

TOWARD A FEMINISM AND QURANIC HERMENEUTICS ON GENDER EQUALITY: A STUDY OF SHAYKH ADAM ABDULLAH AL-ILORY'S WORKS

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Abstract

Feminism is a branch of modern literary theory, pursuing equal rights and legal protection for women in politics, education, economic and culture. It also posits that men and women are equal, both of them deserve equal rights and values in the society. The struggle emanated from Europe and America, when women were considered to be inferior to their male counterparts. Recently, the agitation has spread all over the places, which includes Islamic societies. Amongst the notable scholars in Yorubaland called for women right was Shaykh Adam Al-Ilory, being a renowned Arabic and Islamic reformer and social critics. It is therefore the interest of this essay to examine the questions of feminism in the works and how he succeeded in the interpretation of Quranic passages to answer the women's rights and gender equality. The study adopts descriptive and analytical method of research. The findings reveal that there are no evidences in the Al-Qur'an that women should be subjected to oppression and disrespect against the attitude of some people due to the lack of understanding Quranic text. The paper therefore, suggests among others; that proper interpretation must be given to the Quranic texts regarding the women's right. Islam must also be well understood from its source; that is Al-Qur'an rather from personal opinions.

Keywords: *Al-Qur'an, Hermeneutics, Feminism, Equality, Adam Al-Ilory.*

1. Introduction

It is a known fact that in many traditions and cultures around the world, women are discriminated and neglected. They are considered as slaves or mere property of men, used as chattel and discarded thereafter. They are seen as unimportant and anything relating to them are so treated alike. Raman *et al*: (2005:115) states the thinking of Aristotle thus, "female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities". In pre-Mendelian days men regarded their sperm as the active seeds which give form to the waiting ovum, which lacks identity till it receives the male's impress". Yusuf (2000:76) adds that "in the Greek, Roman and Indian societies, women suffered all forms of cruelty, oppression and injustice such that in the Indian culture a wife used to be cremated along with her deceased husband". According to Opeloye (1999:156), some religions are also notice if being biased against women; "Hinduism denies women every right of independence. Buddhism believes that salvation, which is the goal of human life, cannot be attained in the company of women. While Judaism holds women responsible for all vices and evils. The Christianity likens

women to Eve and they are consequently believe to be co-sharers in God's sentence passed on them till this day" In Africa, the women's conditions are very similar to other societies. According to Al-Ilory (2012) women neither have independence nor access to education or properties. They only engage in farming or weaving and buying, and selling to support the financial status of their husbands. Similarly, women in Arabian society were not exceptional, they also faced degradation, humiliation and deprivation before the advent of Islam. *Al-Qur'an*.16:57 corroborates that female child was buried alive for fear of poverty. An increase in the number of female children is considered as an economic burden and the fear of the humiliation frequently caused by girls being captured by a hostile tribe.

In light of this, people from different backgrounds demand for equal right of women in the society. This campaign neither knows boundaries nor gender. Recently, the concept of feminism is gradually gaining momentum in various societies, which include Islamic societies. *Al-Qur'an* being the primary and most reliable source of Islam, scholars strongly considering its interpretations as reliable source in addressing questions of gender equality. The roles and contributions of such scholars cannot be neglected. In this regard Shaykh Adam was regarded a foremost among Nigerian scholars promote the course of women right in his several works. So, this research work is set out to examine the contributions of Shaykh Adam in addressing the issues of women right, ranging from women's mode of dress, right to education, spiritual status of women, early child marriage, early marriage. The study adopted descriptive and analytical methods of research. In this regard special attention is giving to some of his works such as *al-Islam al-Yaom wa Ghadan*, (Islam: Today and Tomorrow), *Nizām al-Ta'alīm al-Arabī wa Tārīkhu fil-Ālam al-Islāmī*, (History of System of Arabic Education in Islamic worlds) *al-Islām wa Taqalīd al-Jāhiliyah*: (Islam and Ignorance Practice).

