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Creation, Marriage and Divorce of the Woman in the Context of the Old Testament and the New Testament

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ABSTRACT

One of the most addressed issues today is undoubtedly the role of women in society and their rights. As a matter of fact, the level of development of societies is measured by the rights and freedoms they offer to their individuals as well as economic and technological progress. It is known that women, who have undergone significant changes throughout history, are underestimated in different parts of the world, subjected to various pressures, or considered as sexual objects by being ignored in society. In the context of gender inequality, it can be said that they were not considered citizens in Ancient Greece, were bought and sold like any other commodity in the market during the Era of Jahiliyya (Ignorance), and were regarded as sinful and weak during the Middle Ages. However, women have played a vital role throughout human history as they have been ensuring the continuation of the human race since the time of Eve. In this context, there is a lot of information about women in the Holy Books. In this study, we aim to reveal the similarities and differences in the view of women in the Holy Books (the Torah and the Bible). We used the documentation method in our research. The literature on the subject was reviewed; similar academic articles were examined; books, journals and web pages were utilized. In addition, the relevant verses in the Old Testament (the Torah) and the New Testament (the Bible), which constitute the backbone of our research, were utilized.

Keywords: Women's rights; Women in Judaism; Women in Christianity; Holy books

Introduction

Throughout history, it is not possible to come across a community that does not have the phenomenon of religion because human beings need to believe in a higher being due to their nature. Considering that the first human being was also the first prophet, the importance of the issue will become clear.

Today, more than half of the people living in the world (around 55%) belong to celestial religions. The rest either believe in non-celestial religions or do not have any belief. Celestial

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religions are also called divine religions/Abrahamic religions, which are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All religions other than these three are considered to be of human origin. The two religions that we will deal with in this study will be Judaism and Christianity, which are religions based on divine revelation.

According to Jewish sources, the Torah was created before the creation of the world [1] and it was God's counsellor in the creation of the world and man [2]. In addition, God spent one fourth of the day reading the Torah from the creation of the world until the Torah was given to the Israelites [1]. According to the Islamic belief, the Torah was given in the form of plates at one time; however, this issue is disputed among the rabbis. There are those who say that it descended at once as well as those who say that it was revealed in parts [3,4].

According to Christian belief, Jesus did not write the Gospel nor did he instruct anyone to transcribe it. He only preached the revelation that he received and asked his disciples to pass it on orally [5]. In the period following Jesus' ascension to heaven, the need for the Gospels to be written down emerged, and the Gospels that were written and accepted as canonical were added to the list of "inspired books" [6]. According to Christian belief, the writings in question were authored by those appointed by God and inspired by His spirit [7].

Christians believe in both the Torah sent to the Jews and the Gospel sent to Jesus. While they accept the Jewish Scripture as the Old Testament, they call the book given to Jesus the New Testament. These terms belong to Christians and are not used by Jews [8,9]. The Old Testament is the covenant God made with Moses on the Sinai Peninsula. The New Testament, on the other hand, represents the covenant Jesus made with his disciples at the Last Supper. According to Christians, the God who speaks in the Old Testament and the New Testament is the same and the New Testament is needed to understand the Old Testament [10]. The Jews take the Hebrew copy, which is the original language of the Old Testament, as a basis and the Christians take the Greek translation made in the 3rd-1st centuries BC as a basis [8].

The teachings of the Old and New Testaments aim for humanity to live in a righteous relationship with God and with other people. In the Old Testament, God's covenant with the people of Israel is embodied through the Torah; creation, the unity of God, justice, and moral responsibility are emphasized, while the Ten Commandments form the basis of divine law In the New Testament, it is argued that this covenant gained a universal dimension through Jesus; Salvation is explained on the basis of faith and grace rather than a law-centered understanding, and love is reinterpreted as the essence of the law [5]. In this respect, both texts ground a common moral goal within different theological frameworks [11,12].

