

*Ghulam Ahmad Pervez's Tafsir
and Women's Issues:
A Methodological Analysis*

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ABSTRACT

Ghulam Ahmad Parvez is a well-known writer for rejecting the authority of Hadith of Prophet. He was overwhelmed with the Western culture and civilization that he usually appreciated whatever came from the West. In doing so, he did not hesitate to corrupt the interpretation of the Qur'anic ayat and presented them according to his whims and caprices.

In his tafsir, **Matalibul-Furqan**, Parvez dealt extensively with the women's issues. He did not hesitate to reject the established precepts of Islam regarding women's rights such as the issue of women's work, Hijab or Niqab, testimony in the courts, leadership role of women and the Qur'anic law of inheritance. In many of these issues, he preferred to accept the Western culture and tried to mutilate the Qur'anic interpretation of the ayat dealing with those issues.

This paper will present a brief background about his life, a general observation on his methodology, and then focus on certain issues of women as mentioned above. In doing this, the researcher would present objective analysis from traditional and rational point of view. It would compare the writings of Mr. Ghulam Ahmad Parvez with the traditional and modern Mufasssirun and other scholars on specific issues. The paper would adopt a concise and brief yet convincing presentation of issues.

1. BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

Born in a religious family with Sufistic trend on 9th July, 1903 at Gurudaspur, East Punjab of India, Ghulam Ahmad Parvez was raised and trained by his grandfather Moulvi Chowdhury Rahim Bakhsh, who was, as Parvez says, a great scholar of Hanafi school of law.¹

He loved music and used to listen to Mehedi Hassan, Nazir Faruqi and most importantly, to Rowshan Ara Beghum, who he regarded to be the gifted singer of all ages. Music for him was a source of relaxation, and the food for soul. He said, "those who cannot appreciate music and declare it *Haram*, have no soul."²

He also grew in him the ability of debating since his young age. He says, "as it was very common for a young boy of seaside to learn swimming, I also learnt art of debating; for my locality was breeding ground for many religious sects and groups."³

He claimed to pass through three stages in his life: Taqlid [=blind imitation], Tanqid [=critical approach] and Tajdid [=Innovative method]. It was only in the last stage of "Tajdid" that "I came to know the truthfulness of the Qur'an and renewed my Iman afresh."⁴

ASLAM JOYRAJPURI

It might be well said that a single man who made a deep impact on his life and turned him gradually to the confusion on, and later rejection of, ahadith of the Prophet was none else but Aslam Joyrajpuri. Parvez was full of praise for him. He met him first in 1929/1930 at Aslam's residence and was greatly impressed by him. Parvez read his articles before and felt as if his own ideas were wonderfully translated by Aslam. He had lived with Aslam in 1935 for about six months apparently to

¹ *Tulu` Islam Magazine*, Lahore, May-June 1960, p. 31.

² *Ibid.* March-April, 1969, p. 116.

³ Parvez, *Shahkar-i Risalat*, Lahore, Idarah Tulu` Islam, 1987, p. 29.

⁴ *Tulu` Islam* (TI), November 1973, p. 20.

learn Arabic language, but, he says, "as the famous proverb goes, *آك ليني كو حائين، بيميري مل حائي* [=Go to collect fire, but get the prophethood instead], most of our time passed in discussions of the secrets and treasures of the Qur'an."¹

TULU` ISLAM

It was initially published by Nazir Niyazi in October 1935, but after 6 issues it stopped publishing in 1936. In April 1938, it was published under the care of Ghulam Ahmad Parvez as "to translate Iqbal's thought and propagate the message of the Qur'an."²

Parvez was in close relation with the rulers beginning from Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Ayyub Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. He had free access to the rulers. He received gifts and donations from the rulers on various grounds.³ Field Marshal Ayyub wanted wide circulation of Tulu` Islam; for it propagates the same thought of the Army General. Parvez though was always supportive of all the rulers, (majority of whom were from secular background), he did not like the rule of President Ziaul Haq who wanted to implement Islam and Islamic shari`ah in Pakistan, and criticized many of his steps towards implementation of Shari`ah.⁴

PARVEZ AND MAWDUDI

Ghulam Ahmad Parvez was full of praise for Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi in his early age and regarded him as a great scholar of Islam. His articles were also published in *Tarjumanul Qur'an* of Sayyid Mawdudi (before rejecting the Hadith of the Prophet), and also he published Mawdudi's articles in His *Tulu` Islam* magazine with due respect. In one of his articles, Parvez says about Mawdudi:

¹ *TI*, 5th March, 1955.

² *TI*, June, 1959, p. 51.

³ *TI*, January, 1984, p. 47.

⁴ Qasemy, Muhammad din, *Tafsir Matalibul-Furqan ka 'Ilmiy awr Tahqiqi Ja'izah*, Ph.D. thesis, Punjab University, 2006. p. 33 (unpublished).

“Allah has granted him exceptional abilities to serve Islam and reform it in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah. He has gifted insight, deep understanding of Islam and the modern culture that he could wonderfully analyze Western culture, identify its problems and present remedies convincingly from Qur'anic perspective.”¹

He also published Mawdudi's article on 'Nationalism' in *Tulu` Islam*, and commented as follows:

"The opinion of Mawlana Mawdudi on this issue is exactly the same as mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and Tulu' Islam had the privilege of publishing his views on its pages."²

But the same Parvez stood against Mawdudi and became his fierce opponent a few years later. As he said: “It is a reality that we do not regard Mawdudi as a religious scholar, nor an intellectual.”³ He also said: “Mawdudi could not present any new ideas; for he does not have creative thought or intellectual skills. He only had the old information that is being brought to us for centuries.”⁴

REJECTION OF SUNNAH

Parvez did not declare to reject the Sunnah of the Prophet in his early writings. Even he wrote articles to establish the authenticity of Sunnah, as he published one article in March 1935 in *Ma`arif Journal* of Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi, on the 'religious status of the Sunnah of the Prophet'.⁵

He went through a brief period of confusion over the issue of Hadith. He wrote to Tarjuman of Mawdudi for clarification. Mawdudi dispelled all confusions rationally and convincingly.