2. Conceptualizing Feminism

Feminism is a struggle seeking equal rights and opportunities for women in all walks of life as available to men. It started in western world and later got wider acceptance in 1800 in Europe and America. The campaign continued relentlessly until certain right were granted to women, such as right to vote, hold public office, work, earn fair wages, equal pay and eliminate the gender pay gap, own property, receive education, enter contracts, secure equal rights within marriage, and entitled maternity leave. Feminism movement have also worked to ensure access to legal abortions and social integration and to protect women and girls from rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. Changing in dress and acceptable physical activity have often been part of feminism movements. It is noteworthy that the feminism movement started by the middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America. In United Kingdom, were Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of "A Vindication of the Right of Women (1792); Sara M-Grimke, the owner of "Letter on Equality of Sex and the Condition of Women (1833). In the same vain, the efforts of some critics like Julia Kristeva, Cheri Krammarac, Barrie Thorn were acknowledged in launching attack on some literary works that portrayed women in bad manner. Feminism campaign according to Ropers-Huilman, (2003) based on three principal motives; believe that women has something

valuable to contribute to every aspect of the society; Struggle against oppression that prevents them from achieving their potentials or gain full participation in society, and working toward social transformation.

It is also a worthwhile to state that the feminism, since its commencement has passed through different stages and waves in dealing with different issues; (I) the first wave occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It involved some of the foremothers of liberal feminism such as Elizabeth Candy Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage who advocated for divorce laws to protect the rights of women. (II) The second wave came in the 1960s and 1970s. Their campaign included right for equal pay, the right to live free from both physical and sexual violence and the reproductive rights- like access to contraception and safe and legal abortion. (III) The third wave started during the 1990s till date. This stage is an inclusive form of feminism that considers things like race, ethnicity and sexual identity. It recognizes that every woman's experiences are different, but continues to fight for the same rights and principles as the second wave. (<https://rosie.org.au/our-world/womens-rights/what-is-feminism>) (Accessed on 2nd April 2020)

3. Islamic Feminism

The Feminism movement has recently spread and warmly accepted by many societies with different dynamics. Some of them are, Black feminism, Post-feminism, French feminism, Socialist feminism, Liberal feminism, Postcolonial feminism and Multiracial feminism. Similarly, a religion /theology that looks for reconsidering of issues of women in scriptures context.

Islam Feminism is a branch that appeared under nomenclature of religion, which claims full equality of Muslims, in public and private life. It is a belief that Islamic teaching at its inception presented women as half of the society, offered them all opportunities that could enable them to develop their natural abilities. Thus, they should be given right to participate effectively in all issues relating to the society; materially, intellectually and spiritually.

The concept of Islamic Feminism has spread into integral parts of Arab and Islamic worlds by reinterpreting the *Qur'anic* and *Hadith* text in the name of *Ijtihād* (Personal interpretation and application of legal text) or critical review of classical commentaries in order to provide new interpretations of the latter that aim at socio-political and economic equality with men. The Islam Feminism is using a concept called "*Musawah*", means equality. This is a concept that was launched in 2009 in Kuala Lumpur and later spread to other part of Islamic nations by a group of both Muslim brother and sister with popular name known as "Sister in Islam" (SIS). The group consists peoples of different backgrounds, ranging from Muslim activists, scholars, legal practitioners and policy-makers from forty-seven Islam nations like Egypt, Gambia, Turkey and Pakistan, just to mention a view. The movement claims that Islam is inherently biased toward women in all aspects. Likewise, the practice of patriarchy idea among some Muslims occurred as a result of misinterpretation given to some Qur'anic texts. Amongst the notable individual frontier of Islamic Feminism are Amina Wadud, who is an African-American scholar, an author of book "*Qur'ān and Women: Reading the Sacred Text from a Women Perspective*" Omailma Abou- Bakr, Rifaat Hassan, and Asma Barlas, Hasan al-Tuabi of Sudan and others.

Though, it is clear from the *Al-Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* that women are the most respected gender in Islam. They are never being disrespect under any circumstances as claimed by some theories. Islam gave life and dignity to women, which humanity had never witnessed in all its civilizations. It restored the honour of women and considered them equal to men as life partner. It gave them right to religion, social affair, politics, economic, education, financial independent, inheritance and work opportunity. For instance, *Al-Qur'ān* 4:32 calls for equality in the right to earn a living. Likewise, *Al-Qur'ān*. 33:35 stands for equality in worship Allah by both men and women. Islam further talks about equality on right to education, The Prophet was reported to have said; “*Seeking knowledge is compulsory upon every male and female.*” ” (*Sunah Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 224*) *Al-Qur'ān* 5:38. also states that there is also equality in reward for good deed and punishment for disobeying Allah.

4. Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory

Shaykh Adam was an Arabic and Islamic scholar, a reformer and asocial critics. He was born in 1917 by Abdul-Baqi bn Ḥabībullah bn ‘Abdullah in a town called Waza, in the Dendi Local Government, Republic of Benin, the hometown of his mother ‘A’ishah, who was a princess of the reigning King of the town. His father hailed from Ilorin, kwara State, Nigeria. He started Arabic-Islamic education at its early age from his father. He then proceeded to various scholars in seeking more knowledge. The first among them was Shaykh Salihu (Esin-ni-yoo-biwa) (d.1984) at Ibadan in 1934 for the intermediate level. He later learnt from Shaykh ‘Umar Agbaji (d.1974) in Lagos, in 1939, under whom he studied number of Islamic and Arabic books. Thereafter, he met Shaykh Adam Namaji of Kano (d.1944), from whom he acquired advance knowledge on the branches of Arabic language, like Rhetoric, Literature, Composition, Poetry and Logic. Similarly, he learned from Sayed Musaal-Amin who was a trader from Syria that settled down in Lagos.

In 1946, Shaykh Adam visited al-Azhar University in Cairo, where he subjected himself to examination on different subjects such as Tafsīr, Fiqh, ‘Usul, Tajwīd, Akhlāq, Naḥu, Sarf, Balāghah and al-‘Arūd and-Qāafiyah. He successful passed in all the subjects he was examined. Subsequently, he was awarded a certificate of teaching Arabic and Islamic studies, which was equivalent to Old Secondary School Level of *Al-Azhar*. While he was in Cairo, he pursued knowledge in teaching methodologies and school administration. After a while in Cairo, he proceeded to *Makkah* for pilgrimage, where he interacted with some notable scholars. He also visited Sudan, Senegal and Somalia, where he attended many conferences and searched for Islamic materials. (Agaka, 2012)

On his return to Nigeria in 1947, he took teaching appointment as an Arabic and Islamic teacher from *Ansar-ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Abeokuta branch. After a short while, he quited the job for an establishment of his own Arabic and Islamic school, which is popularly called “*Markaz al-Ta’alīm al-‘Arabī al-Islāmī*” (Arabic and Islamic Training Centre). The school was founded on 16th April 1952 at Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, in a rented apartment. After three years of its commencement, it was relocated to Lagos, which was the capital of Nigeria then, for the easy contact of the people from various parts of the world. The school was the first organized

Arabic School in Yorubaland of South West of Nigeria, with distinct physical structures of classrooms, hostels, mosques, clinic and building for teachers and other administrative staff. In this regard, Opeloye and Makinde (2012:7) remarks thus,

Prior to 1952, Yoruba land including the area today known as southwester Nigeria never had modern standard Arabic school. What was common were the traditional Al-Al-Qur'ān ic school that operated in mosques or known as *Ile-kewu*. The first modern standard Arabic school surfaced in 1952. This was *Markaz-* institute of Arabic and Islamic Training Centre established by our illustrious scholar, shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory in April of that year.

The school attracted students from all over Nigeria in particular and most of neighbouring countries, like Republic of Benin, Ivory Coast among others. Today, the school had produced a number of scholars occupying different positions in human endeavours. Some are in the field of Arabic and Islamic in various establishments in Nigeria and abroad, some are administrative officer at different levels, or at the Judiciary. Shaykh Adam had to his credit, over 100 publications, in form of books, monographs and instructional materials on various topics. He participated in several national and international conferences. In recognition and appreciation of his efforts and achievements, the President Muhsin Mubarak of Egypt, awarded him the Highest Egyptian Literary Award on Monday, 9th October 1989. Shaykh Adam died in London on Sunday 3rd of May 1992 and was buried in his school premises.

5. Shaykh Adam and Theory of Feminism

Shaykh Adam being an internationally acclaimed Islamic scholar, researcher and reformer, was not left behind in addressing issues relating to women rights in the society. He emphasises that the status of women in Nigeria society before the advent of Islam in general and coming of Colonialists in particular was horrible. Women lived as if they were not human beings. They were under total control of their husbands. They neither have access to education nor right to acquire properties. In Yoruba society, women mostly joined their husbands in their daily job, most especially farming or weaving or buying, and selling in order to support their husbands. Whatever they gained from their businesses added to their husband's accounts. On this note, polygamy system of marriage is commonly practised among Yorubas. Also, the honour and respect that man received in the society depended on the number of women he married.

However, with the emergence of Islam in Nigeria, status of Muslim women is expected to be bettered, but, it remains the same. Their rights and freedom is still threatened, due to the misinterpretation given to some Qur'anic verses relating to women questions. So, some of this issues are discussed by Shaykh Adam as enumerated thus.

