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Recentring Womanhood: The Qur’anic Method as a Moral Corrective to Contemporary Feminist Disruption

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Abstract

Contemporary feminist discourse has, in many contexts, shifted from its original pursuit of justice toward expressions of autonomy and resistance increasingly detached from transcendent moral foundations, contributing to social fragmentation, instability in family structures, and a crisis of moral identity. This study examines the Qur’an as a moral and spiritual corrective to such disruptions by advancing a faith-centred paradigm of womanhood rooted in divine guidance. The objective is to analyse how the Qur’anic method redefines empowerment beyond ideological contestation and restores balance, dignity, and ethical purpose. Methodologically, the study employs *tafsīr mawdhūī* (thematic exegesis) integrated with the *maqāṣid al-Qur’an* framework, focusing on *Sūrah al-Taḥrīm* (66:10–12) and Prophetic exemplars—Āsiyah, Maryam bint ‘Imrān, Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, and Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’—who are recognised in hadith as among the women of Paradise. The findings demonstrate that the Qur’anic paradigm constructs empowerment through *īmān*, *taqwā*, and moral steadfastness, rather than through antagonistic or individualistic assertions. These exemplars illustrate a transformative model in which faith disciplines emotion, refines agency, and aligns human conduct with divine purpose. The study further reveals that the Qur’anic method reorients contemporary gender discourse from grievance to worship, from emotional volatility to ethical clarity, and from self-assertion to moral responsibility. In discussion, this paradigm is shown to offer a constructive socio-ethical framework that harmonises individual dignity with communal wellbeing, aligning with a Madani vision grounded in justice (*‘adl*), compassion (*raḥmah*), and spiritual integrity. Ultimately, the Qur’anic method emerges not merely as a critique of feminist excesses, but as

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a comprehensive moral blueprint for restoring equilibrium and civilisational harmony in contemporary society.

Keywords: Quranic Method, Womanhood, Fitrah, Feminism, *Maqāṣid al-Quran*, Social Harmony, Madani

Introduction

Contemporary gender discourse is increasingly shaped by ideological frameworks that define empowerment through resistance, autonomy, and self-assertion, often detached from transcendent moral authority. Feminism, which initially emerged as a response to social injustice and women's rights violations, has evolved into a dominant worldview that seeks to reconstruct human identity, family relations, and moral norms independent of divine revelation. This shift has generated not liberation but fragmentation manifesting in weakened family structures, identity confusion, emotional instability, and the erosion of social cohesion. From an Islamic epistemological perspective, this crisis reflects a rupture in fitrah the divinely ordained moral balance upon which human dignity and communal harmony depend.

The Quran, however, does not approach womanhood through ideological contestation or power struggle. Instead, it presents a faith-based methodology (*manhaj al-Qurān*) that forms moral character, disciplines emotion, and aligns human agency with divine purpose. Unlike secular paradigms that define empowerment through autonomy and power relations, the Quran grounds empowerment in *īmān* (faith), *taqwā* (God-consciousness), and moral accountability before Allah SWT. Through this framework, empowerment is not an assertion of self against order, but a cultivation of virtue within divine order producing stability, dignity, and ethical clarity.

A profound illustration of this Quranic methodology is found in Chapter *al-Taḥrīm* (66:10–12), where Allah SWT juxtaposes two disbelieving women the wives of Prophets *Nūḥ* and *Lūṭ* with two believing women *Āsiyah*, wife of Pharaoh, and *Maryam*, daughter of *ʿImrān*. These *verses* transcend sociological categories of gender, lineage, and social status by affirming faith as the ultimate criterion of human worth. The believing women are honoured not for independence, power, or rebellion, but for their unwavering conviction, moral integrity, and submission to divine truth.

