

MASCULINITY IN ISLAM: EXPLORING THE DYNAMIC SHIFT IN GENDER ROLES IN A POSTMODERN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the evolving gender roles in the light of Islam, focusing on the understudied and much-neglected concept of masculinity in the context of postmodernism. Masculinity in Islam refers to men being the sole providers, breadwinners, and protectors of the family, whereas postmodernism acknowledges diverse and malleable expressions of masculinity. This study employs a multi-dimensional approach, analyzing Islamic scriptures, historical perspectives, and ongoing discourse on gender roles, guided by postmodern principles and Islamic beliefs. It analyses whether Islam accommodates reinterpreted, newly constructed concepts of masculinity within postmodern discourses and how Muslim men should navigate tensions between traditional Islamic roles assigned to them and new approaches. Additionally, it delves into the influence of contemporary societal changes on shaping modern Islamic masculinity. By doing so, this study intends to view the issue of gender, particularly masculinity in Islam under a postmodern lens. The significance of these findings lies in their potential to promote intercultural dialogue, challenge stereotypes, and foster gender equity within Muslim communities.

Keywords: Islam, postmodernism, Islamic masculinity, gender roles, culture

INTRODUCTION

The constructions of gender and the roles they involve have come under intense scrutiny and evaluation in an ever-changing world where civilizations struggle with social, cultural, and technological transition. The relationship between faith and identity is becoming more complex in this fluid, always-changing postmodern period. This article explores the complex interrelationships between masculinity, Islamic ideals and the adaptation needed to respond to the postmodern world.

Our primary focus is on the role of men within Islam, a topic that has received relatively minimal attention in existing literature. We will take a multi-dimensional

approach in order to clarify this complex topic. By examining religious texts such as the Qur'an, as well as modern scholarly works on Islam and masculinity, we want to understand how Islamic teachings are applied in contemporary situations.

One of the pillars of our inquiry will be based on references from the Qur'an, the main religious text in Islam, which provides invaluable insights into the duties and obligations that men are obliged to perform. By analyzing the Qur'an and its interpretation, we hope to identify the principles that Islam holds to be supportive for masculine identity. With the help of these sources, which will act as the foundation for our arguments, we will investigate the dynamic change in gender roles within a religious context.

Our study will also take into account the results of earlier studies and research, which have made it possible to understand the relationship between Islam and masculinity in greater detail. We seek to contribute to the continuing discussion surrounding the nexus of Islam, masculinity, and adaptation, particularly in the context of a postmodern society, by expanding upon this body of existing knowledge and examining past literature in this field.

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON CULTURE AND RELIGION

The idea of gender roles is a prominent and divisive subject across a range of academic disciplines and has a significant impact on societal dynamics, individual identities, and human rights. Based on a person's perceived gender, these positions customarily impose particular behaviors, obligations, and expectations on society. Male and female are the two main categories into which they can be broadly divided. Men have traditionally been expected to earn the most money, provide for their families, and protect them, exhibiting traits like aggressiveness, strength, and emotional control. Women, on the other hand, have traditionally been given the duty of domestic careers, which entails caring for the home, raising children, and providing compassionate assistance (Šnele et al., 2020). These ingrained positions have had a profound impact on the labor market, family interactions, and societal power structures. However, it is important to recognize that these roles are not set in stone but are influenced by a complex interplay of elements, such as society, religion, history, and personal experiences.

Gender roles are created and maintained in large part as a result of culture, which is widely described as the common values, beliefs, and practices of a given group or civilization. In a similar vein, religion, with its moral and ethical precepts, frequently supports or opposes these positions. Culture and religion are understood as dynamic

forces that fluctuate in response to societal events and external influences rather than being static concepts is crucial.

Gender, according to the socially constructed idea, is the outcome of societal processes, cultural norms, and personal relationships rather than being an inherent and fixed attribute (Phillips, 2006). Researchers like Judith Butler and Simone de Beauvoir contend that people "do" gender through their behavior, appearance, and deeds, thereby questioning the idea of rigid gender roles and emphasizing the dynamic and changing character of gender.

The concept of 'intersectionality', a word coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, acknowledges that people's experience of gender roles is influenced by their intersecting identities such as race, class, and sexual orientation, in addition to their gender. By taking into account how multiple social identities interact and influence these roles, this theory provides a more complex view of how culture and religion intersect with gender roles (Crenshaw, 2017).