¹ *TI*, July, 1938, p. 73.

² *TI*, June, 1948, p. 84.

³ *TI*, June, 1953, p. 6.

⁴ *TI*, March 1954, p. 52.

⁵ Qasemy: 45.

But Parvez already set his mind to reject the hadith of the Prophet, and did not heed to the responses of Mawdudi.¹

Mawdudi also published a special edition of his Tarjumanul-Qur'an on the Constitutional status of the Sunnah of the Prophet, and later it was published as "Sunnat ki Aayini Haythiyat". Mawdudi quoted their confusions in details, and then responded rationally which easily convince an objective reader, but not the anti-hadith group, whose minds have been blocked and hearts have been sealed up.

DEATH

In 1982, he became extremely weak and could not continue his daily activities. His associates proposed him to change the environment and go to Saudi Arabia for some rest. He travelled to Saudi Arabia for change of place, weather and environment.

He started delivering Dars-i Qur'an [=Qur'anic lesson] in Karachi, then in Lahore continuously even until the last days of his life. He completed two times the whole Qur'an, and then started the third, but before he could complete, he fell seriously ill in October 1984. His last dars was on 15th October, 1984.² He was compelled to take full bed rest until he died on 24th February 1985 at 6 p.m.³

2. HIS METHODOLOGY IN TAFSIR

Ghulam Ahmad Parvez wrote an incomplete tafsir containing 7 volumes until the end of Surah al-Hijr. 5 volumes (until Surah A`raf ayah 158) were published during his life, and 6 and 7 volumes after his death. But it was claimed in volume seven that he edited both volumes before he died.⁴

¹ *Qur'an ki Ma`nawi Tahrif*, p. 82.

² Qasimy: 134.

³ *TI*, April, 1985.

⁴ *Tafsir Matalibul-Furqan*, Lahore, 1995, vol. 7, Pesh Lafz [Introduction], p. 5.

Parvez also wrote *Ma`ariful-Qur'an* in 4 volumes on some specific Qur'anic issues. His mentor Aslam Joyrajpuri wrote an Introduction for this book highlighting the proper methodology of the interpretation of the Qur'an. Parvez followed this same methodology in his tafsir. These principles are highlighted in the following:

A. QUR'AN INTERPRETS THE QUR'AN

Aslam and Parvez said that Allah has categorized all Qur'anic ayat into two: Muhkamat and Mutashabihat. The former is the most important one for mankind for immediate implementation, and the latter is mentioned in metaphorical form, just to believe it and not for implementation. Therefore, "Ayat Muhkamat are the bases of the Qur'an, and the details are also explained from the presence of Allah Himself. As Allah says:

(أَفَعَيَّرَ اللَّهُ اللَّهَ أَتَّبِعِي حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا) (الأنعام : ١١٤)

"Say: shall I seek for judge other than Allah? - when He it is Who hath sent unto you the Book, explained in detail."¹

They also assert by saying, "Allah took the charge of explanation of the Qur'an by Himself, as He said in Surah Qiyamah:

(ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ) (القيامة : ١٩)

"Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear)"

This is a sound principle, which is followed by all traditional and objective rational commentators. But if someone has the intention of rejecting whatever comes from the Prophet Muhammad on the 'ground' (!) that 'it is not authentic' or 'it is forged', and we cannot know which is sound and which is not; the problem lies therein. All Muslim scholars and commentators refer to the Sunnah of the Prophet after the Qur'an. But Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Mr. Aslam, Parvez and

¹ Parvez, *Ma`ariful-Qur'an*, Delhi, Idarah Tulu` Islam, n.d. 1/37-38.

their followers did not agree with it. They should have adopted Sayyiduna 'Umar ® as their role model, who said: *حسبنا كتاب الله* "Allah's Book is sufficient for us." His whole life examples show that he firmly adhered to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. During his caliphate, he wrote a letter to Justice Shurayh as follows:

"If you get the judgment in the Qur'an, then follow it and never look for other sources. If you confront with an issue that you would not find its ruling in the Qur'an, then find it in the Sunnah of the Prophet. if you face a situation, for which there is no ruling in the Book of Allah or in the Sunnah of the Prophet, then decide it according to past precedents that have been unanimously agreed upon. But if you don't get in the Qur'an, the Sunnah or no unanimous judgment was carried out before, then you have the right to proceed to do *ijtihad* and decide, or wait till a unanimous decision is reached. To me, it is better to wait than to decide instantly on your own.¹

B. HADITH: NOT A SOURCE OF TAFSIR

They claimed that the Hadith of the Prophet and the opinions of the Companions of the Prophet should not be regarded as source of interpretation of the Qur'an. For, they are not authentic. They said:

"The reports and narrations could be used as additional aid to the ayat. But since they are simply based on assumptions and not on certainty, Tafsir should not be based on such narrations."²

Simply it means, to reject the hadith of Prophet in the interpretation of the Qur'an. It is far from truth and reality to generalize all ahadith and reports in the same status and to say that they are simply based on assumptions and not on certainty.

¹ Mawdudi, *Sunnat ki Ayini Haythiyat*, Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd. 1963, pp. 116-117, from *Ilam al-Muqi'in*, Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1978, 1/61-62.

² *Ma'arif*, 1/38.

The scholars of hadith made meticulous efforts to discover authentic ahadith from the non-authentic ones and categorized them into various classes. The blind and the deaf only could refute the hadith of the Prophet.

Rationally, the anti-hadith stand does not have a firm ground. For, the people either regard Prophet Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an (*Ma`adh Allah*) or the Messenger of Allah, who received revelations of the Qur'an from Him. In the first instance, the explanation of the author must be given priority; or in the second instance, Messenger's explanation must be accepted without doubt. Because Allah has assigned him the task of explaining the Qur'an. Allah says:

(وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ) (النحل : ٤٤)

“We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message, that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought.”