This Quranic tableau fundamentally challenges modern feminist assumptions that liberation necessitates detachment from faith, family, or divinely ordained roles. Instead, it redefines empowerment as the ability to preserve *īmān*, virtue, and justice even within oppressive or morally testing environments. *Āsiyah's* resistance to Pharaoh's tyranny and *Maryam's*

spiritual resilience amid public scrutiny exemplify empowerment rooted in submission to Allah SWT rather than ideological revolt. Womanhood, within this paradigm, is not a site of struggle for dominance but a vessel of moral reform, compassion, and steadfastness qualities essential to the survival of civilisation.

Complementing this Quranic vision is the Prophetic hadith identifying *Khadījah bint Khuwaylid*, *Fāṭimah al-Zahrā'*, *Maryam bint 'Imrān*, and *Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim* as the four best women of Paradise. Each embodies a distinct dimension of empowerment aligned with the maqāsid al-Quran. *Khadījah* integrates economic agency with unwavering faith and moral loyalty; *Fāṭimah* personifies familial devotion, humility, and spiritual integrity; *Maryam* represents chastity and moral independence; and *Āsiyah* exemplifies courage and resistance grounded in faith. Collectively, they demonstrate that worship, obedience to Allah SWT's law, and moral responsibility are the true foundations of success in both this world and the Hereafter.

In contrast, contemporary feminism often promotes a form of worldly empowerment detached from revelation, where identity is shaped by grievance and autonomy rather than moral accountability. The over-correction of gender roles has led many women to lose the essential qualities of womanhood motherhood, nurturing compassion, emotional depth, and complementarity with men while simultaneously destabilising manhood itself. As women are encouraged to mirror male roles and men abandon their moral responsibilities as protectors and providers, the balance sustaining family and community life is disrupted. Rather than liberation, this ideological confusion has resulted in fragmentation, weakened social bonds, and moral exhaustion.

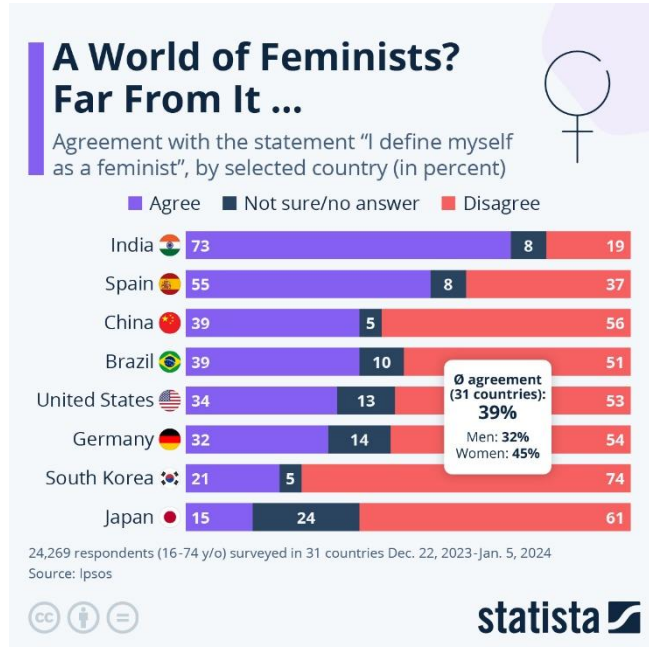


Figure 1: <https://www.statista.com/chart/32523/agreement-with-statement-i-define-myself-as-a-feminist/>

The Quranic exemplars of *Khadījah*, *Fāṭimah*, *Maryam*, and *Āsiyah* affirm the opposite truth: devotion to Allah SWT transforms every dimension of human life. Their unwavering faith shaped their conduct, purified their intentions, and elevated their status beyond temporal measures of success. Faith dignified their womanhood, strengthened their moral core, and guided them toward Jannah, while faithless ideologies promise empowerment but ultimately exhaust the soul and corrupt the natural order of creation.

