



H. NAWFAL DEFINITION OF THE EASTERN WOMAN
ACCORDING TO THE JOURNAL "AL-FATAH"

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Abstract

British-colonized Egypt became the epicenter of movements for decolonization, nationalism, and modernization in the last quarter of the 19th century. British colonialism influenced not only the socio-economic and political dimensions of the country but also permeated all aspects of social and cultural life.

During this period, the so-called "woman question" (*Qadiyat al-mar'a*)-concerning how an Egyptian woman should be a better mother, spouse and housewife - emerged as a central theme in discussions about nationalism, decolonization, and progress. Gradually, women themselves began to participate in what had been a male-dominated discourse by establishing written periodicals.

The magazine **al-Fatah** (Arabic: الفتاة **The Young Girl**, founded in 1892 by Hind Nawfal), was the first Arabic-language publication created by a woman and intended for women. It serves as an important source for understanding how women of the period perceived themselves and how they sought to navigate the prevailing political, gender, economic, and cultural environment.

Keywords: Colonialism, Nationalism, Woman question, Oriental Arab woman.

Introduction

Centuries-old beliefs and ideas about the traditional role of women were closely tied to the cult of the family, in which women's virtue was associated with piety, obedience, and domestic life. This included their reproductive function, child-rearing responsibilities, a limited or entirely prohibited right to education, isolation from the public sphere, and restricted family and kinship relations. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a process of re-evaluating these long-standing views regarding women began in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt as well as in other parts of the world.

Egypt, which had enjoyed considerable autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, was colonized by Britain at the end of the 19th century. The prominence of the "woman question" in Egyptian society during this period was predominantly a result of the intertwined processes of nationalism, decolonization, and modernization, as well as the influence of the Western colonial presence. As M. Booth notes, "At the time of the emergence of the national agenda, the women's issue was proposed as a key issue for determining the new society." (Booth, 2001:173). It is noteworthy that the perceived necessity of

transforming the status of women -within the broader context of national progress and the decolonization process- was of central importance to both conservative and liberal forces, who believed that “the situation of the nation could not be improved without improving the position of women.” (Amin, 1970: 137).

Under conditions in which political associations were banned, literature and periodicals served as effective means of mobilizing and consolidating public sentiment in the country. Accordingly, the “woman question” (*Qadiyat al-mar’a*) and the women’s revival movement (Arabic النسائية النهضة *al-nahda al-nisā’iyya*) were directly linked to the emergence of women’s periodicals. The women’s press (Arabic المجلة النسائية *al-majallāt al-nisā’iyya*; *al-ṣaḥāfa al-nisā’iyya*) paved the way for the process of emancipation, as women’s journals functioned not only as instruments of struggle but also as arenas that directly reflected transformations in women’s circumstances, education, professional development, and legal status.

The first Arabic-language women's journal, *al-Fatah* (The Young Girl), was founded in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1892. Its founder and editor was the first woman in the history of the Arab press, a Lebanese Christian, Hind Nawfal. The article aims to present, according to the journal *al-Fatah*, the definition of the Eastern, Arab woman according to H. Nawfal in the initial period of women's emancipation in Egypt and in the general context of contemporary political events: the social role of a woman, her rights and duties in society and the family, as well as the idea of relationships between the sexes; how she responds with her journal to the dominant discourse of this period about the “woman question”, which aimed at strengthening the status of a woman in the family.

The relevance of the present research topic lies in the importance of examining the issue of gender equality within the context of

the Arab-Muslim world. At the end of the 19th century, the women's press in Egypt had a significant influence on social processes, contributing to the strengthening of women's social status and raising of awareness regarding their civil and social rights.

The analysis of the journal *al-Fatah* makes it possible to highlight the individual vision of Hind Nawfal, as the editor and founder of the first Arabic-language women's magazine, within the broader discourse of the "woman question" at the end of the nineteenth century.

The research methodology is grounded on the principle of objectivity and employs both contextual and structural-functional analyses of the women's press.

