

Subjugation of Women In Thirukkural and The Holy Bible: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:

There is always some denial in the treatment of woman even in primitive literature and religious texts. Women were never given due recognition like her counterpart. The so called religious and ethical texts also showed their enmity towards the fair sex. One can study the age by simply reading it. In that aspect one can trace the darker tones too. Every writer exposes his or her persona in their writing. They usually create their age and, in that attempt, this becomes a creation of that age too. The patriarchal society is basically man made and is men centered one, so the possibility for subduing the counterpart is inexplicable. By Close reading and Rereading of a text one can trace the hidden misconceptions which were prevalent in the text to explore the light. All religious and ethical texts have this flaw about women, because all sacred and ethical texts are made by men, hence they have ruled out freedom of women in the name of religion and culture. Many religions in the world have proximity in the treatment of women. Women face segregation, humiliation in the name of religion and religious practices. This paper studies the partial treatment of women in religious and ethical texts respectively 'The Holy Bible' and 'Thirukkural'. Though these two texts have much insightful thoughts and teachings, yet their treatments towards women are to be reread.

Key words: Patriarchal, Inexplicable, Misconception, Proximity, Segregation.

Introduction:

The Holy Bible which is considered as the word of the God and sacred, has some partial view in regard to women. There are some perceptions which show its partial treatment towards women, “A wise son makes a glad father. But a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (Proverbs 8:17). If a boy does his duty well and gets success in his life his father only takes all the credit, but if he goes in wrong ways by simply neglecting his actual duties, his mother is blamed for it. Our society holds this sort of unwritten laws in shouldering responsibilities towards child rearing in the family and society. God has also given less important in the creation of woman: And the God also caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and he slept and, “He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place” (Genesis 2:21 King James Version). Then the rib which God had taken from man he made into a woman, and he brought her to the man. (Genesis 2:22 King James Version) and Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man (Genesis 2:23 King James Version) In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God (Genesis 5:1). The quoted words show the partial treatment of the gender even in the hands of God.

Even God wants them to be submissive to men, so that only he created woman from the rib of man. If he had a high regard of women, he could have created her from Adam’s head, or he could have created man from woman. God created man as a superior to woman even he has given the identity ‘woman’ from man. So from the beginning she was refused to be given an equal status like man, God created Adam first because he might have had an opinion that man can be better in ruling woman than woman to man, and man was being his own image he had created him directly and he created Eve out of Adam. The God had created Eve to give comfort and to give pleasure to Adam. If God had a high

regard on women, he might have created her from head or he might have created her directly like Adam.

“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since it he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man” (1 Corinthians 11:7 King James Version), “For man is not from woman, but woman from man” (1 Corinthians 11:8 King James Version) “Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (1 Corinthians 11:9 King James Version). Here it is justified why God created Adam in his own image. It is revealed that he is God and that is why he created him in his own image. God created woman for man and even he created her from man, so the duty of women is to be the subservient to men for all her needs and deeds, and men should be the bread winner of the family and women is expected to do the household works to fulfill the needs of her family members. Even husband of a woman can drive her out when he wants.

One can drive out his wife from his house simply by pointing out her simple mistakes. It shows the patriarchal notions of woman. One can justify partial treatment against woman through the following words: When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (Deuteronomy 24:1)

No religious scriptures speak for women, this is an affinity in all religious texts that they have central ideology that a woman should be a subservient to man. They never treat woman equally to man. Somewhere or the other women get exploited by men. It is an injustice meted towards women. This is the groundreality. Indian society too is basically male centered. So, the possibility of getting equality for woman is a delusion. Women have been treated as mere objects in society. She has to play a multifarious role in life. She is expected to fulfill her daughterly duties towards her father, motherly duties towards her children, wifely duties towards to her husband, thus a single woman is expected to play a different role throughout her life.

The ultimate duty of a single woman is to fulfill the needs of males in the society, but they were never given due respect. Thirukkural one of the ethical texts show some partial treatment towards women. There are some couplets to indicate the sign of patriarchal notions against women in the society. “When mother hears him named ‘fulfilled’ of wisdom’s lore,’ Far greater joy she feels, than when her son she bore” (Kural 69 translated by G.U. Pope) Though it shows bliss of a mother when she hears the success of her son, it underlies her inability to take part and to witness the event of her son’s success because the society had assigned only house holdings and never allowed her to take part in the public meetings. So only she simply hears the success of her son rather than watching. In many of his precepts he reveals his aged old beliefs and practices. He tried to make women to be submissive. The following couplets are examples: “If a woman might of chastity retain, / What choicer treasure doth the world contain?” (Kural 54 translated by G.U. Pope).

In this couplet he talks about the importance of chastity for a female which was consider as a symbol of purity. so he stressed the necessity of having chastity and keeping it should be an ultimate aim of women in the society, but he stressed men to have the same. This shows male chauvinism which was prevalent in the society. “Who gives their soul to love of wife acquire not nobler gain; / Who give their soul to strenuous deeds such meaner joys distain” (Kural 901 translated by G.U. Pope), “Who to his wife submits, his strange, unmanly mood / Will daily bring him same among the good” (Kural 903 translated by G.U. Pope) These two couplets exhibit patriarchal male chauvinism very clearly.

The former couplet advices that whoever wants to get success in their life should avoid women because women are considered as a deterring force in the way of success, and it also states that noble personalities do not like the company of women. The next couplet supports the same idea, it advises that whoever obeys his wife will face disgrace from the society. Unless or until they show their control over their wife, they cannot get a manly status in the society, because society will praise who controls

and keep his wife as submissive. “No God adoring, low she bends before her lord; / Then rising, serves: the rain falls instant at her word!” (Kural 55 translated by G.U. Pope) This couplet explains about the perception of woman. This couplet says that, a woman need not to go to temple to worship God, because the real God is her husband so it will be better to worship him and render her service to him and make him happy by doing this, she could even control nature. She could also bring rain. Thus, husbands were regarded as superior like God for their wives.

This is a clear indication of dehumanizing women in the name of chastity and culture. Men want to keep women as their subordinate in the name of religion and ethics. Hence, they made these texts as a way to exercise their power over them. It is very ridiculous that there is no comment about men’s duties towards women. Thus, the so-called religious and ethical texts are nothing, but a collective consciousness of man to show their superiorities over their counterpart.

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