



An Analysis of Epistemological Confrontation between Islamic Beliefs and Postmodern Approaches

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Abstract:

Postmodernism, with its rejection of absolute truths, embrace of moral relativism, and deconstruction of grand narratives, presents significant epistemological and ethical challenges to Islamic teachings. This paper critically investigates the tension between postmodern skepticism and Islam's divinely grounded epistemology, which asserts objective truth rooted in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the classical scholarly tradition. It highlights the incompatibility between postmodern moral relativism and Islam's Divine Command Theory alongside the fixed ethical framework of Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah. By examining case studies on postmodern feminist and queer reinterpretations of Islamic texts, the study reveals how deconstructive approaches clash with Islam's theological exclusivism (such as the finality of prophethood and unequivocal moral directives). While postmodernism unsettles entrenched dogmas, its radical subjectivity threatens the ontological and moral foundations of Islamic orthodoxy. Nevertheless, this article identifies cautious opportunities for intellectual engagement—such as critical reflexivity within Islamic jurisprudence without succumbing to relativism. Ultimately, it argues that Islam's truth claims resist reduction by postmodern critiques, yet certain epistemological methods from postmodern thought could facilitate disciplined reform while maintaining theological integrity.

Keywords: *Postmodernism, Islamic epistemology, moral relativism, Sharia, Islamic feminism, queer theology, pluralism*

1. Introduction

Emerging in the late twentieth century as a profound critique of Enlightenment rationalism and structuralism, postmodernism fundamentally challenges the epistemological and moral foundations of religious traditions, especially Islam. By rejecting universal truths and overarching narratives,ⁱ postmodern philosophy promotes subjectivity, deconstruction, and fluid identities—contrasting sharply with Islam’s reliance on divine revelation, prophetic tradition (Sunnah), and an objective moral system derived from Allah’s commands (amr ilāhī). This epistemological confrontation raises critical questions: Are Islamic truth claims, grounded in transcendent certainty, resistant to postmodern skepticism? How does the social construction of ethics under moral relativism align with Islam’s absolutist framework rooted in Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah (the higher aims of Sharia)?

This study carefully explores four key dimensions of this intellectual conflict:

1. **Epistemological Conflicts:** The postmodern rejection of absolute truth versus Islam’s affirmation of certain knowledge (‘ilm yaqīnī) and established methodological principles (uṣūl al-fiqh).
2. **Moral Relativism versus Divine Command Theory:** The collapse of universal ethics in postmodernism contrasted with Islam’s objective halal/haram distinctions and accountability before God.
3. **Islamic Exclusivism and Identity Politics:** Postmodern fluidity of identity challenging Islam’s theological exclusivity (e.g., the uncompromising monotheism of tawḥīd and the finality of prophethood).
4. **Feminist and Queer Reinterpretations:** Postmodern hermeneutics exemplified by figures like Amina Wadud and Scott Kugle, which create tensions with classical tafsīr (exegesis) and fiqh (jurisprudence).

By examining these tensions, this paper contributes to the discourse on Islam’s intellectual responses to—and selective incorporation of—postmodern critiques. It argues that while postmodernism effectively deconstructs rigid dogmatism, its radical relativism is fundamentally at odds with Islam’s core beliefs. Nevertheless, measured engagement allows for ijtihād (renewal) within orthodox limits, preserving vitality without compromising principles.

2. Epistemological Conflicts: Postmodern Skepticism vs. Islamic Revelation

2.1 The Postmodern Rejection of Absolute Truth

Postmodern academics such as Foucault, Derrida, and Rorty deconstruct the concept of objective reality by arguing that knowledge is power, linguistically constructed, and culturally relative. Derrida’s deconstructionist method destabilizes binary oppositions like sacred/profane and divine/human, thereby challenging the Qur’an’s claim to a transcendent and immutable reality. Rorty’s pragmatism reduces truth to societal consensus, dismissing metaphysical certainty. In contrast, Islamic theology affirms the Qur’an as *kalām Allāh* the eternal and uncreated speech of God transcending historical context and linguistic relativity. Scholars like al-Ghazālī and other

traditionalists delineate a firm distinction between *ḥaqīqa* (absolute divine truth) and *majāz* (metaphorical or interpretive language), accommodating human interpretive diversity while upholding the Qur'an's divine origin and inerrancy. The Qur'an describes itself as *mubīn* (clear and explicit) and *ḥukm Allāh* (God's absolute judgment), standing in direct opposition to postmodernism's epistemological fragmentation.

