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Q: 155 ? Title: I was born Muslim, but a 25 years old I am not able to accept Islam.I am torn between what I do not believe in and what I was raised to believe in? I think Islam is a man's religion why does a man get 70 virginsin heaven, what about women. Why cant women have the same?

Question

I was born Muslim, but a 25 years old I am not able to accept Islam.I am torn between what I do not believe in and what I was raised to believe in? I think Islam is a man's religion why does a man get 70 virginsin heaven, what about women. Why cant women have the same?

Answer

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Assalaamu `alaykum waRahmatullahi Wabarakatoh

Perhaps you may have been misinformed regarding certain matters in Islam. To help clear your doubt about Islam being a ?man?s religion?, since your question relates to the topic of ?Status of women in Islam?, we will mention some background information in this regard.

In the pre-Islamic epoch, women were ill treated and disregarded. Many prominent nations that ruled before treated their women as slaves, being discourteous and abusive towards them.

The Greeks

The Greeks initially gave their women a lofty position. Their marriages were strictly monogamous. The relationships between spouses were affectionate. Divorces were not common and occurred by common consent or by the action of the husband unilaterally. But as they progressed, the intellectual leaders of the Greeks began disgracing their women and cared less for their morality and chastity. Women were regarded as an inferior creation. If women gave birth prematurely, she would be sent to the gallows. In Sparta, unfortunate women, incapable of giving the country a soldier for its defence was put to death. According to Greek mythology, Pandora (Greek Mythology) was the source of all human ills and misfortunes. (1)

The Romans

Among the Romans, housewives had an esteemed status. The physical union of marriage was to produce good citizens. Women had an almost incalculable influence, especially when she had a son and could act skilfully. Once civilisation advanced, the status of women underwent a drastic change. The Roman Emperor Commodus valued nothing in sovereign power except his unbound indulgence in lustful appetite. He spent hours in the company of three hundred beautiful women and as many boys, of every rank and province. Whenever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, his victims died in torment. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beast and exposed to the fury of wild dogs. As soon as public morality declined, Rome was flooded with nude and immoral paintings and poetry, leaving no trace of their glorious past. (2)

The Persians

Persia, now referred to as Iran, was equal to Rome in administration of the civilized world. Practicing a dualistic religion taught by Zoroaster, the Persian Empire's moral structure had never been sound. It is mentioned that Yazdegard II, who ruled during the middle of the fifth

century, married his own daughter and afterwards killed her; and Bahram Chobin, in the sixth century had marital relations with his own sister. They found nothing in incestuous relationship. Under royal encouragement, Mazdak proclaimed that wealth and women should be freely and equally available to men. Spreading instantly, this exerted such influence that everyone could step in any person's home, taking possession of his wife and property. Things accelerated rapidly, to such a degree that parents could not recognize their children and vice versa. Confusion and corruption overtook Persia. (3)

India

In India, most religious rites and ceremonies were open to women, who had privileges of participation and observance with their men folk. They were active in sacrifices and ritual acts. Eminent female scholars, poets and teachers were produced in the Vedic age; however, once the lawgivers stepped in, the literate women had become the accursed and detested person. Manu declared that women could not study. The lawgivers declared women to be impure and unfit to receive sacred education. A man could not eat with his wife but it was meritorious if she ate his leftovers. The position of women in Hindu society was deplorable. She was regarded as sub-human and worshipped her husband as a god and on his death was forced to burn herself with her dead husband. It was a common practice in ancient India to have a family bride or a common wife of several brothers. All of them were intimate with her and she bore children from all of them. M.K.Gandhi said:

? Hindu culture has erred on the side of excessive subordination of the wife to the husband. This has resulted in the husband usurping and exercising authority that reduces him to the level of the brute.?(4)

