

Home > Sexual Ethics in Islam and in the Western World > Chapter 2: Sexual Ethics as Conceived by Modern Thinkers

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Sexual morals constitute an integral part of behavioural ethics applicable to human beings. Included in sexual ethics are some of the various social norms, personal habits and behavioural patterns, which are associated directly with the sexual instinct. Some aspects of the sexual ethics and practices are specified below:

Female modesty, male sense of honour concerning female members of a household, female chastity, a wife's faithfulness to her husband; female inclination to cover her private parts, or her aversion to exposing any bodily nakedness in public; prohibition of adultery, interdiction of any visual or physical intimacy with women other than one's legal wife or wives; prohibition of incest, or marriage between persons too closely related; avoidance of sexual intercourse with menstruating women; debarring pornography or obscenity; and treating celibacy as either too saintly or undesirable.

Sexual instinct is by its very nature quite extraordinary. Also, it is powerful in its manifestation. Accordingly, sexual morals are part of the most important of all ethics.

In his book entitled: *Our Oriental Heritage*, Will Durant highlighted the fact that marrying and settling down was always considered to be one of the very important moral duties of human beings. He said that the natural human capability for procreation involved difficulties, not only at the time of marriage, but before and after that, as well.

The difficulties could be aggravated by the intensity and vehemence of the sexual instinct, as well as its aversion to moral and legal constraints. Further, it might even lead to deviation from its natural course. All these and more, as mentioned by Will Durant, meant extreme confusion and organisational disorders, if and when a society could not provide necessary and effective safeguards.

Any scientific and philosophical discussion of sexual morals need first consider their origins and evolution. For instance, it is necessary to know how modesty and chastity of women have come to be safeguarded. The fact that men traditionally protect their women, as part of their own sense of honour, could be due to identifiable or specific reasons.

The male aptitude for possessiveness and protection of women may not necessarily be attributed to any inborn jealousy of men. For, human jealousy has universally been considered a negative emotion. Has an exception been made in favour of jealousy so as to safeguard husband- wife relationship? If so, why? If there are other reasons for men protecting the honour of their women, as if it were a question of their own honour, how can these be explained?

Likewise, the desires and social norms favouring clothing or covering of female body, curbing sexual promiscuity, prohibiting marriage between persons too closely related and similar other moral and legal restraints need be explained. Their examination can be in terms of whether or not they have their roots in the human nature, physiological and psychological.

Then, one may as well ask as to whether or not sexual morals are linked to the natural requirements of gregarious living Or, is it part of their inborn tendencies, feelings and concerns towards an appropriate human survival in the natural process. Or, is there any possibility that historical causes, other than natural, have gradually affected and influenced human conscientiousness and behaviour?

If the source of human morality has been entirely rooted in nature, it is hard to explain how not only the ancient savages, but today's isolated primitive tribes, living in the manner of their ancestors, were and are quite unlike the civilized people.

The origins and *raison d'être* of sexual morality may be diverse. So can be the historical conditions of social evolution, with reference to human sexual ethics in particular. Nevertheless, the question relevant to us now is as to whether or not the traditional morals are valid in the modern conditions towards achieving overall human progress.

Specifically, we must ask ourselves whether or not we must now safeguard the traditional sexual ethics or replace them by instituting new morals.

Will Durant does not trace human sexual morality to any origins in the mother nature. He attributes moral evolution to reasons arising from historical experience, even some occasionally unhappy or cruel happenings in the past. He favours retaining the substance of traditional morals, while allowing continued evolution of the forms, in order to selectively practise the best without shortcomings.

Referring to morals concerning female virginity, modesty and bashfulness, Will Durant observes to the

effect that traditional values and customs evidence a natural process of moral selection, involving trials and errors through centuries. According to him, virginity and modesty are relative qualities linked with conditions of marriage and traceable to even a past situation requiring purchase of, or bargaining for, wives.

Will Durant recognizes that the moral and social requirements of female chastity and modesty are of basic importance to any society, even if these qualities are sometimes capable of giving rise to psychosomatic and nervous disorders. Moreover, the relevant social regulations are essential for promoting a harmonious continuity in sexual relations in the context of marriage and family living.

Freud and his followers subscribed to a different view of sexual morals. They sought to dispense with the traditional sexual morality, or to replace them with something altogether new. In the opinion of Freud and his followers, morals were based on limitations and prohibitions concerning human sexuality. They claimed that the limitations and prohibitions caused many human afflictions and gave rise to emotional disturbances, including subconscious fears and obsessions.