It is essential to appreciate the historical foundations of gender roles to understand how they exist today. In the past, patriarchal systems were prevalent in most countries, and they were frequently upheld and defended by cultural myths and religious teachings. For example, the idea of "*arete*" in classical Greece placed an emphasis on qualities that were primarily associated with men such as bravery, cleverness, and physical strength (Rosen & Sluiter, 2017). Similarly, the Confucian culture of ancient China placed a strong emphasis on hierarchical relationships and the higher status of men in society (Wood, 2023). These examples demonstrate how cultural beliefs and customs were applied to validate gender roles.

The impact of culture on gender roles is profound, dictating expectations placed on individuals from a young age and influencing their behavior, aspirations, and self-identities. Deviation from these norms can lead to social isolation or discrimination (Phillips, 2006). In some cultures, the expectation of women as caregivers and homemakers restricts their access to education and economic opportunities, while men may face pressure to conform to stoicism and dominance, stifling emotional expression. Cultural practices and rituals further reinforce these roles, such as gendered coming-of-age ceremonies that solidify traditional roles and create a sense of cultural identity.

Religion has also played a significant role in shaping historical gender roles (Arat, 2010). All major religions have traditionally upheld distinct gender roles, often grounded in sacred texts, their interpretation and traditional implementation.

Interpretations of religious teachings can vary widely, leading to diverse perspectives on gender roles within the same faith.

Religious traditions exhibit diverse beliefs and practices, with some advocating for gender equality and increased opportunities for both men and women in leadership, reflecting the evolving nature of gender roles within religion whereas other religious traditions could be considered very narrow-minded, rigid and backward looking. Islam, the focus of this article, claims to be a religion for all periods so the question arises whether or not Islam is open to the latest changes in traditionally set gender roles. Are the Islamic principles regarding gender roles changeable and adaptable?

ISLAM AND GENDER ROLES IN LIGHT OF EARLIER STUDIES

Islam, ranked as the second most practiced religion in the world, emerged in the seventh century CE on the Arabian Peninsula and offered a comprehensive framework for guiding numerous aspects of human life, including gender roles. Traditional Islamic teachings have prescribed distinct but complementary duties for men and women by recognizing the equal importance of both masculine and feminine roles (Siraj, 2013).

Islam views husband and wife as a single team, aiming for complete cooperation between them (Daulay, 2017). It affirms that women are men's equal, mature, and capable companions without whom a family cannot thrive and that both men and women are equal creations of Allah. Although women are subject to restrictive traditions in some cultures, Islam treats them with complete honor and dignity. It upholds their dignity and demands that they be treated with respect. Their feminine traits should not be used against them but they should be treated as ordinary human beings (Daulay, 2017). Women are not considered inferior beings in Islam and the feminine is not viewed as lesser or subordinate to the masculine in the Qur'an. The cause of female inequality in Muslim communities may be ascribed to the intentional misinterpretation of the Qur'an.

In many areas, including politics, work, and education, Bala concludes that Islam accords men and women with equal rights and responsibilities (Bala, 2010). Sulistyawan also argues that the Qur'an depicts justice and equality in gender roles while Moghadam (1991) demonstrates by means of research on Muslim women in Iran that women experience difficulties and prejudice. However, this might have a lot to do with the political and cultural aspects of the country rather than with Islamic teachings.

In Islam, men and women have distinct psychological traits and follow separate social norms in marriage, with the wife often fulfilling the role of taking care of the home while the husband taking on the primary role of provider, caretaker, and protector of women and children. The husband must provide every kind of protection, i.e., physical, emotional, and other types of security. But this does not imply that the husband may be rude or control his wife unnecessarily. In fact, Islam stresses that kindness should be shown towards women. The Holy Prophet's last sermon also gave special attention to care for women. This responsibility lies solely with the man of the house. Biology may suggest that men are physically stronger and that women have greater emotional sensitivity due to their reproductive capacity. The separate roles for men and women, according to which men are active and women are passive, has historically shaped gender roles (Siraj, 2006).

It is important to understand that women are not only allowed but also encouraged to participate in a variety of activities outside of their traditional homemaking responsibilities. They are allowed to work, acquire, and inherit property, which they can continue to do even after getting married. Islamic teachings take a more expansive view of the responsibilities played by men and women in society and permit women to work in a variety of disciplines (Arat & Hasan, 2018). They also require a woman to be mindful of her family duties and careful of her conduct. With these fundamentals assured, Islamic teachings are not in any way restrictive of her activities and provide her with equal human rights (Saleh, 1972).