Judaism

The Jews preserved a generally favourable view of women, particularly in the framework of the family but also in the religious life. Within the Covenant, women had the same moral responsibility as men. The man or the woman who apostatised would suffer the death penalty (Deut.17:2.5). The woman's status as a human being was recognized in legislation. Special attention was paid to injury suffered by a pregnant woman during a brawl between men (Ex.21:22-25). Both parties guilty of adultery, the man and the woman, were subject to the death penalty (Lev.20:10). Nevertheless, there were certain laws that revealed the inferior status assigned to women in Israelite society. A man could sell his daughter as payment for his

debt (Ex. 21:7), but he was forbidden to force her into prostitution (Lev.19:29). She was regarded as menstruating for the first seven days after giving birth to a male child and forbidden to touch consecrated objects or visit a sanctuary for the next 33days;both figures were doubled if the child was a female (Lev.12:2-5). (5)

Christianity

Christianity effectively put an end to immoral ways, rescued corrupt women and dancing girls, endeavoured to eradicate prostitution and purify various areas of life and spread moral education among the people. Never did Jesus (Nabi Isa ???? ???? ? ??????) utter a derogatory word concerning women. They seemed to have enjoyed considerable rights and privileges. However, the concepts of a few preachers regarding women and marital relations were sometimes against human nature. Some believed that the woman was the mother of sin and the basic cause of all evil and corruption.

Ambrosiaster,

a series of biblical commentaries during the ancient era, expresses the view that women were mainly responsible for sin; the man is at most the half willing partner. Her role involving man was much the same as the devil's role involving her; but at the fall she was seduced, the man was merely tricked.

Tertulian (150 A.D) who was Father of the early Christian Church explained the Christian doctrine regarding women in these words:

?The sentence God passed on that sex lives on in the present age; so it must be that the guilt for the sin lives on as well. You are the devil's gateway. You are the violator of the tree, you are the first deserter of God's law; you are the one who duped him whom the devil was not powerful enough to assault. You shattered so easily God's image, man. And you still think of putting adornments over the animal skin that cover you.?(6)

Thus, according to Tertulian, God's curse on Eve lives on in all her daughters, and through her daughters, Eve remains the temptress, still the occasion of sin.

Pre- Islamic Arabia

The pre-Islamic era is commonly referred to as *Jahiliyah* or *the age of Ignorance* because of the religious, social and moral disorder that prevailed before Islam. The conditions of the Arabs deteriorated daily. Alcohol meant more to them than life itself. Ancient Arabic literature was drenched in wine and contained a treasure of expression for it. Gambling was the favourite past time of all. Usury was also practiced. Adultery, fornication and incest were practiced unblushingly, and were shamelessly published and boasted of in all sorts of immoral poetry. The position of women in general was very low; she was regarded as a special creation between the human being and the beast, having no social and moral respect. Women were deprived of inheritance. Men were free to marry any number of wives and could divorce as they wished. All males would avoid the company of their female relatives during their menstruation, and the latter were forbidden to mix with the rest of the family. Female slaves called *Kainad* were instructed to sing, dance and sell their favours, the price of which was snatched by their owners.

Present day

We live in a time which breeds corruption and disorder. Morality is gradually fading away whilst vice and evil is becoming dominant. Society is becoming barbaric in a civilised way. Gambling, prostitution, usury and immorality have become the order of the day. Man is driven by desire and greed for material gain, and will stop at nothing to achieve it; a world which sees the righteous and religious as *backwards and old fashioned* and the immoral and unchaste as *pioneers and legends*. Unfortunately, those who suffer the most are the vulnerable; who are influenced by the many attractive bill boards and advertisements which depict all sorts of filth in vivid colour. Masses are becoming slaves under the guise of *freedom*. Sadly, females have become a pawn in the corporate world. Magazines and Media entertain such degrading and disrespect to women that has never been seen before. Dr Alaskus writes;

The present society has completely ignored the moral feeling and totally suppressed its manifestations from all sides. An attitude of irresponsibility is common. People, who are virtuous and distinguish between good and bad, work hard and are wise and are prudent, are helpless and despised by others. If any woman, having a number of children, gives attention to them instead of looking for a personal career, she is considered as having a low I.Q.?(7)