1.1. Islamic Dress Code (Hijab)

Islam, among other divine religions, holds modesty as a social norm and ethical virtue in high esteem. It values chastity and preserves privacy of both men and women against unlawful acts. Therefore, Islam designed dress code for both men and women in order to protect the society and

individuals. This also allows everyone to conduct his or her life with decorum, dignity and respect. Islam recommends covering of body to all women. The instruction is not limited to a covering of body, but also to walking in a dignified way, modesty in verbal communication and even looking, in order to avoid sexual harassment in society. In the second decade of Islam year, the instruction on using decent dress was revealed to the Prophet (SAW) at Madinah firstly directed to the Prophet's family, and later to the entire believing women as shown in the *Al- Qur'ān* 33:59

“(O Muhammad) tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to wrap their outer garments around themselves. That is more suitable so that they will be known as pious women, and not be harassed.”

In the same vein, *Al-Qur'ān* 24:31 says;

“Enjoin believing women to cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not reveal their adornment except that which is revealed of itself, and they are to draw their veils over their heads and chests and not to reveal their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons...

The same sanction is also expressed in the *Hadīth* of the Prophet (SAW) while talks to Asmā', an Ā'ishah's sister, who went to her home when she worn thin clothes. The Prophet (SAW) returned her and said: “*When a woman reaches the age of adolescence, it is not correct that she displays any part of her body except this and this — and he pointed to his face and hands.*” (Abu Daud, 4140)

It is very clear from the above that the rule of modesty in dressing was authorised and ordained by Allah. However, the word that is most often used that connotes decent dress for women is known as *Hijāb*. The word *Hijāb* literally means barrier or prevention. Technically, it is a way of dressing prescribed for all women. This is mode of dress that covers all their body except the hands and eyes, to avoid all kind of aggressors, molesters and sexual harassment. Use of *Hijāb* is a visible expression of faith, culture and determinant of been identified as a Muslim woman. According to the Qur'anic description, woman can wear whatever it pleases her at home, in the presence of her husband and family or among women like herself. However, she is expected to dress properly according Islam instruction whenever she is going out. The dress must be in conformity with textual guidelines of *Al-Qur'ān and Hadīth*, which includes, covering the entire body except face and hands, losing in shape and style, not transparent in nature, not too ostentatious and free from impurities.

Since using of *Hijāb* is one of the controversial issues among the Muslims of Nigeria, Shaykh Adam in his book “*al-Islam al-Yaom Waghadan*” (Islam Today and Tomorrow) adds his voice. He quickly states the legal position of using *Hijāb in sharī'ah* as “*Sad al-Dhari'ah*” (A preventive measure from become a victim of circumstances). So, the concept of *Hijāb* is a means of preventing women from exposing their ornament from being seen by opposite sex, in order to avoid temptation in the society. In that case, using *Hijāb* cannot be taken as part of *Ibadah*-worship, rather a culture that belong to Arab. He further identifies different types of *Hijāb* thus;

- I. The first type of *Hijāb* is known as veil. This type has different names from different Islamic societies such as *Niqāb*, *Qinā'*, *Khimār*, and *Nazīf*. It is a way of covering the entire face. This type of *Hijāb* not new to the Arab society before the advent of Islam, it is part of dress for both male and female. It was reported that the Prophet Yusuf used *Niqāb* because of his beauty. So, it is clear that this type is not part of Islam, rather an Arab culture. However, Islam remain silent on it. There is no cleared text from *Al-Qur'ān* or *Hadith* neither support nor against it.
- II. The second type is covering entire sensitive parts of the body of women. This can be practised with any type of cloth prevailing in the society. The clear evidence is *Al-Qur'ān* 24:31 that reads thus;

“Enjoin believing women to cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not reveal their adornment except that which is revealed of itself, and they are to draw their veils over their heads and chests and not to reveal their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband’s fathers, their sons, their husband’s sons...”

Similarly, *Al-Qur'ān* 33:59 says;

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughter and the women of the believers to draw their clock close round them (when they go abroad) that will be better, so that they will be recognized and not be annoyed”

- III. The third category is using of purdah (total seclusion). This type restricts women from moving out without being in a purdah. The proof of the supporter of this type emanated from the Qur'anic verse that directed to the Prophet's (SAW) wives only, which clearly stated in the *Al-Qur'ān* 33:32-33 as follows;

Wives of the prophet, you are not like other women, if you fear Allah, do not be too complaisant in your speech lest those with diseased hearts should covet you, but speak in a straightforward manner, stay in your homes and do not go about displaying your ornament as in the former time of ignorance. Establish prayer, give zakah and obey Allah only who wishes to remove uncleanness from you.