In the Torah-centered Jewish tradition, alongside the written text, the oral tradition (Talmud, Mishnah) that explains and adapts it to daily life is indispensable, and a correct understanding of the sacred text is seen as possible only through this chain of interpretation [1,5,13-15]. In Christianity, while the New Testament texts are considered the primary authority, church tradition and theological interpretations that developed in line with Jesus' teachings gain importance; However, particularly in early Christianity and Protestant interpretations, it is emphasized that tradition should not precede the text [5,11,16]. While the Old Testament tradition presents a structure that considers the text and interpretation together, the New Testament tradition involves different balances between text, interpretation, and institutional authority, depending on the historical and denominational context.

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After this brief explanation on the topic, we will try to show how the issue of women is handled in both books.

Creation of the Woman

Creation of the Woman in the Old Testament

In the Torah, the topic of creation is presented as a distinct chapter. Firstly, the creation of the universe and other living beings is described. Finally, the creation of man is described and it is seen that it is narrated in two different ways. Therefore, there are differences in the discourses on the creation of the woman too [17]. In the first account of creation in the Old Testament, on the sixth day of creation, God created humanity, male and female, together and in His own image [5]. In the second account, it is explained that God created Adam from the earth and brought him a woman from his rib to be his helper so that he would not be alone. It is also mentioned that the helper was first sought among the animals, and when it could not be found, a woman was created [5]. The verses in question show that the Elohist and Yahwist texts, compiled at different times, reveal the different perspectives that the Israelites developed towards women in the process [17]. Although the Elohist text positions men and women as equals, the Yahwist text degrades women.

Jewish men pray three times a day to God, who created them as men, as *"Blessed are you, Almighty God, King of the world, who has not created me a woman"* or *"Glory be to God, who has not created me a woman"* [18,19]. The issue of not being created as a man, but not being created as a woman is emphasized and a deficiency/negativity is directly pointed out on behalf of women [20].

According to Judaism, men are created in the image of God and were made responsible for the commandments, while women were not created to be subject to God's commandments. The status of the woman is inferior to that of the man, who is obliged to fulfil all the commandments because the woman is exempt from some of them. A woman can fulfil some of the commandments in her free time if she wishes. Jewish scholars explain the issue as follows: a man is like a farmer who enters someone's field with permission and sows seeds there, while a woman is like a person who sows seeds in the field without permission. The one who sows the field with permission will be fully rewarded for his efforts while the one who enters the field without permission will not receive any reward. In this context, the woman is not rewarded by God for her efforts, or she receives less reward. Therefore, a Jewish woman should be grateful that God created her in accordance with her husband's desire because the creation of woman is due to submission and surrender. It is reported that Jewish women in Austria in the 15th century prayed as follows: *"Glory be to God who has not created me as an animal."* In traditional Judaism, women do not have the authority to initiate and terminate marriage, are obliged to wear simple and unpretentious dresses in public, have to be behind a curtain in the synagogue, and are prohibited from leading worship or reading the Torah. Her role in society is one of enabling and facilitating; she is to help her husband and sons worship God [18,19,21].

However, over time, traditional authority and religious texts were questioned and demands for religious reform were voiced. The reform movement in Judaism unfolded differently from that in Christianity, and also from past reform attempts by the Israelites. Accordingly, reform was not aimed at purifying religion, but rather at purposeful "renewal" to meet the needs

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of the day. This renewal was not conceived as a one-off activity; rather, it was presented as a continuous principle inherent in Judaism throughout history [22]. For example, feminist Jews made a very radical move by claiming that the Torah has a patriarchal text. Even traditional Orthodox Jews joined these criticisms. Indeed, Cynthia Ozick, an Orthodox feminist, wrote in the Jewish feminist journal *Lilith* in 1979 that the Torah views women as less human or demonized [23,24]. She states that the Torah, which opposes the oppression of social rules, is on the oppressive side when it comes to women. She underlines that the Torah always defends the righteous and the oppressed, and that the only exception to this is women. For example, the Torah does not say, *"You should not consider women inferior."* She asks where it is written in the Torah that women are not to be considered second class, and points out that this lack is a terrible scandal. According to her, the Torah's relationship with women makes the Torah itself problematic. If the Torah wants to endure and strengthen itself, it must solve this problem for its own sake, not for the sake of modern times or for the sake of women. These statements are just one example of the Jewish attitude towards tradition [24].