C. BE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF QUR'ANIC TEXTS

They claimed to remain within the words and texts of the Qur'an, and advised others to do so. They said:

“A commentator of the Qur'an should not exceed the limits of Qur'anic words. For, the words of the Qur'an are self-sufficient and in agreement with its meaning. Allah says:

(وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ) (الأنعام : ١١٥)

“The word of thy Lord doth find its fulfillment in truth and justice: None can change His words.”

Exceeding the limits of the Qur'anic texts will cause grave faults and mistakes.”¹

This principle is a sound one that needs to be complied with. But does Mr. Parvez comply with this principle that he asserts

¹ *Ibid.* p. 39.

to be realized in the interpretation of the Qur'an? The reality shows differently. He assigns strange meanings to the ayat of the Qur'an at various occasions which have no relation to the text of the Qur'an.

Let us read the following ayah and see what Mr. Parvez said about it. Allah says:

(وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ)

(الأنفال : ٤١)

“And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to Allah, - and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer..”

Parvez says in its explanation:

“... Remember, the booty that you collect in the field of war, a fifth should be kept for Allah and His Prophet, i.e. for administrative affairs of the state, and the rest shall be distributed to the needy, especially the needy relatives (of Mujahidun and Shuhada’), orphans, distressed, those who suffered bankruptcy in business, or those who are unable to work and the wayfarers who need help etc.”¹

The above interpretation or rather interpolation of the meaning of the Qur'anic ayat is a sheer example of his crossing the limits of the texts of the Qur'an. He uses his minds freely, regardless of the Qur'an to support it or reject it. His interpretation is in total violation of the texts, Arabic grammar and its style. One who understands Arabic language and is familiar with the Qur'anic style, may easily notice the clear distortion of the interpretation of the Qur'an in the above and many other statements.

D. ARABIC LANGUAGE AND ITS STYLE

He asserts that the Arabic language and its style should be given due consideration in understanding the Qur'an. For, it was revealed in clear perspicuous Arabic language. Allah says:

(بَلِسَانَ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ) (الشعراء : ١٩٥)

¹ Parvez, *Mafhumul-Qur'an*, Lahore: Idarah Tulu` Islam, n.d. p. 404.

"In the perspicuous Arabic tongue."

(قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عَوَجٍ) (الزمر : ٢٨)

"(It is) a Qur'an in Arabic, without any crookedness (therein)".

Therefore, Parvez says, "The Arabic grammar and its rules should not prevail over the Qur'an; but the Qur'an should judge over them."¹

He also accused those who wrote the interpretation of the Qur'an from non-Arab origins by saying:

"Whatever came from their pens, the letters were Arabic, but understanding behind it were belonged to non-Arabs. Hence, Arabic language was corrupted and carried non-Arabic understanding since the first century Hijri. Also it was a strange bitter fact that excepting only few, the majority of those who wrote most of such Arabic books were from non-Arab origin."²

Though Parvez claimed to follow Arabic language style and the meaning that was understood by the Arabs during the time of the Prophet, Parvez easily crossed the limit of the ayat and assigned meaning from his own understanding. He accuses all great scholars of the Past, majority of whom were non-Arabs, which he also acknowledged, for assigning strange meaning to the ayat of the Qur'an. They could not, according to him, properly understand the Qur'an. He, unfortunately a non-Arab though, is the only person today who objectively (!) and correctly (!) understood the ayat of the Qur'an.

E. NO CONTRADICTION IN THE QUR'AN

Mr. Parvez also highlights that there is no contradiction in its texts or its meanings. If someone finds any apparent contradiction, it is due to his lack of understanding of the

¹ *Ibid.* 1/40.

² Parvez, *Lughatul-Qur'an*, Introduction, Lahore: Idarah Tulu` Islam, 1960, p. 8, 14.

Qur'an. The contradiction is in his mind, and not in the Qur'an.¹
Allah says:

(أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا) (النساء : ٨٢)

“Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy.”

It is a sound principle which was upheld by most of the righteous scholars while interpreting the Qur'anic ayat. But unfortunately, Mr. Parvez could not uphold this principle. His Tafsir is full of contradictions which create doubts in the minds of readers about the efficacy and truthfulness of its messages.

He is a blind supporter of communism and socialism; and vehemently condemns capitalism or any kind of possession of wealth. According to him, it is not allowed for anyone to possess any additional wealth, and after death, the wealth shall be the possession of the state. He says:

“The means of sustenance - from beneath the earth or above the earth - shall not be the possession of any individuals. It is solely owned by Allah.”²

But on the other hand, he acknowledges the right of possession for the women and men, and said:

“This false notion should clearly be refuted that the right of possession is solely belonged to men; and not to women. It should be noted clearly that the women possess her own property. It is a wrong contention to say that women cannot earn, and that it is the sole responsibility of men to earn. Men and women both are eligible to work and earn. What men earn, is for them; and what women earn, is for them alone.”³

¹ *Ibid.* 1/40-41.

² *Matalib* 1/107, read also *Tulu` Islam*, March 1979, p. 46

³ *Matalib*, 4/317.

This is a sheer conflict in the interpretation of the Qur'an, which should not occur. It creates doubts in the minds of the readers.

F. NO NASKH IN THE QUR'AN

He rejected the concept of Naskh in the Qur'an totally. According to him, Naskh leads to contradiction, which is impossible to occur in the Qur'an. It is the people's fault in understanding the Qur'an; the contradiction is not in the Qur'an.

He says:

"The concept of Naskh has created many doubts and problems in understanding the Qur'an. The people declared some ayat of the Qur'an abrogated simply by their opinions. Allah's Words are far sacred and holy than being abrogated by the opinions of people. Even the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) himself was not authorized to even change a single word of the Qur'an.

(قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تَلَقَاءِ نَفْسِي) (يونس : ١٥)

"Say: It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it."

