Woman in the Struggle Between Tradition and Modernity: Investigating the Social Status of Muslim Woman in Contemporary Islamic Societies Based on the Opinions of Sayyid Quṭb and Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd

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Abstract
Responding to the challenges and changes in the modern world, Muslim scholars have considered the social status of women in Islam through various approaches. They have published some works regarding the crisis deriving from the modernity-tradition struggle and conflict. This survey is done through an analytic-descriptive and documentary approach. In this article, the woman status in society is investigated through two perspectives, namely the perspective of Sayyid Quṭb based on the traditional "Amendatory Fundamentalism" approach and the perspective of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd based on the modernized "Amendatory Neo-Separatism (neo-Mu'tazila)" approach. The results show that while the amendatory fundamentalism scholars refer to tradition as well as Islamic meta-time and meta-place precepts as a solution for the problems of the Muslim women in contemporary societies – therefore, trying to conform modernism and tradition by focusing on Islam –Abū , the neo-separatism amendatory modernized scholars (based on the perspective of Abū Zayd) seek to reconstruct the tradition and conform Islamic precepts and modernity through considering a priority for the modernism and the "contextual" and "timely" Quranic precepts.

Keywords: Islam, Woman, Social status, Sayyid Quṭb, Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd.

Introduction

The first signs of modernity (tajaddud) are destroying the remaining effects of the tradition (sunna). The resultant modernity was a New Order that was only able to emerge through comforting with the previous Order. The New Order ignores the past through the authenticity of the new world that emerged in front of its eyes (Aḥmadī, 2001: 31-34; Rabbānī Gulpāyigānī, 2003: 42-43Aḥmadī). In fact, according to Max Weber, for establishing the fundamental principles, modernity requires a "Disenchantment (Entzauberung) of the world" (Weber, 2004: 30), and religion is a major phenomenon considered as a huge barrier to this requirement. When they encountered the conflict, the religious scholars and intellectuals tried to find a fundamental solution to preserve the status of religion and religious precepts (Mīrsipāsī, 2005: 37). Islamic scholars and intellectuals also participated, and each of them searched for a solution to preserve the stance of Islamic religion in the modern era. Some such as Muḥammad Arkun (1928-2010), Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jabrī (1935-2010), Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū

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Zayd (1943-2010), etc. consider Islam to be in complete conformity with modern concepts and the solution to the problems of the modern world[1]. Others, such as Abul ʿAlā Mawdūdī (1903-1979), Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī (1917-1996), Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966), etc., sought to revive Islamic doctrines according to the requirements of meta-time and meta-place religion that can solve the above-mentioned challenges[2]. The struggle between these two movements can be particularly seen in the social status and role of Muslim women in contemporary Islamic societies. In fact, the Muslim scholars and intellectuals have attempted to examine the social status of women in Islam through the Islamic approach, but many of these interpretations are at odds with each other. It means that although their perspective (Islamic point of view) and source (Qurʾān) is the same, due to the various "reformist" and "revivalist" approaches, different outcomes are obtained. For providing a regularized and integrated analysis of the social status of a woman by Muslim scholars, at the first step, this article has categorized them into two categories of fundamentalist (traditional) and modernist groups based on their approach and objectives for interpreting the woman issue in the Islamic doctrine. This study evaluates the opinions of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd as one of the major members attributed to Neo-Separatism (neo-Muʿtazila) movements in the category of modernists (ʿArab Ṣāliḥī, 2014, 4: 27); this movement considers a claim for renewed, time-based, place-based and rationalized Qurʾān and the Qurʾānic doctrines (ʿArab Ṣāliḥī, 2014, vol. 1: 23-25).

In the category of fundamentalist[3] and traditional[4] scholars, this article analyzes the opinions of Sayyid Quṭb as one of the most important scholars who considers the solution to the problems and challenges of the modern world in returning to the Islamic fundamental and original principles. Since the real status of the thought is recognized through the conflicts and contradictions, this paper also analyzes and reflects the opinions of the scholars who have different intellectual origins. Therefore, in the following sections, we consider several social issues and concepts such as social participation, education, employment, veil (ḥijāb), and inheritance, which are related to the Muslim women in Islamic societies, in the opinions of both thinkers.

