



The Woman Problem
in the Philosophy of Malek Bennabi

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Abstract

The woman problem is a longstanding, complex, and central issue in the history of philosophy. This paper discusses Malek Bennabi's views regarding the role of women and his recommendations for the treatment of such heated debatable issues as feminism and the role of women in social reforms and civilizational advancement. As this paper evinces, Bennabi's conceptions of the woman's role is in tandem with the teachings of Islam. His views of women's role are likely to solve so many problems that emanate from the change of gender roles in the twenty first century.

Keywords:

woman; feminism; women dress ; civilization; Malek Bennabi.

1. Introduction

In his book *The Conditions of the Renaissance*, Bennabi prefers to use the phrase "The woman problem" to refer to the subject of woman, this is because all his philosophical writings revolve around the "problem" of civilization. One more reason is that the role of women, according to Bennabi is of pivotal importance in building the civilization of the nation. She is the backbone of the family who educates its individuals and raises them in accordance with the aspects of the Islamic civilization. Therefore, bennabi establishes a strong relationship between the personality of the woman the society wants and the issue of building a civilized society. In his book *In the Blown Battle*, Bennabi states: "The development of society is actually interlinked with the advancement of women"(p.102). Since the woman is the most influential member on civilizational advancement, there have been many conspiracies to make Muslim women abdicate their Islamic role and responsibilities. Bennabi has already



discussed a subject that is relevant to our time which is marked by social disequilibrium and fragmentation.

2. Feminism and the Problem of Gender Roles

The situation and the role of women in the society, according to Bennabi, determine the country's future and civilization. Thus, questions that are related to women's rights and duties cannot be dissociated from whether they are beneficial or not for the society. For instance, the questions "Can the woman smoke?" or "Can the woman be free to take off the veil?" should be treated in relation to their effects on the whole society and civilization. According to Bennabi, "Giving women's rights at the expense of society means the deterioration of society and, then, our deterioration. Isn't she a member of that society? The issue is not an personal issue, it is a community issue"(Conditions of the Renaissance, p.125). In the last few decades, women have relinquished the values of the traditional woman. They have started to redefine their relationship with men and change their roles in such a way that liberates them from what they consider are the social limitations of their gender identity.

Bennabi reproaches the Algerian feminist movement which calls for the liberation of Algerian women in the Western sense. The feminist movement tries to evade the reality that women have peculiar traits that make them different from men. Feminists rejected the standards of femininity, and they put themselves against their cultural norms. In fact, the feminist movement results in the loss of demarcations between femininity and masculinity. Bennabi believes that the liberation of women has resulted in what Victor Marguerite calls "the bachelor girl" or the "tomboy" which means women adopting masculine qualities and performing masculine roles. This phenomenon which appeared in Europe a long time ago becomes rife in our Muslim societies nowadays. At the same time, men seem to become effeminate because of women's empowerment. Thus, the feminist movement should be discussed within an Islamic civilizational context and not in relation with the Western context. We have to look at what is being asked for, and then we critique it in the light of our religion. As Muslims, we have to judge everything by referring to Islam.

Indeed, men should also be blamed for the rise of feminism. When the woman is treated as a second class citizen, which is against the teachings of Islam, they are likely to revolt against such a kind of treatment. When women are marginalized and mistreated physically and their rights are not given to them, the result is that many of them will opt for values and ideologies which are not in conformity with our faith. If they are not given their rights, they will ask for more than what they really deserve. Also, when they are belittled and abused, they might reject

their culture and its values. Thus, men should give women the rights they are given by Shariah. They have to be generous with them and treat them with the dignity they deserve. In our time, there is an urgent need to follow the prophetic methodology of how he treated his wives and daughters.

For Bennabi, the situation of women in the past was much better. But nowadays, the society becomes deprived of this important member of the society who is, in fact, the cornerstone of the family. The Algerian woman spends most of the time, nowadays, outside the house. She does not have enough time for her husband and her children. At times, she brings a babysitter to take care of her kids. Bennabi states: “And our identification of women's work in society is noteworthy. It is known that the European woman was worthy of this consideration, because the society that liberated her led her to the factory and the office and told her, "You must work and earn a living." However, she works in an environment full of dangers for her morals” (Conditions of Renaissance p.128). Spending most of the time outside the house harms women instead of empowering them. However, by feminist standards, a stay-at-home mother and housewife mired in the demeaning meaningless work of children and domestic drudgery is a total failure. Adopting a masculine role and following the mantra of unfettered freedom makes women lose their femininity. The main role of women is to nurture, discipline, and teach her children. She shapes the next generation of Muslims who can carry the banner of Islam.