The main source of this study is the Arabic-language version of the journal *al-Fatah* itself and is based on the following articles:

The first issue: "Declaration, Cooperation, Permission" (the first article); "Women's Duties and Rights- *al-Fatah*" (the eighth article)

The second issue: "Thanks and Praise" (the first article); "Women's Duties and Rights: What a Wife Wants from Her Husband" (the seventh article)

The fourth issue: "Women's Duties and Rights: A Letter from a Reader from France" (the fifth article)

The fifth issue: "Women's Duties and Responsibilities: A Summary of the Book Family Management, Published in Egypt" (the third article)

The sixth issue: "Women's Duties and Responsibilities: A Summary of the Book Family Management, Published in Egypt-Continuation of the Previous Issue" (the ninth article)

The tenth issue: "Statement of the Newspaper Administration" (the first article); "*al-Fatah*" (the second article)

Findings:

Based on the analysis of Hind Nawfal's journal *al-Fatah*, it was revealed that, on the one hand, she shared the dominant discourse on "woman question" prevalent at the time, which viewed women primarily as mothers, wives, and housewives within the broader context of societal and national progress. On the other hand, Nawfal regarded the Eastern Arab woman as a partner (Arabic شريكة *sharīka*) to man, rather than subordinate to him, and advocated for her active participation in public life.

Discussion

Oriental, Arab Girl

Hind Nawfal (1860–1920) was a Lebanese Orthodox Christian. She received education in her homeland at a Christian missionary school, where she studied English and Arabic. After her family moved to Alexandria, she continued the education at another missionary school, studying Arabic and French. Her family, unlike most at the time, held progressive attitudes toward women's education and social roles. Hind's mother, Mariam al-Nahhas, was the author of the first arabic biographical encyclopedia-dictionary devoted to prominent women⁷¹. Her father and uncle were actively involved in publishing, and since Egypt, unlike other regions of the Ottoman Empire, had enjoyed greater press freedom since the 1860s, the Nawfal family relocated to Alexandria. The family not only supported Hind during her studies but also assisted her in publishing activities later, with her father and sister playing particularly active roles.

In patriarchal, Muslim-dominated Egypt, a Christian, Lebanese, migrant woman established the first women's periodical and, in its very first issue, sought to dispel potential negative attitudes in society stemming from her religious, national, or gender identity. The first

⁷¹ The first part was published in 1879 with the financial support of Khedive Ismail Pasha's third wife, while the second volume was lost during the Ahmad 'Urabi Uprising (1882).

issue opens with the following invocation: “O Goddess of Knowledge (presumably a reference to the Egyptian goddess of knowledge, Seshat), O Goddess of Generosity, fill with life what my pen has written, fill it with kindness; this is your girl as a flag among the Arabs. [ربة يا بين فتاتك هذى قلمى خطه عما لحاظك غضى منعمة الود بحسن تصفحيه الكرم ربة يا بل العلم (الفتاة) 1892, 1#: 19]. كالعلم العرب

By addressing the journal’s audience as “Arabs,” it appears that Nawfal aimed to counteract nationalist bias from the outset, given the growing resentment toward foreigners in Egyptian society at the time, who were perceived as enjoying greater privileges than locals. Christians, in particular, were often regarded as allies of the West, especially Britain.

The Christian editor’s invocation of the goddess of Egyptian mythology in the first article, a gesture that would have been well received by Muslim-dominated Egyptian society, can be understood as Nawfal’s deliberate consideration of the audience’s sensitive attitudes within the country. Both the Muslim and Coptic communities in Egypt historically regard themselves, to some extent, as the heirs of ancient Egypt. This choice also reflects, at least in part, the editor’s adoption of a policy of religious neutrality.

Hind Nawfal’s emphasis on the fact that her magazine was the first women’s periodical under the Eastern sky, that it focused on the Eastern girl, and that it was the only publication in the East expressing women’s thoughts, disseminating their sentiments, defending their rights, exploring their behavior and knowledge, and celebrating their intellectual abilities, handicrafts, and exemplary deeds, can be seen as both an attempt to overcome national differences and a response to the prevailing political context. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a portion of Egyptian society believed that the country’s complete independence was unattainable and therefore supported the end of British occupation while remaining within the

Ottoman Empire with broad autonomy, thereby preserving the idea of Eastern unity. Similarly, the majority of women's periodicals of the first period adopted a policy of loyalty to the government, within which all magazines expressed particular gratitude to the Sultan and the Khedive for their support.

