

Women Need Islam, Not Feminism

Natasha Walter, acclaimed British feminist campaigner, today claimed that women still need feminism. She said feminism had changed and women today did have the freedom to be what they wanted, but were still in more need than ever of feminism due to 'real and urgent' challenges women still faced.

I could not agree more with Walter on one thing – that the challenges women face today are without a doubt, real and urgent. As Walter has described in her previous writings, the sexualisation of women is a crippling and overbearing attitude, valuing women for the size of their waist, the symmetry of their face, over what contributions they could make to society – to the point that being pretty becomes the sole aspiration of masses of young girls.

Despite the Government passing an Equal Pay Act over 40 years ago, the Chartered Management Institute research showed that it would still take till 2067, for the gender pay gap to diminish – meaning society is still on a long way yet to value the contributions women make for what those contributions are, over the gender of the person they arise from. And Prime Minister David Cameron's patronising "calm down dear" comment to a female Minister in the Houses of Parliament may have been forgotten, but it does not take away from the true reality it exposed of how the majority of women are really seen and treated in high level positions and scenarios.

So there is absolutely a real struggle for women not just in the UK, but in the entire Western world. However where I would care to disagree with Walter is how we will overcome this struggle for once and for good. Walter may herald the freedoms women have gained and now enjoy, and propose that it is through these freedoms we continue to struggle, but what she must realise is that these are the very same freedoms which have inspired big business to exploit the woman to advertise a product, violating her honour. It is these same freedoms which make men feel that it is acceptable to use and abuse a woman how you want, for your own desires as has been reflected in the recent Government statistics, revealing 1 in every 5 women in the UK has been a victim of a sexual offence. It is these freedoms which have allowed society to feel free to revel in their prejudices of women; prejudices which assert that women do not have the abilities or same potential as men to be able to achieve like them in a job or role, leading to the glass ceiling, or unequal pay for the same job. So although many feminists like Walter will argue that more freedom for women has been the positive story of feminism, I would argue that with these freedoms and so-called rights, have paradoxically brought women's exploitation. Thus feminists must understand that if they continue to campaign for their rights within the framework of a liberal, free society, ultimately they will be chasing their own tail - they will never meet their ends as this same freedom will continue to simultaneously exploit women and belittle them.

It is incumbent therefore that women globally look towards a system which banishes from the onset the idea that society is free to exploit and treat the woman how they want. The Islamic Khilafah, obligates society to view and treat women according to the value that Allah (swt) assigned to them, which is of great honour. Such a society would provide no room for prejudice, no room for exploitation in how they viewed her, as everyone from men to businesses would be accountable to a Higher Being, Allah (swt), in how they treated her. Unless feminists look towards the alternative of Islam, it is sad to say they will not meet their ends.

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