2.2 Conventional Tafsīr and Contemporary Hermeneutics

Classical Tafsīr: Methodological Foundations for Interpreting Divine Revelation

Orthodox Qur'anic exegesis (tafsīr) adheres to rigid methodological schools with the aim of upholding theological correctness and orthodoxy. The interpretive school is primarily dedicated to two traditional methodologies:

1. Tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr (Interpretation Based on Transmission)

This method is derived from trustworthy sources, including prophetic sayings (ḥadīth), the Companions' insight, and early Muslim scholars' views (Tābi'ūn). It relies significantly on transmitted knowledge (naql) instead of independent reasoning, thus ensuring that exegesis is derived from divine revelation and prophetic guidance. A prime example of this is al-Suyūṭī's *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*.

2. Tafsīr bi'l-ra'y (Interpretation Based on Rational Analysis)

This approach relies on rational inquiry ('aql), philological inquiry, context (asbāb al-nuzūl), and overall objectives of Islamic law (maqāsid al-sharī'ah). Al-Zamakhsharī (Al-Kashshāf) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb) are great examples of this approach, where rational reasoning is maintained with established theological and linguistic norms.

Both approaches attempt to maintain the divine purpose of the Qur'an, thereby ensuring its theological and legal consistency.

Postmodern Hermeneutics: Overturning Essential Meanings

In contrast, postmodern hermeneutics excludes the potential for author-centered, determinate meaning and instead emphasizes subjective, contextually rooted interpretations. Two powerful postmodern schools have had an impact on Qur'anic discourse in the modern era.

Reader-Response Frameworks

Based on Wolfgang Iser's theory, it asserts that meaning is constructed by the reader in reaction to the text, rather than within the text itself. Transferred to the Qur'an, the perspective holds that meanings are fluid, subject to personal or communal experience, and not necessarily bound up with God's intention. While being open, it is in danger of isolating the Qur'anic message from its revelatory source.

Intertextuality and Secular Theories

Postmodern scholars place the Qur'an in wide-ranging secular academic frameworks, such as gender theory, deconstruction, and postcolonial studies (cf. Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*). Such placement allows for reinterpretations, such as feminist analysis-based reinterpretations, but it

disjoins the Qur'anic text from its theological and historical context, and hence depicts it more as a cultural or literary artifact than as a divine revelation.

Key Implications

The tension between traditional Qur'anic interpretation and contemporary hermeneutics raises profound questions: Can reconciliation be achieved between the divine nature of the Qur'an and reader-oriented interpretations? Do intertextual methods add religious depth to the text, or do they compromise its sacred validity? More mature scholars are prone to assert that postmodern methods undermine the absolute authority of revelation, while liberal critics recognize traditional tafsīr as bound within rigid doctrine models. This epistemological tension is part of larger controversies in Islamic thought regarding authority, meaning, and the place of intellectual inquiry in society today.

Feminist Reinterpretations and Postmodern Paradigms of Interpretation

Amina Wadud's groundbreaking work, *Qur'an and Woman*, utilizes postmodern interpretive approaches in its interpretation of the Islamic scripture. By subverting mainstream exegetical norms, Wadud argues that a great deal of the gendered interpretation of the Qur'an is the product of historical scholarly norms and not the text. She uses a reconceptualization of linguistic paradigms, thematic exegesis (tafsīr mawḍūʿī), and critical examination of patriarchal assumptions in mainstream commentary, rather than adhering to mainstream Islamic norms. One of the central themes of her work is the reinterpretation of turning-point verses, such as Qur'an 4:34 (nushūz), subverting mainstream legal interpretations.

Feminist Reinterpretations and Postmodern Paradigms of Interpretation

Wadud's egalitarian methodology seeks to synthesize Qur'anic theology with postmodern and contemporary interpretations of gender equality. It has been subject to fierce critique by traditionalist scholars, who argue that such methodologies will try to apply secular feminist ideologies to scriptural interpretation. Critics argue that such methodologies undermine academic consensus (ijmāʿ), undermine the linguistic purity of the Qur'an (tafsīr bi'l-lughah), and—at an ontological level below methodology—subjectivize scripture, thereby diminishing its divine authority.

