

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER'S CONCEPT ON WOMEN LIBERATION (AN ISLAMIC RESPONSE)

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Abstract

It is something natural, when women argue their ideas to liberate their selves to be treated equally like men did. It might be self-defense from the oppression they saw, from the limitation they had because they are the object itself. But how did men see this thing? This is one reason, why this research is limited on Asghar Ali Engineer (India, 1939-now) as one of male feminists who is also reformist thinker of the contemporary Muslim world. He paid his great attention to the question of women liberation such as: equality, marital rights, concept of jilbab, and women as head of state while some answers are afforded to solve those problems above, based on the interpretation of Qur'an taken from Tafsir al Mishbah written by M. Quraish Shihab (Indonesia, 1944-now), which is a representative interpretation to see women liberation from the sight of Islam for it was written in the same era as the thought of women liberation raised. As a qualitative study, this research is based on a pure library research which the collected data is described, and afterwards analyzed and criticized by Islamic framework. Interpretation of Qur'an should pass the right methodology before using ratio and reason, because it was the only way to gain the right concept of every sphere in life.

Keywords: *Women, Liberation, Tafsir al Mishbah, Equality*

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourses about women's movement, especially with reference to the feminists' thought of liberation from oppression are still controversial among society even less among Muslim. The rise of such Muslim feminists: Fatima Mernissi (Morocco, 1940-now), Amina Wadud-Muhsin (America, 1952-now), Nawal El Saadawi (Egypt, 1931-now), Riffat Hassan (Pakistan, 1943-now), Asghar Ali Engineer (India, 1939-now), and other thinkers, who claimed a number of various interpretations of Qur'an and prophetic tradition, are evidenced that the women's movement is still there and concrete.

This research, to a certain extent, is limited on Engineer, who plays a big role in Islamic society. As what is quoted by Taib that Asghar is one of the most accessible and widely read reformist thinkers of the

contemporary Muslim world. His views on issues of reform in the Muslim world is important contribution towards the process of rethinking aspects of Muslim law, politics and culture that had suffered an impasse and dogmatic rigidity under the treatment of fundamentalist reassertions as found in many Muslim revivalist movements throughout the world.¹

Engineer paid his great attention to the question of women, especially women's status that has acquired great importance throughout the world and among all communities. But now, according to Asghar, many things changed especially the condition of society. Therefore, the verses also need to be changed. In the other meaning, he judged

¹ Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib. 2006. Religion, Liberation and Reforms. *Indian Journal of Secularism* Vol.10 No.3 Oct-Dec.

that theory of divine law is no longer applicable to the institution of slavery. Either thus, the scriptures will have to be abandoned and laws performed on a secular basis, or they will have to be re-read and re-interpreted to suit modern condition.

He doesn't agree that the verse *arrijaalu qawwamuuna 'alannisaa*² is oppressing women and put them in the lower degree of men, he rather thinks that the verse seems to be harsh on women but soon after, he sees on its proper context that in those times women were confined in their houses and men alone were their providers. The Qur'an takes this reality into account and on this ground accords men superiority over women. So he notes that the Qur'an was not glorify such a social structure nor declare it to be normative. As social structure should and does change in a social structure where women are maintenance, or co-partners with men (our social structure is tending towards this) in this respect, she should become equal or superior to men and should begin to play dominant role in the family as men does.³

In the other example, in the case of marriage, he confirmed the position of the men and women in marriage, that both of them, stand equal. Men do not have privilege over women, and vice versa, she has no privilege over men.

“A woman has the right to hold a contract as she liked, as long as she doesn't violate the requirements of God (hududullah). She can

² See, for instance, the Qur'an, chapter 4:34. The translation of this verse is as follows: “Men are maintainers of women, with what Allah has made some of them to excel others and with what they spend out of their wealth. So the good women are obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded. And (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the beds and chastise them. So if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely Allah is ever exalted Great.”