Sayyid Quṭb: The social status of Muslim woman in society

"A woman, wife or mother who spends her time, effort, and mental and physical strength at work outside the home, cannot provide anything except tiredness and negligence in house. A woman who leaves the house because of the work and earns money represents a "Painful Failure" in the home." Sayyid Quṭb, Islam and universal peace, 2012: 123-124

According to Sayyid Quṭb[5], a historical comparison is essential between the status of women before and after the advent of Islam.

He states that due to the ignorance (jāhilīyya) before the advent of Islam, women were not properly treated not only in Saudi Arabia but also all over the world. Generally, it should be said that they did not consider women as human beings and denied their rights; also, in comparison with men, they placed them inferior. Islam emerged and recognized the humanity and real status of the woman through its reformations, and considered her existence equal to man. In addition, it respected her natural role in the family (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 1: 917).

He clarifies that Islam rescued women from disrespects that happened everywhere. It salvaged girls from being buried alive, forced marriages, and being inherited as merchandise.

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1. Under the title of the "Modernized amendatory Neo-Separatism (neo-Muʿtazila)" approach.
2. Under the title of the "Traditional amendatory fundamentalism" approach.
3. q.v. ʿInāyat, 2013: 128, 151; Dirakhsha, 2010: 6; Zāhidī, 2011, 306; Khusrawī, 2005: 126.
4. q.v. Al-Jabrī, 2010: 355, 268 – 267, 185; Manṣūr Kiyāʾī, 2000: 56 – 57; Aṭharī Māriyān, 2000: 128 – 129.
5. To investigate the biography of Sayyid Quṭb q.v. Khālidī, (1994); Soage, 2009: 189; Dānāʾīfar, 2014: 99-100; Azoulay, 2015: 174-175.

Islam creates a different situation for women (ibid, vol. 3: 146). These changes and reformations were not due to the women's demand, but due to seeking the advocacy of justice by Islamic law or Sharīʿa (ibid, vol. 6: 367).

Social partnership of women

According to Quṭb, the social participation of women in Islam is not forbidden, since Islam has recognized various rights for women including property, work, education, etc., which require the presence of women in social fields. Besides his perspective, his life course is approved of his commitment to the social participation of women in society. In the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn) where he participated as an active and major member in the intellectual council and leadership, many women including his sisters cooperated. In addition, there was a group of women led by a woman called Zaynab Al-Ghazālī (1917-2005) who was one of the main students of Quṭb. She suffered extensive tortures and hardships in Egyptian prisons because of her revolutionary beliefs.

Although Quṭb has not prohibited women from being present in the society, he clearly states that it is strongly opposed to the unharnessed, non-normative, and limitless intercourse of men and women in Islamic societies, since according to his perspective, such intercommunications lead to excitement and stimulation of both parties (men and women), and result in negative consequences. He believes that Islam has predicted all of these consequences, so he refers to the problems of the woman and prohibits her from intercourses. He also invites women to cover the eyes and bans them from makeup for others. Intercourse considers as the free relationship between man and woman that has widespread prevalence in modern societies in Western and European countries under the title of freedom (Quṭb, 2012a, 134-135).

According to him, one of the reasons for the objection of Islam concerning intercommunication is because of the importance that this religion considers for the family institution. He believes that the increasing number of divorces and bad experiences in marital life in the West can reflect the destructive impacts of such relationships on the family. Therefore, in Islam, neither parties (men and women) are allowed to commit the acts which might even lead to injury of the other party and threaten the hearth (ibid, 129-135).