In 19th-century Egypt, public opinion was strongly shaped by conservative values, which regarded women's involvement in public life, and particularly in print media, as a potential affront to morality and dignity. Under such conditions, it is unsurprising that the editor's gender significantly influenced public perceptions of the magazine itself. Hind Nawfal addressed this concern in the very first issue, presenting European data on the success of women's participation in newspaper activities and directly emphasizing to readers that such engagement does not undermine their dignity or morality; rather, it serves as a contributing factor to the success and advancement of the state.

The Social Role of an Oriental, Arab Girl and Her Rights and Duties in Society and Family

On November 20, 1892, the first issue⁷² of the Nawfal journal was published in Alexandria. A total of twelve issues were released, and after two more issues in March 1894, publication was discontinued. We think that the cessation of the magazine's operation was due to financial difficulties rather than to Hindi's marriage.

The name of the magazine, *al-Fatah* (Arabic: الفتاة) is given in the form of a noun with a feminine article and means "a girl" or "a young woman." The editor herself defines *al-Fatah* as follows: "A girl,

⁷² The next issue was published on January 1, 1893, and continued until September. After the first issue, all issues were published on the first of the month, and in 1894, the journal was published on February 10, and the next two on March 1 and 16. The periodical consists of a total of 12 issues. Initially, it was intended as a monthly magazine, but in the end, two issues were published in one month.

and what do you know about her? She is a woman in the bloom of her youth and the flower of youth, in the prime of strength and life, and the gentle expression of her face indicates good health and youthful vigor.” [الفتاة وما الفتاة] 1892, 1#:33).

The title of the magazine directly indicates that it speaks about and for young woman. The author's emphasis on this age group reflects her belief, expressed in various articles, that any change in the status and condition of women should begin in girlhood, from childhood and the father's house.

H. Nawfal, in the first article of the first issue of the magazine titled “**Declaration, Cooperation, Permission,**” which begins with the address “My ladies,” defines the purpose and thematic framework of the publication as follows: “**al-Fatah** is a scientific, historical, literary, and humorous magazine intended for its gender, created under the sky of the East. It has no political goals in its subject matter, no intention of engaging in religious disputes, and no desire to explore issues that are not beneficial for women. Its purpose is not a debate, except on matters related to the upbringing and dignity of the beautiful. ... Its only principle is the demand for stolen rights and the assertion and drawing attention to necessary obligations.” جريدة هي الفتاة لا بموضوعها الشرق سماء تحت مبتكرة , جنسها في مختصة فكاهية أدبية تاريخية علمية البحث من لها غاية ولا , الدنية المشاحنة الي فيها منزوع ولا , السياسية الامور في لها غرض و الهيفاء ادب في كان ما الا المناظرات في لها مطمع لا و , للنساء منها فائدة لا مواضع في ...الحسنة محاسن
[الفتاة] المطلوب الواجب الي الاستلفات و المطلوب الحق عن الدفاع الوحيد مبدأ فان
1892, 1# : 21).

As it is obvious from the very first article, the purpose of the magazine is to benefit women; to protect their stolen rights and de-

mand the fulfillment of neglected obligations; to highlight the beauty and virtue of women; to publish the “pearls and valuable thoughts” written by women on topics related to science, history, culture, and humor. From the very beginning, this demonstrates H. Nawfal’s position that she does not demand anything new or non-existent, but rather the restoration of what has been taken away and the fulfillment of forgotten duties. To validate her views expressed in the journal, she notes that she will offer readers articles about the condition and status of women in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The portrayal of successful individuals as models to be emulated by society was characteristic of the Egyptian press during this period. Accordingly, each issue of women’s magazines featured accounts of several prominent women, whether contemporary or historical figures. Through the mention and biographies of notable women presented in **Al-Fatah**, H. Nawfal not only established a standard of female role models for society but also revealed her own vision of who an exemplary woman should be. From the selection of figures - such as strong rulers (Cleopatra, Queen Victoria, Catherine II), patriotic citizens (Joan of Arc), and educated, cultured women (Hypatia, Al-Khansa, Aisha Taymur) - it can be inferred that she sought to present women as powerful and capable individuals. On the one hand, these examples were intended to serve as role models; on the other, they aimed to show to both sexes that throughout history, both in the East and the West, women have been educated, socially active citizens who participated in governance and fulfilled their maternal duties with devotion.

