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**The Qur'an, Human Rights, and the Muslim World: Between Text and Context**

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**Abstract**

*The relationship between the Qur'an and contemporary human rights frameworks is a subject of profound scholarly and theological debate. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) embodies secular, universal principles, the Qur'an offers a divine ethical foundation centered on justice ('adl), dignity (karāmah), and equality. This article explores the tensions and convergences between Islamic scripture and modern rights discourse, emphasizing the Qur'an's affirmation of universal human dignity (Qur'an 17:70), equality (49:13), and freedom of conscience (2:256). Nonetheless, the classical Islamic jurisprudence, which distinguishes between God-given rights (huquq Allah) and human rights (huquq al-ibad), tends to conflict with liberal rights model, especially on gender, religious and legal penalties. Contemporary Muslim scholars are divided: traditionalists uphold classical fiqh as immutable, while reformists advocate ijtihād (independent reasoning) and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (higher objectives of law) to reconcile Islamic ethics with modern rights. The article highlights contextual reinterpretation, feminist Qur'anic exegesis, and socio-historical analysis as tools to bridge gaps between text and context. Case studies of the Muslim-majority states indicate inconsistent rights practices that are determined by ideological conflicts between authenticity and modernity. The conclusion presents the argument in favor of the pluralistic discourse that would not subordinate Islamic moral autonomy to universal rights standards but would treat them critically, opposing both cultural relativism and hegemonic universalism. By centering the Qur'an's ethical spirit over rigid legalism, the article envisions a transformative Islamic contribution to global human rights.*

**Keywords:** Qur'an, Human Rights, Islamic Law, Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah, Ijtihād, Gender Equality, Religious Freedom, Universalism, Contextual Interpretation, Muslim Reformism.

**Introduction**

The modern human rights system, which is enshrined in the most important international legal instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, is founded

on the premise of inherent dignity and universal equality of all humans. It describes a broad set of civil, political, social, and economic rights, which are freedom expression, freedom of religion, gender equality, right to education and fair trial (United Nations, 1948). These principles have since been strengthened and later widened in the international conventions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the contemporary world, human rights standards are regarded as the component of the global moral and legal language that is supposed to be universal and should cross borders between nations, cultures, and religions. The universality claim has however been received with a lot of skepticism in most parts of the world and especially in societies that boast of a religious or cultural identity. In Muslim world, human rights framework tends to be interpreted through an Islamic law and ethical tradition paradigm, which has been both converging and conflicting in interpretations and application.

The connection between human rights and Islam particularly the Quran as its main scripture has always been an issue of fruitful scholarly discussions. On the one hand, many Islamic scholars and jurists stress that the Quran advocates the key principles which coincide with the human rights, i.e., justice (*adl*), mercy (*rahmah*), dignity (*karama*), and freedom of belief (*ikhtiyar*) (Kamali, 2010; Sachedina, 2009). These are reflected in Quranic verses which state the sanctity of human life (Quran 5:32), the equality of all human beings as being in the eyes of God (Quran 49:13) and that there is no compulsion in religion (Quran 2:256). According to the reformist scholars, the worldview presented in the Quran, interpreted through the prism of *maqāsid* (objectives), can be reconciled with contemporary ideas about human rights in their entirety (Auda, 2019; Ramadan, 2009). Conversely the critics have indicated that some classical interpretations of the Islamic law in particular as far as the rights of women, freedom of religion and how religious minorities should be treated seems to be in contravention with the international human rights standards (An-Naim, 2008). The source of these tensions has seen a consistent gap and a lack of meeting point between secular language of human rights and the traditional Islamic jurisprudence, with both camps talking over each other because of their divergent systems of knowledge and sources of authority.

The main tension in the debate lies within the universality of human rights and the particularism of religious text. Secular rationalism, individual freedom, and cross-cultural agreement are the elements of human rights frameworks that impose their moral authority. Islamic ethics, contrarily,

are justified on divine revelation, corporate duty and theocentric perspective of the world. This incongruence of assertions causes practical difficulties when global rights are perceived to offend religious standards or when Islamic injunctions are described as acts of contravention of international standards. As an example, although the international law promotes absolute freedom of belief, the traditional Islamic law, on the other hand, has apostasy provisions, which restrict that freedom. On the same note, gender equality remains one of the key pillars of human rights activism, however, Islamic law based on interpretation supports differentiated role and responsibility between men and women. Such inconsistencies have led to a rejection of universalism in referral of religious authenticity, or a re-interpretation of the scripture to conform to the contemporary sensibilities. The article argues that resolving this tension needs more than the legal-reformative project, but it needs a hermeneutical project to the Quran that finds a balance between textual faithfulness and contextual efficacy. It is only on the basis of a critical analysis of the interrelation of text and context that a fruitful synthesis of Quranic ethics and human rights can be imagined within the Muslim world.

