rural areas, while the main reason for the lack of education for girls is not addressed, which is extreme poverty and war. And meanwhile millions are spent on military armament, and supporting feminist organizations, 70% of the assets of the amounts allocated to these organizations and centers go to administrative expenses (offices, cars, furniture, hospitality, travel tickets, refreshments, wages of foreign experts, high salaries for senior officials in these institutions); the United Nations cannot spend its money to end poverty and hunger in Yemen.

Equality, that magical drug that they fooled the daughters of Eve that whoever drinks it will live in eternal happiness and will be happy and honored, is only an illusion that numbs the minds and distracts the mind from the real cause of what girls endure in this world. It is the economic crisis that resulted from the capitalist system which contributed to the spread of poverty and the expansion of unemployment circles, which in turn led to the deprivation of many girls of education as a result of the failure of parents to pay exorbitant education fees, which in turn increased significantly due to capitalist ideas and the reverence of material value, and the corruption of those in charge of education.

But the irony is that the United Nations girls' education initiatives are part of the broader programming process, and they are presented not as a right for girls attained for their humanity, and everyone's right to have basic education, but rather they provide education as a means to provide job opportunities for women, as an alternative to marriage, according to what was stated in the book, *Soft Invasion, Studies on the Impact of Globalization on Women, Family, and Society*, by Dr. Noha Muhammad Katerji (published in Arabic).

The goal is not, therefore, the education of girls nor the honouring of women. Otherwise, what is the relationship of girls' education and encouragement to work following it, with the articles of the Declaration relating to the provision of contraceptive pills for adolescent girls, and workshops on sexual culture? Why focus on the risk of early marriage and enact laws to raise it (the age), and link it to the age of the end of childhood, that they set at eighteen, while the agreement guaranteed the right to establish relationships outside marriage? [The International Conference on Population and Development recognizes, in paragraph 37 of the Program of Action, that "full attention should be

paid to promoting gender relations of mutual respect and equity, with particular attention to meeting the educational and service needs of adolescents so that they can address the sexual aspects of their lives in a positive and responsible manner"]!!!

In Central Africa, girls suffer from lack of education, and face hunger and death in the hands of the Christian criminal gangs. On the other hand, the United Nations delegate is not content with observing, but its soldiers are involved in the rape of young girls and snatching away their honour. What type of equality and freedoms does Beijing speak about if the protector is in fact the burglar?! What are Beijing's people talking about, while in Beijing, Muslim women from Uighurs are arrested and their honour is taken away daily by the Chinese soldiers, and their children are taken from them and thrown into rehabilitation camps. How dare they discuss the issues of women and girls while Muslim girls in East Turkestan suffer from rape and family deprivation, only because of their belief?

This global hypocrisy is reflected in the mentality of the people of the "Beijing Declaration" who support and honour tyrants. Those who advocate for the rights of girls are those who honour the killers of girls. In the report published by the US Department of State in 2012, entitled "Global Women Issues, Women in the World Today", Hillary Clinton talked about women's rights and equality and the need to work on them. In this same report, a picture of Hillary Clinton was added with the President of Burma, during the time when Muslim girls were raped and displaced from their homes in the country. Underneath it was written: "US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon, Burma. In 2010, Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and spent about 20 years in house arrest. She was released in 2010, and she participated with the ruling military council in bringing reforms."

The rates of violence, child killing and rape of girls are increasing in India, the United States, Russia and Europe, and it was reported by the media summary report for the training guide for Arab media professionals to protect children from violence / childhood media unit, and UNICEF reports which are almost non-existent in Muslim countries. The epidemic of violence against children did not appear in Muslim countries except recently with the Western invasion. The poverty, hunger and death suffered by the Muslim girls in wars and famines, the attack on their honour, dropout from schools and other problems are due to the capitalist system that made human care on the margins, and made the national and patriotic ties and utilitarian material values overcome the concepts of care that Islam brought as a mercy to the worlds and was guaranteed by the Khilafah State (Caliphate state) by the complete practical implementation of all these Islamic rulings. Allah (swt) made childhood before adulthood not linked to a specific age, but the age of discretion was related to the same person in terms of physical and intellectual maturity. And He (swt) obligated both the male and the female certain obligations and imposed for each violation specific punishments, and did not consider the difference or equality (between the genders) and did not make it a source of legislation. Also, He (swt) guaranteed the girls the right to life while they were fetuses in the wombs of their mothers.

﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ حَسِيَةً إِمْلَاقٍ مِّمَّنْ نَّرَزْنَاهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا﴾

"And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin." [Al-Israa': 31] Al-Tabari said by saying "for fear of Imlaq", it means fear of affliction and poverty. In fact, He, the Most of Praised, said this to the Arabs because they were killing the females of their offspring out of fear of poverty for own their lives due to spending on them." A girl in Islam is not an economic burden nor is she a cause of shame and a sense of humiliation, but rather "the apple of the heart and the comfort of the eye," as Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan said.

Islam prohibited abortion, just as it prohibited the selection of the gender of the newborn. In the answer to a question issued by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, eminent scholar Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah, concerning the choice of the gender of the fetus before pregnancy, it was stated:

"B- As for killing the fetus while it is in its mother's stomach when its parents find out that it is unwanted, as if it is a female and its parents want a male, likewise this is Haram, and it has a punishment ... Bukhari and Muslim have narrated, by the way of Abu Huraira, and in the words of Bukhari,

«اقتتلَّت امرأتانِ مِنْ هُذَيْلٍ فَرَمَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا الأُخْرَى بِحَجَرٍ فَقَتَلَتْهَا وَمَا فِي بَطْنِهَا فَاخْتَصَمُوا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَضَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ دِيَةَ جَنِينِهَا عُرَّةٌ عَبْدٌ أَوْ وَلِيدَةٌ...»

"Two women of from Hudhayl tribe quarreled and one of them threw a stone at the other and killed her and her unborn

fetus. They disputed before the Messenger (saw) and he decided that the Diah should be to free a male or female slave...”

C- As for the separation of the male part from the female part of the sperm and then the fertilization of the egg in the male part if they wanted a male baby, and in the female part if they wanted a female baby, or separating the male fetuses from the female ones, and the desired fetus is implanted in the womb, these operations are not permissible because it is not medication. And it is not a treatment for a woman’s unavoidable pregnancy in the natural way; that is, these operations are not the medicine for non-pregnancy, and as it is only carried out by uncovering the private parts, because the process of taking eggs and replanting them requires that, and uncovering the private part is forbidden, and this is forbidden except in the case of treatment, and as long as these operations are not as a medicine or for treatment, then they are prohibited and not allowed.” END. [Ameer of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s website]

Islam has accompanied the girl since her birth till death with rulings that obligate her care, protection and honour, for the Messenger of Allah (saw) says:

«مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ ثَلَاثُ بَنَاتٍ فَصَبَرَ عَلَيْهِنَّ وَأَطْعَمَهُنَّ وَسَقَاهُنَّ وَكَسَاهُنَّ مِنْ جَدَّتِهِ كُنَّ لَهُ حِجَابًا مِنَ النَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

“Whoever has three daughters and is patient towards them, and feeds them, gives them to drink, and clothes them from his wealth; they will be a shield for him from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection.” [Musnad Imam Ahmad]

Rather, Islam made for her a salary imposed by Baytul-Mal from her birth, and guaranteed her the right to be cared for. So it made it an obligation upon the state to ensure that she does not suffer from starvation or lack the basic need of clothing, as the rulers are the shepherds of the people. Ayesha (ra) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say in this house of mine:

«اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَشَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاشْقُقْ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَرَفَّقَ بِهِمْ فَارْفُقْ بِهِ»