There is no abrogated ayah in the Qur'an. Those who declared some ayat of the Qur'an as abrogated, they have committed grave mischief and injustice to the Qur'an."¹

The issue of abrogation in the Qur'an is a known and agreed upon fact among the majority scholars of Ahlus-sunnah. In the early age of Islam, it was only Mu`tazilites who rejected it. Later some neo-Mu`tazilites also emerged, who condemn this concept outright. But a reader in the Qur'an cannot blindly reject the issue of *naskh* in the Qur'an, as Allah Himself established it in some ayat as follows:

(مَا نَنْسَخُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِئُهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا) (البقرة : ١٠٦)

"None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar."

¹ Ma`arif 1/42.

Those who declare major part of the Qur'an as abrogated did grave injustice to the Qur'an, and also those who reject it outright while the Qur'an establishes it at different places.

Parvez could not ignore the places where the Qur'an issued different ruling than the earlier ones. But he issued a different term for it; he names it as "*Uburī Dawr ke Ahkam*" or "Rulings of transitory period". But how could you change the reality by mere changing the term/s? He also agrees to it, when he said:

"By changing the titles or names, its reality or nature do not also change."¹

Also, he names communism as "*Nizam-i Rububiyat*" or "Divine system", which is the same brand of Communism or socialism. The different terms do not change its realities.²

3. WOMEN'S ISSUES IN HIS TAFSIR

He dealt extensively with women's issues in his Tafsir and other articles. Initially, he was supportive of Islamic heritage and culture while comparing with the Western culture and its negative impact on women. But as time went on, his ideas 'progressed' and 'transformed' into new lights from the Western culture. He praises the West for granting equal or better rights to women than men. They deserve to be proud of (!) for granting women better rights to enable them perform jobs that were primarily assigned to men.³

The following issues shall be highlighted in the following:

- A. Women's workplace
- B. Testimony in court
- C. Leadership role of women
- D. Law of Inheritance
- E. Hijab or Niqab

¹ *TI*, April, 1966, p. 63.

² Qasemy, 1/76-77.

³ *TI*, June, 1941, p. 53.

A. WOMEN'S WORKPLACE

Parvez initially advocated for women to live at home, raise and educate children, and do other household activities. He criticized the Western culture for going against nature and engaging women in outside activities. But as time passes by, he changed his stance, and propagated that women should equally participate in the struggles of life like men. For example, he said once:

“From Qur'anic perspective, duties and responsibilities are divided between men and women. Man is charged with earning livelihood, and the woman with the most important responsibility of educating and training children. Therefore, it is evident that to perform such responsibilities, a man has to work outside his home, and a woman should remain inside her home..

It is a real fact that home plays a significant role in the life of a human being. Home does not refer to a mere building of bricks and stones; it is a place of peace and tranquility for both man and woman - a training center for their gifted skills - a house of education and sound training. The women are charged to run this important training centre.”¹

How beautifully he also said:

"Nature did not distinguish in the status of man and woman, but in their responsibilities. It is due to their biological differences in their creation, for which she is not able to perform regular activities during certain period of time.”²

"In formation of humanity, the status of home and family is of fundamental significance. The society that do not give importance to this foundation (as it occurs in Europe and Russia), it destroys future generations. The woman has to play a prime role in making home a safe haven and raising a quality

¹ Parvez, *Tahirah ke Nam*, Lahore: Idarah Tulu` Islam, 1972, p. 200.

² *Ibid.* 229.

generation. If she deserts this responsibility and takes the charges of men and their duties, that is an injustice to humanity by itself."¹

Not only that, Parvez used to criticize Western approach towards women. He did not subscribe to the Western freedom of women and equal status between sexes. He said once:

"Europe has realized its folly stand in bringing woman out of her natural limits; and now it wants to call her back again. But they do not perhaps know that if woman advances a step forward, it goes beyond the ability of the Nature itself to bring her backward."²

Umar Ahmad 'Uthmani, one of the close associates of Mr. Parvez, says:

"Man and woman are like two wheels of a car for one's life. There are distinctions in their abilities and characteristic traits. Some traits of men are as such that they are not available in women; and vice versa. But most of the traits are shared and readily available in both."³

Parvez adopted a modern approach in his later life and desired women also participate in all activities besides men. He says:

"It is essential for a woman that she performs her prime responsibilities first, and then she participates in other activities like men."⁴

"There is no difference between a man and a woman in any aspect of life."⁵

¹ *Ibid.* 232.

² *TI*, June, 1941, p. 50.

³ Uthmani, Umar Ahmad, *Fiqh al-Qur'an*, Karachi, Pakistan: Idarah Fikr Islami, n.d. 3/50.

⁴ Tahirah: 232.

⁵ *TI*, February 1973, p. 39.

"Biologically, there is difference in the creation of man and woman. The difference is basically to perform their natural jobs as assigned by God. Apart from that, on the aspect of humanity, there is no difference between a man and a woman. Their workplace is also same, and same is their jobs and the results it produce."¹

From above quotations, it is evident that he adopted a more modern approach in his later life. In the earlier life, he was critical of Western culture and thought, but appreciated the same in his later stage of life.

Islamic Perspective

Islam does not support extreme position towards the work of women. It does not allow her to engage in activities that are reserved for men. And also she is not allowed to engage in Haram works like in a Bar, serving haram foods, Stewardess in a ship or airplane, for it requires her to stay nights in foreign lands without any Muhrim. But she is allowed to work in jobs that are solely for women and also for both. The Qur'an mentions about two daughters of Shu`ayb (A.S.) who were helping him in tending the flocks of cattle (Al-Qasas: 23-25). Asma' bt. Abi Bakr, the wife of Zubayr ibnul 'Awwam was helping in the works of her husband.²

Sometimes, society is in need of her work, like nursing, gynecology, educating females etc. These jobs are reserved for women. She also might be divorced, or parents are old and need help from her.

It should also be remembered that her prime job is to train her children. She is the best school for her children. if you train the mothers, your children are well-trained. How beautifully has Hafiz Ibrahim, the Poet of Nile, cited in his poetry:

أعددت شعبا طيب الأعراق الأم مدرسة إذا أعددتها

¹ *TI*, June, 1977, p. 17.