Traditionalist Counterarguments: Defining the Epistemological Boundaries of Tafsīr

Traditionalist researchers are of the belief that Qur'anic interpretation must be grounded on an epistemology that is respectful of the holiness of revelation and entails historical context (asbāb al-nuzūl). For instance, the idea of qiwāmah (male responsibility in 4:34) is addressed through rigorous philological examination, harmony of the early jurists, and its conformity to the overall objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharīʿah) such as preserving familial stability. In that regard, feminist reinterpretations contrary to these traditional parameters are often regarded as tafsīr bi'l-hawā (interpretation based on personal inclination) and not scholarly work (ijtihād).

The Hermeneutical Challenge: Engaging with Critical Analysis and Faithfulness to Scripture

The rift between feminist reinterpretations and traditional exegesis betrays a trenchant challenge in modern Islamic thought. Reformist scholars emphasize the impact of sociocultural forces—

chiefly patriarchal institutions—on the evolution of historical readings, calling for contextual sensitivity in interpretation. Conservatives, on the other hand, underscore the enduring character of revelation and warn against over-deconstruction, claiming that it compromises theological consistency.

Modern scholars thus face a fundamental challenge: pursuing meaningful re-interpretation responsive to modern concerns but grounded in long-standing exegetical conventions. This demands a mature approach that balances historical contextualization and textual fidelity, intellectual creativity, and theological consistency. The implications of this debate extend beyond the academy to inform Islamic legal decisions, social morality, and the very basis of the stability of Qur'anic interpretation. While progressive models encourage more flexible models, traditionalists warn that separating the holy text from its long history of interpretation risks severing the exegetical tradition from Islam.

3. Islamic Divine Command Theory and Moral Relativism

3.1 Islam's Rejection of Postmodern Moral Relativism

Postmodern ethical theory, as articulated by thinkers like Michel Foucault (*Discipline and Punish*) and Alasdair MacIntyre (*After Virtue*), posits that morality is not objective but rather a construct of power, culture, and historical circumstance. This framework reduces ethical norms to human inventions, denying the possibility of a transcendent or divinely ordained moral order.

Islam firmly refuses relativization of morals. The Qur'an holds the belief that moral truths are absolute and rely solely on divine revelation: "*If you obey most of those on the earth, they will lead you astray from the right way. They follow nothing but conjecture, and they are deceiving one another.*" (Qur'an 6:116) This passage clearly warns against systems of morality based on human conjecture rather than God's command. Classical Islamic scholarship further substantiates this claim. In his masterpiece, *al-Risala*, Imam al-Shafi'i (d. 820 CE) argues that Islamic law (Sharia) cannot be open to arbitrary human reinterpretation but must be derived from the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah through rigorous methodological process (*usul al-fiqh*). The great Hanbali author Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350 CE) expounds in *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in* that Islamic ethics is not relativistic but is divinely prescribed for ultimate human welfare (*maslaha*) in this life and the next. He emphasizes that Sharia law decisions are founded on divine wisdom (*hikma*), and not fleeting human views.

3.2 The Irreconcilable Conflict Between Sharia and Postmodern Ethics

The deep incompatibility between Islamic ethics and postmodern ethics is uncovered on a number of important fronts:

(1) Gender and Family Structure

Postmodern theory on gender, developed by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble*, contends that gender roles are constructed socially, not ordained by God or biology.ⁱⁱ This is diametrically opposed to the Qur'anic dictate:

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women..." (Surah An-Nisā' 4:34)

The Qur'an and Sunnah share distinctive, but complementary, roles for women and men in society, marriage, and in religious life. Great classical scholars, such as Ibn Kathir (d. 1373 CE) in his *Tafsir*, describe these roles as not being of cultural origin, but as divinely revealed principles to provide social solidarity.