Meanwhile, according to some scholars, the Qur'an does not specifically define any one role or combination of duties for men and women. Instead, they claim that both genders are deserving of peace, love, and comfort and are subjected to the same standards of moral behavior since they have the same nature. This claim does not seem to be prudent or conventional. Cultural globalization has also led to increased awareness of alternative gender roles and acceptance of gender diversity worldwide.

POSTMODERNISM AND ITS IMPACT ON GENDER ROLES

Traditional gender roles have changed as a result of the concept of postmodernism, which emerged in the latter half of the 20th century. In order to comprehend how it has affected gender roles, it is crucial to first comprehend the core ideas of postmodernism, which evolved as a significant cultural, intellectual, and artistic movement that questioned preexisting conventions and ideologies. It questioned grand narratives and meta-narratives such as those associated with religion, science,

positivism, socialism, democracy, liberalism, feminism, and structuralism (Ramli, 2013).

Postmodernism might be characterized as a response to modernism. It refutes the idea that there is an objective reality and maintains that reality is created, contingent, and subject to change. The dismantling of dichotomies like high culture vs. low culture and masculine against female is a key component of postmodernism. Gender norms have been significantly impacted by postmodernism's rejection of binary oppositions. By arguing that these roles were socially manufactured rather than being inflexible, postmodernism challenged the binary oppositions between masculinity and femininity. As a result of such deconstruction, it became possible to interpret gender identities in a more open-minded and flexible way. In contrast to what had previously been regarded as normal, the postmodern viewpoint recognized that people might express themselves in a variety of ways throughout a spectrum of genders (Hughes & Dvorsky, 2008).

As society became increasingly dependent on technology, postmodernism challenged the aesthetic expression and philosophical beliefs of classic modernism while providing fresh literary and artistic works, which had a huge impact on gender roles through their influence on popular culture. A more diversified portrayal of gender identities in the media such as film, television, literature, and art were made possible by the growth of postmodernism at a time that new media and digital technologies were being developed. With the portrayal of multidimensional and non-conforming people, characters and stories began to question conventional gender stereotypes. With the expansion of the gender conversation beyond the binary paradigm brought about by this cultural shift, non-binary identities have come to be more acceptable.

The focus on 'intersectionality' in postmodernism, which acknowledges that race, class, and gender are just a few of the intersecting aspects that define an individual's identity, was also crucial in changing gender roles (Berger & Guidroz, 2010). It emphasized the variety of gender experience in postmodern society and addressed the particular difficulties experienced by people who straddle several identities. The convergence of oppression and discrimination became more apparent as a result of postmodernism, sparking social and political movements in favor of gender equality.

Postmodernism's influence on gender roles also had an influence on politics.. Gender relations in politics and leadership have been re-evaluated as a result of postmodernism's challenge of conventional power structures and hierarchies. It

supported the growth of feminist movements and initiatives to advance gender equality in the decision-making process. As a result, the political environment started to show a more equitable and inclusive depiction of gender identities (Wahl-Jorgensen & Ye, 2015).

The effects of postmodernism on gender roles are also noticeable in the field of business. More women entered the workforce as traditional gender roles grew less restrictive, altering the traditional division of labor. The workplace witnessed substantial transformation as the necessity for gender-neutral regulations, equal pay, and possibilities for career growth for both sexes became increasingly apparent (Rossetti, 2001).

From this analysis of the complicated relationship between postmodern philosophy and gender norms, it is clear that the ideas of postmodernism challenge the accepted wisdom and encourage a variety of identity expressions. The concept of masculinity has undergone a significant transition in postmodernity, freeing people from the limitations of conventional stereotypes and allowing them to create their unique interpretations of manhood. The fundamental postmodernist ethos, which allows people to establish their own realities with flexible identity boundaries, is reflected in this transition. We now turn our attention to "Postmodernism and Masculinity," where we examine what it means to be a male and what roles are allowed for a man in a postmodern society, in order to properly understand the growth of masculinity within this framework.

POSTMODERNISM AND MASCULINITY

Before we delve deeper into the core ideas of masculinity within the postmodern context, let us first try to understand the concept of masculinity. Surprisingly, masculinity has not received as much attention in research as femininity. Most studies have focused on femininity, leaving masculinity in the shadows.