² *Bukhari*, Kitab al-Khumus, No. 2982.

"Mother is regarded as school by herself; if you train her, you train a nation with sound mind and lineage."

But this permission of work is limited to the following conditions:

1. Valid act: She should not engage herself in haram acts, like in Cinema, in Bar, in Dance party, or the one to serve wine etc.

2. Don't violate the limits of Shari`ah: If she comes out of her home, she should wear proper Hijab and maintain valid modesty and decency.

3. It should not be at the expense of other religious obligations like prayers, fastings, her jobs towards husband, children and family etc.¹

B. TESTIMONY IN COURT

The scholars of Islam commonly agree, or let's say unanimously agree, that the women's testimony will be accepted in matters related to her or both males and females. The matters that are exclusively related to women such as major or minor impurity, delivery of a child, breastfeeding, 'iddah, ladies' swimming pool, etc., her witness alone and not that of the males, will be considered. Some matters that are related to both males and females, like marriage, divorce, financial matters; two women's testimony equals one man. In the case of Hudud and Qisas [shari`ah punishments], since she is not usually a part or gets extremely terrified, her witness will not be entertained.²

¹ See for details, Qaradawi Yousuf, *Malamih al-Mujtama` al-Muslim*, Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1993, pp.385-393.

² Al-Jaza'iri, Abdur Rahman; *Al-Fiqh 'ala al-Madhahib al-Arba`ah*, 4/135, 212; see also *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, Shahadah, Shurt al-Ada'..

PARVEZ'S VIEWPOINT

Parvez and his followers like 'Umar 'Uthmani disagrees with this stand of general scholars. The Qur'an, according to them, did not distinguish or "discriminate" between sexes in giving testimony in all matters. Parvez says:

"The Qur'an, in no place, discriminates between males and females in giving testimony. The Qur'an simply mentions "Witness", regardless of being male or female. The Qur'an did not specify gender of the witness, nor declared it as a prerequisite. In a single place, it talks about a male and two females in witness. If we understand this, it will not leave any confusion in the matter..."¹

They criticized such laws and those who enacted them vehemently, as they said:

"These laws have been enacted at a time when the women were purchased openly in the markets."²

"Our laws of jurisprudence were enacted by males, and they kept the males at the superior position, and the rights of women were shattered..."

"Since such laws were made in an environment where injustice was prevalent over justice, and the women were treated as inferior to men. Women were subjected to discrimination, injustice, humiliation and disgrace."³

AYAHS OF SURAH AL-BAQARAH AND PARVEZ

Allah subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى (البقرة: ٢٨٢)

¹ *TI*, March, 1983, p. 54.

² *Ibid.* p. 47.

³ *Tahirah*: 21-22.

“And get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as ye choose, for witnesses, so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her.”

Parvez says in the interpretation of the above ayah:

The Qur'an did not command for the testimonies of two women, one after the other, making it equal to one man. The Qur'an merely said: if one of the sisters gets confused due to fear or anxiety, then the other sister could remind her. This clearly establishes the fact that if one does not face any confusion or forgetfulness, the other needs not to remind her, and her testimony alone will be sufficient."¹

This is a clear distortion of the Qur'anic ayah as he tries to put the female testimony in the equal position of a man. The Qur'an did not ask to provide two female witnesses if the males were not present. If she were to be equal, then two females would be sufficient. Also, why she needs to be reminded only by female friend, and not by her male counterpart as a compulsory witness? The fact is, if she alone testifies, and the other friend is present and remains silent, it would be considered from both.

REALITIES IN THE AYAH:

If we deeply ponder over the Qur'anic ayah, the following realities could easily be discovered:

1. The Qur'an's command to get **two witnesses** from **men** refers that it is primarily the responsibility of men, and not of women.

2. The Qur'an clearly states that “**If there are not two men**”, meaning that the second option could only be accepted when the first option is impossible or not available. But in the presence of the first option, the second becomes irrelevant.

¹ *Tahirah: 67.*

3. The Qur'an did not ask to present two women as witnesses if two men are not present. Rather it says to present **one man and two women**. If she were to be equal to man, two women would be sufficient.

4. The Qur'an did not allow us to have **witnesses only from women**. For, this matter relates basically to man, and the man's testimony must be present.

5. The Qur'an asked for two women besides a man, so that the **two women complement each other**. If one errs, other may remind her. For, financial matters are basically men-related problems, and she pays less attention to it.¹

Abdul Majid Daryabadi also quotes some Western scholars who confirmed above statements. Women, they said, are usually led by her emotions, than by her minds. Bauer, a Western scholar says:

“We are again and again forced to admit that a woman is not in a position to judge objectively, without being influenced by her emotions.”²

“In a court of justice women are more often found guilty of perjury than men. It is indeed to be generally questioned, whether they should be allowed to take an oath at all.”³

C. LEADERSHIP ROLE:

Islamic scholars generally do not agree that the women could be leaders of a state or a country. Women's primary job is to train children and provide them with sound education. She could participate in services that are reserved for women, or could be performed by both males and females. This is basically due to a hadith of Prophet that he said:

¹ See for details, Abdul Majid DaryaBadi, *Tafsir Majidi*, Lahore: Taj Company Ltd. n.d. vol. 1, p. 196-197.

² *Ibid.* 197.

³ *Ibid.*

لن يفلح قوم ولوا أمرهم امرأة

“A nation would never prosper if it assigns women to the post of leadership.”¹

But Parvez and modern scholars do not like to agree with this. According to them, women also could hold the post of leadership. Parvez presents the ayah of Amr bi'l Ma`ruf and Nahi 'ani'l Munkar, and says that, it is the responsibility of both men and women (9:71), which could only be performed by leaders of a state. That proves that women could also be leaders. Let us read the ayah:

(كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ) (آل عمران : ١١٠)

"Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah."