Creation of the Woman in the New Testament

In the Bible, the holy book of the Christians, there are verses similar to the two above-mentioned parables about the creation of the woman. Accordingly, while it is first mentioned that God created man as male and female at the beginning of creation, it is then narrated that God created the woman from the man, first created Adam and then Eve, derived all nations from one man and settled them in all parts of the world. In addition, there are verses telling us that the firstborn of all creation was Jesus, who made the invisible God visible [5]. Although the Bible describes the creation of the woman from the man, it does not mention the creation from Adam's rib.

Marriage and Divorce

Marriage and Divorce According to the Old Testament

Marriage is attached great importance in Judaism. Marriage is considered a religious duty and regarded as a sacred union. Rabbis say that an unmarried man is not a complete man. It is explained that men should marry by the age of eighteen, and if he remains unmarried until the age of twenty, the Holy One will curse him. As for girls, since they are given the right to marry anyone by the age of twelve, they are advised to marry even earlier [25].

As a matter of fact, it is recommended in the Bible to marry and have children, and children are also advised to marry and have children, thus fulfilling the command to multiply [5]. Jews consider marriage necessary for reasons such as the continuation and multiplication of the human race. Even in the case of war, the newlyweds were explicitly asked not to take part in the war, not to be assigned any duty, but to stay with their wives for a year freely and make them happy [5]. Accordingly, it appears that the continuation of the species and having children are more important than war.

There is no prohibition on polygamy among Jews. The Torah mentions prophets who practiced polygamy: *"Solomon had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines...," "After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem...."* [5]. In Judaism, polygamy continued until the Middle Ages and was forbidden by Rabbi Gershom in the 11th century though there is no contrary decree in the Bible. Today, except for small Jewish communities living in Muslim countries, those who practice polygamy are excommunicated [25,26].

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The Torah is very scrupulous about marrying people of different religions too. There are verses stating that King Solomon sinned because of foreign women, and that children born from foreign marriages do not know the Jewish language and therefore it cannot be tolerated [5].

The reason why the Jews forbade marrying girls/women from other nations was because they worshipped different gods and feared that their sons would also worship those gods. Therefore, Jewish parents advised their sons not to have foreign wives. Those who violated these prohibitions were to expel their wives and offer a ram from the flock as a guilt offering for forgiveness. Although Deuteronomy mentions the taking and giving of girls, the verses in Genesis and Ezra only mention the marriage of sons to foreigners, thus emphasizing that the woman must be Jewish. It is also stated in the Torah that giving and taking girls/women from the uncircumcised is frowned upon. In fact, one of the conditions for a woman to receive a share of the inheritance is to marry someone from her father's tribe [5].

It is also stated that a clergyman may not marry a widow or a divorced woman, but may marry a virgin girl from the descent of Israelites or a widow of another clergyman [5]. A widow whose husband died must first marry her husband's brother. It is seen as a duty of the brother-in-law to his sister-in-law.

When brothers live on the same property and one of them dies without a son, the wife of the dead man may not marry a stranger outside the family. Her brother-in-law is to take her as his wife, have sexual relations with her, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law for her. The first son she bears will carry on the name of the dead brother, so his name will not be blotted out from Israel. But if the man doesn't want to marry his sister-in-law, she is to go to the elders at the city gate and say, *"My brother-in-law refuses to preserve his brother's name in Israel. He isn't willing to perform the duty of a brother-in-law for me."* The elders of his city will summon him and speak with him. If he persists and says, *"I don't want to marry her, then his sister-in-law will go up to him in the sight of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face."* Then she will declare, *"This is what is done to a man who will not build up his brother's house."* And his family name in Israel will be *"The house of the man whose sandal was removed."* (p. 172) [5].