Accordingly, this study seeks to demonstrate that choosing to live for Allah SWT anchored in *īmān*, *taqwā*, and obedience to divine law is far more precious and transformative than pursuing ideological constructs that breed moral confusion and social decay. The paper pursues three interrelated objectives: first, to analyse the moral and social disruptions produced by contemporary feminist ideologies through the lens of Quranic epistemology; second, to examine chapter *al-Taḥrīm* (66:10–12) and the Prophetic exemplars of womanhood as theological correctives; and third, to integrate the lives of *Khadījah*, *Fāṭimah*, *Maryam*, and *Āsiyah* within the *maqāsid* al-Quran framework, demonstrating their continuing relevance to the Madani vision of justice, compassion, and social renewal.

Through this framework, the paper argues that empowerment rooted in worship, faith, and moral responsibility restores balance between men and women, individual dignity and communal wellbeing, worldly action and

eternal purpose offering a Quranic cure to the moral unrest produced by feminist ideology.

Modern feminism has reshaped society in many areas such as gender, family, economy, culture, and morality. Its growing distance from divine moral guidance has caused serious social imbalance. In gender relations, the push for total autonomy and self-definition has created confusion about natural roles and harmony between men and women Connor-Savarda (2024). Within the family, feminism's emphasis on independence has weakened marriage, devalued motherhood, and blurred the balance of responsibility. Economically, empowerment is often commercialized through "femvertising," turning justice into consumer branding Walker (2025).

Culturally and psychologically, the rejection of fixed moral values has led to identity crises and emotional burnout, especially among women pressured to "have it all" Alcoff (1988). Politically, Western models of feminism often dominate global discourse, sidelining religious and cultural contexts in other societies. These combined effects show that when gender justice is separated from divine ethics, the result is confusion, family breakdown, and loss of compassion in society. True balance and dignity, as the Qur'an teaches, can only be maintained through faith and moral accountability Jaiyeoba et al. (2024).

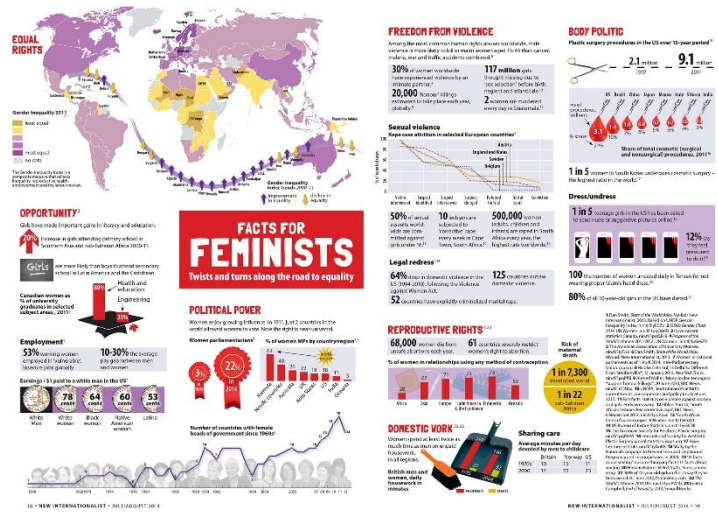


Figure 2: Image above were retrieved from web page https://newint.org/features/2014/07/01/facts-for-feminists-infographic?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The figure above illustrates how feminism has been portrayed across digital media as a progressive framework for human survival and social advancement. Yet, contemporary realities demonstrate that the deeper

consequences of this ideology particularly the detachment of womanhood from her natural fitrah have been largely ignored or even condemned. This disconnection has led to moral disorientation, identity crises, and the gradual collapse of social cohesion. Within the Quranic paradigm, women are regarded as the moral and emotional pillars of the ummah, entrusted with nurturing compassion (*rahmah*), faith (*īmān*), and continuity of the family institution (Quran, 30:21).

When the divine essence of womanhood is displaced from its ordained balance, social norms lose their ethical centre, leading to corruption in values and relationships what the Quran describes as *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption upon the earth) (Quran, 2:11–12). Therefore, the removal of fitrah from womanhood does not signify liberation, but rather the erosion of the spiritual and civilizational fabric that sustains humanity.