Education and knowledge acquisition of women

According to Quṭb's opinion concerning other social issues related to women, it seems that the right to education is reserved for women in Islam. In addition, according to the narrations regarding the issue of knowledge acquisition, the stance of education and learning is recognized in Islam. Therefore, according to the justice-oriented attitude and egalitarianism of Islam toward human beings, the right to education is recognized for all the social stratification who demands it. Since Islam does not prohibit the presence of women in society, girls and women are allowed to participate in educational environments. Therefore, according to Quṭb, the priority of women in life is to work craft and preserve the family foundation (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 2: 57). Given the classification of tasks based on natural talents for men and women, it is clear that whatever facilitates the role-playing of both parties is naturally allowed and valued. Besides the usefulness of knowledge acquisition, men and women should educate in the specialized fields of their obligations and duties (Quṭb, 2013: 92-93). In other words, when the priority of women is the housecraft, wifehood, and motherhood, they must have the required knowledge regarding their duties; this way, they may not only enjoy their natural and attributive facilities but also they can use their acquisitive knowledge.

Therefore, according to the intellectual principles of Sayyid Quṭb, although he did not evaluate the issue of education for women, it is clear that education is not forbidden for them, and Muslim women should not be deprived of the right to education. However, two major points shall be considered: first, the education of women should not interfere with the duties that are assigned to them (Quṭb, 2012a: 122-123). If this happens, the priority is given to the complete and proper role-playing. Second, the most important duty of women is the housecraft (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 1: 388-389). Their knowledge acquisition should be directed towards facilitating such duties.

Employment of women in the society

According to Quṭb, Islam has not only agreed with the presence of the woman in society, but it also allocates the right of working to them. Quṭb believes that many Western ideologies and doctrines have authorized this issue many years after the emergence of Islam. Nevertheless, he has considered the proportion between the duties and human talents and capabilities for all the people along with their evolution (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 2: 47). He also considers this principle for both men and women. He considers that women are responsible for housecraft and men promote the requirements of the family outside the home (Quṭb, 2013: 97).

In other words, he believes that although Islam does not prohibit women from employment since women are the mothers of Islamic societies, they are exempt from supplying the expenses of livelihood such as food, clothing, etc. Man is responsible for the expenses of the woman since she should provide an appropriate and proper atmosphere for the formation of the family and educate children. Therefore, since the priority of the woman is being a mother and doing the housecraft, the man should supply the expenses of the woman and the family life, because the woman needs time and most importantly relief of mind to fulfill her duties (Quṭb, 2012a: 122).

According to him, the women's employment leads to mental and physical damages. Then, they do not have time and patience for conducting their priorities. He believes that if employment were considered as an excuse for imitation and the sense of freedom, it would result in aberration and collapse (ibid: 123-124).

To prove this, he refers to Abul 'Alā Mawdūdī's opinions. According to Mawdūdī, in western societies, men have disavowed from paying the cost of life; instead, women are responsible for supplying the expenses of life under the pretext of granting freedom to them. In the Capitalist system, since most people cannot take advantage of the facilities of this system, all the family members try to achieve their standards of life. In line with the employment of women in workplaces, the sexual intercourse of men and women increases and leads to destructive consequences. Following this process, a growing corruption such as women's sexual freedom and nudity appears, and the body of women is employed to attract the customer. Nowadays, in all the jobs that women have, they are used to absorb buyers and customers. This is the situation of women in western countries, which now has intoxicated Muslim women, and is dragging them anywhere (Quṭb, 1986: 182-186).

According to Quṭb, although the employment of women does not have good results, in the cases that due to socio-economic requirements they do not have any other choices, their employment can be the key to problems. However, he clarifies if all Islamic economic regulations and principles govern the society, there will not be any problem in seeking a solution or sending women into the workplace (Quṭb, 2012b: 54).

Therefore, women are allowed to work in Islam, but according to Quṭb, since it may lead to the mental diffusion and dispersion in the duties of women, they should specify their aims and motives according to natural talents and capabilities that God has assigned them that are proportionate to their responsibilities and obligations. God has explicitly exempted women

from paying the cost of livelihood so that they can act as mothers with the relief of mind who can provide the comfort and calmness for their husband and children to keep them engage in their duties in the best way. Accordingly, he considers the employment of women for earning money as a "painful failure" (Quṭb, 2012a: 123-124).