It was emphasized by Shaykh Adam that all the aforementioned types of *Hijāb* are commonly found in Nigeria society. However, the third type is mostly used among the Hausas and Fulanis and few group in Yorubaland. The problem related to this type is whoever practises this type neither has access to social interactions nor education. No free of movement except in the night in a midst of her family's relatives as a guards. Consequently, this practice has been giving much concern to some Muslim scholars and feminists movements. Shaykh Adam, therefore, stands out

in condemning it in his book- *al-Islam al-Yaom wa Ghadan*- with what may be rendered into English thus;

“Veil is not part of Islamic teaching, because it is neither mentioned in the *Al-Qur’ān* nor in the *Ḥadīth*. It is an Arab culture that prevailed among Arab women before the advent of Islam”. (p.123) (Appendix I)

1.2. Muslim women right to education

Feminism movement also strongly holds a position that that Islam denies Muslim women having access to education. Though, the fact still remains that no other religion apart from Islam holds knowledge in high esteem. The indication of this is the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) instructed him to read. So, Islam directs both male and female, young and adult to seek knowledge to whatever level of their choice (*Q.96:1-2*) There are many textual evidences in the *Al-Qur’ān*. Allah even praises whoever possesses knowledge. For instance, *Al-Qur’ān* 39:9 praises and elevates those who knows over who know not.

“Ask them; are those who know equal to those who do not know? Those endowed with understanding take heed.

The Prophet (SAW) also was reported to have said; “*Search for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim, male or female*” (*Sunah Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Book 1, Hadith 224*). He also said “*It is not befitting for anyone with knowledge to give up learning*” (*‘Jāmi’ Bayān al-‘Ilm No. 423*). Historically, at the early period of Islam, women were not excluded in the purse of knowledge. There were many scholars among the women specialized on different fields of knowledge, ranging from writing, poetry, medicine and teaching. ‘A’ishah, wife of the Prophet was among the famous women that played a significant role in transmission of *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (SAW). She also played role of nurse during the war for wounded Muslims. In account of her competency, the Prophet instructed his companions to learn half part of their religion affairs from her.

On this note, Shaykh Adam observes that the reverse is the case for Nigeria Muslim women, particularly in Hausa land. Using full *Hijāb* (Purdah), which is considered as part of religion obligations, has prevented women to have access to education and social affairs. Whosoever among the ‘Ulamā’ attempts to maintain a liberal position to allow women to participate in public lectures were been attacked by others. The evidence of such was the confrontation between al-Shaykh Mustapha al-Barnowi and Abdullah bn Fodio. al-Shaykh Mustapha al-Barnowi writes the following poetical form in attacking Abdullah bn Fodio, which translated thus;

To you a blessed greeting that has lovely scent like *Misku* and *Sikun* that come from *Yulaquna*.

O sun of Fodio! stand and warn people, such is better than to let them be in ignorance, so that they may be well informed about the religion introduced by our father.

Prevent women from attending public lecture, because intermingling of the both sex is enough evil.

Do away from what would course you embarrassment, surely, Allah will never instruct one to involve in such act.

Surly, death upon death and to be called ignorance is enough as consequence of our actions (Appendix II)

Abdullah bn Fodio replies thus;

O you that admonishing us, your message is well taken, so, you also should listen to ours

We do not mingle with the women. Why should we do that, when it was what we also preach against such. Hence, distance us from such act.

Even, if your assumption is correct, I would not subscribe to leave those women to be ignorant, if we do so, such would be more dangerous.

If that is our sin, then such would be considered as a lesser evil, but leaving them in ignorant is a disbelief, (which is a greater sin) (Appendix III)

Shaykh Adam feels uncomfortable on this issue. While he holds different position, he encourages and advices women to have access to education, religion and secular education. The proof of his position is the doors of his school, (*Markaz al-Talīm al'Arabī al-Islamī*)- Arabic and Islamic Training Centre, are widely opened at all times to both male and female students. Similarly, he also allows women to attend his Jumah service and public lecture during the month of Ramadan. All his own biological daughters had Islamic and Western education. Some of his female students, after graduating from *Markaz*, furthered their education in western line. They are today occupying different positions in the society. He further comments in his book *al-Islam al-Yaom wa Ghadan as follows* ;

Today, Muslim women of Yoruba race are ahead of Hausa women in education and spiritual activities. Simply because they are not practice total *Hijāb* (seclusion) that can prevent them from education. Whereas, such *Hijāb* was only recommended for the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) wives. The total seclusion is considered by Hausa people as part of Islam. Whosoever denies his wife from using it, is regarded as an unbeliever and praying behind such person is prohibited. Please! Tell them to bring out their evidences (to back their claim), if they are truthful. (p.131) (Appendix IV)