### **Qur'anic Foundations of Human Dignity and Rights**

The Qur'an provides a powerful ethical foundation for human dignity and rights, beginning with the affirmation of *karāmah* the innate dignity of all human beings. This concept is rooted in the recognition that every human being, regardless of race, status, or faith, is honored by God. The Qur'an states:

"وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ".

And We have certainly honored the children of Adam..." (*Qur'an*, 17:70). This verse affirms the divine bestowal of dignity upon all humans, not just believers, indicating a universal status that transcends identity boundaries. The term *karāmah* in this context refers to the sacredness and worth endowed by God as part of human creation. This dignity is not earned by faith, wealth, or social class—it is an essential feature of being human. As such, it serves as a Qur'anic basis for upholding the sanctity of life, personal integrity, and basic rights. It challenges all forms of dehumanization and asserts that any form of oppression, racism, or inequality violates the fundamental ethical order established by divine revelation (Sachedina, 2009). From this perspective, the Qur'an can be seen as initiating a moral discourse that resonates with the core values of modern human rights: respect, equality, and protection of the human person.

Closely related to human dignity is the Qur'anic affirmation of equality among people, which undermines any hierarchical view of humanity based

on ethnicity, gender, or class. In one of the most cited verses related to pluralism and moral equality, the Qur'an proclaims:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ"

"O mankind! We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you (*Qur'an*, 49:13). This verse offers a theological rejection of racial and tribal superiority, emphasizing that all people share a common origin and are thus morally equal before God. The criterion of nobility is not bloodline or social rank but *taqwā* (God-consciousness), an internal ethical quality. The Qur'anic emphasis on *ta'āruf*—mutual recognition—highlights the importance of coexistence and intercultural engagement. This moral vision aligns with contemporary calls for inclusivity, diversity, and global citizenship. Importantly, it also challenges some traditional practices within Muslim societies that privilege certain groups over others based on lineage or gender. By grounding equality in divine revelation rather than temporal legislation, the Qur'an provides a stable foundation for advocating universal human worth (Kamali, 2010; Saeed, 2018).

Another vital Qur'anic principle relevant to human rights is freedom of conscience, particularly in matters of belief. The verse

"لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ"

("There is no compulsion in religion" – *Qur'an*, 2:256) is among the most cited in modern Islamic human rights discourse. It establishes the principle that faith must be a matter of personal conviction and not coercion. The Qur'anic approach to religious freedom includes not only tolerance of other beliefs but also a recognition of religious diversity as part of God's will (*Qur'an*, 5:48). Historically, Islamic societies developed legal structures that, while not fully aligned with modern notions of religious liberty, did accommodate pluralism through systems like *dhimmah*. However, many contemporary scholars argue that these historical models must evolve to reflect the Qur'an's underlying ethical vision rather than its historical applications (An-Na'im, 2008). Freedom of belief in the Qur'an is not an expression of secular individualism but a recognition of the human capacity for moral agency. This view supports the idea that belief cannot be genuine if compelled, and therefore religious diversity should not only be tolerated but respected as a reflection of human dignity.

The Qur'an also affirms the protection of core human values that parallel modern rights frameworks: life, property, family, and belief. The sanctity of life is underscored in the verse:

"مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا"

"Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land it is as if he had slain mankind entirely." (*Qur'an*, 5:32). This teaching presents human life as sacred and its unjust taking as a crime against humanity. The *Qur'an* also prohibits theft (*Qur'an*, 5:38), emphasizes the rights of orphans and family (*Qur'an*, 4:10, 2:83), and repeatedly calls for the establishment of justice:

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ"

"Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence." (*Qur'an*, 16:90), and another verse state;

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ".

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah..." (*Qur'an*, 4:135).

These verses frame justice not as a political ideal but as a divine imperative. Together, these ethical principles constitute a *Qur'anic* blueprint for a just society where rights are respected, lives are protected, and moral responsibility is a shared duty. They also offer a solid platform for Muslim engagement with the global human rights discourse, enabling a response that is both authentically Islamic and universally relevant.

