

**ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND ITS  
CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**  
**A Discourse on Selected Issues**

**THAMEEM USHAMA**

**IUM PRESS**  
**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



# **Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance**

*[A Discourse on Selected Issues]*

Edited by

Thameem Ushama



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## TWO

### **The Feminist Discourse in the Muslim World**

Abdul Salam Muhamad Shukri

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At present, some Muslim women have formed movements in Muslim countries to champion their cause and protect their rights, which, they believe, are being abused on a daily basis by a handful of Muslim men and contrary to the teachings of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. These Muslim women believe that this situation is primarily due to interpretations of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, particularly by Muslim men. Hence, they have resorted to reinterpreting the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, especially on women issues, through a feminist perspective in order to show that men have falsely interpreted the Book of Allah. In addition, they wish to establish that the Book is not biased against women and use these positions in a struggle to establish their God given rights as Muslim women as equals in all respects with their male counterparts according to Islam.

This essay traces the genesis of the feminist discourse and its diversity so as to better understand feminist debates and the roots of Islamic feminist movements. By so doing, we hope to know how and where to better place the Islamic feminist discourse within feminist movements. In order to know how Muslim feminists have reinterpreted the Holy Text, it is pertinent to review the thoughts of the Islamic feminist scholars who have championed this cause with reinterpretations of Qur'ānic verses and *aḥādīth* from their feminist perspective.

#### **Feministic Discourse in the West**

Like all isms of the modern age, feminism is a brain child of the Enlightenment or humanism as its root may be traced to 18th century Europe. As philosophers — Enlightenment thinkers — fought for socio-political reforms on all fronts and severely criticized both Church and state with the aim of wresting society free from all accepted traditions, authorities and