

Editorial

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon His noble Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ and his family and companions.

In today's interconnected world, the Muslim family encounters a multitude of unprecedented challenges that destabilize its very foundation. The rapid and pervasive impact of globalization imposed new societal patterns and ways of interacting that often conflict with the long-standing traditions. Consequently, traditional family structures, once pivotal to the Muslim community's lifestyle, are now experiencing a gradual decline in their influence, leading to a reconfiguration of roles and authority both within the family unit and society as a whole. This transformation is further complicated by efforts to redefine the concept of *family*, however, often disregarding the intrinsic values and specific cultural contexts of each community.

The gradual deterioration of the family's inherent foundations and the fragmentation of its core values in favor of emerging global paradigms has inevitably disrupted traditional roles within the household. New cultural frameworks have arisen that enhance individualism and encourage a break from the family's moral authority, thereby undermining the harmony that once characterized family life. As a result, families, which were once essential educational environments, began to relinquish their primary mission, namely, providing consistent parental guidance and overseeing the intellectual and cultural development of children. This shift has weakened intergenerational cohesion within families. Currently, the Muslim family faces existential threats from the overwhelming forces of modernity and the prevailing ethos of our world, which urge independence among youth through structures external to the family. These frameworks are intertwined with a capitalist moral order that, in numerous instances, replaces the values of cooperation and solidarity with competition and self-interest —hallmarks of a postmodern agenda that seeks to dismantle the stable centers of meaning and value.

On a different front, some contemporary discourses have sought to actively promote a new global family identity, under the guise of universal humanity and the emancipation from so-called 'illusory' authority. This agenda has gained more momentum with the surge of information technologies and the rise of non-traditional modes of interaction in media spaces, which has caused profound shifts in both communicative practices and behavioral patterns. Changes that have given rise to a new cultural formation that threaten the cohesion of society and place traditions in direct conflict with the forces of modernity.

The role of women has been redefined by certain feminist movements, drawing upon global rights-based narratives that aim to dismantle traditional structures. This is clearly reflected in the growing demands for reforms in family law. This intersection of global rights discourse with local legislation poses significant challenges for advocates of Islamic legal reform, who tackle such matters from both doctrinal and ethical perspectives to uphold women's dignity and restore family balance, however, without compromising core principles. Hence, there is an urgent need for a thoughtful discussion that addresses these changes, offers practical solutions to the underlying causes of women's issues, and enhances their status in line with the higher objectives of Sharia, rather than being swayed by transnational ideologies.

Being in harmony with human nature and grounded in higher objectives, the Islamic law, defines the fundamental aspects of the Muslim family and safeguards its identities, structures, roles, and values. The Qur'an articulates two distinct frameworks for the family: one human and the other divine. Both are rooted in creation and affection, and both are guided by the divine purpose of merciful coexistence; a purpose which calls for positive participation, mutual compassion, gentleness, and the provision of tranquility and reassurance, all of which are vital to ensuring family cohesion and stability.

Given the urgent need to raise Muslims' awareness and safeguard it regarding the family, vis-à-vis

the rising influence of external and internal attempts to reimagine it and redefine its boundaries, we have solicited scholarly contributions on these significant topics through the present special thematic dossier titled, *Muslim family values in the face of modernity's constraints (Qiyam al-usra al-Muslima wa-ikrāhāt al-ḥadātha)*. This issue comprises eight studies that cover a diverse array of fields, including law and jurisprudence, intellectual history and media. Seven articles are written in Arabic and one in English:

1. In “Domestic Violence Protection Laws in the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait) A *Maqāṣid*-based Study in Light of Modernist Discourse” Wasan Al-Rashidi examines the laws pertaining to domestic violence protection in the Gulf region, focusing specifically on Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait. Through the lens of Sharia’s higher objectives (*maqāṣid*), it bridges Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) with modern legislative analysis in the domain of family violence protection to conclude that modernization has not significantly altered these laws, as they remain rooted in their legal and cultural structures and resistant to the modernist discourse.
2. In “Modernist Women Movements and their Influence on Family Legislation: Moroccan Law as a Case Study” Abdelmounaim Elmoumni investigates the evolution of modernist women organizations in Morocco, where it examines the evolution of these movements’ demands throughout their historical trajectory
3. Ghazala Nouri Ben Ashour and Salih Qadir Al-Zanki, in “The Conflict of Universals and Particulars in Muslim Feminist Thought: A Legal-Theory Assessment” unravel the critiques that Muslim feminists have directed towards Islamic rulings concerning women. Drawing on the principles of legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and through a comparative analytical approach, they demonstrate that Muslim feminists’ methodology is inconsistent. The latter arises from their acknowledgment of the textual authority of Islamic law while simultaneously neglecting its interpretive framework. They particularly highlight the feminists’ failure to differentiate between universal and legal rulings and principles..
4. In “Educational Implications of Gender Normativity and Queer Promotion in Foreign Children’s Films: A Case Study of *Barbie*,” Naouel Boumechta offers a critical examination of media materials directed at children, focusing on the iconic *Barbie* film. Using a semiotic approach, the author examines the film’s visual and linguistic symbols from an educational perspective and critiques its role in undermining the value of motherhood, promoting new social roles for women beyond traditional structures, and encouraging individualism and homosexuality.
5. In “Muslim Family Values and Terminological Westernization: A comparative Analytical Study,” Taraq Khalifa undertakes an overlooked dimension in the decline of Muslim family values. Namely, the terminological field within media discourse and the digital sphere. Through a comparative, lexical analysis of Qur’anic concepts related to family relations and their counterparts in European languages, with an emphasis on French and English, the study investigates the causal relationship between language dominance and cultural alienation. He argues that the hegemony of these foreign languages is both a cause and a consequence of the Westernization of the Muslim family, ultimately calling for activating what he terms “language public awareness.”
6. In “A Civilizational Reading of the Family Crisis in the West,” Hassen Ben Hassen analyzes the historical transformations of the Western family and the central role of Western cultural particularities and modernist choices in shaping its current crisis, which he connects to the erosion of moral boundaries and dysfunction of social roles. Using an analytical approach, the article concludes that the most critical factor in family reform lies in what Hassen terms the “reconstruction of its moral foundation.”

7. “*Maqāṣid-Based Ijtihād and the Issue of Women’s Blood Money (diya)*” by Ali Suleiman Al-Saleh significantly contributes to the ongoing global discourse about gender equality and justice. It presents a dynamic application of legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) grounded in the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī’a*) as it revisits the question of blood money for women. Al-Saleh navigates the landscape of jurisprudential evidence on this issue weighing textual sources against ethical imperatives and social consequences. In doing so, he rebuts common critiques of Islamic criminal law while also addressing contemporary calls for gender equity and the elimination of discriminatory legal frameworks.
8. In the last article, written in English, “Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) and Criminal Liability in Iranian Law: A Legal Lacuna,” Abolfazl Alishahhighalehjoughi and Sidighe Riyahi Rad examine Iranian law and jurisprudence regarding the legal argument that women can be more predisposed to criminal behavior during their menstrual cycle, known as Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), which then warrants a reduction in punishment. Using a descriptive-analytical approach and examining several legal and medical view, they conclude that PMS, classified as an emotional disorder, should be considered a mitigating factor in sentencing, thus recognizing the psychological and biological distinctions between men and women.

Finally, we trust that all the studies in this issue will contribute to deepening our understanding of family-related matters, strengthening the foundation of Islamic values in family life, and offering rigorous scholarly perspectives and insights on the contemporary challenges facing the Muslim family.

We express our deepest gratitude to the contributing researchers, peer reviewers, and the editorial board of the *Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies*, for their dedication in bringing this issue to fruition. Your continued commitment to advancing the journal and producing high-quality research is commendable and plays an essential role in guiding both scholars and practitioners in the field of Islamic studies. May Allah bless and reward the efforts of all involved.

Dr. Amar Benboudina

Guest Editor

Associate Professor of Aqeedah and Islamic Thought,

Family Research Project Manager at College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Qatar University

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