Through the biographies of these notable figures, H. Nawfal challenged the prevailing perception in Eastern and not only Eastern society that women, due to their biological characteristics and gender, were incapable of governing a country, fulfilling the role of active

citizens, or pursuing education. According to this traditional belief, if a woman attempted to engage in such activities, she would inevitably fail to fulfill her primary duty: to be a good mother. For example, Nawfal's contemporary Aisha Taymur, regarded as the first emancipated woman in Egypt during this period, blamed herself for being so deeply engaged in her work that she failed to help her daughter when she fell ill and died. As an act of remorse and protest, Taymur even burned a collection of her poems.

Some members of society held even harsher views. For instance, a writer Amin Efendi, in a letter to the magazine *al-Hilal*, claimed that "those women who have become famous [successful] owe their achievements to their position, environment, and advisors; nevertheless, they are anomalies of nature, like an animal with a human head or a man with two heads." (النساء من) اشتهرن اللواتي هن [حيوان كجسم الطبيعة فئات من فهن ذلك ومع مستشاريهن و حاشيتهن و لمركزهن به فالفضل الفتاة (1894, #10: 409),] براسين رجل او انسان برأس

The editor and authors of *al-Fatah* openly criticize the widespread public perception that an individual's mental and physical abilities are determined by gender. They regard this notion as a discriminatory and deeply entrenched patriarchal discourse, primarily employed by men as an ideological tool to subordinate women. The detrimental effects of gender stereotypes on women's self-expression and participation in society are also highlighted.

H. Nawfal writes: "Anyone who delves into the origins of this dominance will realize that this sin lies on the shoulders of both [men and women] and deserves to be condemned. As one of its consequences, the girl is deprived of her rights by society, despite the fact that, by the principle of creation, they are one in command and prohibition, in effort and determination." يرى الغلبة هذه منشأ في أمعن من و [الفتاة سلب نتاجه من كان حيث العتب يستحق و الملاماة يستوجب دنيا منهما كل عائق على السعى و الجد و النهى و الامر في واحد الخلق مبدا في انهما مع الاجتماع هيئة من حقها

(الفتاة , 1892, 1#: 33).

A relative of H. Nawfal, bearing the same surname- Nawfal, wrote in a letter (الفتاة ; 1893, #4: 162) that if Plato and Aristotle had been treated as women are treated, they would have possessed fewer abilities than women themselves - so much so that they would not have been able to speak and would have lived in isolation from childhood. ... Women are often accused of lacking intelligence and morality, yet those who say it do not fear the punishment of the Day of Judgment.

Regarding the current condition of women, H. Nawfal identifies men as the primary cause: "Years pass, and a girl remains unchanged in her status within human society, not daring to take a single step toward attaining her rightful position or elevating her status. This is because the man forced her to surrender her dignity; after seizing control over her, he made her to follow his footsteps, fearing that she might equal him in greatness and share the fruits of his achievements." [المجتمع في شأنها على قائمة والفتاة الدهور وكُرِّت السنون مرت لقد] على أكرهها الرجل لأن، شأنها ورفع مقامها على للحصول خطوة تتقدم أن تجسر لا الإنساني العظمة في تساويه أن من خوفًا، خطواته ترافق أن أمرها زمام على استولى أن بعد وأبى كرامته (الفتاة ; 1892, #1: 22) However, she also notes with regard to women that their inaction was nothing more than a choice, until all this affected the man's condition and the woman's peace of mind.

H. Nawfal not only rejects the notion of gender-based differences in abilities but also criticizes the idea, prevalent within women's own circles, that women do not need education or work, since men are supposedly born for labor and women for idleness. She challenges the belief that education brings no material benefit to women and instead harms them morally, as some claim that literate girls become preoccupied with corresponding with boys.