Conversely, the Quranic exemplars of *Khadījah*, *Fāṭimah*, *Maryam*, and *Āsiyah* affirm that devotion to Allah SWT transforms every dimension of human life. Their steadfast worship and faith elevated them beyond temporal measures of success, proving that living for Allah SWT is infinitely more valuable than living by ideology. Faith dignifies and refines the soul, guiding it toward Jannah, whereas faithless ideologies exhaust the heart and corrupt the natural order of creation. Accordingly, this paper seeks to remind both men and women that choosing to live for Allah SWT anchored in *īmān* and *taqwā* is far more precious than pursuing ideological constructs that breed moral confusion and societal decay.

Despite the undeniable historical contributions of feminism to human rights, its contemporary manifestations have often displaced the transcendent source of moral guidance. This detachment from revelation has created an anthropocentric worldview in which the human ego becomes the ultimate arbiter of truth. The resulting epistemological confusion manifests in phenomena such as the redefinition of family, the desacralization of motherhood, and the erosion of moral clarity regarding gender identity. From an Islamic epistemological perspective, such moral and social fragmentation signals a deeper collapse of fitrah and social harmony a crisis that demands a return to the Quran's theological and ethical blueprint for balance, justice, and spiritual renewal.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Crisis of Modern Feminism: Moral Dislocation and Ideological Fragmentation

Recent scholarship reveals deep fractures within global feminist discourse, where the language of liberation has been absorbed into consumerism, political manipulation, and moral relativism. Lin & Wang (2023) argue that feminism has lost its emancipatory soul through its alignment with

neoliberal individualism and neoconservative cultural forces. What was once a movement for justice has devolved into a market ideology promoting self-gratification and alienation. Similarly, Christoffersen & Emejulu (2023) expose the hypocrisy of “intersectional” white feminism, showing how its rhetoric of diversity masks racial and class hierarchies. These contradictions erode feminism’s moral legitimacy and create internal distrust.

Varghese & Kumar (2022) further illustrate how feminism has been commodified through “femvertising” the use of empowerment slogans in global advertising reducing liberation to a lifestyle brand devoid of ethics. Ozkazanc-Pan & Pullen (2021) highlight another dimension of crisis: feminism’s neglect of the ethics of care. The COVID-19 pandemic, they argue, revealed how modern feminist economics undervalued motherhood, family, and relational responsibility. Zhou (2023) extends this critique to the political sphere, warning that “state feminism” in authoritarian regimes transforms women’s empowerment into a tool of control rather than justice.

	Activism (%)	Breaking from traditional gender roles (%)	General desire for gender equality (%)	Exposed to feminism (%)	Empowerment (%)	Freedom of choice (%)	Equality in context of gender differences (%)	No reason given/no response (%)
Ethnicity								
White	78.9	92.3	89.4	78.9	88.5	94.7	100.0	85.7
Non-white	21.1	7.7	10.6	21.1	11.5	5.3	0.0	14.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age								
18–25	14.3	40.0	36.5	55.0	20.0	19.0	40.0	17.5
26–35	9.5	26.7	24.9	15.0	33.3	28.6	30.0	20.0
36–45	23.8	20.0	19.0	20.0	16.7	28.6	20.0	17.5
46–55	9.5	6.7	9.0	5.0	13.3	9.5	10.0	17.5
56+	42.9	6.7	10.6	5.0	16.7	14.3	0.0	27.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Religion								
Religious	66.7	57.1	50.8	41.2	66.7	38.1	70.0	41.0
Non-religious	33.3	42.9	49.2	58.8	33.3	61.9	30.0	59.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Region								
Midwest	14.3	13.3	18.4	10.5	17.2	14.3	50.0	20.0
Northeast	47.6	40.0	37.4	47.4	31.0	28.6	30.0	40.0
South	4.8	20.0	22.9	21.1	31.0	38.1	20.0	20.0
West	14.3	6.7	9.5	21.1	0.0	4.8	0.0	15.0
More than 1	19.0	20.0	11.7	0.0	20.7	14.3	0.0	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: Percentages were calculated 'within theme'. All responses of 'N/A' were removed.

