

Rape: An Expression of Power or Deviant Sexual Behavior?

The disturbing occurrence of rape incidents is a growing social problem, which unfortunately, only gets attention in the media after some horrific incident is reported. Usually, such an incident triggers a fierce debate on social and electronic media, which then compels the government officials and rulers to issue a few statements on this issue. However, once the debate subsides a little, the government becomes completely oblivious to the problem, as if it did not even exist in the first place. The issue of rape is not specific to Pakistan, but instead afflicts the entire world. The severity of this issue can be judged by the following facts:

1. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 7% of the population in UK - the majority of whom are women - have been sexually harassed. Furthermore, these numbers are continuously rising each year.

2. According to Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), the largest American anti-sexual assault organization, which also sometimes works for the government, every one in six females and one in thirty-three males has been a victim of sexual assault. This situation is continuing to deteriorate.

3. In Pakistan, Geo News reports that around 10,000 cases of rape have been reported between 2014 and 2017. These numbers, too, are continuously increasing.

4. According to *The News International*, rape cases in big cities have seen a rapid increase between 2014 and 2020.

A minority, but nevertheless influential group in Pakistan, believes that rape incidents are a result of a patriarchal society, in which women are not considered as equals to men. They reason that such a society produces sexually-frustrated men who consider women to be subservient to them. They hence believe that they are free to use these women in whatever and however way they desire to the extent of their own sexual satisfaction. This group of people, thus, believes that rape is neither linked to an increase in nudity in the society nor a result of the adoption of a particular set of ideas imported from the West. In fact, this group believes that men and women should be free to establish consensual relationships between themselves in whatever way they please. Therefore, they label people who criticize nudity or the clothing choices of women influenced by Western ideals as rape apologists.

A closer examination of this narrative, however, reveals that it is shallow in nature, and also does not address the entire reality of this issue. Furthermore, this narrative is also influenced by Western thinking, which views society through the false lens of liberalism.

To understand the real reasons behind rape and other crimes in the society, one must develop a correct understanding, firstly, of the human nature which is the basis of human creation by their Creator and, secondly, of the way in which societies are formed. Allah (swt) has created all human beings, men and women, with a specific nature, and has made the survival of the human race dependent on the two of them co-operating and coming together. Both men and women are human beings and, as such, have all the characteristics that make them humans. One of these is the ability of every human being to think which, in turn, influences their actions. Another characteristic is that all human beings have a certain set of organic needs, such as need to take food and water, need to breath air and the need to relieve oneself, which are vital for life. Apart from these organic needs, human beings also have some instincts which, if left unfulfilled, **may** result in anxiety and discontent, such as the procreation instinct. These facts about human nature are definite, and true without exception.

Allah (swt) is the One Who has placed these instincts in human beings. Furthermore, He (swt) has also provided human beings with the correct means to satisfy these instincts. So Allah (swt) didn't only create an instinct but He (swt) also provided means for its satisfaction. Moreover, Allah (swt) also guided towards ruling for the correct satisfaction of human instincts, be it the survival instinct, procreation instinct or spiritual instinct. Any old method to satisfy an instinct in itself is not necessarily correct. For example, every person has a survival instinct, which pushes him to find comfort for themselves in life, for which a person earns money and then buys essentials and luxuries. However, this does not mean that in order to satisfy one's instinct, any method by which a person can get money, including stealing, looting, hoarding, smuggling or selling drugs, is correct. Obviously, this is not the case. So, then why is such a view, that a person should be free to fulfill their sexual desires by any means possible, including through incest, or bestiality, propagated in the case of the procreation instinct?

So then the real question is this: What should be the criteria to decide the correct ways to satisfy an instinct? Should the criteria be that two consenting adults, either of the same or opposite gender, be allowed to satisfy their needs in whatever way they want to, outside the bond of marriage, either by paying one another, or as partners? Adherents of the liberal Western thought would answer in the affirmative. However, then, by the same token, should it be allowed for a person to enslave another against a handsome amount of money, if the other person desperately wants this money for a better livelihood of their children? Should it be allowed for two consenting adults belonging to different countries, in the name of freedom, to exchange sensitive secrets of their respective countries in exchange for intimate relations?