1.3. Spiritual Status of Women

Islam also emphasizes equality of male and female in social and religious engagement. Men and women worship Allah, the same God (Allah), in the same way, perform the same acts of worship, follow the same scripture, and hold the same beliefs. Allah judges all human beings fairly and equitably according to their deed not on gender basis. In this regard, *Al-Qur'ān* 33:35 says;

Surely, the men who submit to Allah and the women who submit to Allah, the men who have faith and the women who have faith, the men who are obedient and the women who are obedient to Allah, the men who are truthful and the women who are truthful, the men who are steadfast and the women who are steadfast, the men who humble themselves to Allah and the women who humble themselves to Allah, the men who give alms and the women who give alms, the men who fast and the women who fast, the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah much, for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward.

Similarly, the reward for a good deed and punishment for otherwise are based on what both man and women put forward before Allah and not on gender factor. *Al-Qur'ān* 16:13 says;

Whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.

However, some Muslim scholars are against the spiritual independence of women. They are of opinion that it is forbidding for women to attend mosque for any spiritual activities. However, Shaykh Adam, is also among the few scholars that stands against this view. He addresses it in his book “*al-Islam Yaomom wa Ghadan*” that women must be spiritually independent. They are free to attend mosque for spiritual and social activities. His argument is based on the *Al-Qur'ān* 19:18;

The mosque of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such who believe in Allah and the last Day, establishes regular prayer...

Also, *Al-Qur'ān* 9:71;

The believers, both men and women, are protectors of one another. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil, establish regular prayer, pay Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely Allah will show mercy to them. Allah is All-Mighty All-Wise.

He explains that the aforementioned passages instruct all believers both men and women without any discrimination to worship Allah either at home or mosque. It would therefore be unjust for any scholar to separate men from women in spiritual activities. Some Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) are used to buttress his claim thus;

“Umm Hānī said; I do not memorize surah *Qāf*, except from the lips of the Prophet (SAW)- he used to draw on it his sermon on the pulpit on Friday.”¹ (Muslim, *Book of Prayer*, 872)

¹. عن أم هانئ قالت: ما أخذت سورة ق، إلا على لسان النبي -صلى الله عليه وسلم- كان يخطب بها على المنبر يوم الجمعة

*Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet said the best of the rows of men is the first and the worst is the last. While the best of the rows of women is the last and the worst is the first.*²(Muslim, Book of Prayer, 1083)

*Abu Mālik al-Ash'arī narrated thus, the Prophet said; the men should be on row first, follow by children and women after the children.*³ (Muslim Book of Prayer 1075)

Without doubt, the aforesaid Hadiths are the clear indication of the involvement of women in the religious affairs during life time of the Prophet (SAW). Women participated in religious activities and attended the mosque on various prayers; five daily prayers and Juma'ah prayer. Shaykh Adam also allows participation of women in his Jum'ah service and other religious activities. Meanwhile, the argument of those who denial women to attend mosque resides on the *Hadith* narrated by 'A'ishah said;

If the Messenger of Allah had seen the unlawful innovation that women have introduced, he would have definitely prevented them from going to the mosque, as the women of the children of Israel were prevented from their temple” (Bukhar, Book on Prayer, 173/1 and Muslim, Book on Prayer, 328/1)

Shaykh Adam has the following comments on authenticity of the saying of 'A'ishah thus;

- I. The statement was not *Hadīth* of the Prophet, (SAW) rather a personal opinion of 'A'ishah, which cannot be viewed as *Hadīth* of the Prophet (SAW).
- II. The *Hadīth* in any way does not condemn women to attend the mosque.
- III. 'A'ishah, regardless of her status to the Prophet, was not (*ma'sumah*) one of those protected from committing mistakes. Her statement can be right or wrong.
- IV. The statement is not an authentic that can be relied upon in taking such crucial issue in Islam.