Nawfal attributes these misconceptions within women's society to a lack of understanding of the true value of education and the opportunities it provides. She writes: "If women knew that education would give them equal opportunities and the power to participate [they, should probably be مشاركتهم and not مشاركتهن] in intellectual activities such as writing, teaching, rhetoric, and healing the sick, how could they not strive for education" [شانهن تعطى التربية السيدات علمت فاذا] الخطاب و التعليم و كاتليف العقلية الاعمال في مشاركتهم على تقويهن و بدرجة درجتهم تساوى (الفئة); 1894, #4: 112).

Nawfal shares the view that it will take generations for women to achieve equality with men in social position and opportunity. Unlike men, who receive a solid education from their fathers since childhood and are prepared for specific professions and social roles, women-particularly Eastern women - generally lack such preparation, with only a few exceptions. She also argues that women should begin with small, gradual changes. This perspective aligns with the broader social context of the time, which recognized that many reforms concerning women required the readiness of society, a process that inevitably takes time (for example, the issue of the headscarf).

Reflecting the educational focus of the magazine, the editor also discusses the problem of laziness in society, noting that if a lack of education and idleness harm men, they have an equally detrimental effect on women.

Within the context of decolonization, nationalism, and modernization in Egypt during the 19th and 20th centuries, the "woman question" was often framed around her role as the foundation of a strong family and the nurturer of the nation's future. The idea that an educated mother, who raises strong and capable citizens, contributes to the stability of the family, and therefore to the strength and progress of the state, was a shared belief among women's periodicals of the time.

H. Nawfal also addresses the issue of **tarbiya** (Arabic: تربية, meaning upbringing or education) in her journal. During this period, public discussions concerning child rearing and education focused on several key issues: the problem of unqualified local educators; the influence of European teachers who instilled Western values and culture in local children while neglecting national culture and traditions; the balance of roles between mothers and educators in the upbringing process; and the methods of child upbringing more generally.

H. Nawfal emphasized the importance of early education, stating that “Education in childhood is like an engraving in stone” [العلم] [الحجر في كالنقش الصغر في الفتاة] (1892, 1#: 35), and believed that the upbringing a child receives at an early age has a lifelong impact. She criticizes the common practice of entrusting this crucial task to servant-educators, arguing that they rarely succeed in raising children properly. According to Nawfal, a negligent mother is one who leaves her children unattended and delegates their upbringing to others. She observes that many such mothers later regret this decision for the rest of their lives. Nawfal advocates for the involvement of both parents in child-rearing. For her, a good mother devotes all her efforts to raising knowledgeable sons and virtuous daughters who will contribute positively to society through their knowledge and work. She regards the mother blessed from God that invests her time and energy in educating her children and instilling discipline thus transforming her youthful example into a model for her daughter. Child-rearing, in Nawfal’s view, is a chain process: the values, habits, and education imparted by one generation shape the next.

On the subject of women’s right to education, Nawfal asserts that restricting education for girls constitutes a crime: “It is undeniable that every nation that neglects the issue of educating girls violates the human rights of its members; the morals of its members

are corrupted, the minds are weakened, and the means of their livelihood are undermined.” تف لم البنات تربية امر اغفلت أمة كل أن ريب ولا [معايشهم اسباب تعطلت و عقولهم وضعفت افرادها الاخلاق فسدت الانسانية بالحقوق (الفتاة; 1894, 5#:211).

She further argues that no matter how much education boys receive, it will be in vain if girls are denied the same opportunities [دامت ما لارتقاء و تقدما تحوز فلا العلمى والارتقاء العقلى التهذيب في بلغت مهما ابنائها لان (الفتاة; 1894, 5#: 210), because those girls will become mothers, household managers, and shapers of their children’s morality one day. These views demonstrate that, on the one hand, she aligns with the prevailing approach in Egypt at the time, that the goal of changing the legal status of women is to raise mothers who serve the nation; while on the other hand, she also believes that prohibiting this right is a disregard of fundamental human rights and harms the nation morally and economically.

Although Nawfal accepts certain European approaches to child-rearing and family management, she strongly criticizes those of her fellow citizens who take pride in neglecting their native language, disregarding local customs, and even changing their names to emphasize a Western identity. She considers such behavior a superficial and ill-considered attempt to adopt Western civilization, failing to engage meaningfully with its positive aspects.