Veil (Ḥijāb) and women's clothing

> Sayyid Quṭb considers the Islamic veil (ḥijāb) obligatory for Muslim women. According to him, ḥijāb in Islam is not considered to restrict women in society, but to make society healthy, "Yes, Islam is aimed at keeping the consciences and hearts healthy, remaining relieve in hearts and souls, and keeping families safe" (Quṭb, 2012a: 135).

He believes that the ḥijāb is not regarded as an individual affair in Islamic society and is not limited to individual choices; rather, ḥijāb and clothing is a social affair, since being unveiled can destructively impact all the society's members and family foundation (Ḥusayn, 2017: 80).

He believes that women's liberation based on the Western opinion is considered as women's slavery in Islam (Quṭb, 2016: 608) since only their nudity and physical dimensions are important. However, Islam has prevented women from going out half-naked, sharing their romantic sights with people, and delivering lecherous smiles to men. Islam has not forbidden women from going out, but due to the insight and foresight on social issues, the priority is given to prevention over treatment, and the ḥijāb serves as a preventive tool in this approach (Quṭb, 1971: 117).

He states that in the interpretation of the Qur'ān 24:31, the emphasis is on the preventive feature of the Islamic program. The inherent requirements of both parties are permanent and constant. This need forms the family and society. Lasciviousness always exists in men and women. To maintain a healthy society for achieving the individual and group objectives, Islam has considered various barriers on the way to erotic motivations and desires that prevent the creation of moral corruption at the society level. This Qur'ānic verse highlights one of the tools that Islam has employed to tighten the circle of chances for stimulation, i.e. "veil of eyes" and "veil of the body" (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 4: 810-811).

According to him, women are interested in exhibiting their beauty, ornaments, and Tabarruj (Display of Beauty) because of their morals. Islam does not consider inhibitions on the women's beauty and ornamentation but rather organizes it. Therefore, women must cover their beauty and ornamentations in the front of men, in society, and against whatever attracts attention and distraction (ibid: 812-813).

He also believes that in the interpretation of the Qur'ān 33:59, it is ordered to the wives and daughters of the Prophet Muhammad and all faithful women that if they must leave the house to satisfy their requirements, they must keep their bodies, heads, necks and slashes veiled and hidden, so that these chadors and long- robe garments separate them from others. Therefore, this clothing is admirable for women to keep them safe from harassment of the perpetrators (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 5: 227).

Women's economic ownership and legacy rights

According to Quṭb, Islam has always tried to improve the position of women in terms of human, family, and social status. It is mentally and objectively obvious in all the issues related to women (Quṭb, 1986: 90-91). He states that if a man died in the pre-Islam era in Saudi Arabia, his wife would be inherited to other survivors, similar to his other assets. Islam forbade the inheritance of women and stopped considering them as merchandise or animal. In

addition, in a situation in which woman were considered as a commodity for most people, Islam granted them the right of inheritance as well as individual and economic ownership (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 1: 917-922).

He refers to the Qur'ān 4:32 concerning the right of inheritance and ownership of women. In its interpretation, while it recognizes this right for women that had not any pre-Islamic history, he considers this right as a fundamental principle of justice. This right is not due to the various movements and revolutions of women, nor even in respect of their choice and demand (ibid, vol. 2: 50). According to Quṭb, Islam states the rule of disinheritance of children and women under the excuse that "they do not mount on a horse and fight with the enemy." This way, it emphasizes the importance of family and relationships and also recognizing the right of women and children. It set the rule of inheritance based on the relationship levels to show the responsibility of relatives toward each other. However, in Islamic universalism, relatives are not just the individuals who are responsible toward each other, but the whole members of society should help each other and promote the requirements of one another (Quṭb, 2014, vol. 1: 892-893).