1.4. Early Marriage of Muslim Women

The issue of early age marriage is furthermore calls attention of Feminism movement. According to the United Nations and other International agencies, child marriage is a consummation that happens between spouses before reaching a certain age, which is specified by the UNICEF as minors under the age of eighteen. This practice is common among Muslim, which is violation of the rights of a child. Whenever their child reaches age of puberty they must be married out. In the UNICEF report, the top five nations in the world with highest observed child marriage rates are Niger (75%), Chad (72%), Mali (71%), Bangladesh (64%), Guinea (63%) – where Muslim

². عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله " خير صفوف الرجال أولها وشرها آخرها. وخير صفوف النساء آخرها وشرها أولها"

³. كان النبي يصف الرجال أولاً ثم الغلمان خلفهم، ويجعل الرجال قدام الغلمان والغلمان خلفهم والنساء خلف الغلمان" رواه أبو

داود وأحمد.

dominate countries. Africa has the highest incidence rates of child marriage, with over 70% of girls marrying under the age of eighteen. Girls in West and Central Africa have the highest risk of marrying in childhood. Niger has one of the highest rates of early marriage in sub-Saharan Africa. ([https:// www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).)

In Nigeria, child marriage is most common in the North West and North East of country, where 68% and 57% of women aged 20-49 are married before their 18th birthday. Yet it is always common among the poorest rural households in Hausa ethnic group. Parent involved in this act for a number of reasons; either to avoid economic burden or prevent premarital sexual activities, unwanted pregnancy or to guard against sexually transmitted diseases (TSD)

Indeed, this type of marriage has caused various challenges; emotional, social and health that defeated the purpose of marriage. Because marriage in Islam is for love and intimacy. The spouse has freedom to make his/her choice of whom he/she loves most that can use the rest part of his / her life with. A child that is dragged into marriage by her parents without her knowledge and consent, leads to a miserable life. The girl at this age, is neither matured nor has experience. If she is in school, her education will abruptly come to an end and end up being illiterate. She later become a burden to herself and completely dependent on her husband.

Shaykh Adam, as usual, stands against this act of marriage. He emphasizes that the practice is as killing a child emotionally and intellectually. The practice prevents her from having an education that would bring light to her life. Life without education and information is similar to death. He states further in his book *al-Islam al-Yaom wa Ghadan* in the following manner;

“Unfortunately, some people regard child marriage as an obligation in Islam, that prompts a father or guardian to marry her daughter out at early age. This practice halts her education. She leaves her parents to start a married life before reaching the age of puberty.” (p. 121) (Appendix V)

1.5. Giving out a lady as a charity in Marriage

Another problem facing Muslim women especially in the Norther Nigeria, is giving out their daughter for marriage as a charity. It is well noted that before the advent of Islam, there were various types of marriage, practiced during the Pre-Islamic era, which have negative impacts on women's life. Shaykh Adam in his book titled” *al-Islām wa Taqalīd al-Jāhiliyah*” (Islam and Ignorance Practice), discusses some of these marriages in Arab society such as follow;

- I. When someone gives out his daughter to someone as a gift, so that he can marry her back as a wife.
- II. Sending a wife to another man -that possessed certain qualities- for a sexual intercourse immediately after her menstruation. so that the women can give birth to a child that will poses some qualities noticed from such man. The women will be forbidden to sleep with her former husband again.

- III. Having sexual intercourse with several men, at least ten. when she is pregnant and about to deliver, she will call for those people and choose the most loved among them as her husband, and the name of that person will be given to the child.

On this note, Shaykh Adam observes that there is similar type of marriages that are commonly practiced in Nigeria, especially among Hausa tribe. One of them is *Tasadaq bil Bikr*'- (Giving out a daughter as a gift to marry by someone). The Hausa peoples gives out their daughter as a wife to someone that she has never met in her life. Those who practice this act used the *Hadīth* of the Prophet (SAW) that encourages continuous charity (*al-Sadaqah al-Jāriyah*). While he says; "Whenever a son of Adam dies, his deeds come to an end except three things: a continues charity, a knowledge that beneficial, a good child that prays for him." (*Ṣāḥīḥ Muslim, Book of Wasiyah, 1631*). Therefore, people believes that giving out a child as wife is considered "a continuous charity" for her parents, in as much she remains as wife and has children for her husband. Even after her demise the reward continues. However, the intention of these peoples appear perfect, but against the teaching of Islam. The Prophet frowned and condemned this attitude. He was reported to have said; "An unmarried girl should not be married until her permission has been taken" (*Ṣāḥīḥ Muslim, Book of Nikkah, 3239*). In this regard Shaykh Adam also remarks thus in his book *al-Islām wa Taqalīd al-Jāhiliyah*;

Severally, this kind of marriage always end-up in conflict and displeasure between the couples because, love is not sown but planted. Surely, it is far part what is between sowing and planting. Islam frowns at this charity marriage. Anything like it is not hear of in *Shar'iah*. Only slave can be given out as charity (to someone to marry) but not free born.