³ Asghar Ali Engineer. 1990. *Islam and Liberation Theology*. Sterling Publishers Private Limited. India. p.172

be entered into an agreement with an acceptable reason, including the right to divorce (talaq tajwiz). In fact, he asserts that the Qur'an does not recognize the concept of guardian. A woman is free to marry without guardian, if she chooses. In the case of widows and divorce, the most orthodox judges also agreed that women do not need a guardian and are free to marry their selves.”⁴

Those thoughts leave some contradictory questions; the attack on Islam launched by secular feminists who declared that the Islamic system is a curse on the status of women under its law (or at least, that system requires distortion), thus portraying Islam as an oppressor rather than as a liberator, and urging women to release themselves from the shackles and constraints their religion by adopting Western secular alternatives.⁵ Is the understanding of women liberation here really a problem or a need, when one notices to the right interpretation of Qur'an and prophetic tradition? Whether women liberation compatible to Islam or not?

In this research, some answers will be afforded to solve those problems above, based on Islamic literature and of course, the right interpretation of Qur'an and prophetic tradition, which is taken from *Tafsir al Mishbah* written by M. Quraish Shihab (Indonesia, 1944-now). It is because, *Tafsir al Mishbah* seemed to be a representative interpretation to see women liberation from the sight of Islam for it was written in the same era as the thought of women liberation raised.

This study is purposed to know the concept of women liberation according to Asghar Ali Engineer and Islam response on it. For it is known that society this day is trapped in such confusion that a

⁴ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. 2000. *Woman between Islam and Western Society*. Goodword Books. New Delhi-India. p.173

⁵ Haifaa A. Jawad. 1998. *The Rights of Women in Islam*. St. Martin Press. New York. p.viii

contemporary problem, especially which is related to women liberation, is spread widely throughout muslim society. Therefore, this research is requested to give valuable contribution so the society itself may use the interpretation that suit the problem they face in this modern era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous works on Asghar's thought as follows:

1. *Islam dan Pembebasan (Studi Terhadap Pembaharuan Asghar Ali Engineer)*; written by Armawanto (UMS, 2006). This thesis is studying Engineer's thought on Liberation in Islam. He concluded this kind of liberation as *tawhid*. For in this research *tawhid* is not merely explained as The Ones of God, but it is also meant as the human unity, which could be reached only if there is a classless society.
2. Written by Muhammad Agus Nuryanto on 2000 entitled "*Asghar Ali Engineer Views on Liberation Theology and Women's Issues in Islam: An Analysis*". This thesis, which is fulfilled for his last assignment in Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal Canada, analyzed liberation theology focusing on two issues; polygamy and the wearing of *jilbab*. In the conclusion, he stopped on the idea that Asghar is such a liberalist, critical and emancipative thinker, more than that, he successfully promoted Islam as a religion of justice.
3. The third research entitled "*Telaah Kritis tentang Teologi Pembebasan dalam Pemikiran Asghar Ali Engineer Perspektif Islamic Worldview*", a thesis written by Agus Irfan, S.H.I to meet the requirement of his Master degree at University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta. He concentrated this discussion on some specific topics, namely: *Kafir* Term discourse, Pluralism discourse and Gender Equality discourse. His final assumption mentioned that someone could not be said that he understood the

essence of Islamic teaching, if he puts aside the concept of socio-economic justice, gender equality, race and freedom, and respect for human dignity.

Based on the reviews above, it is known that the work on this topic is not yet written. The difference between this research and the previous research is the object that is used in the research. This research is focused on Asghar's thought about women liberation.

The quotes, which are gained from some sources, about women liberation such:

1. According to the free dictionary⁶, women liberation is a movement directed towards the removal of attitudes and practices that preserve inequalities based upon the assumption that men are superior to women. It is also called women's lib.
2. While according to digital encyclopedia⁷, women liberation is a movement for the political, social, and educational equality of women with men; the movement has occurred mainly in Europe and the United States. It has its roots in the humanism of the 18th cent. and in the Industrial Revolution. Feminist issues range from access to employment, education, child care, contraception, and abortion, to equality in the workplace, changing family roles, redress for sexual harassment in the workplace, and the need for equal political representation.