He comments the following:

“It is evident from this ayah that this noble job of inviting people towards nobility and forbidding vices is not the sole responsibility of men alone; it is the job of women as well. This gives the answer to the basic question that whether or not women may participate in leadership role of the country. It was also said that Amr bi'l Ma`ruf and Nahi 'ani'l Munkar is the responsibility of Islamic state (22:41), and according to ayah 9:71, women may also participate in carrying out this responsibility. Therefore, they may take part in the leadership of the country. (See also ayah 9: 112).”²

He also raised the same issue in his Journal *Tulu` Islam*, and says:

“It has been widely circulated that in Islam women are not allowed to take part in the leadership role of the state. This notion is contradictory to the teachings of the Qur'an. The ayah establishes the fact that it is the responsibility of the state to

¹ Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, chapter 77, Hadith No. 4163, 6686.

² Tafsir Matalibul-Furqan 4/190.

command for nobility and forbid vices. In other places, it is clearly stated that the men and women both are charged with this responsibility, and not men alone.”¹

ANALYSIS:

Parvez's opinion cannot have a sound ground based on the above ayah. It was not a prerequisite to have authoritative power to command what is virtue and to forbid what is vice. It was rather mentioned that one of the prime responsibilities of the people in power is Amr bi'l Ma`ruf.. As a single legislative ruling of an authoritative power could correct many vices in society, which would not be possible in hundreds of years by the preachers with no authority. Amr is not used for power or authority alone; it is used in many other meanings, such as 'encouragement', 'advice', 'persuasion', 'temptation' etc. Consider the following:

(قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصْلَابُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ) (هود : ٨٧)

They said: "O Shu'aib! does thy (religion of) prayer command thee that we leave off the worship which our fathers practiced, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property?"

(إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ) (البقرة : ١٦٩)

"For he commands you what is evil and shameful, and that ye should say of Allah that of which ye have no knowledge."

The above ayat establish that the word 'Amr' is not only used for command with authority of power. What kind of authority of power Satan possess to deviate people and command them for evils? Or, do the prayers of Prophet Shu`ayb also possess some ruling authority to prohibit his nation from following their ancestor's religion?.

¹ *TI*, January 1980, p. 30, December 1983, p. 54.

PROPHET'S PREACHING IN MAKKAH

The Prophet Muhammad did not possess any ruling authority while in Makkah. He became leader of the state only after migrating to Madinah. The ayah of Surah A`raf which was unanimously a Makkan surah,¹ establishes that the Prophet made Amr bi'l Ma`ruf.. in Makkah as well. Read the following:

(الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) (الأعراف: ١٥٧)

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) - in the Law and the Gospel - for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil.”

This shows that the command of nobility and prohibiting from vices was among the primary responsibility of the Prophet (SAAS) in Makkah as well.

Sayyid Mawdudi mentions that in Egypt the women were placed at the key posts of the country. It made the secrets of the country revealed to the enemy Israel, and also they could not perform jobs as efficiently and promptly as men could especially in jobs requiring physical energy and skills.²

MODERATE STAND

Islam does not allow women to be the leader of a country or state. Islam wants her to put all efforts in raising a sound generation by providing training and education to her children.

This job of leadership is so hectic and tough a job that a woman cannot usually handle. You may find some iron ladies

¹ *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Al-A`raf, 7/144. Mawdudi, *Tafhimul-Qur'an*, Lahore: Tarjumanul-Qur'an, 1990, vol. 2, p. 5.

² Qasemy 2/779, quoting from Mawdudi, *Islami Riyasat*, Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd. 1967.

who are much stronger than men. But they are exceptions, and the rules of *shari`ah* cannot be based on rare examples.¹

The scholars have different opinions about the validity of the post of Judges for women. Majority scholars including Maliki, Shafi`i and Hanbali do not allow this, as the earlier *hadith* includes the position of Judge as well. But Imam Abu Hanifah allows her to be Judge in the matters other than in *Hudud* and *Qisas*. That means, if she is allowed to give testimony, she is also allowed to be the Judge. Imam Tabari, the writer of Tafsir, mentions that she can hold the post of Chief Justice without any condition. For, she is allowed to be *Mufti*, then she must have the privilege of being a Qadi as well. The same is held by Ibn Hazm.²

Apart from that, the women are allowed to hold the post of Rector, Dean, Chair person of a foundation or institution, member of a parliament and so on.³

D. WOMEN AND INHERITANCE

The Qur'an has declared in the ayah of *Mirath* (4:11) that the males will get double the females in inheritance. It is due to his huge expenses in life and various obligations that he is obliged, and the woman is relieved from such obligations. A man marries and spends dowers and pays for gifts etc. But a woman receives dower and also the gifts, making her equal or even earning more than her brother in wealth. That is why a woman usually gets richer than her husband. For, he is charged with all expenses, and she is not, regardless of her financial condition.

This is mentioned in the Qur'an as a guiding principle in Islamic inheritance. Allah says:

¹ Qaradawi, *Fatawa Mu`asirah*, 2/372-389.

² See for details, *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, on "Al-Qada". <http://feqh.al-islam.com/bookhier.asp?DocID=100&Mode=0>

³ See for details, Qaradawi, *Fatawa Mu`asirah*, Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1990, 2/372-389.

(يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ) (النساء : ١١)

“Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females.”

PARVEZ'S VIEWPOINT

Parvez does not like to agree with this being as guiding principle. He appreciates Western culture that it gave women more shares in inheritance than the men. He says:

"It is false to say that the Qur'an made it as a guiding principle that the women will get half the men in inheritance."¹

“Europe is proud to give women more rights than men. It made women participate daringly in the jobs that are assigned primarily for men.”²

Parvez is full of praise for the Western culture that it assigns equal or even more rights to women than men. He loves this culture of the West and tries to interpret the *ayat* of the Qur'an to make it closer to the Western ideology.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF INHERITANCE

It is agreed upon by all scholars throughout Islamic history that males will inherit double the females in the shares of inheritance. The Qur'an put it as a guiding principle in its ayah of Surah Nisa'. It is not to discriminate women from men; but to ensure a just distribution of properties. For, in the struggles of life, the men have to carry burdens which women don't usually have to.