In previous research, masculinity was explored in terms of certain personal qualities associated with being male, with manhood, or with what it means to be a man (Ayubi, 2020). It is important to understand that masculinity, like femininity, is shaped by various factors such as our social, cultural, and religious surroundings. Many influences, including media, school, and government, play a significant role in shaping masculinity (Arat & Hasan, 2018).

Traditionally, being a provider has been the measure of success and of male identity. Riley's examination of how males discuss gender roles reveals that biological and

social justifications were frequently used to defend traditional gender norms. In the present period, however, we must reexamine masculinity in light of developments such as postmodernism and globalization. It is important to recognize that the traditional ideas of masculinity are no longer relevant (Ouzgane, 2003). Traditional ideas have been questioned by societal and cultural transformations, which have produced new norms and altered how men view their gender roles, identities, and traditional values. Men are being inspired to reinvent their traditional identities as a result.

We notice a change as more women take advantage of their rights and leave the home to pursue careers. The traditional position of men as providers is being impacted by unemployment, global economic concerns, and other issues (Radzi et al., 2018). Masculinity is undergoing a profound transformation as it embraces its changing expression in postmodernist philosophy. The idea of rigid, globally applicable gender norms has been rejected by postmodernism. Because of this, the concept of masculinity has become dynamic and varied and can now refer to a variety of behaviors, experiences, and positions. People are being encouraged by postmodernism to examine and establish their own interpretations of masculinity and to break free from traditional constraints despite the fact that this new experience of embracing different male traits goes against conventional wisdom.

The concept that there is a singular, generally recognized definition of masculinity is also contested by postmodernism, which accepts that masculinity can be influenced and changed by a variety of cultural, societal, and personal influences. Due to this adaptability, multiple forms of masculinity can be accepted and even embraced, leading to a more inclusive definition of the concept.

In short, postmodernism encourages us to assess the numerous variations of manhood and to consider the limitations of conventional masculinity by its tendency to rewrite societal norms. Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that our planet is a patchwork of communities, each with its own unique histories and traditions.

MASCULINITY IN ISLAM:

Muslim men's masculine identities are diverse and multifaceted and, indeed, in recent years, the term 'Islamic masculinity' indicates that "Muslim men are not born; they are made; they construct their masculinity within particular social and historical contexts". Muslim notions of masculinity are rooted not only in Qur'anic prescriptions of masculinity but are also informed by other expressions fostered in different local and cultural contexts (such as defense of honor and the value of

virility). Referring to four particular stories of Abrahamic prophets related in the Qur'an, De Soudy (2015) concludes that while the prophets' lives "tell us much about ethics and morality", they tell "little about a uniform Islamic masculinity." Masculinity in Islamic contexts emerges as a set of distinctive practices defined by men's positioning within a variety of religious and social structures. The characteristics of Muslim masculinity constructed in the Qur'an, however, remains elusive and calls for a close reading and comprehensive analysis of the text (Arat & Hasan, 2018).

In the context of men's roles in Islam, postmodernism encourages a nuanced approach that recognizes the historical context and societal norms that shaped these roles. Within a postmodern framework, we can reinterpret men's roles as a form of social contract. Men are entrusted with specific responsibilities such as financial support, protection and religious guidance to maintain the well-being of the family unit. However, this does not imply inherent superiority; rather, it reflects a division of labor based on the needs of the time.

The Qur'an begins by establishing the fundamental principle of equality between men and women in the sight of Allah. Qur'an 9:71 states, "The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give *zakah*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those – Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." This verse underscores the idea that both men and women are equal partners in faith and share the responsibility of promoting righteousness and justice.

Qur'an 33:35 further emphasizes this equality by stating as follows:

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so – for them, Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

Here, Allah places no distinction between the genders concerning their eligibility for forgiveness and reward based on their deeds and virtues. Badawi points out that equality is often misinterpreted to refer to unconditional equality, which encompasses every detailed item of comparison, rather than overall equality

(Badawi, 1995). Instead, in Islam, although all human beings are held to be equal, they are not necessarily the same (Siraj, 2013).

In Islamic tradition, marriage is considered a sacred covenant, and it marks a significant milestone in the lives of both men and women. The role of men in Islam, particularly their responsibilities, is intrinsically tied to the concept of *nikah*. Once men enter into this sacred social contract, they willingly assume financial, emotional, and spiritual responsibilities towards their wives and families. It is essential to recognize that these responsibilities do not extend beyond the boundaries of the *nikah* contract.