Women liberation or feminist movement have a description that is not so different from the known descriptions of feminism, it refers to a series of campaigns for reforms on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, voting

⁶ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com> (accessed on July 23, 2013 on 8.13 a.m)

⁷ <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com> (accessed on July 23, 2013 on 8.21 a.m)

rights, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.⁸

An Islamic scientific approach will be used here, a; research that focuses on efforts to attract value, and universal value based on the information contained in scripture and supported the events and the phenomenon that is happening.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The description of research method is as follows:

a. Type of the Research

The problem objects which will be studied in this research is Asghar Ali Engineer's thought on women liberation. Therefore, this research is conducted in a qualitative study, based on a pure library research. While library research is aimed to gain data collecting and information with the help of all sorts of available material in the library space as books, magazines, documents, records, historical stories and so forth.

b. Approach of the Research

The approach that is used in this research is a historical approach, which is based on the argument that one type of research is the history of biography of a person's relationship with society, nature, character, or sometimes influence of their thoughts.

c. Data Source

This research is conducted in a qualitative study, based on a pure library research. That's why the sources data are all written sources. Meanwhile, the sources of data will be classified into primary data sources and secondary data sources: the primary sources are the works authorized by Asghar Ali Engineer, pertaining to the issues discussed while the secondary sources are all literatures; books, articles either in journal,

magazine, or internet that are relating to women's liberation.

d. Technique for Analyzing Data

Descriptive method is used to describe the collected data and afterwards it will be analyzed and criticized mainly on the source that will be collected. The deductive research model will be used for explaining the data and the inductive model will be used after that to conclude the description of the data into a conclusion.

4. FINDINGS AND RESULT OF RESEARCH

a. Engineer's Methodology of Understanding Qur'an and Islam respond on it

Before entering Engineer's concept on women liberation, being explained here his method of interpreting the Qur'an. He said that the text of the Quran is divine, but interpretation is Human. First of all, it comes from its language; that the Holy Qur'an is pronounced in Arabic language. Second, the fact that Qur'an has two forms, they are both normative and contextual. Next, there are some pronouncements of Qur'an inapplicable as Islamic law. Fourth, there are some symbolic words produce varieties of interpretations. Fifth, the Quranic verses must be interpreted creatively.

Engineer said that Qur'an is a revealed scripture of religion of Islam and one of the greatest revealed scriptures. It is revealed in Arabic language and easily comprehensible.⁹ Again, Engineer said that even though Qur'an revealed in Arabic, however still, there are some people who don't understand as well as Prophet did. For this reason, Engineer took a Qur'anic verse chapter 14:4 which its translation is as follows: "And we sent not a Messenger except with the

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org> (accessed on July 23, 2013 on 8.47 a.m)

⁹Asghar Ali Engineer. On Methodology of Understanding Qur'an, <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~rtavakol/engineer/QRAN.htm> (accessed on June 17, 2013 on 9.24 p.m)

language of his people, In order that He might make (the Message) clear for them. Then Allâh misleads whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”

He believes in the contextual and normative pronouncements of the Qur’an.¹⁰ There is also another point he states after that knowledge and understanding in order to apply the correctly meaning of holy Qur’an for its contextual sense in this era; he always clarifies that it is important to remember the meaning of Qur’anic verses unfolds with time. What the verses meant to an Islamic scholar in the mediaeval period maybe quite different from the meaning understood by scholar living in modern condition. Religious scriptures often use symbolic language which makes them pregnant with several levels of meaning, all of which may not unfold at any given time. It, therefore, becomes necessary to interpret the symbolic language creatively to fit in with our own experiential context. What he is attempting here is in his own experiential context. Time and experiences are always in flux and so is our understanding.¹¹

The religion interpretation actually could be observed from both two sides; external aspect -which shows the written text and the internal one -which implies something between the line. Feminist theology’s paradigm always uses the interpretation on the outside of the text, related to his agenda to transform the social structure (external aspect). This kind of re-interpretation will never be apart from commentator’s purpose, that’s why the interpretation is able to be changed, re-constructed and sometimes it was just against the written text. So it will be