“O Allah, who (happens to) acquire some kind of control over the affairs of my people and is hard upon them-be Thou be hard upon him, and who (happens to) acquire some kind of control over the affairs of my people and is kind to them-be Thou be kind to him.” [Narrated by Muslim] Omar (may Allah be pleased with him) was obliging an amount to be given to the children who are already weaned, and when he heard a child crying because his mother wanted to wean him before his time he said: “Omar is in misery, how many children of the Muslims has he killed”. Then he announced that a certain amount of money is imposed for every child in Islam, and there is no need to hurry with weaning the child. Thus, in Islam, with its economic legislation, the girl has the right to a decent life in which she has all the basic requirements. And the Khalifah (caliph) during that time was saying: “You have the right not to be thrown into ruins by me, and I must be the father of your children if you are absent in the missions, wars and battles until you return to me again.” [From Umar ibn al-Khattab’s sermon when he assumed the caliphate, narrated by Ibn Saad in the classes.] Also, he (saw) said:

«أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ هَكَذَا، وَأَشَارَ بِالسَّبَابَةِ وَالْوُسْطَى وَفَرَجَ بَيْنَهُمَا شَيْئًا»

“I and the one who looks after an orphan will be like this in Paradise,” showing his middle and index fingers and separating them partially”. [Documented by Al-Bukhari, Al-Tirmithi, Abu Dawud and Ahmad] Islam also prohibited hitting the children before ten years of age as in the hadeeth narrated by Abi Dawud, the Prophet (saw) said:

«مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ وَاصْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ عَشْرِ»

“Command your children to pray when they become seven years old, and hit them for it (prayer) when they become ten years old”. Hence, from the hadith it is understood that hitting should not take place until the age of ten and after. Al-Bukhara and Muslim narrated in their Sahih that Anas ibn Malik reported: I served the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, for ten years. By Allah, he never even said to me, “Uff!” He never spoke harshly for anything, “Why did you do that?” or, “Why did you not do that?” (authenticity agreed upon).

Thus, the Shariah rulings guarantee the full care for children, girls and women, without the slightest discrimination. Rather, the girl was the focus of attention and honour from her family, society and state, the state of the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate). She is educated like boys. This is evident from the specific rulings of the obligation of education, which were derived from general rulings that did not allocate a specific gender to receive education.

Allah (swt) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ﴾

“O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over

which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.” [Al-Tahreem:6]. This verse is the basis of teaching and raising the members of the household, and enjoining the good and forbidding what is evil, and if the Messenger (saw) had urged the teaching of imaa’ (female slaves), who are slaves, then what about the free girls?? The Messenger of Allah also allocated a day for women, where he taught them the rulings of Islam. Al-Bukhari, may Allah Almighty have mercy on him, in his Sahih: “The chapter of a man educating his slave girl and his family” gave this hadith of the Messenger (saw):

«ثَلَاثَةٌ لَهُمْ أَجْرَانِ... وَرَجُلٌ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ أَمَةٌ فَأَدَّبَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبَهَا وَعَلَّمَهَا فَأَحْسَنَ تَعْلِيمَهَا ثُمَّ أَعْتَقَهَا فَتَزَوَّجَهَا فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ»

“Three have a double reward...And (the third is) a man who has a slave girl, and teaches her well and instructs her well and then sets her free and marries her. He has two rewards.” Al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him, said: in the Chapter - Is it permissible for women to make a single day in learning? “Some women requested the Prophet to fix a day for them as the men were taking all his time. On that he promised them one day for religious lessons and commandments. Ibn Hajar said: It took place in the narration of Sahl bin Abi Saleh on the authority of his father, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, about this story: “Your appointment is at so and so house, so he came to them and spoke to them” Faith’ Al-Bari [195/1]”