The woman pursues activities that exceed the boundaries established by her role. And because she adopts a masculine role, she becomes emotionally alienated from her husband, who sometimes makes illegal relations with other women, because he feels an emotional vacuum in his family. Moreover, moral degradation becomes very rife in our society. Fanon has already shown how the colonizer tried to destroy the Algerian society by converting women to the Western culture. He states: “Converting the woman, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical effective means of destructuring Algerian culture”(p.39). Fanon adds that European workers always ask Algerian men the following questions: “Does your wife wear the veil? Why don't you take your wife to the movies, to the fights, to the café”(p.39).

It becomes of utmost importance to know the aims of the feminist movement and in which direction it is moving. Bennabi finds that it really becomes a problem when some scholars admit that we have to cope with the new changes and circumstances and this does not apply to the problem of women only but to all our problems. This surrendering to the new changes and circumstances make men very tolerant with some behaviors that were seen as taboos in the traditional society.

The reality is that Islam is not a patriarchal religion that deprives women of their rights as it has been stereotyped in the West. Women before Islam were oppressed by the patriarchal system, but they have been granted many rights with the coming of Islam. The prophet Muhammad PBBUH says: “Women are the twin halves of men.” So, in Islam, there is no gender discrimination. In fact, fighting for women’s rights began in the West where Western women had fewer rights than their Muslim counterparts. In America, for instance, it was only in 1848 that a married woman could own her own property. In the West, the fight for education for women saw the emergence of the first university for women in the US in 1821, and in 1841, women were formally allowed to teach in the universities. In the Islamic world, Aicha, the wife of the prophet PBBUH, was a source of knowledge for the comparisons of the prophet PBBUH after his death. She was also the narrator of many Hadiths by the prophet PBBUH. It is also worth mentioning that it was Fatima al Fihriyya who founded the first university in 841 in Morocco. Science along with other various subjects were taught in that university.

In Islam, there no distinction is made between men and women in terms of superiority or nobility of one gender over another. In Surat Al-Imrane, God says: “So their Lord accepted of them (their supplication and answered them): Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female. You are members of one another”(3:195). In another verse, God says: “Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.”(16:97). In Surat Al-ahzab, God says: “For Muslim men and women,- for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise,- for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.”(33:35) So, in Islam, there is ultimate equality of spirituality. There is also equality of nobility and of humanity, and there is equality in earning Allah’s reward. In other words, the potential to enter paradise is equal regardless of gender.

Despite the fact that there is no gender that is better and nobler than the other, men and women are different biologically, physically, and psychologically. In Surat Al Imran, God says: “ And the male is not like the female ”(3:36). Though men and women are equal spiritually in the eyes of God, they are not equal in the tasks they are assigned. In Surat Al-nisaa, God the exalted says: “And in no wise covet those things in which Allah Hath bestowed His gifts More freely on some of you than on

others: To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn: But ask Allah of His bounty. For Allah hath full knowledge of all things”(4:32). Destroying gender roles and assuming that genders are fluid will destroy the bedrock of society and create anarchy in the family and the society. Refusing the gender role as handed down by God instigates negative changes in the society. Consequently, problems will certainly occur when there is a difference between what the woman is and what the society wants her to be.

In his book, *Between Guidance and Wandering*, Malek Bennabi gives examples of famous Muslim women in History who are truly model for all Muslim women. One of them is Soumia, the mother of Ammar ibn Yasir who was always proud of his great mother. He used to say to the Caliph “I am the son of Soumia.” (p.64). Yasir, may God be pleased with him, was one of the most beloved and respected companions of the prophet PBBUH. Yasir and his family were subjected to severe afflictions. They were tortured and tormented on the scorching sands of Mecca. The prophet PBBUH, while passing by, would enjoin patience upon them and would give them glad tidings about paradise; “Patience o family of Yasir. Your meeting place is paradise”. Yasir’s mother, Soumia, was killed by Abu Jahl for her refusal to abandon Islam, and she is considered the first Murdered Muslim woman. In sharp contrast with Soumia, nowadays Muslim women are willingly abandoning the teachings of their religion.