Sayyid Mawdudi mentions:

"This is the initial guiding principle of Islam in the matter of inheritance that the male's portion is double the females. It was

¹ *Matalib* 2/321.

² *TI*, June, 1941, p. 53.

due to the fact that Islamic *Shari`ah* has made males responsible for family expenses, and not the females. Therefore, it was the demand of justice that females should get less than the males in the shares of inheritance."¹

Abul Kalam Azad says:

"The basic principle in this matter is that the boys should get double the girls."²

Abdul Majed Daryabadi says:

"This is a general principle that the boy should get double shares and the girl should get single shares, no matter what their number is, one or more. Many world religions and cultures do not give any shares to the females at all. Even in Jahily Arabia, women were totally deprived from any shares in inheritance. It was the males, and only the able bodied males, who could take part in battles, will inherit. It was an unjust and unnatural law practiced by those people... Moreover, a married woman gets inheritance from both her own parents, and also from her husband's inheritance. So she does not get less in the real facts."³

Shaykh Yousuf Qaradawi explains it through an example. If a person dies leaving behind one son and one daughter, and an amount of 150 thousand dollars. Naturally, the son will inherit 100 and the daughter 50 thousand dollars. The son got married and paid expenses amounting approximately 25 thousand dollars; and the daughter got married and earned a dower and gifts of approximately 25 thousand dollars, making both equal. Moreover, the son has to spend continuously, which the daughter is exempted from.⁴ This shows the equitable just distribution of Islam in inheritance.

¹ *Tafhimul-Qur'an* 1/326.

² *Tarjumanul-Qur'an* (Azad), 1/361.

³ *Tafsir Majidi*, pp. 180-181.

⁴ Qaradawi, *Malamih al-Mujtama` al-Islamiy*, pp. 385-393.

E. HIJAB OR NIQAB

The Islamic scholars of Indo-Pak subcontinent debated frequently on the matter of Hijab or Niqab. Generally, they stand on three groups: Traditionists, modern and moderate scholars.

TRADITIONIST SCHOLARS

The traditionist scholars of Indo-Pak subcontinent did not allow women in general to open her face outside her home. It was seriously discouraged to go out except in emergencies, and also should be clad in a 'Burqa' [large gown covering her whole body including face].

Sayyid Mawdudi believes that In Islamic society of Madinah, *Hijab* includes face and hands as well.¹ Muhammad Qasimi advocates that the command for lowering gaze also relates to those who are related to her at home.² He also differentiates between 'Satr' and 'Hijab'. According to him, the face and hands are not parts of Satr, and they can be uncovered in front of *Muhrim* males like father, brothers, uncles etc. But 'Satr' (coverable parts) should not be exposed even before parents. It could only be exposed before husband alone..³

These scholars present various arguments and proofs to substantiate their claims. They present the incident of 'Ayishah ® when she was left alone behind the army of the Prophet in the campaign of Bani Mustalaq, as a proof. It was said that she slept till the morning, when Safwan bin Mu`attal passed by, who was also left behind for final checking or oversleeping, and he came to know her as he saw her before the revelation of *Hijab*. He cited *Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raji`un* in a loud voice, which made 'Ayishah woke up, and covered her face with the scarf.⁴

¹ Mawdudi, *Tafhim*, Ahzab: 53, 4/121.

² Qasimi: 757

³ *Ibid.* 758.

⁴ *Bukhari*, Kitab al-Maghazi, chapter Hadith al-Ifk, no. 2494, *Muslim*, No. 2770.

This is a proof that face was included in *Hijab*, as 'Ayishah ® covered her face immediately when Safwan came close.

Also in another incident Umm Salamah ® and Maimunah ® were together with the Prophet. Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum came to visit the Prophet. The Prophet asked them to observe *Hijab* from him. They exclaimed: "Is not he a blind man that cannot see us?" The Prophet said: "Are you also blind that you cannot see him?" Umm salamah clarified that this incident was after the revelation of *Hijab*.¹

PARVEZ AND MODERN SCHOLARS

Parvez and his followers advocated that the face and hands are not parts of *Hijab* for women. They could remain unveiled. Shari`ah does not require women to cover her face and hands.

He criticizes the stand of traditional scholars who propagate for *Niqab*:

"It has been claimed by our scholars that the woman should remain imprisoned behind four walls of her home. Even if she needs to go out for serious necessities or for any dangers, she should cover herself totally so that she looks like a 'Walking Tent'. This practice is simply imposed on them by their religious scholars who pose themselves like the *Ahbar* and *Ruhban* of Jews and Christians."²

Umar Ahmad 'Uthmani, an associate of Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, says:

"In Indo-Pak subcontinent, the common notion about *Hijab* is that the women should never go out of their homes. If they need to go out of their homes for journey or other reasons, they should veil themselves totally under *Burqa`* and cover her face, so that the people should not and could not look at them."³

¹ *Tirmidhi*, Kitab al-Adab, No. 2778, *Abu Da'wud*, Kitab al-Libas, No. 4112.

² *TI*, May-June, 1982, p. 89.

³ *Fiqhul-Qur'an* 3/305.

"The command to lower their gaze was simply given to men, so that they should not look at other women. But if the woman come out covering her whole body parts including face and hands, so why a man is then asked to lower his gaze? What is need for it? Even though he looks ahead or above, what could he see from her?"¹

Parvez regards the *ayah* of Surah Ahzab 32-33 for all Muslim females, whereas his associate Umar Uthmani limits the rulings of the *ayat* for the wives of the Prophet. The *ayah* reads as follows:

(يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا. وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى) (الأحزاب : ٣٣-٣٢)

"O Consorts of the Prophet! ye are not like any of the (other) women: if ye do fear (Allah), be not too complaisant of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech (that is) just. And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance.