(2) Criminal Law and Divine Prescriptions

Postmodern critiques of Islamic criminal law (*hudud*), such as harsh punishments for theft and adultery, view them as archaic and culturally relative. The Qur'an, however, establishes these as God's ordinances:

"[As for] the thief, the male and the female, cut off their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent from Allah." (Qur'an 5:38)

The hudud are considered permanent Islamic Law throughout the Islamic civilization. In recent times, the Saudi Arabian Permanent Council of senior scholars, *al-Lajna al-Da'imah*, ruled that *hudud* punishments are fixed divine laws that cannot be changed under any circumstances.ⁱⁱⁱ

(3) The Denial of Moral Subjectivism

Postmodernist rejection of moral absolutes is the basic rejection of the Islamic idea of *halal* (acceptable) and *haram* (prohibited), which are unequivocally defined in revelation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"The difference between what is halal and what is haram is clear, with doubtful matters in between." (Sahih Bukhari)

This hadith leaves no margin for moral relativism or subjective reinterpretation.

3.3 The Postmodern Relativistic Implications for Islamic Philosophy

Postmodern moral relativism poses an existential threat to Islamic orthodoxy because:

1. It Denies Divine Authority

By bringing morality down to human-made categories, postmodernism denies the very basis of Islamic morality—that Allah and Allah alone has the authority to make law: *"Law is solely the prerogative of Allah."* (Qur'an 12:40)

2. It Undermines Accountability in the Hereafter

If morality is considered a social construct, the concept of divine judgment would be irrelevant. The Qur'an always insists on the fact that humans will be accountable for their deeds:

"Then We will certainly question those to whom the message was sent and the bearers of the message." (Qur'an 7:6)

3. It Leads to Intellectual and Moral Chaos

Without established ethical norms, society enters into ethical chaos—a situation the Prophet (peace be upon him) cautioned against:

No one will stay in an assembly in which they disobey Allah's commandments without being filled with punishment.^{iv}

Islam's ethical system is absolute, founded on divine revelation and not on human subjectivity. Postmodernism's rejection of transcendent truth is fundamentally incompatible with Islamic theology.

4. Identity and Pluralism: Fragmented Subjectivity vs. Islamic Exclusivism

4.1 Postmodern Deconstruction of Religious Identity

Postmodern theory promotes hybrid and fluid identities that challenge fixed religious affiliations.^v Postmodern theory has led to the invention of "cultural Muslims," people who maintain ethnic ties to Islam but repudiate conventional beliefs.^{vi} Fragmentation of this kind is seen in:

- Selective Practice: Practicing rituals but not Sharia's legal requirements
- Cognitive Dissonance: Muslim in Faith but embracing ideologies that Islam prohibits outright
- Epistemic Relativism: Taking Islamic truth claims as being subjective instead of divinely established

The Qur'an cautions us against such compartmentalization:

"Do you believe in part of the Book and reject part of it?" (2:85)

"When Allah and His Prophet have decreed something, then any believer, be he or she male or female, does not have any choice in his or her affair." (33:36)

Traditional scholars viewed this action as dangerous. Ibn Hazm (d. 1064) said: "Whoever accepts some rulings and rejects others is a disbeliever".^{vii}

4.2 Islamic Exclusivism in a Multicultural World

The Qur'an sets rigorous theological boundaries:

"Whosoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall never be accepted from him." (3:85)

"Indeed, the faith acceptable to Allah is Islam." (3:19)

Postmodern pluralism, which asserts all religions are on an equal footing,^{viii} explicitly contradicts:

1. The Prophethood's Finality:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the last of the prophets." (33:40)

2. The Rejection of Syncretism: *"Proclaim: O disbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Your religion to you, and my religion to me."* (109:1-6)

3. The Prohibition of Apostasy:

"Whosoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief shall incur the wrath of Allah." (16:106)

4.3 The Challenges Confronting Contemporary Muslim Identity

Contemporary efforts to bridge Islam and pluralism are unsuccessful because:

1. They ignore the Qur'an's explicit exclusivity verses
2. They oppose the early scholars' consensus (ijma')
3. They result in the doctrinal fallacy of identifying truth with falsehood:
"Also, don't mix truth with falsehood or hide the truth when you do know it." (2:42)

The Requirement of Established Mainstream Boundaries

The theological structure of Islam cannot embrace postmodern relativism without sacrificing its essence. The solution is:

1. Reaffirming Tawhid:

"Thus is Allah, your Lord; there is no god but Him, creator of all things." (6:102)

2. Refuting Syncretism:

"And hold fast all together to the rope of Allah and do not become separated." (3:103)

3. Maintaining Clear Identity:

"You are the best people brought forth for mankind - you enjoin good and forbid evil." (3:110)