In Judaism, marriage is regarded as a sacred union, but divorce is frowned upon. So much so that the Lord, the God of Israel, states that He hates divorce [5]. According to the Torah verses, the Lord facilitates divorce for men even though He hates divorce. The patriarchal system gives absolute authority to the man. However, this was forbidden by the reformist Rabbi Gershom in the 11th century, and it was decided that divorce could not take place without the consent of the woman [21]. Thus, the patriarchal system was weakened. Henceforth, it was decided that a man could easily divorce a woman only as a result of her indecent behavior [5]. The concept of indecent behavior in the Old Testament was interpreted and accordingly, while the Shammai school considered the unfaithfulness of the woman as a ground for divorce for the man, the Hillel school ruled that even a bad cookery could cause divorce. Talking to foreign men and going out without covering one's head are also grounds for divorce. Insanity, on the other hand, is not a ground for divorce. However, contagious diseases such as leprosy are considered in this context [25]. In addition, the fact that the woman prepared food contrary to kosher rules and did not give birth to a child within ten years after marriage were also considered as grounds for divorce [27].

Although the right to divorce is given to the man in Jewish law, the woman may also have the right to divorce if the man is unable to fulfil his obligations, has a contagious and chronic

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disease, works in disreputable jobs, mistreats his wife, converts to another religion, refuses to live with his wife and provide for her [28].

In the Old Testament, adultery means the voluntary sexual intercourse of a married or betrothed woman with a man. The judgement varies according to whether the woman is married or betrothed and whether the intercourse takes place in the city or in the countryside. Sexual intercourse between a married man and a single or unengaged woman is not considered adultery. This is because in Judaism, a man is allowed to marry more than one woman; after this intercourse, he will marry her. The crime of adultery is described with expressions such as disgrace, infamy, abomination, dishonesty, perversion, shamefulness, self-defilement; death and even burning are mentioned as the punishment for the crime and sins. In fact, among the Ten Commandments, which are very important for Judaism, the prohibition of adultery is clearly stated: *"You shall not commit adultery"* [5].

Marriage and Divorce According to the New Testament

According to the New Testament, when a man and a woman marry, they are regarded as a single entity [5]. Marriage is sacred because it symbolizes the spiritual relationship between Jesus Christ and the church [4].

In the early periods of Christianity, Jesus treated women amicably and valued them, glorified women not only with his words and behavior, but also included women in his mission to spread the Gospel. The New Testament mentions many women, most notably Mary. Women, along with men, were recipients of Christ's doctrine and followed him [29]. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to the yeast that a woman adds to the flour to make the dough rise. Many women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, helped Christ and his disciples by proclaiming God's kingdom with their own means. When his disciples rebuked a woman who poured oil over her head, Jesus praised her, saying, *"Why are you upset with her? She has done a good thing for me…"* Similarly, when he saw a poor widow putting in the donation box along with the wealthy who contributed large sums, he honored her by saying, *"This poor widow has given more than everyone else"* [5].

However, it is the letters of Paul rather than Jesus that determine the status of women in Christianity because the New Testament is not a book limited only to the stories of Jesus. Paul, who converted to Christianity about 15 years after Jesus' death on the cross, claimed in the Damascus Vision that he had become a prophet of Jesus Christ, that he had been chosen and commissioned by God, and that he had received all of his teachings from Jesus Christ. With his travels and letters in the New Testament, he changed the direction of Christianity from Jerusalem to the West. Paul freed the Church of Christ from Jewish fanaticism and the limited environment of Palestine, transforming it into a universal institution [30-34].