Some defenders of women's rights in the modern era consider the law of inheritance of women as a violation of their rights in Islam. They believe that Islam should consider equal rights of inheritance for men and women, and if they used such rights of inheritance at the time of the Qur'ān revelation, now the condition has changed in a way that man and woman should have an equal share of the inheritance. Nevertheless, Quṭb thinks differently. According to him, Islam has always considered aspects of both parties in any rule and provides them with facilities based on the obligations of both parties. On the issue of inheritance, God has considered the utmost justice and wisdom for both parties. He has analyzed the reason for inequality in the share of inheritance for men and women as follows:

> "When a man marries a woman, he is responsible for all the expenses of his wife and children who are born by him and his wife, whether she stays with him or divorces. However, before or after the marriage, either the woman herself pays her expenses or a man pays her expenses. [According to Islam] the woman is not obliged to pay the expenses of husband and children" (ibid: 899).

Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd: The social status of Muslim woman in society

> "A man who considers housekeeping and mother-craft as the main duty of a woman and believes that woman is not able to do anything else has a narrow-minded opinion about life; since women have proven their competency in all spheres."

Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, The circles of fear: Women in religious discourse, 2018: 263

Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd[1] suggests that for an appropriate understanding of Islamic objectives and the relevant changes, we require a historical comparison between the pre-Islam and post-Islam era. According to Abū Zayd, although Islam has been influenced by the social contexts and structures of its era of emergence, this impact has not been unilateral. Islam also has made great changes in the then-current system. In all the rules relating to women, Islam has made some reformations that according to the increasing improvements may consider trivial and worthless. If we consider these changes within the structural framework of that era, we can understand its importance (Abū Zayd, 2016: 198-199). He emphasizes that the measure for valuing Islamic issues should consider the pre-Islamic society rather than the current requirements that are expected from Islam. Accordingly, the direct addressing of

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1. To explore the biography of Abu Zayd, q.v. ʿAbd Majīd, 2014: 62; Suardi, 2018: 489.

women in the Qur'ān is an unprecedented and pioneered step (ibid: 39). He explains the social status of women in pre-Islam as follows:

> "[In Pre-Islamic era] woman was considered as an unimportant creature. If she had any value, it would derive from a man who was her father, brother, or husband. In this regard, there is a lot of evidence… The man is authorized to divorce her and based on his willingness, may marry her again to affront her. If the husband dies, a man of his relatives puts his mantle on her to show his desire to marry her; that woman is not allowed to marry. She still can donate everything to release herself" (Abū Zayd, 2004: 307).

Women's social contribution

In discussing the social issue of Muslim women, it should be kept in mind that Abū Zayd decisively and explicitly expresses his disagreement with the rule of "repelling corruptions, taking precedence over the interests. The traditional jurisprudents consider it as a measure for their performances and reformations in the society. Therefore, where the matter is freedom, salvation, and social presence of women, the deviation created in the West is understood as an instance of corruption of these interests; as a result, prevention from its occurrence is given preference over its attraction. However, although Abū Zayd – like Muḥammad 'Abduh[1] ('Abduh, 1972, vol. 2: 72-74) –is aware of the negative aspects that this change may have, he doesn't consider such impacts and negative aspects as logical preventions for the change (Abū Zayd, 2018: 190-191).

In his opinion, since the world is increasingly undergoing another form of change and women are entering modern social arenas every day, the Islamic regulations concerning their rights should also change. For example, he holds that slavery and many Islamic penalties have become obsolete with today's conditions; therefore, the rights of women can be changed according to the cultural and social changes. In these days that women have become an important partner in public life, have entered all the economic, political, academic, and suchlike arenas, and have achieved great success, why do some people try to consider anachronous limitations for women; i.e. doing something in which home, family, and obedience from husband is classified as the priorities of the woman? He considers the rule of Islamic behavior to be a step forward in history and the improvement of the laws is along with the changes, crumbles on Muslims who do not follow this regulation. He believes that this leads to nothing but weakened and devalued religion. According to him, Muslims have deprived themselves of the rich insights concerning the value-directive level that is mentioned in Qur'ān. Thus, he binds all Muslims to return to the Islamic manner to stay away from the obsolete beliefs and customs of history (Abū Zayd, 2016: 151-152).