Bennabi also makes a reference to another Algerian heroic figure Lalla Fatma N’Soumer. She is called “Lalla”, because in North African countries, this word denotes respect, honor, and high status. Fatma N’Soumer obliged the whole society to respect her for what she was. She led Muslim Mujahideen to fight against the French colonial invasion of Algeria. She dedicated herself to serve God, and she was not immersed in earthly pleasures like most of nowadays women. Bennabi states: “Here is another Algerian woman (Lalla Fatima Nsumer) who descends from the Djurdjra mountains at the head of a battalion of the Mujahideen who were nicknamed "Al-Masbileen" because they sold their souls for the sake of God. She stood face to face with the enemy during the period of the French Occupation of Algeria”(*Guidance and Wandering*, p.65).

Another example of glaring females in the Algerian history is Fadila Saâdane who was a very famous Algerian nationalist activist. She took part in the Algerian war of independence as a fidaïa before she was killed by the French colonizers.

According to Bennabi, the Algerian revolution pushed the woman's movement forward, but it might deviate from the right path and cause many problems if it is not monitored. For Bennabi, it is important to know the roots of this movement. He writes, "Therefore, we must raise from now on the problem of planting it so that we do not plant its roots wherever we want. There are fertilizers that help the good plant grow, and there are sheds in which only rotten plants grow" (*Guidance and Wandering*, p.65). What Bennabi implies is that women's movement should have religious foundations. For him, religion is the solid thing around which they have to center their budding identity. He refers to one of the hadiths of the prophet Mohamad PBBUH to show on which basis a man chooses his future wife. The Hadith says: "Avoid green pastures." The hadith implies that man should not marry a beautiful woman on the basis of her appearance, because she might not be a good mannered and righteous woman. It is the spiritual side that defines the woman. Thus, the goal of the Muslim is not merely to obtain pleasure but to establish a marital life based on the piety of God, the fruits of which will be a righteous family that will be a strong building block in a righteous society. The pursuit of beauty only does not help in the advancement of civilization. The hadith cited by Bennabi is a warning against marrying women with good looks and charming beauty without moral values, as this produces bad mannered children. The woman should be a role model for her children who learn many things from her words, her tone, her facial expressions, behavior, speech, and general way of comportment. In fact, there is another authentic hadith narrated by Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him, who reported Allah's Messenger PBBUH as saying: "A woman may be married for four reasons: for her property, her status, her beauty and her religion, so try to get one who is religious, may your hand be besmeared with dust" (Tirmidhi). So, we can notice that Bennabi's views are in tune with the teachings of our prophet PBBUH.

Bennabi criticizes the feminist movement which merely ask for rights, and it uses passionate speeches to galvanize public opinion and get its support. This feminist movement is influenced by other feminist movements whose cultural context totally differs from ours. Bennabi makes fun of these feminist activists like Fadéla M'rabet who, recently in her book *The blue-eyed muezzin* (2008), calls for the abolition of the second article of the Algerian constitution, which says that the religion of the republic is Islam. For Bennabi, Muslim women should not be hypnotized and

mesmerized by Western discourse. They should rather rely on Islamic discourse which, according to Shehab, Al-Harashseh, and Shahid, “challenges the West’s ideology due to the peculiarity of its mode of representation; the master signifier of this genre is Islam and it reflects the core images, beliefs and ideologies of Muslims”(2020, p.175)

According to Bennabi, women should not slavishly and blindly imitate their Western counterparts. The problem of woman, for him, cannot be solved by women alone but in collaboration with man. The two genders complete each other. In Bennabi’s words, “We should not imagine a pole (woman) separated from the other (man). If this happened [...], the society will vanish”(*Guidance and Wandering*, p.65). In fact, feminism is a dangerous movement. It tries to mangle the harmonious relationship between man and woman by teaching women to deny their nature and to pit themselves against men.