### **Rights in Islamic Tradition: Between Scripture and Historical Practice**

The traditional Islamic law tradition elaborated a specific theory of rights in terms of a duality of the right of God and the right of human beings which are described as the rights of the human being before God. Jurists placed the former first, the latter was viewed as unchangeable, unnegotiable and in many cases not waivable by humans, particularly where they were associated with rites, criminal laws, or social decency (Hallaq, 2018). By contrast, human rights, including those on personal injury, property disputes or contracts could be more fluid and offered individually to be waived or negotiated within *sharī'ah* parameters. This was the style of a worldview, where divine authority was the main issue, and the decisions of the law were to be regarded not only as a guarantee of justice but also of the maintenance of the religious and social order. Nevertheless, this system usually led to a more duties-based or rights-based view of the law, and an emphasis on meeting one of the obligations to God and society, instead of claiming personal rights (Zaman, 2021). The fact that classical jurisprudence did not have a formal theory of individual rights does not mean that the classical jurists were indifferent to justice or welfare, but it does represent a basic distinction between Islamic legal ethics and contemporary liberal theories of rights.

In this legal system, classical jurists created the decision on such matters like gender roles, religious minority, and freedom of expression that were related to the socio-political facts of their epoch. Although spiritually, women were equal in the religious discourse, they were generally bestowed with different legal obligations and could not be allowed to work in the judicial or political offices in most schools of thought. They were accepted to have access to education, property, and family rights but had to be limited to a patriarchal legal culture (Ali, 2016). In the same way, religious minorities, particularly Jews and Christians, were given partial self-governance under such structures as dhimmah where they were permitted to exercise their religion and internal policies on the condition that they pay a tax and be subjected to political subservience. Although this gave a kind of legal pluralism within a pre-modern setting, it fixed hierarchical citizenship as an institution. Regarding freedom of speech, the classical Islamic legal thought acknowledged the right to speak against the authorities, especially in the academic or theological context but also criminalized blasphemy or apostasy, which were both perceived as a danger to the social order and the integrity of religion (Rahman, 2020). Such rulings though not all uniform in relation to all the schools were influenced by the normative agenda of maintaining social harmony in the hierarchical and theocentric societies.

Such classical understandings have created serious conflicts between orthodox Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and new human rights discourse particularly on the territories of gender equality, religious freedom, and democratic participation. The current understanding of human rights is structured on the foundation of universal, inalienable and individual human rights, and this principle tends to clash with the communal and divine-rights nature of pre-modern Islamic law. To give an example, according to contemporary critics, customary laws on inheritance, testimony and personal status are in conflict with the gender parity principle promoted by modern human rights conventions (Mir-Hosseini, 2018). As a counterargument, numerous Muslim jurists emphasize that the classical rulings were not absolute, and they were predetermined by the existing norms, which can be decontextualized regarding new conditions. Actually, in pre-modern Muslim communities, like Andalusians, Abbasid Baghdad, or Mughal India, a pragmatic approach to religious diversity, urbanization and legal pluralism was demonstrated. According to the case studies on the history of governance, formal doctrine can be seen as limiting, but in practice less restrictive and more pragmatic forms of governance existed, which can be taken as a valuable model of the rights-based reform based on Islamic tradition (Bano, 2017). This interrelationship between the law,

context, and practice as it is lived out, persists even in defining the manner in which Muslim societies relate to the current dynamic discourse on human rights.

### **Contemporary Muslim Debates on Human Rights**

The Muslim reaction to human rights is diverse and is broadly divided into the reformist and the traditionalist schools of thought. Traditionalists believe in the maintenance of classical fiqh as an all-encompassing legal system, revealed by God and therefore not susceptible to outside reform. They tend to consider the international human rights norms as culturally bound and incompatible with the divine excellence of shari'ah (Afsaruddin, 2015). In contrast, the reformist scholars promote a contextual and ethical approach to Islamic sources that claims that the fundamental moral purpose of Islam is compatible with the universal human rights. In their arguments, they believe that most of the classical decisions were influenced by historical standards and not divine scriptures that were undeviating. Reformists demand the re-examination of the Quran in the terms of ijtihad (independent reasoning) and prioritizing the ethical nature of Islamic law over its classical form (Abou El Fadl, 2017). The main argument of the two camps is on the origins of moral authority: whether it is based on divine commandment in the prescribed form or on the changing human interpretations based on divine values. The reformist idea is an emerging belief among academicians and social activists that want to harmonize the Islamic heritage with the requirements of international fairness, especially in the spheres of gender equality, religious freedom, and democratic rule.