Women's education and knowledge acquisition

The traditional and formal religious discourse divides education into two parts, including "sufficient obligation" and "tangible obligation." The tangible obligation includes a religious instruction that is obligatory on everyone, and sufficient obligation includes educations which the Islamic community only needs several trained women in, such as female nurses, physicians, and teachers. Other areas in which women are educated should be proportionate to their natural duties such as cooking, mother-craft, learn child psychology, etc. (ibid: 106).

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1. Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905).

Abū Zayd considers the freedom of education for women as an entirely obvious matter. What he means by education is a practical education that must be applied every day to interact with the social environment of individuals. Accordingly, he states that:

> When women stay at home after their marriage, education and acquisition of highest degrees cannot change their fate, since the educational specialties require practical work to be continuously dynamic and updated in instructional skills. Without practical activity, the educational skills will gradually become worn out and replaced by negativity due to the monotony and habitation that extinguishes the flames of skill and improves the consciousness with imbecility (ibid: 78).

Therefore, the criticism that he directs toward the issue of education is about learning scientific principles and skills without applying it.

Women's employment in society

One of the most important fields through which the education of people is driven from conceptuality to practicality is the issue of employment. However, according to the common divisions of religious traditional discourse from the past until today, women have been responsible for home craft and men have been responsible for the expenses and working outside. Nevertheless, the occurrence of the industrial revolution, the currents of modernity, the establishment of factories, and the expansion of jobs (which are dependent on the advanced equipment rather than the manpower) have led to the employment of the large population of women. Nowadays, women work along with men not only in factories but also in other social fields. Given this introduction, we consider the opinion of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd on the employment of Muslim women in Islamic societies and the approaches of other social discourses.

He uses the opinions of Ṭāhir Ḥaddād (1899-1935) to emphasize the Islamic right of women to working outdoors. Ṭāhir Ḥaddād points to some "structured" and "historical" Islamic regulations, holding that such laws can be changed based on a timely manner. He states, "Islam has passed beyond the status quo in many precepts by the necessity of transformation and keeping up with various times" (Ḥaddād, 1992: 31).

Some ideologies of thought seek to highlight women as unsuitable individuals for performing outdoor works based on their biological differences and provide full access for men (Al-Ghazālī, 1991: 40, 45, 47; Al-Jawaheri, 1978: 112-119). According to Abū Zayd, this approach introduces the social differences to the level of biological inequalities that is made through the structural causes between women and men, and justifies and legitimizes the disordered status. Nowadays, with the implementation of technological advancements, there are few jobs that ranked as hard works. If such work persists, it is a form of human exploitation – which regardless of gender – is contrary to human rights (Abū Zayd, 2018: 97).

Women's Ḥijāb and clothing

According to Abū Zayd, Ḥijāb is not something that is mentioned in Islam and the Qur'ān as it is understood today, but ḥijāb in one sentence is what demands by the leaders of religious discourse to enhance their aims. By dividing the educational field for women into two parts of "sufficient obligation" and "tangible obligation" as well as the containment of knowledge acquisition for them, the ground for their social presence is excluded from society. Ultimately, their physical existence remains hidden from view through the ḥijāb (Abū Zayd, 2015: 55-56). Abū Zayd considers the ḥijāb as a symbol of the decline of women's rationality. He considers the starting point of this process to be the prevention of knowledge acquisition for

women and only due to the inevitable social necessities and the endpoint is their physical elimination:

> Anti-intellectualism reveals first by concealing women from the spheres of free knowledge and depriving their social existence; second, by jailing them in the house and more importantly, by covering them with a veil which is a symbolization of anti-intellectualism and disguising social issues (Abū Zayd, 2018: 107).

In most cases, Islamic scholars and theorists consider the description of women as a piece of nice music, painting, etc. that is a symbol of beneficence and esteem, but in this regard, Abū Zayd writes:

> This blank poeticism is a substance that fantasizes the reader to honor the women, make them reification, and consider them as a forsaken object, which characterizes its importance according to the usefulness for owner/man. From this perspective, ḥijāb of ownership must be imposed on this object (ibid: 100)

According to him, the philosophy of the ḥijāb, as many scholars say, is nothing but a veil to prevent men from provoking and intercourse of genders. Thus, it looks as if the physiology of women must be remained in the veil to stop the passions and lusts of the society's other members (ibid: p.108).