Islam also took care of the protection of girls, prohibiting all attacks against them, and has placed strict punishments in this regard. It also came with Shariah rulings related to purity, the sanctity of the body, its cover and honour. Any aggression against it is prohibited in any way. Neither in the time of the Messenger of Allah nor the Khalifahs (caliphs) time after him; it was heard of any assault on young girls let alone women. This was when everyone, the righteous and immoral, knew the woman and girl’s status and the prohibition of attacking them. In fact, the Khilafah state (caliphate) protected and preserved them to the degree which reflected the saying, “The honour is the honour of the Sultan,” an example that is always given, as the Muslim sultan protected the honour of Muslims and all the dhimmis (non-Muslims living under the Khilafah). The space is limited here while we are dealing with the aspects that the Shari’a has offered for women and girls in terms of care, protection and honour. For above all, she has the free-will to her possessions and employment, to marry whoever she wants, and she is not forced to accept a man she does not want and can ask for Khul’a i.e. end of marriage contract if she was forced in the first place. Also she has the right to divorce if it is proven that she has been harmed by her marriage.

However, the daughters of Muslims today do not have anyone to cry for them, nor a father caring for them in the absence of their fathers placed in the prisons of the oppressors and the cellars of the unbelievers. And the poor and ill Muslims do not have a Khalifah over them, who would feed them, carry them flour and set a fire for them. And the honour of Muslims does not have a protector, but this will not be for long, for this will change when Allah grants us with a just Imam. We entrust Allah our honour, our daughters, and our people everywhere, that they would not be touched by the evil of the demons of humankind and jinn ■

Conclusion



The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) offered women many promises of lifting them from oppression and building for them more prosperous, just, safer and happier lives through strengthening the implementation of 'Gender Equality' globally. It also pledged to bring progress and development for nations. However, a quarter of a century on, those promises have failed to materialize for the vast majority of women and states across the world. Rather their problems have persisted, or in many cases, worsened. Furthermore, even gender advocates acknowledge that the UN agenda of achieving gender equality within states, east or west, by 2030, is an unachievable goal, despite intense agendas to promote the ideal internationally. According to the SDG Gender Index published in June 2019, which measures efforts to end gender inequality, not one single country is set to achieve gender equality by 2030, even the Nordic states which score high in the index. This is because the concept of attempting to equalize two beings, who are biologically distinct from one another, is an irrational idea. Anything which defies reality and does not accommodate for basic biological facts when organizing the roles, rights and responsibilities of the genders within society, is bound for failure.

Hence, the gender equality illusion has well and truly shattered. In truth, it has functioned as nothing but an opium in the struggle for women's rights globally; and will never deliver a better quality of life for women. This is because it fails to recognize that the root causes of the countless problems and injustices women face internationally are not gender-based, but rather ideological and systemic in their nature. Therefore, its myopic approach to addressing issues from a narrow gender perspective, served as a distraction from focusing attention and efforts in countering these root causes: the capitalist, secular, liberal, socialist and other man-made values, ideologies and systems that govern nations today. Indeed, it acted as a veil to cover the scale of responsibility that these ideological and systemic factors carry for the woes of women globally.

Furthermore, feminism and its ideal of gender equality are socially corrosive concepts that have inflicted much damage upon the harmony and unity of family life as well as the wellbeing of women, men and children alike, in addition to sowing countless problems for societies. This is because they ignore the biological nature of women as the child bearers of the human race, trying to push this aside as irrelevant, while it should be a central factor in defining gender roles and rights within marriage and family life. Additionally, any perspective, feminist or otherwise, which encourages women or men to selfishly define their own entitlements and duties according to individualistic desires and choices, or seeks to organize family life and society from a gender-centred approach – female or male - will inevitably overlook what is best for a marriage, children, a tranquil family life and society overall.