One of the key ideas in the reformist thought is maqasid. Pfundrizqu: Stevenson, "The History of Islamic Law: An Introduction" (note 1), p. 56. Although the traditional definition of maqasid upholds religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, modern scholars redefined it to safeguard human welfare, justice, and dignity as central legal objectives (Auda, 2019). This paradigm shift enables the scholars to state that laws that are against these objectives like discriminative rulings or compulsive religious practices do not reflect Islamic intentions. As an example, in the discussions of the women rights, reformist scholars recontextualize Quranic verses in terms of their socio-historical context and support the idea of legal equality in inheritance, testimony, and the role in society (Mir-Hosseini, 2018). In a similar vein, the minority protection and freedom of religion debates are highlighted by the principles of justice and non-coercion, which are identified in the Quran. Ideally, there are states which are predominantly Muslim in population that have adopted reforms based on maqasid, like the Personal Status Code in Tunisia, which accorded women more rights in

marriage and child custody. These interpretations however tend to draw the wrath of conservative establishments that consider them as as the western influenced dilution of Islamic purity. In this way, the maqāṣid theory has become a field of theological legitimation of the reform and a platform of conflicting Islam and modernity visions.

The process of establishing human rights has not been even across the Muslim-majority states as the constitutional foundations and politics differ. Whereas states like Indonesia, Tunisia, and Morocco have adopted some aspects of international law on human rights in their jurisdiction, other states have been opposed to the international norms with traditional interpretations based on shari'ah. As an example, the constitutional law of Malaysia acknowledges the Islamic law in the field of personal statuses but fails to strike a balance between the Islamic law and civil liberties, which results in legal ambiguity and jurisdictional conflicts (An-Na-im, 2019). By contrast, Saudi Arabia and Iran largely use Shari'ah as the source of law, which tends to restrict expression-based freedoms, religious-based freedoms, and gender-based freedoms. These constitutional solutions are not legal options only, but an expression of the wider ideological conflict on the construction of national identity, control of religion and integration into the world. The human rights discourse is politicized in most cases whereby selective embrace of the discourse is adopted to please international donors or avoid condemnation and the actual reforms are minimal. Nevertheless, the elements of civil society movements, women organizations, youth movements throughout the Muslim world are becoming increasingly insistent on rights-based interpretations of Islam, which is indicative of a gradual but meaningful change in the moral fabric of the Muslim societies.

### **The Qur'an and Universal Human Rights**

The issue of the compatibility of Quranic principles with Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has presented a strong academic debate. On the one hand, critics tend to see the points of tension between Islamic law and international rights norms especially in the gender equality, freedom of religion, and legal punishments as the signs of their irreconcilability in nature. Conversely, most modern researchers believe that the Quran does not necessarily agree with all points of the UDHR but interpreted by the moral and goals and objectives approach, it promotes the moral spirit of human rights (Kamali, 2019). By way of illustration, Quranic ideas of justice, dignity, mercy, and human responsibility are reminiscent of most important human rights, e.g., equality before the law and the right to life and to personal property. Reformist scholars stress that the



interpretation of jurisprudence in the history of this world might contradict the contemporary understanding of human rights but the Quran as a source of moral guidance provides an extensive possibility of reinterpretation, especially when viewed through the prism of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* (higher objectives of the law). Instead of treating compatibility as a dichotomy, researchers propose to concentrate on the aspect of ethical convergence, which implies finding common ground where both systems can promote the discourse about global justice without eliminating their unique bases (Saeed, 2021).

Criticism of cultural relativism and Islamophobia is commonly mixed with arguments on compatibility. According to critics of human rights universalism, the UDHR carries with it the Western liberal values, which have been historically informed by the secular Enlightenment thought, and are not able to accommodate other non-Western ethical traditions, such as Islamic ones (Donnelly, 2013). Cultural relativists emphasize the need to consider rights in the local religious and moral frameworks, and the application of a global model is likely to be an issue of cultural imperialism. But there are warnings that this way of thought can be used to cover up abuse of human rights in the name of tradition or religious purity. Meanwhile, the issue of Islamophobia in the global context makes it even more difficult to engage. The policies about Islam as something oppressive or incompatible with modernity perpetuate the exclusion, alienate the Muslim communities, and make the constructive dialogue impossible (Brown, 2022). Having identified these problems, Muslim thinkers have sought a de-colonial approach to human rights an approach that is both inclusive of Islamic morals and is also critical of relativist justification of abuse as well as the hegemonic imposition of western norms. This is a strategy of dealing with fair criticisms and at the same time remaining principled in opposing injustice, wherever it transpires.