Islam's emphasis on the *nikah*-based social contract ensures that the rights and dignity of women are upheld within the context of marriage. Apart from this contract, both men and women are equal before Allah in their worship and deeds, emphasizing the principle of justice and fairness in Islam. By considering various verses, particularly the assertion of men's "degree of advantage" (2:228) and their responsibilities, we can find out how these roles are perceived in a postmodern context.

Qur'anic verse (2:228) states, "... And women have rights similar to the rights of men in a just manner, and the men have a degree (of advantage) over them..." This verse has been fundamental in discussions regarding gender roles in Islam. To gain a nuanced understanding, it is crucial to explore the explanation of Ibn al-'Arabī, who elucidates that men's advantage relates to their responsibility to pay dowry for marriage, bear family expenses post-marriage, and impart religious knowledge. So men have a degree of advantage due to their responsibilities, particularly in terms of providing for the family. However, this responsibility is tethered to the institution of marriage – the *nikah*-based social contract. Without this contract, men do not bear the financial burden of women or a family.

Traditional gender roles assigned to men in Islam have played a significant role in shaping the lives of individuals within Islamic societies. These roles have historically emphasized specific responsibilities, rights, and obligations for Muslim men, shaping their roles within the family and the broader community. One of the central traditional gender roles assigned to men in Islam is that of the provider and protector. Men are expected to take on the primary responsibility of providing for their families. In *Surah al Nisa*, the Qur'an clearly mentions that men are caretakers of women because of their role as providers, which has been made obligatory for them. This is one of the main masculine traits relegated to men by the Holy Book.

Surah al Nisa 4:34, has multiple translations for the first portion of the verse. It is translated as "Men are caretakers of women" by Mufti Taqi Usmani, "Men are the upholders and maintainers of women" by The Study Qur'an, and "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women" by Yusuf Ali. Men are referred to as *qawwāmūn* by Allah, and all of these translations try to express the correct meaning. The Qur'an often says that the role of men is to spend on their women and family because that is what makes them eligible for the role of head of family. "Let the rich man spend according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him." (*Surah Al-Talaq* 65:7) Regarding the expenditure of child and mother, Qur'an says that: "But the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis" (*Surah Al-Baqarah* 2:233).

Unlike the normal practice of traditional society, Islam does not define certain traits as masculine and others as feminine. Men are also supposed to help their wives in household chores, be good to them and they are permitted to show emotion. Mu'aawiyah ibn Saalih narrated on the authority of Yahya ibn Saeed from 'Amrah that she asked 'Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, 'What did the Prophet (PBUH) used to do in his house?' She said: 'He was a human from among the humans; he used to serve himself, milk his ewe, patch his garment, and mend his sandals.' We find many examples from the *Sunnah* of Holy Prophet (PBUH) that he used to get involved in house chores and in other domestic work.. We can conclude that Islam does not restrict any one of the genders from doing anything. But when it comes to men being a provider and protector, this becomes an obligation. This responsibility is seen as a sacred duty and men believe they will be held accountable by Allah for fulfilling it. In contrast, postmodernism, as a philosophical and cultural movement, emphasizes individualism and allows for greater flexibility in defining gender roles. While postmodernist perspectives may not impose strict gender-based obligations, they encourage individuals to explore and determine their roles and responsibilities in relationships and in the family based on personal choice and consent rather than according to traditional norms or religious mandate.

Qur'an 4:32 addresses the issue of financial provision, stating, "Men will have a share of what they earn, and women will have a share of what they earn." This passage supports the notion that everyone has the right to their own means of subsistence and to their assets. It also emphasizes again that men are primarily responsible for meeting the financial demands of their families. Although men are solely responsible for providing financial assistance, this obligation does not lessen

the economic freedom of women. Men's financial responsibility ensures that women are not burdened with the financial aspects of family life, freeing them to pursue their own aspirations and service to society. This perspective is in accordance with postmodern ideals that advocate for shared responsibilities within relationships, without confining either partner to traditional gender roles.