Figure 3: Demographics of self-identified feminists by theme. (Swirsky & Angelone, 2015)

Together, these studies outline a shared conclusion: modern feminism, detached from spiritual and moral grounding, has become self-referential and socially fragmenting. Its promise of freedom often results in alienation from communal ethics and the very moral order it sought to transform.

2.2 Islamic Feminism and Its Epistemological Challenges

Parallel to global feminist discourses, Islamic feminism has emerged as a reformist attempt to reconcile women's rights with Islamic sources. Yet scholars have identified significant methodological and theological weaknesses in this movement. Bakhshizadeh (2023) critiques Islamic feminism through a social-psychological lens, arguing that many of its interpretations deviate from the revelatory methodology, privileging subjective reasoning over divine guidance. Mohammad (2025) similarly observes that dominant strands of Islamic feminism often misrepresent key female figures in Islam such as Khadijah and Maryam by framing them within secular feminist constructs instead of their Qur'anic roles rooted in faith and virtue.



Figure 4: Source from webpage <https://www.behance.net/>

(Lestari, 2024) provides a comprehensive review of Islamic feminist scholarship, identifying recurring themes of textual reinterpretation, socio-political activism, and legal reform. Her analysis, however, notes persistent barriers arising from patriarchal state structures and conservative religious norms. While these findings acknowledge the struggle for gender justice, they also reveal internal contradictions within Islamic feminism particularly its dependence on Western academic frameworks and its limited integration of *tafsīr mawdhūī* (thematic Qur'anic interpretation).

Jaber (2025) extends this critique by examining Islamic feminism as an alternative rights paradigm that still operates within the epistemic assumptions of liberal feminism, thereby inheriting its conceptual limitations. (Husayni, F. S., Fouladi, H., & Bostan, 2025) counter this by emphasizing Qur'anic and Hadith-based empowerment, showing that

Islam offers its own moral and legal architecture for women's dignity without borrowing from secular ideologies.

These discussions collectively indicate that Islamic feminism remains an incomplete paradigm a bridge between tradition and modernity that often loses coherence without a clear *maqāṣid*-based theological anchor.

2.3 Quranic Corrective Models: Reclaiming Womanhood through Faith and *Maqāṣid*

In response to both secular and Islamic feminist crises, several studies have turned to the Qur'an's archetypes of womanhood figures such as Asiyah, Maryam, Khadijah, and Fatimah as models for restoring moral balance and social harmony. Anis (2019) demonstrates that Islam envisions social strength through cooperation (*ta'āwun*) between men and women for a higher spiritual purpose. Women's roles, far from being subordinate, are integral to the moral and civilizational mission of the ummah.

Bajri (2021) revisits the Quranic narrative of Maryam, highlighting her spiritual autonomy, chastity, and devotion qualities that contrast sharply with modern feminist portrayals of empowerment. Soim, Fuady, and Zahid (2024) offer a theological reflection on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Khadijah (RA), framing their relationship as a model of balanced gender partnership grounded in mutual respect and divine purpose. Malik (2024) echoes this vision by urging Muslim women to emulate Khadijah's sincerity, loyalty, and contribution to Islam's early mission as a means of countering the moral emptiness of capitalist lifestyles.

Jaber (2025) and Mohammad (2025) both emphasize that these Quranic exemplars represent faith-driven empowerment a form of liberation anchored in *īmān*, family ethics, and community responsibility. Their lives embody the *maqāṣid* principles of *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of faith), *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of family and lineage), and *ḥifẓ al-ird* (preservation of dignity), offering a theological corrective to feminism's secular humanism.

This growing corpus of literature demonstrates that Islam's vision for women is neither patriarchal nor reactionary but ethical, purposeful, and integrative a paradigm that restores equilibrium between freedom and faith, individual worth and collective virtue.