Abū Zayd does not consider the ḥijāb as the Islamic law commanded in the Qur'ān; rather, he asserts that the Qur'ān requires the observance of modesty (Ḥayā') and chastity of showing the body in the public areas. However, it should be noted that such a command concerning preserve modesty and chastity is not exclusive to women, and it includes men as well. He believes that the Qur'ān 24:31 "indicates that they (women of the Arab peninsula) were already wearing Khimār[1]. The Qur'ān did not mean that Khimār must be an obligatory Islamic dress, rather, women wore it at that time" (Abū Zayd, 2016: 158). Therefore, Islam sought to preserve the element of modesty and in the veil rather than wearing a scarf by women in different cultures and eras.

According to him, the Qur'ān 33:59 that also refers to the issue of ḥijāb asks the wives and daughters of Prophet Muhammad and the faithful women to wear their Jilbāb[2] so that they may be recognized. Here, the ḥijāb is a symbol of recognizing free and slave women than being raised as a religious obligation so that they would not be persecuted and harassed. In other words, he believes that this verse is introduced the ḥijāb as a social solution for solving the problem of Arab society in that era. In today's modern societies, fortunately, there is no longer any lawlessness; hence, the requirement for a solution is eliminated. (ibid: 158-189). Notably, although Abū Zayd does not consider the ḥijāb as obligatory for women, he considers the right of women to use the scarf as a part of their religiosity and he opposes the disavowal of this right. He disagrees with a ban on wearing ḥijāb in some societies (ibid: 159).

Economic ownership and inheritance right of women

According to Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, inheritance is included in the verses that can be developed and modified by reference to social-cultural contexts and structures. In this attitude, every text consists of two aspects includes "meaning" and "signification" (Abū Zayd, 2004: 285). He explains the connection between signification and meaning as follows,

> According to our survey, "Meaning" and "signification" contain two inseparable aspects: the first aspect considers "Meaning" and has a historical aspect; i.e., it is achievable only through recognizing the inter-linguistic and extra-textual socio-cultural contexts. Although "Signification" is inseparable from the Meaning and

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1. A kind of Hijab (Veil).
2. A kind of Hijab (Veil).

dependent on and derived from it, it has the aspect of "era"; i.e., it is the product of an era except for the era of the text… Meaning considerably enjoys relative stability, while the Signification base on the change in the reading attitude has a dynamic aspect" (ibid: 303).

Therefore, although according to the Islamic approach, the classification of inheritance leads to a half share of inherence for female in comparison with male –which is nowadays considered by critics as a symbol of inequality and has received various criticisms from different factions of thought – Abū Zayd considers it differently. He first describes, in general, the deplorable status of women until pre-Islam and in particular the issue of inheritance. Under those circumstances, based on the rule "someone who neither rides a horse nor carries a burden nor repels an enemy is not inherited," women were deprived of the right of inheritance. As mentioned above, not only they did not have any share in the inheritance, but also they were inherited. Thus, according to him, to realize the pioneered and unity of such an action, this rule shall necessarily be examined through the same lens; otherwise, this rule will fail to achieve its egalitarian goals, and finally Islam will be accused with the label of inequality and prejudices. Nowadays, Islam and the Qur'ān are charged with such stigmas through the emphasis on some jurisprudential and religious approaches and the stability and invariability of laws (Abū Zayd, 2018: 198-199).

Once again, Abū Zayd refers to the description of Muḥammad ʿAbduh, particularly the Qur'ān 4:11 to provide his interpretation of verses on inheritance. In this verse, in addition to the literal meaning that indicates the change in women's status in Arab society, the signification of verses is important. ʿAbduh believes that besides ignoring the disinheritance of women, this verse should be considered for the measure and criteria for the inheritance of women. This verse states,

> "Man inherits twice the woman. It seems that in this verse, the share of inheritance for the woman is certain and decisive; man has twice shares or female share of inheritance is considered a principle in canon law and the share of the man is considered based on it. The inheritance of man is known by adding to the inheritance of the woman. If this were not the case, it would state, there is a half of male share for the woman" (ʿAbduh, 1972, vol. 5: 177-180).