3. Women’s Dress

Bennabi discusses thoroughly women’s dress as it reflects, to a great extent, the change of the woman’s personality. He assumes that a person’s attire gives us hints at his/her beliefs and cultural identity. In his book *The Conditions of the Renaissance*, Bennabi states: “There is no doubt that when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk imposed the hat as a national dress for the people, he wanted to change people’s psychology; it was not a change of clothing, because clothing governs human behavior to some extent.”(p.99). The dress determines one’s role and personality. Bennabi asserted that the: “dress is not only one of the material factors that establish moral balance in society, but it has its own psychological effects, and if they say the shirt does not make the priest, I see the opposite. The shirt contributes to the making of the priest to some extent, because the dress gives its owner his soul” (*Conditions of Renaissance*, p.132). Because the dress has very important implications and psychological effects, Kamal Ataturk replaced the fez with the hat.

Bennabi noticed the change in women’s clothing. They have abandoned the traditional conservative dress and replaced it by the Western dressing style. For Bennabi, the Western way of dressing correlates with the Western culture and its views of the body as a means of procuring pleasure. In that culture, the sensual triumphs over the spiritual. Thus, a Western woman displays her body without any external, including religious, restraints. Bennabi states: “The development of clothing in the Western society has started from a certain point, which is to highlight the beauty

of women in the street with everything that can show it clearly. Contrariwise, we find that the development of clothing in the Islamic community has taken a completely different direction. It mainly aims, by means of the shroud that covers her body, to hide the woman's beauty in the street”(Conditions of the Renaissance,p.109). Likewise, Bennabi explains that when it comes to art, we find that Western artists practice the art of drawing naked women. However, this is not found in Islamic art because “The moral code in the Islamic society deters the artist from expressing all the aspects of beauty, especially the naked woman” (Conditions of the Renaissance p.109). This does not mean that Islamic culture is devoid of the element of beauty, but moral values are prioritized over sensual pleasure. A culture that gives priority to beauty and pleasure over religious values will always have a disastrous end. Bennabi gives us two pertinent examples from history. The first is Messalina, who was the third wife of Roman Emperor Claudius. She was famous for her promiscuity and insatiable sexual desire. The second is Nero who was sexually dissolute.

The attire is not just an external decoration; it has deep meanings and implications in the life of the nation. It is an expression of identity. Therefore, It helps us distinguish societies from each other and gives them their distinct characteristics. In this respect, Fanon states: “The way people clothe themselves, together with the traditions of dress and finery that custom implies, constitutes the most distinctive form of a society’s uniqueness”(p.35). The dress makes the individual feel belonging to his own culture and civilization and gives him a sense of the social responsibilities that he/she has to carry out.

A woman's going out in a beautiful adornment awakens men’s greed and satisfies their desires. Though women may not talk to men outside, their attractive and seductive clothes and appearance speak volumes. Hence, true Muslim men do not allow their women to go out in a dress that stirs men’s desire, but nowadays because of moral degradation, they do not care anymore. By not dressing modestly, they become promoters of sexual pleasure. In Surat Alhujirat, there are instructions for Muslim women concerning veiling. God says: “O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”(33:59). Women should conceal their beauty in order not to be subject to sexual harassment. By wearing hijab,

the woman shows others that she is not free for all men. Another Quranic verse that clearly asks women to wear hijab is from Surat A nur. In it, God says: “And say to the believing women, that they lower their gaze cast down their eyes and guard their chastity, and do not reveal their adornment except that which is outward (face and hands); and let them draw their veils over their chests”(24:31). Before Islam, some women used to cover their heads with the scarf, but they threw it behind their back to reveal the upper part of their chest. Dressing modestly is likely to thwart the surging emotions and the throbs of desire for pleasure.

By removing the patina of shyness, the woman annihilates her feminine identity. The Qur’an makes references to shyness (bashfulness) as one of the qualities of women. In Surat Al-Qasas, when narrating the story of Moses, God says: “Then, one of the two women came to him walking shyly, and said: ‘My father invites you, so that he can recompense you with a wage for having drawn water for us ’” In his praising of the virtue of bashfulness, the prophet PBBUH says: “And bashfulness is a branch of faith.”(Muslim). He also said: “Shyness does not bring anything except good.”(Muslim). So, women need to embody modesty outwardly and inwardly. Contrary to what secular feminists push, modesty is not weakness and brazenness is not strength. A modest woman is fully alive. Ibn Alqiyam Aljawzia says that Haya’ (modesty) and hayat (life) are directly related, and the degree to which a person has modesty is the degree to which that person is alive (p.257). In fact, one of the core aspects of true femininity is modesty, not just in dress alone but also in thought, mannerism, gaze, speech, and actions.