Despite the growing body of scholarship addressing feminism, Islamic feminism, and gender discourse, a critical gap remains in

articulating a coherent Qur’anic methodological framework that integrates theological anthropology, maqāṣid al-Quran, and prophetic exemplars into a unified paradigm of womanhood. Much of the existing literature focuses either on sociological critiques of feminism or legal reinterpretations of gender roles, leaving the Qur’anic moral methodology itself insufficiently explored as a corrective paradigm. This study addresses this gap by synthesising the Qur’anic narratives of Āsiyah, Maryam, Khadījah, and Fāṭimah within a maqāṣid-based framework, demonstrating how the Qur’anic method offers a comprehensive moral alternative to contemporary ideological constructions of empowerment.

3. Scope and Methodology

This study aims to examine the moral and social challenges associated with contemporary feminist ideologies through the lens of Qur’anic epistemology. It analyses Chapter *al-Taḥrīm* (66:10–12) and the *Prophetic* models of womanhood as theological correctives that reposition empowerment within īmān and taqwā.

Classical exegetes such as *Ibn Kathīr* (1999) and *al-Ṭabarī* (2001) interpret the juxtaposition of believing and disbelieving women in Chapter *al-Taḥrīm* as a moral lesson that lineage or social position cannot substitute for faith. This exegetical tradition reinforces the Quran’s emphasis that true honour is grounded in taqwā rather than worldly status.

By integrating the lives of Khadījah, Fāṭimah, Maryam, and Āsiyah into the maqāṣid al-Qur’an framework, the study highlights their enduring relevance to the Madani vision of justice, compassion, and social renewal. Within this paradigm, empowerment grounded in worship and moral responsibility is shown to restore balance between men and women, individual dignity and communal wellbeing, as well as worldly engagement and eternal purpose.

Name	Core Maqāṣid Reflected	Empowerment Characteristic	Relevance to Madani Vision & Social Renewal
<i>Khadījah bint Khuwaylid</i>	<i>Ḥifẓ al-Māl</i> (protection of wealth), <i>Ḥifẓ al-Dīn</i> (preservation of faith)	Economic empowerment, moral support for revelation	Integrates faith, entrepreneurship, and moral leadership a model for empowering Muslim women as ethical agents of socio-economic justice.
<i>Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’</i>	<i>Ḥifẓ al-Nasl</i> (protection of family and lineage)	Familial responsibility, spiritual integrity	Symbolises family-centred empowerment and ethics of care restoring compassion and moral balance in fractured societies.

Maryam bint 'Imrān	<i>Ḥifẓ al-'Ird</i> (protection of honour), <i>Ḥifẓ al- Nafs</i> (preservation of life)	Spiritual autonomy, chastity, courage	Embodies moral independence and purity vital for rebuilding ethical identity amid modern moral confusion.
Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim	<i>Ḥifẓ al-Dīn</i> , <i>Ḥifẓ al- Nafs</i>	Political resistance, moral courage	Represents justice and defiance against tyranny aligning with the Madani ideal of integrity and resistance to corruption.

Table 1: Integration with the *Maqāṣid* al-Quran Framework

This integrative framework demonstrates that the four Qur'anic-Prophetic exemplars embody the comprehensive objectives of the Qur'an, where empowerment is understood as service, moral responsibility, and contribution to social harmony rather than individualistic self-liberation. Through a maqāṣid-based reading, their legacies are shown to align with the Madani vision of a balanced and compassionate society governed by ethical restraint and collective wellbeing.

By grounding the discourse on womanhood in Quranic revelation and Prophetic guidance, this study moves beyond the reductive dichotomy of “patriarchy versus feminism” and advances a Quranic paradigm of complementarity (*ta'āwun*) and shared moral stewardship. The maqāṣid framework restores the spiritual depth of female empowerment and offers a principled response to the ethical dislocation produced by secular modernity, reinforcing a civilisational vision rooted in justice (*'adl*), mercy (*raḥmah*), and faith (*īmān*).