Considering these dynamics, Quran-based reinterpretation of rights and formation of ethical pluralism as the potential global model have gained increasing momentum. Instead of posing Islam and human rights as incompatible, the scholars suggest a third way dialogical pluralism in which Islamic and secular systems can be in a mutually beneficial relationship, engage in meaning-making, and enrich each other (Hasan, 2021). The recontextualised and morally-interpreted teachings of the Quran provide a fulfilling language with which to argue the rights and duties in social justice, environmental management, and interfaith dialogue. As one example, some recent activities by Muslim ethicists and interfaith coalitions have employed Quranic standards to promote protections of refugees, climate

action, and anti-racism causes. These trends are indicative of the Qur'an, as not a fixed book, but a living ethical resource, which can be used in the development of a more universal and spiritually oriented model of human rights. The point is that it is vital to strike the right balance between adherence to the scriptural principles and openness to the changing human experience understanding that compatibility is not about the same structures but about the common moral aspirations.

### **Role of Context: Rethinking Interpretation in Modern Times**

The need to take historical context into account when interpreting the Quran has been argued in an increasing volume of contemporary Islamic scholarship, on the understanding that most verses of the scripture were revealed as answers to certain social, political, and legal situations in 7th century Arabia. Only by knowing the socio-historical context under which the Quran was revealed to its audience, norms, and cultural references, can one distinguish between universal moral standards and ahistorical legal decisions (Abdel Haleem, 2022). As an example, verses concerning slavery, war and sex roles are a product of predominant system of the era that the Quran was slowly transforming, rather than completely overturning. This subtlety separates form and practice, and enables Muslim scholars to preserve the ethical vision of the Quran and to adjust its practical guidelines to new realities. Such contextual awareness is not possible without which such interpretation can be literalist and not in touch with the moral goals that the Quran is attempting to advance. Historical consciousness is therefore, not an act of relativism, but a promise of faithful and pertinent response to divine revelation.

Revival of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) has now become the core of this contextualize approach. *Ijtihad* was once accepted as a valid approach to the derivation of rulings on issues not covered by scripture in classical Islamic jurisprudence using reason, public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). Its application has declined since the colonial and post-colonial strains, but it has been recently revitalized by contemporary reformers, who demand its application to solve modern ethical dilemmas about biomedical ethics to human rights and artificial intelligence (Fadlalla, 2020). Tariq Ramadan and Jasser Auda and other scholars point out that *ijtihad* is not just a technical instrument of law, but an ethical obligation on scholars to reinterpret inherited interpretations in the light of justice, compassion and evolving human experiences. In this respect, *ijtihad* is seen as a mediator between scriptural authority and the changing moral realities, enabling the Muslim tradition to be well-rooted but flexible to change. Notably, *ijtihad* is democratic as well because it

questions the exclusivity of classical jurists and allows gender-inclusive and lay interpretation to become a part of the process (El Fadl, 2017). With Muslim societies faced with complicated ethical concerns within pluralistic societies, *ijtihad* does not only come into relevance but is also a prerequisite to effective Quran engagement.

Contextual re-interpretation is also an expression of changing moral awareness in the Muslim world, stimulated by globalization, education and inter-faith dialogue. In the Muslim world, an increasingly large part of the population of young people and thinkers is doubting traditionally established norms that do not correspond to their moral instincts or the universal principles of justice (Yilmaz & Erturk, 2022). Gender equality, freedom of expression, minority rights and so on are no longer viewed as the Western impositions but as the emergency needs that can be caused by the Muslim communities themselves. This change has resulted in the demand to re-engage the Quran not only by the faithfulness to its doctrine but also by the ethical consideration that its values should be applicable to the current fight of the human dignity. Although some conservative scholars oppose this transition claiming that it is a surrender to modernity, others assert that even the Quran encourages thought and moral development as time progresses. Ethical awakening can be seen through the rise of movements of critical *tafsir* (exegesis), feminist Quran studies and the *maqasid* based legal reasoning. They are a kind of attempt to reconcile Quranic interpretation with the ethical needs of modern life and not to give up theological essence of the tradition.