Regarding women’s right to work, H. Nawfal believes that a woman’s choice to work depends on her personal decision and economic situation. However, she maintains that a woman’s primary role is motherhood. Accordingly, after marriage, a woman should prioritize her family according to her abilities and avoid employment outside the home. Nawfal’s own decision to cease working for the journal after her marriage aligns with this perspective, which is often cited as a reason for the magazine’s discontinuation. Nevertheless, the introduction to the final issues of **al-Fatah** indicates that the magazine

also suffered from a lack of subscribers and income, which likely contributed to its closure.

In Egypt of this period, issues such as marriage, divorce, and polygamy were widely recognized as areas requiring reform, as they were considered sources, provoking family and social weakness. Nawfal addresses these issues in her writings. In evaluating the relationship between men and women, she emphasizes partnership, considering a woman to be a **sharika** (Arabic: شريكة partner, participant) to her husband: "A woman is a man's partner in life; she shares with him the joys and sorrows of life, entrusts him with her secrets, and they are equal in the power of action and emotional impact." هما و , ضراها و سراها تقاسمه و يؤسها و الحياة نعيم تتشاطره دنياه في الرجل شريكة هي و [الفتاة; 1892, 1#: 33].

In the article "**Declaration, Cooperation, Permission**", H. Nawfal notes that men are distinguished from women by courage, endurance, and generosity, while women are characterized by natural beauty, tenderness of heart, and sweetness of mind (logic). She emphasizes that men and women share a natural attraction and instinct for love. Each supports the other in earning income, managing household affairs, raising children, and conducting business, opening the doors to the secrets of nature and the world for one another. Consequently, the happiness of one becomes connected with the happiness of the other.

Regarding the contemporary state of family and marital relations, Nawfal considers both men and women share responsibility for the imbalances that exist. Despite changing times, husbands often perceive their wives as individuals without rights who cannot control themselves or their desires, while women frequently lack the skills to stand as competent partners. Equality between men and women - an existing yet limited phenomenon - was restricted and neglected by

certain segments of society. Nawfal cites the example of fellahs (peasants) in rural areas to illustrate a more egalitarian model: "Generally, in villages and provinces, they share the work with their women and see nothing in them except as equals." بين عاما الشرق في يحسب يكاد شان هذا و [الفتاة] الكفاءة الا منهن يجدون فلا أعمالهم على نساءهم يشاطرون ممن والارياف القرى سكان (1894, 10#: 412). This observation aligns with historians' assessments that gender segregation and the seclusion of women were more prevalent among the upper classes.

In **al-Fatah**, similar to later women's journals, columns featuring successful and famous women aimed to demonstrate the possibilities open to women - for both women and men. For example, in the twelfth issue, the article "**al-Nisa**" responds to A. Effendi's claim that successful women are anomalies of nature, noting that history - the greatest witness - is filled with hundreds and thousands of women who surpassed men in courage, morality, and good deeds. The editor, presumably H. Nawfal's father, presented such biographies to refute this misconception.

H.Nawfal and periodicals of the time in general predominantly feature biographies of Western women. For instance, in the first issue of **al-Fatah**, none of the five featured biographies⁷³ are Arab or Eastern women. This omission should not be interpreted as stemming from the editor's religious or cultural affiliation or from Western influence; rather, it reflects the historical context of her contemporary East, where women were rarely represented in public life. Nawfal notes that Eastern women were not always absent from public roles; in fact, women in ancient Egypt and the broader East had occupied positions that even contemporary Europe had not yet reached.

⁷³ Queen Victoria (1837-1901); Baroness Angela Burdett-Cootes (1814-1906); Mary Morgan (1828-1892); Adelina Bath (1843-1919); John Carton; featured in the first issue.

Nawfal's vision of women as active individuals and citizens is particularly evident in “**Declaration, Cooperation, Permission**”, where she solicits feedback from her female readership. She highlights women's involvement in the press in Europe and America as a factor in national progress, emphasizes the importance of women's active participation in society, and encourages engagement in public discussions. She also clarifies that women's involvement in public activities, including contributing to periodicals or working with or without a headscarf, does not harm their morals or values.