God created in us an innate desire to be clothed, and he blessed us with materials to cover ourselves. In Surat Al-Araf, God explicitly links the story of Adam to the concept of modesty, and he uses this story to warn us against immodesty, nakedness, and nudity. God says: “O children of Adam! Do not let Satan deceive you as he tempted your parents out of paradise and caused their cover to be removed in order to expose nakedness”(A-Araf: 27). So, anyone who openly encourages nakedness is following the footsteps, the plot and desire of Satan to uncover our bodies. Therefore, muslim women should stick to their noble Islam ideals by protecting their modesty and guarding their chastity.

Bennabi sadly remarks that women who used to wear the full covering shroud, have begun to follow European women's style of clothing; however, this will not solve their social problems and promote their status. Bennabi states: "And we regret that the women of the East are so superficial in their thinking when they see that their problem has been solved by such an imitation of the women of Europe; the problem of women is a human problem, and the progress of civilization depends on its solution. This solution is not by a mere imitation of the appearance of European women, ignoring the foundations on which European women have built their life. And while we are trying [...] to define the role of women in society, we should look at this problem in relation to other social problems in order to advance civilization. This problem cannot be discussed without this framework" (*Conditions of the Renaissance*, p.125).

Imitating non-Muslim women implies effacing our identity, because others are not governed by the same rules of regulation. The feminist movement, which Western in origin, will not solve Arab and Algerian women's problem because the feminist movement has changed women's nature and role, and this has unspeakable effects on social and civilizational advancement. Feminism instills a sense of mistrust and fear into the hearts and minds of modern women, and it puts them in conflict with mrn. Feminism has noting good to offer us that we don't already have in Islam. It is not better than Islam, which is the perfect, complete, and comprehensive system made by the Creator.

Fanon shows how the colonizers tried to destroy the Algerian society and the resistance by altering and shaking the Algerian Muslim women's identity. Thus, the colonizer tried to adopt the well-known formulae: "Let's win over the women and the rest will follow"(p.37). According to Fanon, the colonial administration relied on the following political doctrine: "If we want to destroy the structure of the Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight"(p.38). The colonizer realized that the veil is a means of empowerment, and it also shows women's attachment to their religion and their culture. Because the woman has a prominent role in preserving the harmony and unity of the Algerian society, the colonizer strived to unveil her in order to weaken the resistance. In this regard, Fanon states: "We have seen that on the level of individuals, the colonial strategy of destructing Algerian society very quickly came to assign a prominent place to the Algerian women [...] It was the colonialist's frenzy to unveil the Algerian woman, it was his gamble, on winning the battle of the veil in whatever cost"(pp.46-47). For Fanon, unveiling women means possessing Algeria. He states:

“Every veil that fell, every body that became liberated from the traditional embrace of the haik, every face that offered itself to the bold and impatient glance of the occupier was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonize”(p.42).

Bennabi’s conviction is that change must come from within by embracing our values, not by rejecting them and search for the solution in other cultures that have different values. In *Conditions of the Renaissance*, Bennabi asks: “And now we ask ourselves: is it useful for a Muslim woman to be placed in a position that makes her resemble her European counterpart? Some Islamic countries have followed this path, and for them, this is a movement of renewal for women, and many renovators are calling for it. But with some consideration, we see that the transition from a veiled woman to a non-veiled woman who reads newspapers, elects and works in factories has not solved the problem [...] What we have done is that we moved women from one situation to another, and this made the problem more complicated than before””(p.126). For Bennabi, the situation of the European woman is not a good one for which she is envied. Her appearance in an attire that stirs the individual’s instincts has dangerous impacts. For instance, it results in illegal sexual relations. It has made the European society – after erasing sanctification of sexual relations - consider these relationships as a pastime for deprived souls, and thus lost its function in terms of preserving the family and the society. Today, raping is one of the great challenges facing the non-Islamic countries of the world, and they have failed to find solutions for this problem. Leaders of these countries are making efforts to put an end to this phenomenon, but in vain. Moving naked and showing all the attractive parts of the woman’s body have led to untold cases of rape. During the Algerian revolution, according to Fanon, “the rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of a European is always preceded by a rendering of the veil”(p.45). Islam has offered solutions for this problem like wearing decent and respectful clothes. In our religion, freedom in relationships is quelled because it destroys a woman’s respectability. Thus, the European woman is not a model to be imitated by Muslim women. She is rather dangerous not just for the society but even for herself.