Paul spread Christianity among non-Jewish peoples and told them they were not obligated to follow Jewish customs. Some Christians of Jewish origin, however, continued to adhere to both Christian teachings and Jewish law [30]. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul emphasized that justification comes not from obeying the Law, but only from faith in Jesus Christ; he argued that if justification were possible through the Law, Jesus' death would be meaningless. Following these discussions, the Council of Jerusalem convened in 49 AD and reached a consensus that circumcision was not required for non-Jewish Christians [35,36]. According to Paul, God, by raising Jesus, initiated a new era of salvation, thus eliminating the obligation for Christians to adhere to Jewish customs [36]. Paul argued that he was given

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the task of conveying the Gospel to non-Jews, and for this reason, he is known as the "Apostle of the Gentiles" [5].

Paul's letters are the oldest texts in the New Testament. Even the Gospels, which contain the message of Jesus, were evaluated and accepted or rejected from this perspective. In short, we should say that it was Paul who shaped today's Christianity [37]. Christianity absorbed many things from Judaism and Greek philosophy and was turned into a Greek sect of Judaism by Paul [38].

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians there is a whole chapter on the topic of marriage. Accordingly, marriage is a virtuous behavior, but on the other hand, the virtue of remaining single in order to devote time to the worship of God is also mentioned. He advises the married woman not to separate from her husband, and if she does, not to remarry. Paul goes on to say, *"To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord),"* and he states that there is no need for a Christian whose husband or wife is not a believer to divorce his wife. The following statements written to the Corinthians clearly reveal the Christian faith's perspective on marriage: *"So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better," "In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God."* Christianity therefore also forbids marrying one's brother's wife. It is also stated that as long as a woman lives, she is bound to her husband by the law, but that she will be free from the law upon his death. In this case, the woman can marry another man, and it is not mentioned that this man should be the brother of her husband [5].

Church fathers who lived between the 2nd and 8th centuries made important contributions to Christian theology, and their works were accepted as authority. The views of Paul and the church fathers (Tertullian [160–220], Clemens [182–202], Origenes [184–254], Augustine [354–430], St Antony [251–356], Gregorius of Nyssa [331–399]) who were influenced by his thoughts on women were negative. The original guilt brought by birth is also related to women. As a matter of fact, St Augustine sees women as evil, jealous, inconsistent, the source of all quarrels and injustices, and declares that the relationship in marriage is also a sin. Tertullian, on the other hand, states the following: *"Woman! You should walk about in rags and mourning; your eyes should be full of tears; your gaze should show remorse in order to make you forget that you have ruined the human race. Woman! You are the gate of hell. Even if the human race is to be destroyed, one should choose not to marry."* [37]. In the Christian world of the Middle Ages, woman was so vilified that the Council of Macôn in 585 discussed whether the woman had a spirit or not [29].

Since the Church Fathers held women responsible for the sinfulness of the human race, they regarded marriage as a necessary evil. In Catholic wedding ceremonies, the phrase *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"* is a manifestation of this understanding. The fact that sexual intercourse was considered a sin caused people to distance from marriage, and in the 2nd century *the Institution of Holy Virgins* emerged. Later, monasteries were opened for these women who devoted themselves to living as virgins and serving the church. It is believed that the nuns confined there will become the wives of Jesus as a symbol of purity [29,37].

Marriage was not condemned because it was blessed by Jesus Christ, but it was considered inferior to virginity. For those who wanted to be perfect, it was best to avoid sexuality. There were those within the church who stated that a man could not please both his wife and

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God by marrying [25]. Paul, on the other hand, said that one should marry only to avoid fornication [5].

According to Paul, it is forbidden for a Christian man or woman to marry a person of another religion. However, he does not want those who have been married before to divorce because he believes that they can find the right way through each other. He describes the children of those who do not find the right path as unclean and says that those who do not believe should be divorced [5]. It is believed in Christianity that marriage represents the unity of the church, Jesus Christ and God. Accordingly, marrying people of different religions will not lead to such an outcome. In the Roman Empire, Christian-Jewish marriage was strictly forbidden. It is even stated that marriage even between Christian sects is forbidden [39]. This is because there are some Christian sects that do not accept other sects as Christian [40,41].