Basically similar arguments have been put forward by Bertrand Russell. He defends in his own way the position that nothing should be regarded as taboo. His views concerning marriage and morals are independent of any moral considerations, such as those of chastity, rectitude, modesty, any male sense of honour encompassing the female (which he suggests is actually jealousy) and similar others.

The proposed liberation of human sexuality from traditional moral restraints is tantamount to claiming that nothing ugly, bad or disgraceful can come out of it. The impression conveyed is one of relying on nothing but the human intellect and its rationalizations. The proposal concedes no more restraint on sex than any natural limitation of food intake!

Elsewhere, Bertrand Russell tried to answer a question as to whether or not he had any advice to give those who wanted to follow a correct and sensible path in matters of sex. His reply was to the effect that, after all, one should examine the question of sexual morality in the same analytical manner as in the case of any other problem. If, as a result of adequate examination, it was found that others would come to no harm from one's pursuing a certain manner of sexual conduct, we would have no reasons to condemn any such individual rationalization and practice.

Bertrand Russell replied in the negative to a second question as to whether or not, in his opinion, any violation of female chastity could be viewed as an exception to his contention that actions causing no harm or loss to others should not be condemned. He explained that loss of virginity could be due to an act between two individuals. However, if it was construed as an act of violation of the chastity of a virgin, there should be evidence to the same effect before it could be condemned as rape.

For the time being, we may refrain from a detailed examination of the question as to whether or not human traits like modesty, or sexual chastity, are rooted in the mother nature. For, the question is very broad in scope. One can hardly give a completely scientific answer. However, whatever has been indicated thereon, so far, can neither be assumptive, nor approximate. For., it is recognized that those who base their opinions on assumptions often lack consensus:

For instance, human inclinations like sexual modesty are viewed differently by Freud, Will Durant and Bertrand Russell. The nature and content of their difference need not be detailed herein. Suffice it to mention that these writers seem to base their views on the assumption that human qualities like female modesty are not inborn or in any way specific to human nature. If so, their understanding of human characteristics shows what appears to be disinclination to seek a correct justification, or a microscopic approach.

Be that as it may, we can indeed make two assumptions regarding sex habits and inclinations. Firstly, we may assume that sex-oriented behavioural qualities have no connection whatever with the innate nature of human beings. Secondly, we may suppose that the "habits" are inculcated as part of other human practices and norms, under some kind of a social contract, designed to harmonize individual and social interests, as well as towards assuring peace and well being of mankind.

Let us now ask ourselves as to whether or not logic and reasoning demand intrinsic values and safeguards for assuring complete psychological harmony and maximizing human well being and peace. We may further ask ourselves as to whether or not any elimination of moral and social restraints and limits will be conducive towards achieving complete psychosomatic harmony of individuals and enhancing social welfare.

Then, we may well realize that logic and reasoning deem it advisable for us to oppose every customary practice and superstitious habit, which implicitly treats human sexuality as unclean and pernicious. At the same time, we are likely to consider it necessary that we should refrain from promoting any unrestrained sexual freedom which causes widespread excesses, transgressions and agonies.

The supporters of the proposed new sexual liberty base their arguments on three premises,

(1) Freedom should be ensured for every individual, as it does not interfere with that of others;

(2) All inborn sexual desires and aptitudes should be freely nurtured and brought to fulfilment without any inhibition or restraint, since their curbing or frustration leads to disorders of the ego; and

(3) Any natural desire subsides when it is fulfilled, and it becomes insistent and excessive when it is subjected to any negative moral restraint or ill conceived prohibition.

The sexual liberationists argue that emotional instability arises from discriminating among the natural instincts and desires, so that only part of these are satisfied while the others remain frustrated. So, they say, equal nurturing and development of all human inclinations is necessary for personal and societal well being.

Furthermore, they suggest that, for avoiding constant preoccupation with sex, the only correct way is to lift all moral restraints and social prohibitions. They claim that liberation of the natural process of sexual fulfilment will also pre-empt mischief, malice and vengeance characteristic of a situation involving moral restrictions.

The foregoing arguments constitute the basis on which the new sexual morality is proposed. God-willing, we should be able to render these arguments untenable, through an adequate investigation and a thorough evaluation of the three basic premises mentioned above.

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