The veil confers a sense of respect on women. It also determines the role a woman wants to play in the society. In this regard, Bennabi states: “The outfit that a woman chooses for herself is a clear evidence of the role she wants to represent in society and that she actually represents. Until recently, the [Western] woman used to wear a beautiful dress that covers the secret feminine parts and it even reaches her feet. And she uses her modesty as a barrier that prevents her from deteriorating into unethical acts. Her robe was the best example of gentleness and politeness in society, as she was the lady worthy of all respect, the good wife who wiped with her gentle hands her husband’s exhaustion of work” (*Conditions of Renaissance* p.127). By wearing the veil, the woman shows that she is forbidden and inaccessible to men. She is not a commodity whose role is proffer pleasure to the sick hearts of men. In fact, the veil is not just a symbol that asserts women’s Muslim identity, it is also a means of empowerment and protection. In this respect, Alloula states: “The opaque veil that covers her intimates clearly and simply to the photographer a refusal. Turned back upon himself, upon his own impotence in the situation, the photographer undergoes an initial experience of disappointment and rejection. Draped in the veil that cloaks her to the ankles, the Algerian woman discourages the scopic desire (the voyeurism) of the photographer. She is the concrete negation of this desire and thus brings to the photographer confirmation of a triple rejection: the rejection of his desire, of the practice of his ‘art’, and of his place in a milieu that is not his own” (p.7)..

The woman is aware of the unspeakable sensations of her body. A woman wearing immodest clothes and putting make up affords her viewers with vicarious access to what they cannot in reality attain, wishes for sexual gratification. Thus, the veil saves her from sexual harassment outside her house, especially nowadays when women become competitors to men in the workplace.

In his staunch criticism of the lack of modesty in dressing, Bennabi states: “Today, however, she [the Western woman] is wearing the sexy dress that does not only reveal the meaning of femininity, but rather the nakedness of the female. It confirms that women are defined in terms of their corporality by their society which is mad and obsessed with immediate sensual pleasure” (*Conditions of Renaissance* p.127). By dressing immodestly, women do not assert their freedom, but they rather confirm their status as objects whose role is to satiate men’s desire. In Islam, women cannot do whatever they want in terms of dress. They have to dress in a specific way, following the teachings of their religion. But nowadays, women have changed their clothes, thinking that the traditional way of dressing makes them look backward and lagging behind. Contrariwise, they assume that indecency and nudity are considered progress and enlightenment. In fact, these views are propagated by Westerners to

convert Muslim women. In this respect, Alloula states: “If the women are inaccessible to sight (that is veiled), it is because they are imprisoned. This dramatized equivalence between the veiling and the imprisonment is necessary for the constitution of an imaginary scenario that results in the dissolution of the actual society”(p.21).

4. CONCLUSION

Men and women do not have to be locked in battle with each other. It is not a fight or a competition. If they are pitted against each other, and if they are constantly competing or fighting with each other, the entire project will fail. Each of them has a specific role for which they are already equipped and hard wined for optimal performance. They have to accept their role and their natural ability to do it. Rejecting their role and trying to rewrite it or altering their own nature will only result in tension and futility.

Instead of being concerned with solving the problem of cultural backwardness, our society is now concerned with gender issues. The feminist movements have put men in conflict with women, and has resulted in many social problems. In fact, the feminist movement is shattering the unity of our families and society, and it is hindering the advancement of our civilization. Its slogans and ideas, which have nothing to do with our religion, will lead to failure. The change, as Bennabi suggests, will be successful only if we follow the Qur’an and Sunnah. To solve the problems related to gender roles, we have to return to our religion, because it is the only perfect reference for us. Nowadays intellectuals should follow the path of Bennabi. They are faced with the overwhelming task of having to rid the society of the Western ideas that resulted in social disequilibrium.

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