There is no decree in the New Testament that prohibits polygamy. Luther explicitly declared that polygamy was permissible; the Anabaptists who emerged in Germany in the 16th century allowed it; and even the Mormons who organized in America in the 19th century not only allowed polygamy, but also accepted it as a sacred and divine order [26].

In the New Testament, adultery is a behavior that defiles human beings and that a person who divorces his wife for reasons other than fornication will lead her to adultery. A man who divorces his wife and marries someone else is regarded to have committed adultery; similarly, a man who marries a woman divorced from her husband is regarded to have committed adultery. A woman who divorces her husband and marries another man is also regarded to have committed adultery. The Gospel does not tolerate divorces based on anything other than adultery. It is also emphasized in the Gospel that looking at a woman with lust is also regarded as adultery [5].

Adultery is considered the sole reason for divorce, but the punishment for adultery is not mentioned. There is no relevant decree regarding the issue in the Bibles. Accordingly, the scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman caught in adultery and told him that under the previous law the punishment was stoning. When they said, *"What do you say?"* Jesus replied, *"Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her!"* Those who heard it gradually left, leaving Jesus alone. Jesus asked the woman where they were and said, *"Has no one condemned you?"* When she said, *"No one, sir,"* Jesus said, *"Neither do I condemn you"* and told her to go and not to sin again. However, there are verses in the Bible stating that God will judge those who commit fornication and adultery [5]. Considering that Jesus is also God according to the Christian belief, it can be said that there are statements that need to be explained between the two verses.

Evaluation and Conclusion

First of all, we should state that both the Torah and the Gospel were sent to the Jewish race as Holy Scripture. As a matter of fact, Christians accept the Bible (New Testament) as the explanation of the Torah (Old Testament) and believe in both. Among the Jewish clergy, there are those who say that the Torah was revealed all at once, as well as those who say that it was revealed in parts. However, the main issue is related to the New Testament and Christianity. As a matter of fact, the Bible does not consist of only divine revelation sent to Jesus. The Gospel was not written down at the time of Jesus Christ, and the copies written later were

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evaluated from the perspective of the letters written by Paul, who declared that he became a Christian about 15 years after Christ's ascension. This is where the knot in question lies. There are serious differences between the Bible and the Old Testament as well as within the Bible itself. We will focus on revealing them in the conclusion part. In this context, we will analyze the verses related to women in both books.

In the Torah, the creation of woman is handled in two different ways. It is mentioned that the woman was created together with Adam and that she was created from his rib in the later process. While there is information similar to both parables in the Bible, the creation from the rib is not mentioned. The Torah mentions that a helper was sought among the animals so that Adam would not be alone, and that Eve was created when it could not be found. The fact that the woman is mentioned together with animals shows that no value is attributed to her. Moreover, the fact that men pray, *"Glory be to God who has not created me a woman"* and women pray, *"Glory be to God who has not created me an animal"* makes the situation clearer. According to the Old Testament, in the context of gender, a woman should play the role of wife and mother and should live her life under the protection of a man. Her role in society is determined on the basis of enabling and facilitating. However, Jewish women in particular state that the Torah is a patriarchal text and consider it scandalous that women are seen as second-class citizens in the Old Testament. They emphasize that this issue makes the Torah problematic. Therefore, a constant demand for reform is on the agenda. Feminists argue that the Torah does not defend women's rights, and they are not wrong. In particular, when the woman described in the Old Testament texts is compared with the woman of the Era of Jahiliyya (Ignorance), many similarities will be seen. For Christianity, however, there is a different situation: How can they explain such humiliation in the Old Testament, which they believe in along with the New Testament?