¹⁰Asghar Ali Engineer. Islam, Women and Gender Justice. <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~rtavakol/engineer/genderj.htm> (accessed on June 17, 2013 on 9.24 p.m)

¹¹Asghar Ali Engineer. 1996. *The Rights of Women in Islam*. St. Martin’s Press. United States. Second impression p.42

shown afterwards that religion is merely a thing which its purpose could be redrawn and then used as legitimation’s instrument to reach hedonistic aim of human (wealth, authority and status). The man will exactly become the possessor over al Qur’an by changing its interpretation according to his necessary. Finally, he’ll claim his authority or deifying his idea.¹²

b. Engineer’s Rights of Women and Islam respond on it

The discussion contains; the equality of women, marital rights of women, the concept of jilbab and women as the head of state.

Equality of Women

It had been explained clearly in the previous chapter that women is in inferior status, proved by the interpretation of Q.S. AnNisa (4): 34 that Engineer took, which is said that women are not able to take leadership control over men, and however are below men. It indicates that there is no way women stand in the same level as men; whether inside their house or outside, whether in family circle or social life.

While in the sight of Islamic law, social life (*muammalah*) is a significant thing, it plays a big role in emotion’s building and attitude’s development better than any other environments in life. The smallest form of social life among human being is family that lives under one household, composed of: husband and wife, or father, mother and child. This component needs leader, and according to the Qur’an, the proper leader is father.

Word *qawwamun* interpreted as leader, probably not occupied whole connotations yet, because the word “leadership” means need’s fulfillment, care, safe-guarding,

¹² Ratna Megawangi. 1999. *Membicarakan Berbeda; Sudut Pandang Baru tentang Relasi Gender*. Mizan Publishing. Bandung, p.155

protection, and development.¹³ It refers to the point of being leader is acknowledging big responsibility and its consequences.

Muhammad Quraish Shihab gave details in his manuscript, there are at least two basis revealed on the verse related to this, thus:

- a. Because Allah gives priority to some of them above the other, and
- b. Because they (husbands) have to earn the life for their wives and or families.

First explanation, related to men and women's psychological aspect; if women do things according to their emotions, men set their ratio out. Nevertheless, a lot of women surpass men in their intelligence. But the main point is the specification of each; women with their sensitive feeling which, it is needed in raising and taking care of children. Whereas men compare to women, by their consistency and willingness in hard-headed type can rule the family better. That's why he is the responsible of leadership in the household.¹⁴

Perceiving Engineer's outlook that domestic occupation (house-wife) worked by women to assist husband and raise children is clearly the consequences of the husband's dominance. Because they earn the life for their family and guide them, it makes household plays second fiddle likewise inferior; this became the grounds of *al Mishbah*'s denial. Because the sharing of each work is not freed both from supporting each other in doing their responsibilities. For instance, in Asma's case, daughter of Khalifah Abu Bakar, that however her husband help her in doing the house-hold, also she help him in doing his works such as taking care of his

horse, rooting up the grass, planting seeds on the field, and so forth and so on.¹⁵

Thereby broadly speaking from the right angle of view, that wife as house-wife is not an inferior role; it takes a key position in order to bring *sakan* into reality, it means as "place where the whole occupants feel calm and comfort". And in this context, Rasulullah SAW emphasize the characteristics of a good wife; such as making husband feels comfort and please when he see her, doing things as her husband's told, taking a good care of herself, her wealth and children while her husband far from her.¹⁶

Hence, Engineer's view on equality of women's status, dissent from *Tafsir al Misbah*; the significant dissimilarity is found in accepting the role of women. If Engineer insist that women have the same opportunity as men in leading (in this point, it speaks about household and stuff). Shihab's interpretation refuses it clearly, as it said that women and men are equal in accomplishing requirements and deeds to worship toward God, with their own portion.