The choice is easy: to embrace totally divine revelation or to become a casualty of the fallacy of subjective truth claims. As the Qur'an defines it:

"Is it then the judgment of ignorance that they wish for? But who is greater than Allah in judgment for a people firm in faith?" (5:50)

5. Feminist and Queer Reinterpretations of Islam - A Critical Islamic Analysis

5.1 Islamic Feminism and Postmodern Hermeneutics: A Review of Theological Perspectives

Modern feminist scholars using postmodern approaches practice what they call "gender-sensitive" Qur'anic interpretation. *Sexual Ethics and Islam* by Kecia Ali is a prime example of this genre:

Re-examination of Polygyny (Qur'an 4:3)

Postmodern feminist scholars argue that Qur'an 4:3, which permits polygyny subject to specific conditions, should be interpreted as a temporally located decree but not a timeless mandate. They

argue that the verse was disclosed in relation to the socio-economic circumstances of 7th-century Arabia (i.e., orphan welfare) and does not necessarily have to hold for all ages in our time..^{ix} But classical Islamic exegesis (tafsir) unequivocally denies this contention and believes the verse remains a legislative (tashri'i) injunction with continued application. Some of the principal arguments of classical scholars are:

Al-Tabari (d. 923) in his *Jami' al-Bayan* stresses that the verse legally allows polygyny but with strict ethical requirements—above all, sheer justice ('adl) among wives. He maintains that the Qur'anic verse ("if you fear that you cannot do justice, then marry only one") formulates an abiding legal rule, not a fleeting exception.^x

Ibn Kathir (d. 1373) in *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* connects 4:3 to the previous orphan-welfare verses (4:2-6) and indicates that polygyny was established not for the indulgence of male fancy so much as a social duty—namely, in the sphere of fair treatment to widows and orphans.^{xi} Al-Qurtubi (d. 1273) in *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an* also attests to this stance, arguing that the jurisprudential soundness of the verse is unless abrogated (mansukh), and there is no abrogation. In addition, he notes that Islamic law (fiqh) has always recognized polygyny as a valid, albeit highly regulated, institution.^{xii}

Therefore, while postmodern critiques attempt to relativize the ruling, traditional scholarship collectively proclaims its abiding legislative quality, susceptible to justice and social need.

Hadith Criticism Methodology

Postmodern criticism of hadith authenticity dissolves conventional Islamic scholarship by discrediting centuries of meticulous verification processes. This action has profound theological and methodological consequences because:

It pays no attention to 'ilm al-rijal (science of narrator criticism), an organized science that analyzes the credibility of hadith transmitters in detail based on biographical analysis (tarajim), cross-referencing chains (isnad), and textual analysis (mathen).

It contradicts the Prophet's (SAW) promise in the famous hadith:

"Allah will raise at the beginning of every century for this ummah such people as will restore to it its religion." (Sunan Abu Dawud 4291) This prophecy highlights God's maintenance of Sunnah through intellectual revivalism (tajdid) and not capricious reinterpretation.

It rejects the ijma' of earlier women scholars like Aisha (RA), who critically vetted hadith while being totally within the parameters of mainstream gender roles. Her reputation as a chief expert on hadith (narrating in excess of 2,000 hadiths) attests that Islamic tradition had healthy female scholarship already in place without postmodern deconstruction.

The postmodern approach to hadith disrespects 1,400 years of scholarly consensus by abandoning tried and tested verification methodology. Classical Islam, in contrast, balances critical skepticism with rigorous methodology, maintaining the integrity of the Sunnah.

Qur'anic Counter-Arguments:

"And when you shall judge between men, judge with justice" (4:58) - setting down divine instead of culturally relative standards.

"We have shown to you the Book in its truth, confirming that which came before it" (5:48) - highlighting the priority of revelation over historical context.

5.2 Queer Muslim Theologies: An Orthodox Response

In his controversial work *Homosexuality in Islam* (2010), Scott Kugle proposes a postmodern reinterpretation of the Qur'anic narrative of the people of Lūṭ (Qur'an 7:80–84). Kugle argues, the primary crimes of the Lūṭians were rape, sexual violence, and violation of hospitality, not same-sex relations. This aligns with certain liberal Christian reinterpretations of the Biblical Sodom story.^{xiii}

However, **classical Islamic exegesis (tafsīr) and scholarly consensus (ijmā')** firmly reject this reading on both textual and theological grounds:

Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273) states unequivocally in *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*:

"Their most abhorrent sin was sodomy (liwāṭ), which surpassed all other transgressions."

