

Qno: 3 Islam provides better rights to men and women than all other religions. Explain with arguments.

① INTRODUCTION:

Islam emerged in the 7th century Arabia as a corrective and reformative deen (system of life). It rejected the inhumane practices prevalent among Christians, Jews, and polytheist Arabs in Najran, Medina and Mecca respectively.

Islam replaced the Christian liquidity and Jewish rigidity with a balanced egalitarian and inclusive system of human rights. The Prophet Muhammad's ^(PBUH) journey himself was divided into spiritual Makkah and political Medina periods. Thus, Islam granted human rights to all without any discrimination.

It also protected rights of the weakest segments of society such as widows, children, slaves, and orphans.

② Islam Provides Better Rights

(A) Islam Replaced Arab Tribalism with Universal Equality

Islam replaced the tribalism of Polytheist Makkah (Arabia) with universal equality. Pagans had strong tribal rivalries and vendettas were prevalent among them. Islam challenged this tribal exclusivity and proposed 'umrah' (community) transcending tribes and other distinctions.

"The believers are but brothers" - **سورة الممت**

(B) Islam Transformed Punishment-oriented Religions with a Reforms-Based system of life

The religions before Islam such as Judaism, Christianity, polytheism, and Hinduism were all based on physical punishments for individual and collective reform. Witch hunting among Christians, Sati and Devadasi in Hinduism, women agnats among Jews

and oppressive slavery among tribal Arab pagans, were all commensured. However, Islam came as a beacon of hope and source of light for all humanity. Islam won the hearts and minds of Arabs through its social, political and economic reforms. The rights of people were ordained by Divine law, not left at the mercy of the powerful tribes, churches, or rabbis of Jewish courts.

"Islam gradually reformed the Arabs with a just socio-political moral order" — Muhammad A'ad (Islam at the Crossroads).

(C) Islam Raised Women's Social Status against All Religions

Among the Christians, the inhumane practice of witch hunt was widespread; whereas, among Jews, women were seen as impure by origin. However, it was Islam which raised the spiritual and social, political, and economic

A status of women through inheritance rights, right to remarriage & right to pledge directly to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) among others. Their right to divorce was a great achievement in human rights at a time when female infanticide was the norm and among Jews, women cannot remarry until they get permission from their husbands.

"Men have rights over women
, and women, too, have rights over men" — Prophet's sermon.

(D) Islam Dismantled slavery with Human Dignity

Islam did not abolish slavery overnight.

Rather, it reformed it by encouraging owners to treat their slaves well.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encouraged manumission and obligated owners to give their due

share in food, clothing and marriage. Thus,

Islam elevated the status of the most

vulnerable social segments of society. Hazrat

Bilal, the first muazzin, was an Ethiopian slave.

When
Slaves were subjected to torture and debtors, too, had no rights. It was Islam which obligated the owner to treat them well.

"Beware! Do not violate the rights of others" — القرآن

(5) Islam Balanced Rights with Responsibilities

Unlike other religions:

In Pre-Islamic Arabia, rights and duties depended on tribal norms, not divine law. Judaism, on the other hand, was heavily focused on formalism and ritualism, neglecting humane treatment for all. Rights and duties only applied to Jews. However, it was Islam which applied rights and duties to all humans, not just a chosen community.

"You have rights over them, and they too have rights over you" — Prophet's sermon.

(6) Islam Guarantees Divine Rights, not subject to Human whims as in Other Religions.

In Islam, rights are guaranteed by Allah himself as absolute and non-negotiable. No human whims or capriciousness can deny them. However, in Christianity, rights were enforced by church and its Bible scholars. Whereas, in Judaism, it was rabbis or Jewish courts which granted rights to Jews based on its own interpretation of Jewish law. In Hinduism, rights were strictly determined by one's social status or caste. It was Islam which universalized rights for all equally.

"Your life and wealth are as sacred as this day" — Prophet's last sermon.

(7) Islam Granted Social Rights For All

Without Any Discrimination Like Other Religions:

Islam granted equal social status to all without any discrimination of caste, region, language, wealth, or even religion.