Further to this, gender equality did not deliver a fair and happier life for women. Rather it caused confusion and discord in marital life and parental responsibilities, caused the rights and wellbeing of children to be neglected, devalued and cheated women of motherhood, eroded men's responsibility over their families, and burdened women with the duties of men in family life including being wage-earners, placing untold stress upon them and depriving them of the right of financial provision. All this created a situation which was far from the golden fields of happier lives, better marriages and liberation from oppression that was promised from enshrining gender equality in the family unit, and the laws and constitutions of nations. Hence, the idea of women defining their own rights and roles did not liberate them from oppression but rather subjected them to different forms of injustice. Dale O'Leary, a US journalist and lecturer, and one of the opponents of the feminist philosophy, writes in her book, 'The Gender Agenda: Re-defining Equality',

“Feminists claimed to promote the progress of women, but the feminists appeared to me to have a very warped idea of what it meant to be a woman, and an even weirder idea of what constitutes progress.”

In truth, gender equality and other feminist ideals have always been exploited and manipulated by capitalist systems to simply pressurise women into employment in order to increase the size of their workforce and revenue generation with a total disregard for the wellbeing of women, their children, family life and the health of society overall. It is the mark of an ideology that systematically and consistently places wealth creation above other important human needs and values.

Therefore, gender equality is an erroneous and misleading standard for evaluating the progress and improvement of women’s lives and nations, as well as judging the merit or deficiencies of other cultures and belief-systems. It was feminism and gender equality’s failure to appreciate the unarguable biological differences between men and women that led them to judge the Islamic family laws as oppressive and discriminatory towards women due to the gender differences in certain rights and responsibilities. However, they failed to understand that those very differences accommodated for the distinction between the two sexes and complemented one another to create an effective, well-organised and harmonious family structure. This is alongside ensuring financial maintenance, protection and support for women and their children. Hence, when the Islamic family laws were abandoned by states and family units due to this ‘Equalizing of Genders’, it was women and children that suffered the most.

In light of all this, it is astonishing that governments and various organisations in the Muslim lands continue to strengthen their involvement in this disastrous western-inspired experiment in social engineering, implementing further laws and policies upon its basis and propagating it intensively amongst their people. This is rather than rejecting this failed foreign concept of gender equality outright.

Surely, it is enough of pursuing a path of gender equality illusions that offers nothing but false hopes and broken dreams. Surely, we cannot continue to recycle decades of failure which simply prolongs the suffering and misery of women the world over. And surely, as Muslims we need to reject this non-Islamic secular concept of gender equality and other feminist beliefs which were and continue to be promoted in our communities and lands simply to extend the hegemony and secure the interests of Western capitalist colonial states in the Muslim world, rather than bringing any good to the women of the region. Allah (swt) says,

﴿مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ﴾

“Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture nor the polytheists wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord.” [Al-Baqara: 105]

If we genuinely wish to build a brighter future for the women of the Muslim world, then this cannot be achieved through the BPfA, CEDAW or any other international treaty or convention. It will also not be realized through the adoption of a few new policies and laws within countries. Nor can it ever materialize within the framework of the failed capitalist, socialist and other systems which govern states today which are the perpetrators of the crimes against women, including robbing them of their high status, protection and rights they deserve. Rather, we must embrace a radically alternative political, economic and social vision for our lands that embodies credible principles, laws and systems to deliver real change for the lives of women. Such a vision cannot be generated from the minds of human beings: male or female, for the human being by nature is weak, limited and flawed in his or her thinking and hence will inevitably create laws and systems which will fail to secure the needs of people effectively. Rather, this vision can only originate from the Creator of the universe, Allah (swt), the All-Knowing, the All-Aware, the All-Wise. It is He (swt) alone who knows best how to organize family life and society, including the relationship between the genders and their rights, roles and responsibilities in the best and most just way, to secure the needs, dignity, rights and interests of all human beings – male and female alike in order to establish harmony in marriage, family life and society. Allah (swt) says,

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

“Which then is best? - he that lays his foundation on piety to Allah and His good pleasure? - or he that lays his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces? and it does crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guides not people that do wrong.” [At-Taubah: 109].