Men are obliged to act as the primary defenders of their loved ones. This protection involves maintaining the family's honor and reputation as well as defending the family from internal and external dangers. This traditional role places a considerable emphasis on the physical aspect of masculinity, where men are expected to display courage and strength when facing challenges to the family's security and well-being. In his role as the main provider and protector of the family, the man dedicates himself to the performance of instrumental tasks and so marriage becomes an opportunity to express masculinity. We should view these tasks not as instruments of control but as forms of cooperation within the family unit. In a postmodern context, these responsibilities could be seen as expressions of collaboration rather than dominance. If fathers and husbands understand their obligations in this way; marriage becomes a religiously approved expression of masculinity (Siraj, 2013).

It is also important to clarify that the Qur'an does not expect women to show blind obedience to their husbands. Instead, the Qur'an introduces the concept of *qunut*, which applies to both genders (Qur'an 3:17, 33:35) and to non-human entities (Qur'an 39:9, 2:117). *Qunut* refers to humility before Allah and does not imply submission from one human to another. When the Qur'an states, "if they obey you," it employs the term *ta'a* meaning that one person follows the orders of another and this word is applicable to both women and men (Qur'an 4:59). We should be clear that this word also does not demand that women obey men blindly or support any kind of cruelty.

The traditional leadership and decision-making responsibilities of Muslim men within the household are a consequence of their gender roles. Even though men and women have equal claims on one another and have equal rights, there is one exception: a man's leadership and duty. In Islam, men are regarded as the head of the home and are responsible for making choices that are best for the family. Hence, the position of authority is an expression of a man's responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the family.

Men are required to lead their families by example in terms of morality and religion. This entails ensuring that family members uphold Islamic values and practices, take

part in religious observances and provide a role model for piety and devotion. A strong sense of faith and spirituality is fostered inside the home by encouraging men to become aware of Islamic teachings and to share this information with their families. Muslims distinguish between the roles that men and women play in worship. When participating in religious rituals, men frequently assume more visible public roles. For instance, men are usually the ones to lead congregational prayers, such as the Friday prayer, which is seen as a male social duty. In the mosque and the larger religious community, men frequently serve in visible positions as imams, scholars of religion, or leaders of the community.

The division of money and property is governed by specific roles for men under Islamic inheritance laws. Male heirs are entitled to a certain share of a deceased person's estate and this share is usually larger than the share given to female heirs. Men are given responsibility for the administration and distribution of the inheritance and they are expected to ensure that it is distributed fairly among the heirs in compliance with Islamic principles.

In the postmodern era, the gender spectrum has become more open, allowing people the opportunity to defy socially imposed roles and expectations. Thanks to postmodernism's rejection of universal standards, people can now explore their gender identities without being restricted in any manner. A distinct perspective, however, remain evident in the Islamic context. In contrast to postmodernism's call for unlimited gender exploration, Islam provides certain limits and expectations. Islam places a high value on the distinction between the social roles played by men and women. This viewpoint is supported by verses from the Qur'an, such as *Surah Al-'Imran* 3:36, which indicates that "the male is not like the female". This verse recognizes the fundamental distinctions between men and women that are upheld in Islam. The Islamic view of masculinity is based on the identification of complementary roles rather than a difference in the value of men and women. Islam defends the idea that certain limits, particularly those relevant to gender roles, are necessary for social order and household stability. Postmodernism, however, advocates a world without fixed boundaries.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to addressing contemporary issues, Islam occupies a complex space that is somewhere between rigidity and fragility. Despite the fact that Muslims are bound by broad principles and ideals, the Islamic framework is flexible and adaptable, allowing Muslims to approach modern concerns in novel ways rather than

rigidly sticking to outdated patterns. Islam promotes practical problem solving while maintaining a firm hold on its essential principles rather than requiring a rigid and unchangeable devotion to tradition. The formation of distinct gender norms is one noteworthy aspect of Islamic heritage. Men have a duty to be the family's head, protector, caretaker, and provider. These obligations are mandatory, and it is the responsibility of a man to carry them out. This contrasts with postmodernism's emphasis on embracing flexible identities over set roles.

However, we can also acknowledge that certain Islamic principles coincide with postmodern beliefs. Islam places a high value on respecting specific standards and boundaries in order to maintain social order and family harmony, echoing the postmodern rejection of a single, generally perfect structure. Islam seeks a balance between respect for traditional roles and values and flexibility for adaptation to contemporary situations. By emphasizing personal responsibility and the maintenance of communal and familial relations, this balance enables Muslims to remain true to their religious convictions. ■

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