One such especially pressing field of rereading is that of gender, freedom and social justice that have become areas of interest to reformist Muslim scholarship. Patriarchal readings of the Quran has been disputed by feminist scholars including Amina Wadud, Kecia Ali and Asma Barlas, who have claimed that male-dominated exegesis has frequently been more culturally biased than divine-inspired. These academics offer gender egalitarian interpretations that place the primary ethical concerns of the Quran, justice, compassion, and spiritual equality, before legalistic formulations that are historically contingent (Wadud, 2019). On the same note, reinterpretations of religious freedom hold that the Quranic focus on the moral agency and diversity favor greater protections of belief and conscience than on classical law. With respect to the social justice domain, researchers refer to Quranic appeals to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, oppose injustice, and promote the principles of equity that are echoed in the modern experience of economic and racial justice. Re-readings are not concerned with changing the text, but with freeing its ethical potential to become detached to

historically contingent interpretations. By so doing, they prove that the Quran would be able to remain a source of moral guidance in the contemporary world provided it is treated with intellectual integrity, spiritual probity, and context sensitivity.

### **Conclusion**

The connection of Quran and human rights in the contemporary Muslim world is debatable, changing and ambiguous. The center of this discussion is whether the divine written word can be a source of morality in the era of universal rights systems. Although there is no formal system of rights in contemporary law sense of the term in the Quran, it offers a very strong moral framework of rights founded on dignity, justice, equality, and freedom. These tenets appeal greatly to the modern day human rights. Yet the tensions arise when classical interpretations of history-based and patriarchal, tribal or hierarchical nature are strictly applied to the contemporary pluralistic societies. To fill this disparity it must be possible to make a distinction between the timeless moral goals of the Quran and the temporal legal forms that it took in classical jurisprudence. It is therefore imperative to begin to understand the historical context of revelation in order to retrieve the ethical purpose of the Quran and restore its significance to the contemporary world issue.

The contemporary arguments in the Muslim world are an indication of an increasing willingness to harmonize Islam teaching with universal human rights. The reformist thinkers are rediscovering Islamic tradition on the basis of the principles of *ijtihad* and *maqasid al-shar'a*, with reinterpretation of it pointing to the compatibility of the Quran with the concept of human dignity, gender equality, freedom of belief, and social justice. These are not approaches that disregard scripture, but they aim at finding out the transformative power scripture embodies in the face of the changing moral awareness. Traditionalist quarters, on the other hand, tend to be wary of such initiatives believing that religious authority will be eroded or that other moral systems will be foisted upon it. However, injustice in the name of religion either by gender discrimination, suppression of minorities or denial of basic freedoms demands more in-depth and bolder approach to the sources of the Islamic law. This reform is not an imposed one, but a homegrown necessity on the basis of the Quranic injunction of reflection, justice, and moral enhancement of society.

After all, the Quran still provides a strong ethical basis that can be used to guide Muslims in the modern world as long as it is approached with intellectual honesty, spiritual fervor and contextual awareness. When the Quran is reengaged with in a way that respects not only its divine

authorship, but also its human audiences, room is created to make a very specifically Islamic contribution to the discourse of global human rights. This contribution would not be an imitation of Western liberalism, it would not turn into a retreat into isolationist traditionalism, but would rather pursue a principled course in the middle, based on shared values and moral discourse. What awaits is not the attempt to reconcile two incompatible regimes, but the reconsideration of the conditions of that very relationship, in which one considers the Quran a living source of justice and dignity, and accepts human rights as a vibrant field, in which faith and morals can enrich each other. This reconsideration will be important to the future of a more welcoming, fair, and spiritual Muslim world as Muslim societies face the challenges of modernity.

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### **Qur'anic Verses List**

- Qur'an 2:256 – "There is no compulsion in religion."
- Qur'an 4:10 – Warning against devouring the wealth of orphans.
- Qur'an 4:135 – "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah..."
- Qur'an 5:32 – "Whoever kills a soul... it is as if he had slain mankind entirely."
- Qur'an 5:38 – Punishment for theft.
- Qur'an 5:48 – Diversity in divine legislation.
- Qur'an 16:90 – "Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence."
- Qur'an 17:70 – "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam..."

Qur'an 49:13 – "O mankind! We created you from a male and a female..."

Qur'an 2:83 – Covenant to do good to parents, kin, orphans, and the needy.