Hence, some sort of criteria is required to determine what is right and what is not right for an individual to do. The question then is this: who should be given the authority to decide this criterion? And if humanity really has a Creator, then should that Creator not have a say in this?

When we look at the organic needs and instincts in human-beings more closely, we realize that the former do not require any external stimulus. For example, people will get hungry at some point of time, irrespective of whether they have good food in front of them or not. Instincts, on the other hand, require an external stimulus. However, if these instincts are not satisfied, then the person remains restless and dissatisfied. For example, seeing a mother caring for her child would trigger emotions in a childless person. However, when the mother and the child are not in front of that person, their emotions will subside. However, despite of this, the childless person will remain restless and may feel that something is missing from their life. The same is also true in the case of procreation instinct, which is stimulated when a person is confronted by a sexual stimulant, even if it is a construct of that person's imagination.

Another aspect of human nature is the ability of a person's thoughts and viewpoints about life to influence and shape their inclinations and instincts respectively. For example, a Muslim would not have sexual inclinations towards his mother and sisters, because of the way Islam and the society around him sanctifies these relationships. However, in the West, incest is relatively common. So, to develop the right sexual attitudes of individuals, it is necessary that the correct thoughts are propagated and established in society. Instead, declaring all individuals to be free will only push them to believe that they are free in whatever way they choose to satisfy their sexual needs, even to the extent of coercion and violence.

In light of the aforementioned thoughts, let us now look at the problem of rape more closely. Rape is an outcome of three factors:

1. The person's desire to fulfill their sexual needs.

2. The person has a lack of the correct understanding of the way in which relationships between men and women should be organized, or an inclination of putting their desires ahead of this.

3. The person has the ability to physically overcome and control the victim once s/he are within their reach.

A person commits the heinous crime of rape when these three factors come together. Liberalism seeks to promote all these three factors, despite its claims otherwise, whereas the Islamic social system provides an effective means to put a stop to them. Thus, rape incidents are extremely rare in a society that adopts Islam in its entirety.

As far as the first factor is concerned, Islam seeks to minimize external stimuli to a person's procreation (or sexual) instinct. Therefore, Islam neither allows pornographic material, nor does it allow billboards that objectify women for material promotion. Islam does not permit partially-nude women to be paraded on the stages of events such as the Hum Style Awards. In public places, such as offices, both men and women are expected to conform to the Islamic code of dress and to interact with one another within the limits set by Islam. This protects the society from the sexual frustration that we are witnessing today all over the world.

This, however, does not mean that Islam does not recognize or suppresses a person's procreation instinct. On the contrary, Islam encourages men and women to get married as soon as they reach puberty, so that they may satisfy their sexual needs as soon as possible. This helps prevent people from turning to sexually immoral means such as adultery and homosexuality. Allah (swt), says in the Glorious Quran. ﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا

“And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.” [TMQ Surah Ar-Rum 30:21]).

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: « يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ ، فَإِنَّهُ أَعْضُ لِلْبَصِيرِ ، فَإِنَّهُ أَعْضُ لِلْبَصِيرِ ، فَإِنَّهُ أَعْضُ لِلْبَصِيرِ ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ» **“O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding one's chastity. Whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for it will diminish his desire.”**

[Agreed upon]

With regards to the second factor, the educational system and media within an Islamic society serve to inculcate the correct concepts about human instincts and needs, in both men and women. Hence, in an Islamic society, women will be viewed as those to be respected, whose honor must be protected as a life and death issue. A woman must be respected as a mother, daughter, wife and sister, rather than being objectified by having her sexuality and attractiveness exploited for advertising. Islam also prohibits homosexuality and considers it a heinous crime punishable by death, which previously invited Allah (swt)'s Wrath upon an entire society. Allah (swt) says in the Quran; ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا

“O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate,¹ and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah—in Whose Name you appeal to one another.” [TMQ Surah Al-Nisa 4:1]). The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, « خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِيهِ، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي » **“The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives.”** [Tirmidhi]

As far as the third factor is concerned, Islam seeks to minimize the number of opportunities where a corrupt-minded person can overwhelm a potential victim. Thus, Islam prohibits non-Mahram men and women to be in seclusion together, such as on a deserted road while travelling, in a house in the absence of Mahram relatives, or in schools, universities or offices during work. Abdullah bin Abbas (ra) narrated that he heard the

Prophet (saw) say during a sermon, «لَا يَخْلُونَ رَجُلٌ بِامْرَأَةٍ إِلَّا وَمَعَهَا ذُو مَحْرَمٍ» **“No man can be in seclusion with a woman except in the presence of a Mahram.”** [Sahih Mulsim]). Similarly, the Prophet (saw) also said, «لَا يَحِلُّ لِامْرَأَةٍ تُوْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، تُسَافِرُ مَسِيرَةَ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ إِلَّا مَعَ ذِي مَحْرَمٍ عَلَيْهَا» **“It is not lawful for a woman believing in Allah and the Hereafter to undertake journey extending over a day and a night except when there is a Mahram with her.”** [Sahih Muslim]). Furthermore, Islam also prohibits mixed gatherings of men and women without any valid Shar’i reason. Thus, non-Mahram men and women can interact with one another for educational or business purposes, but they are not allowed to spend time in each other’s company for enjoyment and recreational purposes.

People who subscribe to the Western liberal school of thought ignore the first two factors that lead to rape, and instead fixate only on the third factor. Furthermore, the solution that they propose to solve this issue contradicts with Islam’s concept of a family. They further argue that the solution to this problem is to ‘empower’ women by creating women-only organizations that strengthen women’s voices for their liberal rights and oppose the social system of rights and duties prescribed by Islam. In this way, this group of liberal thinkers strives to destroy societies, as they have already destroyed the Western society, by pitching half of the population against the other half. Despite many feminist movements, Western societies are still a hotbed of rape incidents. One must also note that rape incidents in Pakistan have significantly increased in the past few decades, despite a decline in the so-called male-dominance.

Rape is neither a mental affliction, which requires some sort of medical treatment, nor does it stem from a tendency to oppress and exert dominance. Instead, it is a consequence of the corrupt thoughts and social atmosphere within people regarding the society, a lack of piety and neglect by the state in its duty develop Islamic personalities. Once a person employs the wrong means to satisfy their sexual needs, they then continue to walk down that path.

It is also not correct to say that rape is only a consequence of women not following the Islamic code of dress, since women who do follow this dress code are also raped. However, one of the primary goals of Pakistan’s liberal capitalist class has been to give women and men the choice not to observe the proper Islamic dress code. Thus, these sick minded people use rape incidents involving women who follow the Islamic dress code to attack clear Islamic injunctions on this matter. The point to understand here is that Islam’s injunctions do not work in isolation. Therefore, the problem of rape will not be solved by only enforcing the Islamic dress code on women, nor will it be solved by only introducing the Islamic punishments for such crimes. In fact, introducing Islamic punishments within the current system, with its rampant objectification of women, will only give the impression that they cannot solve this problem and hence they are useless. This is because Islamic punishments alone do not free the society from all those factors leading to rape, for which Islam has given separate rules. Therefore, the demand of Islamic punishments alone is an incomplete demand. This problem will not be completely solved unless and until the Western liberal capitalist system is completely purged from our society and replaced with the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood, which implements Islam comprehensively in all spheres of life. This is the only way to develop a chaste and virtuous society, which will be a beacon of light for the rest of the world.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Ali Nawaz – Wilayah Pakistan