The universal message of equality and human dignity was novel at a time when the Christians in Najran (Yemen),

Jews in Medina, and Arab polytheists in Makkah used to tie social rights with superficial markers such as church authorities, Jewish rabbinical courts, and caste-based duties in Hinduism. However, Islam accorded acquired dignity to piety, free from the constraints of human-imposed divisions.

"Indeed, we have honored
the children of Adam" — القرآن
وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

(8) Islam Prioritizes Justice with Ihsan. Unlike Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism

Islam has prioritized justice with forgiveness, without favoring one at the cost of other. This ensures Ihsan (excellence) in human rights as adl-wa-Ihsan shows that just doing justice is not enough. Rather, moral excellence encourages humans to go above the bare minimum to treat others with kindness. However in Christianity, forgiveness

is stressed over accountability. whereas, in Judaism, justice is strongly emphasized while treating forgiveness as secondary. Rights and duties are purely based on Kuna (caste).

However, Islamic law is universal for all.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمْ يَنْصَرِفُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمْ يَنْصَرِفُونَ

"One who does an atom's weight
of good will see it." — القرآن

(9) Islam Allowed Freedom of speech Unlike other Religions.

At a time when Christians in Najran, Jews in Madinah, and Polytheists of Arab in Mecca fought a number of bloody wars and battles for gaining power over one another.

Forced conversions, severe punishments on ~~non~~-followers of other religions over minor offenses. However, Islam came with binding treaties, written constitution and protection clauses for non-believers and people of the Book. Islam came with kinds of human rights in a systematic and structured manner.

القرآن: "There is no compulsion in religion"

(I) Islam Rectified Gender Rivalries in Other Religions

In Christianity, women were seen as sinful by origin and had no rights over husbands. Polygamy was prevalent, leaving women exposed to exploitation. Leadership roles were preserved for men. In Judaism, women were chained to abusive husbands (agunot) and had no divorce rights. Islam enlightened the whole Arabia and restricted polygamy to protect the rights of first wife. However, justice among wives is not optional, but strictly mandatory. Islam made monogamy the safer principle if fairness cannot be ensured.

"The best among you is he who is best to his family." — القرآن

(II) Islam Protected the Most Vulnerable Groups

Unlike Other Religions

Arab polytheists regarded women as impure and female infanticide was

prevailent at that time. slaves were treated as property, widows could be inherited, and orphans had no real protection. Whereas, in Christianity, widows were left to monasteries to become nuns against their will. In Hinduism, women were burnt alive with their husbands (Sati) and Devadasi practices exploited young girls in temples in the name of religious service. On the other hand, Islam protected the most vulnerable groups with absolute divine rights.

"The most beloved act to Allah is
freeing a slave" — هو أعز

(12) Islam Enforced Economic Rights not as Privileges but compulsory

Islam has made economic justice legally binding without leaving it to mere moral preaching. In Christianity, charity was voluntary and welfare of the financially poor was left at the mercy of the rich. In Judaism too, charity was encourage but not mandatory.

It was Islam which made social welfare an enforceable duty. The rich were obligated to help the poor, not as an act of charity but an enforceable right of the poor over the wealth of the rich.

'Islam transformed charity into rights' — Mawdudi (Islamic law and constitution)

Critical Analysis

Islam corrected the extremes in all religions from Christianity and Judaism to polytheism and Hinduism. Islam reformed the excessive liberalism of Christianity and outright formalism in Judaism by striking a middle path (الوسط). It neither promoted rights-only absolute democracy nor duties-based authoritarianism. It tied rights with duties, worship with social responsibility, and morality with law. Islam thus, came as a corrective and reformative religion against all odds.

Conclusion

Thus, it could be concluded in the end that Islam reformed and corrected all the odds in previous religions. It replaced agnost and witch hunt with divorce and remarriage rights of women, prioritized manumission over slavery, and altered the caste-based discriminate of Hinduism. Islam granted inheritance rights to women in 7th century Arabia where female infanticide was the norm. Islam sanctified the life, health, and dignity of all humans regardless of their religion, gender, region, race, and other such superficial social markers.