According to the Torah, marrying and multiplying and having children are important for the continuation of the human race. In this context, the Torah encourages marriage. The Bible, on the other hand, sees marriage as sacred and virtuous, but interprets it as an obstacle to the worship of God. Therefore, it points out the virtue of remaining single. So, there are differences between the practices of Jesus Christ, who glorified women in the early period, and Paul, who shaped today's Christianity, and the Bible contradicts itself as well as the Torah. There is no direct encouragement. Paul's statement in his letters, *"In short, he who marries his betrothed does well, but he who does not marry does better"* will present a better understanding of the issue. A behavior that is incompatible with human the nature is inculcated there. The advice to the married woman that she should not leave her husband and if she does, she should not remarry is also related to it.

Polygamy is permitted in the Old Testament, but this decree was forbidden by Rabbi Gershom in the 11th century. A decree that was permitted in the Bible was abolished by a clergyman. Polygamy is not prohibited in Christianity either. However, a question arises here. Do Christians today follow the Old Testament, which they believe along with the New Testament as the Holy Book, or do they follow Rabbi Gershom's prohibition? In any case, there is a contradiction.

The prohibition regarding the issue is related to the fact that Jews consider themselves to be the chosen/blessed race. There are also women who are forbidden to marry for Jewish clergy. In the Catholic sect of Christianity, clergymen cannot marry at all. In Judaism, a woman whose husband dies must first marry her husband's brother, and it is considered a religious

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duty that falls on the brother-in-law. In Judaism, a woman of legal age has free will when marrying for the first time, but in this case, she has lost her freedom. Similarly, the free will of the brother-in-law has also disappeared. In Christianity, on the other hand, the verse mentioning that the widow would be happier if she remained as she was removed the issue of marrying a brother-in-law from the agenda. In contradiction to the verse above, another verse says that a woman is bound by law to her husband and upon his death she is free from the law and can marry another man; the brother of the deceased husband is not mentioned there.

Both religions frown on divorce, but Judaism makes it easier for a man to divorce a woman who talks to a man she does not know, goes out without covering her head, or does not give birth to a child within ten years of marriage. Here, it is the creator himself who determines whether a woman can bear children, and subsequently, the man is given the right to divorce, a ruling that is thought-provoking. The Bible, on the other hand, does not accept any reason other than adultery as sufficient for divorce. A man who divorces his wife for any other reason leads her to fornication. Both the man who divorces his wife and marries another man and the woman who divorces her husband and marries another man are regarded to have committed adultery. A man who marries a woman divorced from her husband is also considered an adulterer. A sociological perspective does not view divorce as an absolute negative. Indeed, it can be considered negative compared to a happy marriage, but positive compared to an unhappy one. However, forcing the continuation of a marriage despite unhappiness/disagreement will disrupt social harmony. Neither marriage nor divorce are individual events; they are both social phenomena. In Christianity, adultery is considered the only valid reason for divorce, but the issue of punishment for adultery hangs in the air. Jesus told the woman who was brought to him accused of adultery that he would not judge her and released her with a promise not to commit the same offence again. However, there are verses in the Bible stating that God will judge adulterers. According to Christian belief, if Jesus was God, why did he not judge the woman accused of adultery? There are differences between the New Testament and the Old Testament as well as within the New Testament itself regarding adultery.

Paul's statement on divorce and the marriage of the widow, *"To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord) …", "… and I think that I too have the Spirit of God,"* is in need of explanation. Although there is no such information in the book sent to Jesus Christ regarding the issue, Paul clearly states his own opinion in the Bible.

After all these explanations, adherents of both religions question religious texts. For Christians, the situation is even more complicated. It is possible to say that the demands for reform in a religion where the existence of a woman's spirit is debated will increase day by day. Indeed, the texts of the Old and New Testaments have evolved through contemporary feminist interpretations regarding the creation of women, marriage, divorce, and social status; the patriarchal narratives of the Old Testament are being reread from a gender equality perspective through modern critiques, while the emphasis on love and equality in the New Testament allows for a reassessment of women's religious and social roles. This transformation is related to the flexible interpretation of the texts according to their historical context.

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