In defining the role of women, Nawfal responds to the rhetorical question of what is most important for them: “...but the most important thing for a girls is... to see herself (a girl who is not covered by the veil of faith and tradition) existing (alive) in a human society, which, with knowledge and dignity, makes her a valuable member of society, of higher status than a sweetly smiling, beautiful flower that is loved and no longer wanted when it loses its youth.” [فإذا الابتداء و النساء على لازم العمل عن السؤال رغبتهن و ذلك الكاريمات القارئات ايتهن لكن تبين اهم ان غير الاقلام لتبارى رحبا مضمار هذا على الجواب في ان فاقول ابائهن بيوت من به المتمتع في وجودا العوائد و العقائد حجاب يحجبها لا التي الفتاة اي لنفسها الفتاة ترى ان الاعمال و الاجتماعية الهيئة في نافعا عضوان كمالها و حشمتها و علومها و بادابها يجعلها الانساني و ذابلة وهي ينبذها لا ثم حينها بها الراى يتنعم المنظر جميلة الرائحة طيبة زهرة من مقاما أعلى و ذابلة وهي ينبذها لا ثم حينها بها الراى يتنعم المنظر جميلة الرائحة طيبة زهرة من مقاما أعلى]. [نضارتها فقدت قد (الفتاة); 1894, 10#: 413].

Conclusion

H. Nawfal's journal **al-Fatah** laid the foundation for women-run and women-oriented periodicals and played a pioneering role in the struggle for women's rights in Egypt and the Arab world. As the first magazine run by a non-Egyptian Christian woman in a Muslim-dominated country, **al-Fatah** strategically addressed the Eastern, Arab woman with religious neutrality, aiming to overcome societal biases and earn the goodwill of readers regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation.

In 19th century Egypt, conservative segments of society viewed women's participation in publishing as potentially harmful to morality and dignity. On frequent occasions the head of a household would decide what books and magazines women could read. In this context, the gender of the editor had a significant impact on how readers accepted and perceived content. Notably, the tenth issue of **al-Fatah** observes that women were more receptive to critiques from female readers than from male critics.

Through her journal, H. Nawfal transcended the limited contemporary notion of women's empowerment, which confined their role to the family setting. While she acknowledged the importance of women as mothers, wives, and housewives in building the well-being of a family, society, and the state, she also emphasized that women are full members of society- **sharika** (partner) to men- entitled to equal education, work, and civic participation.

Nawfal envisioned **al-Fatah** as a vehicle for disseminating reliable knowledge that serves both the nation and the state, providing a platform to showcase the virtues, emotions, and capacities of Eastern women. The magazine not only represented a first in terms of being a women's journal but also in advocating for the protection of women's rights. The column titled "**Duties and Rights of Women**", which lists duties before rights, reflects the contemporary societal pathos that granting rights was justified only when women fulfilled their obligations.

In discussing gender relations, Nawfal consistently framed woman as man's **sharika** – partner and co-participant- emphasizing equality. Nawfal also sought to engage men in the pursuit of gender equality, recognizing that such equality cannot be achieved without their active participation. She argued that this involvement ultimately serves men's own interests, stating that "yesterday, she (the woman) was

his mother, who imparted knowledge and taught him proper conduct; today, she is his bride, with whom he must share thoughts and ideas; and tomorrow, she will be the one who raises his children and those around her.” عروسا اليوم هي و التهذيب و الاداب علمته أما بالامس له كانت وقد لا كيف (الفتاة; 1892, 1#: 32) [قريب ات كل و بنيه تعلم غدا و أفكاره و بارائه] استشاركه

This perspective aligns with the prevailing national view of the period: the state's strength depended on strong families, and strong families depended on educated and capable mothers.

H. Nawfal framed women's rights - not as privileges to be earned but as entitlements to be restored - emphasizing that the subordination of women was not natural but socially imposed. She highlighted that the neglect of obligations applied both to men, in failing to respect women's rights, and to women, in failing to pursue their own education and development.

Ultimately, H. Nawfal's vision of the woman as a girl, citizen, and partner encompasses equality in natural abilities, education, work, and civic engagement. She demonstrated that women could be active, knowledgeable, and capable participants in society. Despite her foreign background, she successfully overcame potential audience prejudices, making **al-Fatah** not only a platform for women's education and self-expression but also a persuasive vehicle showcasing women's capabilities, freedom, and the principle of gender equality.

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