Marital Rights of Women

According to Engineer, the Qur'an equates both the sexes in terms of moral responsibility and rewards and punishments. Biological otherness, according to the Qur'an, does not mean unequal status for either sex.¹⁷ This is also logically extended to the sphere of marriage. In Islam, marriage is known with a contract between two equal partners. Men enjoy no superiority in this respect. A marriage cannot do so without ensuring approval of the women concerned and the condition she wishes to stipulate. Thus it will be seen that without the woman's approval and approval on her condition, a

¹³ M. Quraish Shihab. 2000. *Tafsir al Mishbah; Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al Qur'an*. LenteraHati. Jakarta. Volume 2, First Published, p.404

¹⁴ M. Quraish Shihab. 2013. *Wawasan al Qur'an*. Mizan Pustaka. Bandung. The second edition, First Published, p.279-280

¹⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al Qur'an*, p.411

¹⁶ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al Qur'an*, p.411

¹⁷ Asghar Ali Engineer, *The Rights of Women in Islam*, p.44

marriage cannot take place.¹⁸ In another meaning, it is legal when the marriage is held without the presence of male relative legally responsible for a bride.

Shihab refuse to admit his statement and say, it is inevitable that the attendance of a male relative legally responsible for a bride in the wedding accepted by most *Ulama* as told by Prophet Muhammad, “*laa nikaaha illa biwaliyyin*”.

Substantively, the presence of male relative legally responsible for a bride or bride’s guardian is really important in the wedding. Just in case something bad happens, there will be a responsible that could assist and be reference for any decision. The bride’s guardian is also functioned as signal of wedding permission from the bride’s family. Furthermore, he can also be a guide who commissioning the wedding ceremony.

Besides, he believed that marriage is encouraged by Islam because family life not only ensures survival of the human race but also guarantees social stability and a dignified existence for both women and men. That is not merely for enjoyment and pleasure that is not merely a sexual urge which bring women and men together; it has a higher end, and exalted motive, and is a relationship of love and mutual respect.¹⁹ Engineer emphasizes the significant matter in this connection; that both man and woman are equal parties. Neither man enjoys any privilege above woman nor does woman above man. A woman has every right to stipulate any condition she likes provided of course, it doesn’t violate *hududullah*²⁰ (limits

¹⁸*Ibid*, p.98-99

¹⁹*Ibid*, p.100

²⁰The concept of *hudud* (punishments) mentioned in Holy Qur’an for any sexual act outside of marriage (*zina*), surreptitious (*sariqa*), and calumniating (*qadif*). For any sexual act outside of marriage, will be punished with a hundred scourging, surreptitious with hand-cutting, and *qadif* with eighty times scourging. Those are

set by God). She can stipulate any reasonable condition including the delegate right to divorce (*thalaq tafwiz*) under this delegate rights to divorce, if she is displeased with any act of her husband (including his taking another wife) she can divorce herself on his behalf. As far as Engineer’s knowledge goes, no other legal system, let alone any other religion, gives her such far reaching right.²¹

Women’s right to initiate a divorce, as mentioned above, only confirmed by the secular system that does not reflect on the laws of Islam. Because in Islam, divorce is an absolute right to husband.

Concept of Jilbab

As most of contemporary issues thinker, Engineer sees that the scarf-wearing is one of traditional Arabic clothes and not as Islamic tradition; it is the product of Arabians tradition. So that the scarf-wearing for Muslim women is not an obligatory, it is optional.

known by *had* in the Islamic jurisprudence. In literature meaning, *had* is limit, constraint, or bounding factors. Because of its crime-bounding, those are called *hudud*. While Qur’an mentioned *qisas* crime caused physically defective.

Engineer saw these punishments inapplicable on plural society. The punishments based on Islamic jurisprudence seems barbarian from the view of non-Muslim. For him, Islamic jurisprudence and *hudud* are applicable on society formed by distributive justice, equality for both sexes and between human beings also public or common justice.