Ibn 'Abbās (RA), the eminent companion and exegete, explains:

"They abandoned the women Allah created for them and pursued men instead." (*Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*)

The Qur'an repeatedly condemns their actions across multiple passages (11:77–83, 26:165–166, 29:28–29), indicating that their punishment was not context-dependent but a universal moral indictment.

Thus, from a traditionalist perspective, attempts to reinterpret these verses as condemning only rape rather than same-sex relations contradict the Qur'an's unambiguous moral framework.

The Concept of Fitrah (Natural Disposition)

Postmodern queer theory fundamentally **opposes the Islamic concept of fiṭrah**—the innate, God-given disposition of humanity. The Qur'an affirms this in **30:30**:

"So set your face firmly toward the true faith, adhering to the fiṭrah upon which Allah has created humanity."

Imām al-Ghazālī elaborates in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* that heterosexual marriage is the natural (fiṭrī) foundation of emotional and social stability, essential for moral and spiritual development.^{xiv} Modern science and medicine continue to recognize the biological distinction between male and female (sexual dimorphism) as the foundation of human reproduction. While acknowledging that some individuals experience discomfort with their biological sex, a condition known as gender dysphoria, this does not change the fundamental biological reality. This scientific understanding aligns with the Qur'anic view that men and women are naturally complementary to each other.

6. Conclusion: Rejecting Postmodernism and Reaffirming Islamic Orthodoxy

The postmodern intellectual paradigm of relativization of truth and moral subjectivity is

fundamentally at odds with the basic teachings of Islam. The Qur'an and Sunnah hold a strict epistemological and moral system incompatible with postmodern deconstructionist ideologies.

6.1 Incompatibility of Postmodernism with Islamic Truth

The Islamic worldview begins with the conviction that truth is absolute, eternal, and revealed by Allah—rather than being a fluid concept shaped by changing societal trends or personal experiences. The Qur'an clearly affirms the absoluteness of divine truth (*haqq*):

“And say: Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Surely, falsehood is bound to perish.”
(Surah Al-Isra 17:81)

This verse affirms the Islamic belief that truth, as defined by revelation, is unchanging and remains unaffected by cultural or ideological shifts. In stark contrast, postmodernism dismisses the idea of universal truths, asserting that all truth claims are socially constructed and dependent on context. This leads to a relativization of even the most essential religious and moral teachings, something that Islam resolutely opposes.

Core Islamic Doctrines Challenged by Postmodernism

- **Finality of Revelation (Khatm al-Wahy):**

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen Islam as your religion.” (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:3)

Islam considers divine revelation to be complete and flawless, allowing no reinterpretation that alters its legal or ethical framework.

- **Sovereignty of Divine Law (Shari'ah):**

“Is it the judgment of ignorance they seek? Who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who have certainty in faith?” (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:50)

This verse emphasizes the exclusive legitimacy of divine legislation, rejecting any secular or relativistic moral system.

- **Warning Against Following Desires Over Revelation:**

“And if you follow most of those on the earth, they will lead you astray from the path of Allah. They follow nothing but speculation and lie.” (Surah Al-An'am 6:116)

The emphasis here directly counters postmodernism's validation of personal desires and subjective moral frameworks.

Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ firmly stated:

“Whoever introduces something into this matter of ours that is not part of it, it will be rejected.”
(Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith establishes the clear precedent that unauthorized innovations in religious practice or doctrine are invalid and spiritually harmful.

6.2 The Challenges of Postmodern Hermeneutics

The growing trend of applying postmodern hermeneutics, particularly feminist and queer readings to the Qur'an and Sunnah, represents not a legitimate exercise in *ijtihād* (independent scholarly reasoning), but a distortion (*tahrīf*) of divine revelation. These interpretations rely on foreign epistemologies rather than Islamic methodological foundations (*uṣūl al-tafsīr*), and thus compromise the sanctity and coherence of the Islamic worldview.