In other words, ʿAbduh refers to the fact that in this Qur'ānic verse, the focus and priority are with women and their right of inheritance (Abū Zayd, 2018: 199-200). It is notable that in this interpretation, first women are entitled to inheritance; second, women are considered as the criterion for classification of inheritance rather than men who found themselves the only owner of all standards and criteria. This kind of disruption of the regulations and formal law in the society, other than its literal meaning, has a content signification. According to Abū Zayd,

> "This Qur'ānic signification intends nothing but to create a balance between two aspects, with one of them being the man who is the ruler and dominant and maintains all economic, social, and human values. This balance can be achieved through a temporary transfer in the center of gravity to the women. In this case, the principle of equality from which this chapter began is stabilized, and its scope contains content ranging from the sphere of "religious equality" to the horizon of "social equality" (ibid: 200).

According to the above-mentioned issues, ʿAbduh provides a different interpretation of the existing interpretations of this verse. According to the meaning and significant denotations of this verse, he believes that monopolizing the share of female inheritance by half of the male share, limiting it to the historical era of the rise of the Qur'ān in Arab patriarchic society, and the absence of attention to the requirements of the modern era that have another criteria of justice and human equilibrium between man and woman is an action against the final

intention of the Qur'ān. This verse does not say that the female share should be half of the male share forever and male share should be twice; this verse is aimed at specifying the maximal and minimal limits of the male and female share of the inheritance. In other words, this verse states that male share should not exceed twice the female share and female share should not be less than half of the male share. Therefore, if the Divine Limits which is not to be violated state that more than twice of female share should not be given to man and less than half of the male share shall not be given to woman, these limitations authorize the Mujtahid[1] to clarify that the equality of man and woman fail to contrary with Divine Limits (Abū Zayd, 2018: 201; Shahrūr, 1994: 30, 55, 358, & 447).

Therefore, according to him, that the men have twice the female share is a token of maximal limitation in the Qur'ān but does not consider a half share for females. Note that the Qur'ān states these verses in a patriarchal society (Abū Zayd, 2016: 148-149). Therefore, 'Abduh and his follower, Abū Zayd, seek to reform the laws of inheritance. They do not consider these laws contrary to Divine Limits cited in the Qur'ān.

Conclusion

According to the article, it is concluded that Sayyid Quṭb and Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd have fundamental disagreements concerning the social status of women in Islam in the mentioned fields, which includes what follows.

1. Sayyid Quṭb recognizes the social partnership of women in society; however, he does not authenticate it and considers it subject to the lack of promotion of corruption. In this regard, Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd considers any restrictions inadmissible. He believes that the positive aspects of the extensive partnership of women in social affairs are more than the negative aspects.

2. Sayyid Quṭb permits education and knowledge acquisition of women in Islam; however, he believes in the priority and authenticity of women's role in the home and the alignment of educational contexts with their roles. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd deems free the various trainings for women and establishes their unconditional presence in educational and scientific environments.

3. Sayyid Quṭb authorizes the employment of women in Islam; however, their main responsibility is to take care of household and family. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd has a completely different opinion and considers employment as one of the main contexts of women's presence in society to develop their talents.

4. Sayyid Quṭb considers veil and women's clothing not only a restriction, rather, a factor for purifying the society from corruption and lechery. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd strongly opposes this perspective. He believes that along with separating the veil from modesty, the current veil is not inferred from Qur'ān.

5. Sayyid Quṭb believes that Islam recognizes women's economic ownership and legacy rights. Therefore, the differences are due to the various responsibilities of couples. Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd considers this right as a great privilege; he adjusts the difference among the legacy rights of men and women in the current era through a separation between "meaning" and "signification."

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1. "One who exercises independent reasoning (ijtihād) in the interpretation of Islamic law" ("Mujtahid." In The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. Ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online. 18-Feb-2020).

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