Umar Uthmani comments on the above *ayat* as follows:

"The address in these *ayat* was made to the chaste wives of the Prophet (SAAS). From the beginning it was mentioned that the wives of the Prophet were not like ordinary and common ladies. This means the rulings mentioned in the *ayat* were special rulings for the wives of the Prophet alone, and not for others. But if the general Muslims and their wives treat themselves in the place of the Prophet and his dignified wives, they could follow this ruling; but we cannot regard this ruling as the common ruling for all people."²

Regarding the *ayah* 53 of Surah Ahzab, in which Allah asked Muslims to maintain Hijab between them and the wives of the Prophet while asking them for any necessities, Umar Uthmani

¹ *Ibid.* p. 318.

² *Fiqhul-Qur'an*, 3/306.

says:

"Allah has commanded special guidelines in this regard for the wives of the Prophet: Do not enter the house of the Prophet for food without permission; do not go so early to wait for its preparation; do not wait for friendly chats after enjoying foods; and most importantly, don't ever desire to marry the wives of the Prophet after his demise are some of the rulings that are not related to the common Muslim women; but for the wives of the Prophet."¹

MODERATE SCHOLARS

Islamic society is based on Iman and virtues. It commands for noble characters and forbids from all practices that may lead to *Fitnah* and heresy.

The Qur'an asked Muslim male and female to lower their gazes and guard their modesties (Nur 30-31). It also asked females not to disclose their inherent beauty but what appears by itself, "Illa Ma Zahara minha" (Nur: 31).

The scholars generally or unanimously agree that it means to cover her whole body parts except 'Face' and 'Hands'. This is among the necessities for women to keep them open. If they were asked to cover it always, there will be difficulties and hardships on women. Allah says:

(هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ) (الحج : ٧٨)

"He has chosen you and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion."

But it does not let one to show and expose her beauty among the public to attract the attention of the 'guys'. In a society that is prevalent with corrupt people that usually prey on women and young teenage girls, they could prevent women from showing their faces in public. But in today's society, where

¹ *Ibid.* 307.

ladies are available in markets and other places with mini dresses and skirts, how would you find people preying on modest ladies who cover the whole bodies except the face alone. In the Western countries, it is absurd to say that they should cover the whole bodies. The exposed girls are cheaply available everywhere there and also most of the countries today.

FACE IS NOT 'AWRAH

Most of the scholars and schools of jurisprudence agree that face is not an 'awrah that need to be covered. Ahnaf, Maliki, Hanbali, Shafi'i (in the famous report) and also Zahiri scholars all agree that it is not 'awrah, hence need not to be covered. Ibn Hazm Zahiri, who is well-known for his literal interpretation of the Qur'anic ayat, said: The ayah (Nur: 31) *وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ* "That they should draw their veils over their bosoms" indicates that 'face' is not an 'awrah', and need not be covered; or else, the Qur'an would say, "They should draw their veils over their faces".

It was reported in Bukhari and Muslim that Fadl bin 'Abbas was with the Prophet in his last Hajj, while a pretty girl approached the Prophet and asked him a question. Fadl started looking at her beautiful face, and also the girl at him. The Prophet turned the face of Fadl to the other direction.¹ This shows that faces could be kept open.

The ladies in the time of the Prophet used to perform prayers keeping their faces and hands open. It was required from the *Muhrim* ladies to keep their faces open.

Some people tried to present the hadith of Umm Salamah and Maymunah when the Prophet asked them to go in veils as Abdullah bin Umm Maktum approached. The hadith is not free from defects and cannot stand against the hadith of Bukhari and Muslim about Fatimah bint Qays, who the Prophet asked to observe her 'Iddah at the house of Ibn Umm Maktum. For the

¹ Bukhari, Kitab al-Hajj, no. 1442.

Prophet said, فإنه رجل أعمى تضعين ثيابك, he is a blind man and you could easily and comfortably stay in his house without much trouble about the dress up.¹

Abu Da'wud made the ruling of the Hadith of Umm Salamah and Maimunah limited specifically for the wives of the Prophet.² Dr. Yousuf Qaradawi also preferred this, as the wives of the Prophet were not like common women, and they receive double rewards for noble acts and multiple punishments for vicious acts.

The custom of *Niqab* as existed in some Muslim societies today is not as Shari`ah obligation, but as a traditional practice with them. Not all societies follow this. In Indo-pak subcontinent it is strictly maintained in traditional Muslim families. But the situation is changing now. Many people today follow moderate stand, while others remain extreme in either sides: Extreme freedom or total restriction. But Islam loves moderate stand without extremism. Allah says:

(وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا) (البقرة: ١٤٣)

"Thus have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.³

CONCLUSION

Parvez has written *Tafsir Matalibul-Furqan* in a view to present Islam from a modern perspective and to bridge a gap between Islamic and Western civilization. A wide reading of his *tafsir* and other writings prove that in doing so, he rejected the authority and role of hadith of Prophet in the interpretation of the Qur'an. He overwhelmingly used reason and rejected or

¹ *Muslim*, Kitab Talaq, no. 1480.

² *Abu Da'wud*, no. 4112, 2/462.

³ See for details, Qaradawi, *Fatawa Mu`asirah*, 1/429-433.

manipulated the Qur'anic interpretation to befit his reasoning and the modern culture.

In Women's issues, we find that he is much closer to the Western civilization than to Islam. He encouraged women's free mixing with the opposite gender in the struggles of life, rejected Qur'anic principle of inheritance, opposed the unanimous opinions of Islamic scholars in women's testimony in the court, and also her leadership role in an Islamic state. In doing so, he tried to get popularity from modern men and women by transforming Islam to befit the Western culture and the developed world.

Studies are needed on his thought extensively on many other issues relating to condemnation of *hadith* of the Prophet, misinterpretation of Qur'anic ayat, rejecting miracles of the Prophet, unseen issues etc.

May Allah enable us to get *Hidayah* from the eternal Book, the al-Qur'an, and present its teachings to the humanity in a clear objective straightforward approach.

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