

PROGRESSIVE ISLAM IN  
PRACTICE



MUSLIMS FOR  
PROGRESSIVE VALUES

# ISLAMIC FEMINISM

PART I

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# WHAT IS ISLAMIC FEMINISM?

## ISLAMIC

in connection with or pertaining to the religion of Islam or those who practice Islam.

## FEMINISM

an ideology that aims to establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes.

## ISLAMIC FEMINISM

a way of life committed to gender justice while engaging with Islamic epistemology as an expansion of a faith position rather than a rejection of it.

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"A concise definition of Islamic feminism gleaned from the writings and work of Muslim protagonists as a feminist discourse and practice that derives its understanding and mandate from the Qur'an, seeking rights and justice within the framework of gender equality for women and men in the totality of their existence."

**MARGOT BADRAN**

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# Feminist Hermeneutics

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The act of reading a historical or sacred religious text and interpreting these texts (i.e. Qur'an and Sunnah) to promote the ideas of gender equality.

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# FEMINIST HERMENEUTICS

- Hermeneutics is a method of interpreting religious or literary texts.
- By applying feminism to this method, individuals read these texts and focus on gender equality and justice.
- The texts are read and understood from the perspectives and experiences of women.
- Acknowledge the historical context in which the text was revealed or written, including the time, place, and the background.
- Examines the entire text to develop a framework of understanding rather than applying a singular meaning to one verse.

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Islamic feminism is also reacting to the dominant Western feminist trends, according to which to be a feminist you have to be secular and must work within a secular framework, an understanding that is something heavily influenced by white, middle class Western women's experiences and cannot be said to be universal at all.

**ZIBA MIR-HOSSEINI**

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**THE FIVE  
ASPECTS OF  
FEMINIST  
HERMENEUTICS**

Intra-textuality method,  
which is based on  
systemic thinking.

Uses historical  
context, paying  
attention to the  
context of time.

Based on the  
perspectives  
and  
experiences of  
women.

Monotheistic  
paradigm,  
recognizing the  
incomparable unity  
of God.

Framed from the  
theory of feminism,  
which centers  
equality and gender  
justice.

# READING THE QUR'AN AS A FEMINIST MEANS

- Returning to the core of classical Islamic teachings.
- Challenging other sources, like the Hadith and the Sunnah, in a way that promotes gender equality.
- Investigating the historical contexts and background in which the texts were revealed that perpetuate inequality.
- Expose conservative patriarchal interpretations of the text that falsify the text.
- Recognizing that previous processes which analyzed the Qur'an were inherently patriarchal.
- Consider the Quranic principle of justice for all humans when reading and interpreting each verse.



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The life and experiences of Muslim women are determinant factors to finding the truth of the Qur'an. We can not blame God or Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) for the unequal position between women and men that is happening today. We have been provided Islamic teachings that are based on tawhid, that values reciprocity and equality.

**AMINA WADUD**

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