It is **Islam**, implemented by its political system: the **Khilafah** (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood which is the alternative credible vision revealed by Allah (swt) to mankind for how to comprehensively solve all the problems that women face, and build a prosperous, safe, and dignified life for women and men alike. It is Islam

that demands that women enjoy a high status of respect within society and places the protection of their dignity at the level of defending life itself, rejecting any belief, value or action which could devalue or violate their honour or wellbeing, including liberal freedoms. This is alongside nurturing Taqwa (God-Consciousness) within individuals and accountability to the Creator which also guards against harassment, exploitation and violence against women. Additionally, the Islamic social laws regulates the interaction of men and women effectively to maintain purity in the meeting, while Islam's judicial system enforces severe punishments for crimes against the dignity of women – all of which protects them from harm and preserves their high status in society.

Further to this, Islam does not place the man as the gold standard that the woman is expected to catch up to, nor define the action of earning a living and financial independence as a mark of female success. Rather, it truly values the unique nature of women as the child-bearers of humanity, assigning them a primary role and responsibilities within the family unit and society which is in harmony with this distinct quality. Hence it supports and empowers women to fulfil their position as mothers, defining it as a prestigious role, and lifting from them the burden of earning their own living by obliging that they be financially provided for always by their husband, male relatives or the state. Therefore, the Islamic social system defines duties and rights for men and women which are complementary rather than competitive, and which looks at what is best for family life and society as a whole rather than just the interests of the man or woman. This includes obliging the man to be the guardian and protector of his wife and family, and the woman to show obedience to her husband and fulfil her primary role as a wife and mother. This creates a harmonious marital and family life. Islam does not irrationally allow the man or the woman to selfishly define his/her own entitlements and duties, that sows nothing but confusion and discord in marriage and parental responsibilities, but rather prescribes gender roles and responsibilities which are fair and best for all – the man, woman, and child. This also ensures that the rights of children are fulfilled and that they are cared for and raised effectively to become upright and remarkable citizens in their thinking and behaviour who are a source of goodness for their community.

Furthermore, Islam views the political, economic, educational, health care, and legal rights of women as God-given rights that no ruler or state can deprive them of. Rather, the Islamic Shariah obligates that the leader of the state must secure these entitlements for them. However, in contrast to the systems of today, where promises to provide these rights for women exist as mere rhetoric, Islam embodies the principles, laws and systems to guarantee them within the state, as evidenced by Islamic history and as addressed in the articles in this booklet. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

“And We have sent down to you the Book explaining everything, and a guidance and a mercy and good tidings for those who have surrendered (to Allah).” [An-Nahl: 89]

The high status, protection, support and God-given rights that Islam affords women, cannot be realized without the establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood. For this state is the practical means defined by the Shariah to implement comprehensively all the Islamic beliefs, values, principles, laws and systems, including those which secure the privileges and rights of women, such that they become a reality in women's lives, rather than remaining dormant in the pages of Islamic texts or books of history. The Prophet (saw) said,

«الإمام رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»

“The Imam (ruler) is a guardian, and responsible (and will be questioned) for his subjects.”

Hence, it is the Khilafah which establishes a leadership based on guardianship of the people and accountability in governance, such that the political voice of women has real weight within the state. It is the Khilafah which eradicated poverty and created prosperity in lands such that the economic rights of women had real meaning. It was the Khilafah that generated rulers of Taqwa who would carry food on their own backs to feed those women who were in need. It is the Khilafah that protected women from persecution, mobilizing whole armies to liberate them from their oppressors and punishing severely anyone who harmed them under its rule, demonstrating to the world, the sanctity of the honour of the woman. M. De M. D’Ohsson, an Armenian man who worked for many years in the Swedish Embassy in Turkey in the 18th century, wrote regarding the Uthmani Khilafah, “Anyone who behaves badly towards a woman, regardless of his position or religion, cannot escape punishment, because religion generally commands women to be respected. For this reason, both the police and judges deal very severely with anyone who ill-treats women.”