(p. 134)

(Appendix VI)

Conclusion and Recommendation

In the previous pages, we have discussed the concept of feminism, which seeks the gender equality and right of women in politics, economy and social life. Islamic feminism was also discussed. Later, the paper concentrates on critical examination of Shaykh Adam works that addresses questions relating to the right of women, ranging from mode of dressing, education, religion matters social interaction, and marriage. Shaykh Adam vehemently argued against those who violated the rights of women in the name of religion and social matters. Some of his arguments were grounded in the Qur'anic provisions. It is very cleared that Islam has already granted women all the rights they are seeking for. Islam treats women equally in all spheres of life: equality in basic humanity, religious obligations, rewards and punishments, ownership and financial transactions, honour and nobility, education and social responsibilities. The evidences showed that during the time of the Prophet, women participated in religion and social affairs.

However, some of issues relating to women in Hausa land, addressed by Shaykh Adam in his book been gradually improved, especially in the area of education. Hausa women are now

more educated than before. Many of them hold prominent positions in public sector as administrators, directors, business women, lecturers at various institute of learning and politic at various levels. Efforts of various agencies, under government and Non-governmental organizations like Ministry of Women Affairs, National Commission for Women, the government's Family Support Programme ware noteworthy in this development. Lastly, due to misunderstanding of Islamic teachings attributed to violate of women rights among some Muslims, the research hereby suggests as follow;

- I. Proper consultation and interpretation of the *Al-Qur'ān* on any issue relating to women must be considered first before personal opinion.
- II. Islam must be judged by the *Al-Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* guides not by personal opinions.
- III. Socio-Islamic history particularly the early period of Islam must be known on issue relating to women in Islam to guide the affairs of women in Islam and social affairs.
- IV. Campaign for women emancipation must be continued and encouraged by the government and individuals in every society. For women to get the full right.
- V. Islamic Feminism must also be encouraged in order to reposition women in proper perspective.
- VI. Islamic scholars should desist from misinterpretation of the *Al-Qur'ān* that would give Islam bad image and misrepresentation.

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(I)

"فحجاب الوجه بالوجه ليس من تعاليم الإسلام، إذ لم يرد بذلك نص لا القرآن ولا في الحديث، بل كانت عادة جارية بين نساء العرب قبل الإسلام"

(II)

عليك منا تحيات مباركة
أيا ابن فودي قم تنذر أولى الجهلا
وامنع زيارة نسوان لو عظك إذ
لا تفعلن ما يؤدي للمعائب
إن الممات وما بعد الممات وجهلا
شممن مسكا وسكا من يلاقونا
لعلمهم يفقهون السدين والدنا
خط الرجال بنسوان كفى شينا
لم يأمر الله أمرا كان يؤذينا
بـالعواقب وعظ كان يكفين

(III)

يا أيها ذا الذي قد جاء يرشدنا
لسنا نخالط بالنسوان كيف وذا
إن كان ذلك ولكن لا أسلم أن
إذ ارتكاب أخف الضر قد حتما
سمعا لما قلت فاسمع أنت ما قلنا
كنا نحذر أن ذا قلت سلمنا
يتركن بالجهل هملا كان يؤذينا
يكفر الجهل إن ذا كان عصيانا

(IV)

فقد تقدمت اليوم نساء يوربا المسلمات على نساء هوسا في التعليم وفي العبادات بفضل عدم التزامهن الحجاب المطلق الذي هو خاصة بنساء النبي وجعله علماء هوسا فرضا وكادوا يكفرون من لا يحتجب نساؤه ومنعوا الصلاة خلفه، وقل لهم هاتوا برهانكم إن كنتم صادقين"

(V)

ومن الأسف أن يعتبر بعض الناس الزواج المبكر فريضة إسلامية على البنات يجب على الأب أو الوالي أن يسرع إلى أدائها في سن المراهقة، فقطعوا بذلك طريق تعليمها بالزواج المبكر. فانتقلت وهي صغيرة من بيت أبيها وأمها إلى بيت زوجها لتبدأ الحياة الزوجية قبل البلوغ.

(VI)

وكثيرا ما ينقلب مثل هذا الزواج شقاوا ونفورا بين الزوجين. لأن المحبة لم تكن مزروعة، وإنما هي مغروسة. وشتان ما بين الزرع والغرس في المحبة. والإسلام يستنكر مثل هذه الصدقة ولم يسمع بمثلها في الشرع الإسلامي، وإنما يتصدق بالإماء دون الحرائر.