Engineer departs two crimes: (1) based on pressing need; (2) based on the arrogance. The first is based on the need (e.g. starving or illness), and the doer must not be punished, or punished with a light arrest. On the contrary, crime caused by the arrogance must be punished explicitly for it may harm all walks of life.

see...Listiyono Santoso. 2009. *Seri Pemikiran Tokoh: Epistemologi Kiri*. Ar-Ruzz Media. Yogyakarta, sixth impression p.311-312

²¹Asghar Ali Engineer. 1990. *Islam and Liberation Theology*. Sterling Publisher. India, p.173

Examining phenomenon that is found in countries non-Arabic, Engineer saw that the provision of *jilbab* does not apply to in Islamic countries in Southeast Asia. Because however, this case is definitely different with the condition of women in these countries, women in Southeast Asia traditionally have played an important economic role. That's why; traditionally there is no veil among them. After seeing the phenomenon, Engineer concluded that *hijab* is more socio-cultural than religious practices.²²

This thought according to the view of Quraish Shihab is not completely wrong. Because Shihab has a high understanding of consideration to the contemporary issues thinker, as quoted below:

It have to be acknowledge that most *Ulama* at past up to now tend to have a notion that part of women's body which may not be visible to men (must be covered) including the whole body except their faces and palms. But then there is another flexible notion besides the fact that many of *Ulama*'s family which consist of the highly regarded women –daughters and wives, they do not wear any scarf.

That the importance of women's clothing is showing them in honourable and principled, in order to save them from either intruder or meddler's disturbance.²³

However the boundary of women's clothing become controversial, but there are determinations standard by *Ulama* and Muslim intelligents, such:²⁴

- a) No *tabarruj*, means no redundant, neither overdressed nor overacting
- b) No provoking men's attention
- c) No wearing transparent cloth, and

²²Asghar Ali Engineer. 2003. *Matinya Perempuan, Transformasi al Qur'an, Perempuan dan Masyarakat Modern*. Ircisod. Yogyakarta, p.104-105

²³M. Quraish Shihab. 2010. *Jilbab: Pakaian Wanita Muslimah*, LenteraHati. Tangerang, 5th publishing, p.249

²⁴*Ibid*, p.250-256

- d) No wearing masculine clothes

Women as Head of State

The last, perceiving Engineer's argument about women's leadership or, let us say women's contribution in politics as governorship, premiership, mayoralty, head of state, or sort of those positions. QuraishShihab re-analyzes the verse *Ar-rijal qawwamuna 'alan-nisa'*; that in state leadership context, this verse unperceivable as 'men are leader of women', because that command considers as clarified the continuation verse mentioned 'because they (husbands) earn the life for their wives'. It means that the verse above talks about leadership which applied just in household.²⁵

Shihab explained another reason in his interpretation over Holy Qur'an chapter 9:71 as follows The signification of word *awliya'* in this verse consists of teamwork, assistance, and headship; whereas the description of phrase *ya'muruna bil ma'ruf* contains entire good side and life enhancement, it is as well as giving review and advice to the monarch.²⁶

Syura according to the Qur'an is one of the principles of management of common area, and politic is not aside from that. History of Islam also illustrates how women with no exception involved with multiple social areas; likewise political practices. For instance Prophet Muhammad's wife, Aisyah r.a directly front the war called Camel War (656 M) against Ali bin Abi Thalib which stands as head of state when it happened.²⁷

5. CONCLUDING REMARK AND SUGGESTION

The work of this research can be noted as short as answering two questions; what is the concept of women liberation according to

²⁵ M. QuraishShihab, *Wawasan al Qur'an*, p.415

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.417

²⁷ *Ibid*, p.418-419

Asghar Ali Engineer? And how does Islam respond the concept of women liberation according to Asghar Ali Engineer?

First, Engineer's notion of concept on women liberation is kind of thoughtful. He began with the method of understanding Qur'an because his opinions are based on interpretation on Qur'anic verses. He understand the Qur'an as a holy book which its text neither be transformed nor altered, but its meaning is enable to be interpreted according to the era it read. Shihab has a premise that somewhat similar, that everyone can interpret without any restrictions, as long as the interpreters (*mufassir*) fulfills the requirements of becoming *mufassir*.