The study further affirms that faith is not an ideology but a stable moral foundation for restoring human dignity and social cohesion. The Quran's portrayal of believing women as moral agents and bearers of divine trust (*amānah*) provides a lasting blueprint for renewal amid contemporary crises of identity and moral relativism.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative textual analysis based on *tafsīr mawdhū'ī* (thematic Quranic exegesis). Primary data consist of Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions, and classical exegetical interpretations relating to womanhood and moral exemplars. Secondary data include contemporary academic discussions on feminism and Islamic gender discourse. Data were analysed through thematic interpretation by integrating Quranic narratives with the maqāṣid al-Qur'an framework to identify ethical principles relevant to contemporary gender debates.

3.1 The Quranic Method (*Manhaj Al-Quran*) as a Cure for Feminist Ideology Invasion

The anger and resistance that characterise many strands of contemporary feminist discourse do not emerge in a vacuum. They are symptoms of a deeper moral and epistemological dislocation: the separation of womanhood from divine purpose. When injustice is interpreted exclusively through ideological frameworks, emotional intensity replaces ethical clarity, and resistance becomes perpetual rather than reformative. The Quran recognises anger (*ghaḍab*) and suffering as human responses to oppression, yet it does not allow them to become governing principles of moral action.

The Quranic method addresses such moral unrest through three interrelated processes: *reorientation of belief*, *discipline of the self*, and *restoration of moral balance*. Unlike ideological movements that amplify grievance, the Quran heals it by returning the human heart to its proper centre faith in Allah SWT.

First, the Quran reorients womanhood from grievance to *īmān*. In Chapter *al-Taḥrīm* (66:10–12), the believing women are not portrayed as angry rebels against their social conditions, despite enduring profound injustice. Āsiyah lives under the tyranny of Pharaoh, yet her response is not rage but supplication: “*My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise*” (66:11). Her faith redirects emotional suffering into spiritual aspiration, transforming oppression into moral elevation. This illustrates a core Quranic principle: faith governs emotion, not the other way around.

Second, the Quran disciplines the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) rather than validating unrestrained anger. *Maryam bint Imrān* faces public accusation and social humiliation, circumstances that modern feminist narratives might frame as grounds for defiance or protest. Instead, the Quran presents her as guarding her chastity and trusting divine command (66:12). Her silence, patience, and obedience are not signs of passivity, but of inner strength rooted in certainty (*yaqīn*). The Quranic method thus cures emotional volatility by cultivating moral restraint and spiritual confidence.

Third, the Quran restores balance (*mīzān*) between justice and serenity. Feminist anger often arises from the perception that womanhood is structurally diminished. The Qur’an corrects this by severing worth from social hierarchy and grounding it in *taqwā*. As the Qur’an states, “*Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous*” (49:13). This recalibration dissolves the need for constant confrontation, as dignity is no longer dependent on social recognition but on divine acceptance.

Through the exemplars of Āsiyah, Maryam, Khadījah, and Fāṭimah, the Quran demonstrates that faith does not suppress female agency; rather, it refines it. These women are not defined by anger toward men or society, but by moral clarity, patience, and purposeful action. Their faith generates behaviour that heals rather than fractures, nurtures rather than destabilises, and reforms rather than revolts.

Accordingly, the *Quranic* method offers a therapeutic alternative to the emotional unrest generated by ideological feminism. Where ideology sustains perpetual struggle, the Quran offers tranquillity (*sakīnah*). Where feminism centres anger as power, the Quran centres worship as strength. This is not a denial of injustice, but a transformation of how injustice is confronted through faith that purifies the heart and conduct that restores social harmony.