Islam

Islam brought man back to the natural practice of moderation, thus exterminating extremism. Rights were restored to the people only if it were lawfully theirs. Women, instead of being a symbol of condemnation, came to be regarded as a model of dignity, peace and tranquillity. Discouraging celibacy, the value of marital life was emphasized. Man and woman are members of humankind and the Quran has invariably called them spouses and companions of each other. As human beings, man and woman are equal having the same human rights and obligation. The Quran states:

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?Oh mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one being and created from it its mate.? (4;1)

From the above verse we understand that man and women are created from the same being. The notion that a woman is a sub-human creature or at least treated as such is totally incorrect. Man and woman are two complementary parts of humanity and in the absence of one of them, humanity is incomplete. The roles of either gender are neither opposed to each other nor inferior or superior to each other. Men are the protectors and maintainers of women. Regarding this, the Quran states:

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?Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (from maintenance) from their wealth.

Therefore it is the husband's duty to provide for his family and the duty of the wife to manage the household affairs and the upbringing of the children. Woman enjoys a very high status of respect and honor in an Islamic society. As a wife she is the queen of the house and enjoys full and complete social, religious, cultural, legal and economic rights. She is entitled to receive the dower and maintenance from her husband. She can own and manage her property and can also purchase and sell the property without the intervention of the husband. She can even seek the dissolution of marriage in extreme cases.

After the corrupt and brutal conditions of previous nation and societies have been understood, it is clear from the beautiful teachings of Islam that women hold a very lofty status and is no less part of the human race than man; thus, Islam can in no way be called a "man's religion".

Now, regarding the answer to the question; it is stated in (Fatawa Mahmudiyah Vol 5, P298), the wives of the believers will have their husbands in Paradise. The unmarried woman will have whatever man she desires in Paradise and if she does not desire any of them, a special male *Hurs* will be created for her. Not only will she have this favor but she will also have superiority over the *Hurs* (beautiful damsels of paradise).

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Narrated from Hazrat Umme Salama **??? ???? ???? ?** she said **?I said, Oh Messenger of Allah
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are the women of this world superior or the Hurs? He replied ?The women of this world will
have superiority over the Hurs as the outer lining of a garment have superiority over the inner
lining. I said ?Oh Messenger of Allah
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, why is this? He replied ?Because they performed Salah, fasted, and worshipped (Allah)?.
(Ma?jam Kabeer, vol23, p367)**

Allah Ta?ala also mentions in the Holy Quran:

?????? ???? ?????????? ?????? ?????????????? ??????

?They will have whatever they wish therein (Jannat) and with Us is more.?(50:35)

Therefore we should bear in mind that Almighty Allah in His infinite Wisdom and Knowledge has created man and woman from a single being and it is only Allah who knows the true biological, mental and spiritual structure of each individual, their needs and desires; hence, if Allah Ta?ala wills that males should get Seventy virgins, He knows what pleases them. Similarly, females will be given what pleases them.? Allah Ta?ala can do as He wishes and there is none to question His authority.

Despite your doubt regarding Islam, it is pleasing to know that you seek the truth. Undoubtedly the truth will be found in Islam; however, this is a fact that needs to be discovered by you. If you have any doubts or queries in future, we will be more than happy to assist you to the best of our ability.

References

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- (2) a) Kittel.op.cit. 779-781. b) Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire* (U.S.A.: Classic Appreciation Society,1956) 391, 441
- (3) Al Tabari, Ja'far ibn Jarir *Tarikh Tabari* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Al Ilmiyah, n.d) Vol3, 138
- (4) Walker, Benjamin, *Hindu World* (Great Britain: George Allan and Unwin Ltd.1968) 603-606
- (5) *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House Ltd. 1971) 624-626
- (6) a) Ferguson, Everett, *Study in Early Christianity* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc. 1993)20-21. b) Ibid. 134-201.
- (7) Rahman, Afzalur,op.cit. 28.

The above extracted from 'Morality in Islam' by Dr. Mufti Allie Haroun Sheik

And Allah knows best

I was born Muslim, but a 25 years old I am not able to accept Islam.I am torn between what I do not believe

Wassalam

Darul Iftaa, Madrassah In'aamiyyah