While the second point of this research represented by Quraish Shihab in his popular interpretation of Qur'an; *Tafsir al Mishbah*.

a). Engineer sees that women need to be equal with men in every path of life, including their role in leading the household. He denied the substance of Qur'anic verse *arrijalu qawwamuna 'ala an-nisa'*. He saw there is men domination over women in almost every sphere of social life. Although al Qur'an normatively put both of genders in the same level, but contextually, it was the opposite.

This matter was clarified by Shihab that position of both men and women in household has different duties. If men lead, it is because they have some excellence, especially in their psychological aspect. Men have reliability and willingness characteristics stronger than women.

b). It is concerning marital rights of women. Engineer drags in the problem saying that women doesn't need any male relative as a guardian in her marriage for he said the requirement of representing women's guardian in marriage is an old tradition; the pre-Islam custom which is merged to the Islamic jurisprudence lately.

Shihab's opinion was contradictory, as he believed that representing bride's guardian

is necessary with reference to prophetic tradition, "*laa nikaaha illa biwaliyyin*". If there is an opinion that bride doesn't need guardian, it is occurred for the widows not virgins. That's because the guardian has a great responsibility over the bride, which is might be his daughter, sister or niece. Also, guardian's role is really needed to be an assistant when error occurred.

c). The concern is around women's scarf-wearing in Islam. By means of most contemporary issues intellectual, Engineer comprehends that the scarf-wearing is one of traditional Arabian's clothing manufactured article and not a product based Islamic tradition. So Engineer's estimation is Islamic tradition recommend Muslim women to wear the scarf (*jilbab*) as an optional recommendation, not an obligation.

Shihab make a distinction in the concern of scarf-wearing not far from Engineer's view. He point out that the importance of scarf-wearing is its quintessence to save women from intruder, besides giving them attitude and proper looks toward social surroundings. It makes sense to his understanding that Islam didn't put the matter of women without scarf as a problem as long as their women save from intruder and looks worthy and ethical, headed for their communities.

d). The last of Engineer's observation that is studied in this research is concerning the issue of women as the head of state. As for him, the women's leadership in some extent is actually allowed. He takes a case in point of Islam history that proved women's involving in some political practises and war as leading light.

Quraish Shihab comes with another reason in order to agree to the leadership of women in Islam. Here-analyses the verse *Arrijal qawwamuna 'alan-nisa'* (men are leader of women) as verse which functional not just in the household matter, as the furtherance verse come after the verse above is 'because they (husbands) earn the life for their wives'.

On the top of those inferences, it can be said that Engineer's concept of women liberation is dominated by western effect as he adopted Karl Marx's ideology, Bertrand Russel's thought, etc. That's why he emphasized that reason plays a very crucial role in human's life and its importance cannot be underestimated and the revelation cannot be contradictory to reason in any case.

While Quraish Shihab, even though he lived in the same era as Engineer, and he interpreted Qur'an by ratio, but he doesn't combine his thought with westerns. It is because he passed the right way of using the methodology of understanding Qur'an, not merely using the ratio or reason. He places women in the great position, neither below men's position nor equal with them, because even women or men, have their own portions in living the life.

This research is open to be analyzed deeper from any other sight; from different view of approach. The purpose is getting the dissimilar result. As Engineer, even though he learned religion since his young age, but he began his career as scientist (he studied engineering) before deepen his religion knowledge and expertness in Qur'an interpretation. There is this man, who had the similar background of life and life-career just like Asghar Ali Engineer, called Muhammad Syahrur. The study about him, his interpretation on Qur'an, and the way he read the contemporary problem with Islamic response on it, seems needed to be studied, because the study about him using the same approach as this research is not yet found. That's why it is suggested for academies to work through this man.

The next suggestion is dedicated for muslim commonly. Muslim in this era is caught in a war, called brainstorm or *ghazwul fikr*, which forbids them to close their eyes hiding from reality. For what they have to do is facing it and raise weapons against it. One of the weapons is interposing the right concept according to Islamic law outspoken;

by action, words, or at least –the weakest, is by heart (praying).

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