The Qur'an sternly warns against manipulating revelation for personal, ideological, or worldly agendas:

"So woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, 'This is from Allah,' to gain a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:79)

This verse underscores the severity of misrepresenting divine scripture to suit human desires. Postmodern reinterpretations often begin subtly by questioning established concepts such as gender roles, family structure, and sexual ethics, only to later challenge the very foundations of *'aqīdah* (belief) and *sharī'ah* (law).

The Prophet ﷺ also warned of future corruptions within the Ummah:

"There will come a time when people from my Ummah will consider fornication, silk (for men), wine, and musical instruments to be permissible." (Bukhārī)

This prophetic narrative highlights the grave risk of legitimizing what Allah has unequivocally prohibited under the guise of cultural integration or so-called intellectual progress. The assimilation of postmodern thought into Islamic discourse signals the onset of this anticipated deviation.

6.3 The Path Forward: Upholding Islamic Foundations

Islam's firm resistance to postmodern ideologies must not be mistaken for narrow-mindedness or intellectual stagnation. Rather, it serves as a stronghold of divinely revealed, timeless, and universal truths. The remedy for the ideological disarray introduced by postmodernism lies not in compromise, but in a deliberate and humble return to the foundational sources of Islam—the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the interpretive legacy of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥīn*.

1. Reaffirming Core Islamic Doctrines

To counter the corrosive effects of moral relativism, Muslims must reassert the enduring truths of Islamic belief:

- **Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa'l-Ṣifāt:** Affirming Allah's names and attributes without distortion (*tahrīf*), denial (*ta'ṭīl*), or anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*).
- **Finality of Prophethood:** *"Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets."* (Sūrat al-Aḥzāb, 33:40)
- **Moral Absolutism:**

"This day I have perfected your religion for you..." (Sūrat al-Mā'idah, 5:3)

"This is My straight path, so follow it." (Sūrat al-An'ām, 6:153)

These verses reinforce the immutable nature of divine guidance and categorically reject the notion of fluctuating moral standards.

2. Reviving Authentic Islamic Scholarship

The Islamic intellectual tradition has weathered numerous ideological threats across history by virtue of its rigorous methodology and preservation of sacred texts. Revival today means:

- Returning to tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr, which relies on the Prophetic explanations and the understandings of the early generations.
- Preserving 'ilm al-ḥadīth, especially the discipline of verifying transmitters (*'ilm al-rijāl*), to protect the authenticity of the Sunnah.
- Resisting hermeneutics that are rooted in secular or anti-theistic worldviews, which undermine the intended meanings of revelation.

3. Uncompromising Refutation of Postmodern Thought

Islam does not permit syncretism with ideologies that contradict its core teachings. The Qur'an calls for clarity and separation from misguidance:

"Indeed, this is My straight path, so follow it; and do not follow other ways, for they will separate you from His way." (Surah al-An'ām, 6:153)

"O believers! Enter completely into submission (to Allah), and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is your sworn enemy." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:208)

The Prophet ﷺ further emphasized the station of the few who remain steadfast upon the truth:

"Islam emerged in a state of estrangement and shall once again become estranged, just as it began. So blessed are the strangers who uphold it." (Muslim)

This ḥadīth serves as encouragement for those who preserve authentic Islam amid widespread deviation. Postmodernism, like other ideological innovations (*bid'ah*), seeks to dilute Islam from within. The appropriate response is not intellectual accommodation, but firm rejection of anything that conflicts with divine guidance.

"The word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. None can change His words." (Surah al-An'ām, 6:115)

Conclusion

In the face of postmodern challenges, safeguarding Islam demands unwavering commitment to its authentic teachings, firmly rooted in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the scholarly tradition of the Salaf. This preservation is not mere resistance to change but a reflection of divine permanence amid intellectual chaos. It calls for steadfast adherence to correct belief (*'aqīdah*), vigilant rejection

of religious innovation (*bid'ah*), and a deliberate revival of traditional Islamic sciences that have historically shielded the *ummah* from ideological deviation.

While postmodernism revels in ambiguity, moral relativism, and the erosion of truth, Islam stands as a beacon of clarity, ethical certainty, and divine direction. Unlike postmodern thought—which breeds fragmentation and existential confusion—Islam offers spiritual accountability, a God-given purpose, and an unchanging framework of justice and virtue. In an age of moral confusion, the most sensible course for Muslims is to hold firmly to the rope of Allah, walking the straight path with conviction, clarity, and humility.

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