4. Discussion

4.1 Re-centre Faith in the Gender Discourse

This section argues that contemporary social fragmentation stems primarily from spiritual dislocation rather than gender inequality alone, as empowerment has increasingly been detached from divine accountability and reduced to self-referential autonomy. Drawing on thematic exegesis of Chapter al-Taḥrīm (66:10–12) and the lives of key Quranic Prophetic exemplars, the study demonstrates that Islam offers a reformative and relational model of womanhood grounded in īmān and taqwā. The examples of *Āsiyah*, *Maryam*, *Khadījah*, and *Fāṭimah* illustrate that true empowerment lies in moral courage, ethical restraint, service, and responsibility, not in ideological confrontation or self-assertion. Collectively, these women embody a maqāṣid-based paradigm that restores balance between individual dignity and social harmony, providing a principled corrective to both patriarchal excess and the moral limitations of modern feminist individualism.

4.2 Synthesising the Four Archetypes

Considered together, the four Qur'anic-Prophetic exemplars present a unified theological vision of humanity rooted in divine balance (*mīzān*). Although each reflects a distinct maqāṣid objective, they collectively affirm that true human worth is grounded in īmān rather than identity-based claims. This framework addresses the epistemological shortcomings of both secular and Islamic feminist paradigms, which often equate empowerment with legal or structural parity while neglecting inner moral formation (*tazkiyat al-nafs*).

By restoring complementarity (*ta'āwun*) as the foundation of gender relations, the Qur'anic model redefines empowerment as responsibility, ethical purpose, and service to the common good. Through the maqāṣid lens, individual growth is inseparable from communal wellbeing, offering a principled pathway for rebuilding social harmony amid contemporary moral and ideological instability.

Each archetype represents a distinct moral dimension of Quranic empowerment. Khadījah symbolises economic agency aligned with faith, demonstrating that financial power becomes virtuous when directed toward moral purpose. Fāṭimah embodies familial stewardship and spiritual humility, highlighting the ethical significance of nurturing the family as the foundation of civilisation. Maryam represents moral autonomy and spiritual resilience, proving that dignity is preserved through obedience to divine command even amid public scrutiny. Āsiyah reflects courage and resistance grounded in faith, illustrating that true liberation lies in loyalty to divine truth rather than submission to worldly power.

4.3 Implications for Contemporary Muslim Societies

This study underscores the need for Muslim societies to anchor gender discourse, policy, and education in maqāṣid-based ethics that integrate justice with spiritual integrity. Rather than importing ideological models, it calls for reviving Quranic paradigms of female excellence embodied by Khadījah, Fāṭimah, Maryam, and Āsiyah. Their lives offer enduring guidance for ethical entrepreneurship, family-centred care, moral autonomy, and resistance to injustice values essential for social stability. Framed by the Madani vision of justice (*'adl*), mercy (*raḥmah*), and faith (*īmān*), this approach harmonises gender complementarity with social equity, countering both patriarchal excess and ideological extremism through virtue-based civic life.

Within the Malaysian context, the Madani vision emphasises civilisational balance through justice (*'adl*), compassion (*raḥmah*), and moral integrity. The Quranic archetypes examined in this study illustrate that sustainable social reform cannot emerge from ideological confrontation but from spiritual ethics that nurture responsibility, humility, and social care. By integrating faith, family responsibility, and social contribution, the lives of Khadījah, Fāṭimah, Maryam, and Āsiyah embody a Madani ethos in which empowerment strengthens rather than fractures communal harmony.

5. Conclusion

This study adopts a textual and normative approach grounded in Quranic exegesis and Prophetic tradition, privileging theological coherence over empirical analysis. While this enables moral depth, future research may extend the framework through qualitative and cross-cultural studies examining lived applications of Quranic womanhood.

Ultimately, the Qur'anic method redefines empowerment not as ideological confrontation but as moral refinement rooted in faith. By presenting the lives of Āsiyah, Maryam, Khadījah, and Fāṭimah as archetypes of spiritual strength, the Quran offers a timeless framework for restoring dignity, social balance, and ethical purpose. In an era marked by ideological polarisation and moral relativism, this Qur'anic paradigm provides a civilisational blueprint for re-centring human identity upon divine guidance. Reintegrating faith, family, and moral responsibility within gender discourse is therefore not merely a theological imperative but a prerequisite for sustainable social harmony in contemporary Muslim societies.

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