It was also the Khilafah that established a judiciary that served as a guard over the rights of the woman, such that even

non-Muslim women under its rule preferred to seek recourse for their grievances through its courts rather than their own religious proceedings. And it is the Khilafah that created a first-class health care system enjoyed by rich and poor alike, and a world renowned prestigious education system which generated thousands of female scholars and female experts in all areas of life. It is understandable therefore, why many female European writers who lived in or visited the Khilafah praised the unrivalled status and treatment of its women. Lady Elizabeth Craven for example, an 18th century British traveler and author wrote in her book, 'A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople', regarding the status of women within the Uthmani Khilafah, "The Turks in their conduct towards our sex are an example to all other nations.....and I think them (Turkish women) in their manner of living, capable of being the happiest creatures breathing."

Therefore, the only way to lift women from oppression, and build for them a brighter and more prosperous and just future is by the re-establishment of the Khilafah: a state that stood as a guard over the rights and wellbeing of its women for over 1300 years. Indeed, it was upon the loss of this noble Islamic state in 1924 at the hands of the Western colonialists and their agents that the nightmare and mass oppression of women across the Muslim world began in all its forms, intensifying in severity as the years passed, and continuing till today. This is reflected in the wise words of the renowned Islamic scholar Imam Ghazali (rh), who said, "The Deen is the foundation and the Sultan is the guard. What does not have a foundation will crumble and what does not have a guard will be lost."

Hizb ut Tahrir is a global Islamic political party which is working for the establishment of this glorious state: the Khilafah. The party has detailed extensively the laws, systems and institutions of this state and how it would solve the problems that the Muslim Ummah, and indeed humankind, faces today. It has also presented a comprehensive Draft Constitution for the Khilafah, founded upon clear Islamic evidences, unrivalled in its detail and which is ready for implementation now. Hizb ut Tahrir consists of hundreds of thousands of members and supporters worldwide – from east to west. This includes thousands of female members who are striving tirelessly to achieve this noble vision of resuming Islam as a way of life through the establishment of the Khilafah, which will achieve true progress within the Muslim lands in all sectors of society, with its benefits enjoyed by all citizens – male and female alike.

Indeed, Allah (swt) has obliged both believing men and women to carry the dawah to establish His system upon this earth. Muslim women therefore have a great responsibility alongside their Muslim brothers to work for the return of the Khilafah in the Muslim lands. This is because, the Prophet (saw) said, addressing both men and women,

«مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ»

"And whosoever dies without having a Bay'ah (pledge of allegiance to the Khalifah) upon his neck dies the death of Jahiliyyah", indicating the obligation of establishing the Khilafah and appointing a Khalifah to whom the Muslims can give their Bay'ah.

As the women of Hizb ut Tahrir, we therefore call our dear Muslim sisters across the world to work with us to establish this magnificent righteous state which will herald a new dawn for women in the Muslim world and stand as a model globally for the rights and good treatment that all women deserve. We call you not to be seduced by narrow political battles or be deceived by misleading struggles for gender equality that have proved to be nothing but an illusion in improving the lives of women. Rather, focus your attention and efforts in uprooting the flawed ideas and systems in our Muslim lands and establishing in their place the System of your Lord (swt) which will create a society that will place the dignity and wellbeing of women at a level that mankind has not witnessed for a long time. We call you to carry this noble dawa, which will gain you the honour of being amongst those who brought the light of Islam to this world once again which has been immersed in darkness for too long, and which will secure for yourself Insha Allah the great status and unimaginable rewards in Jannah promised for those who strive to establish the second Khilafah Rashidah. Allah (swt) says,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

"O you who believe! Answer (the call of) Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life; and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be gathered." [Al-Anfal: 24]■

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