6581 - Christian lady interested in Islam

the question

For the last few years, I have been interested in Islam. I have no idea where to begin in further studies. I am a nearly 50 year old woman and am a bit put off by the retractions (seemingly) regarding women. How can I begin to enter the realms of Islam to study? I am open to learning.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

How women are dealt with is something that varies from one culture to another. A woman is usually subjected to the teachings, systems and customs of her society, good and bad alike. Many non-Islamic social systems, customs and ways of life are unfair to women. Anyone who studies them will find that the purpose behind them is to make women a means for men’s enjoyment under the banner of freedom. This is something which goes against the true religion and is contrary to the dictates of common sense and wisdom.

Is it wise or fair that a precious pearl should be shared by a number of people when one of them is able to keep it and look after it? Is it wise to uncover that which should be hidden merely for a few moments of fleeting pleasure?

Is it wise to open the door to provocation of desires, free mixing and women uncovering their beauty so that men may commit immoral actions with them, which leads to the spread of disease and large numbers of illegitimate children and the mixing of lineages? Is it wise to burden women with work outside the home which results in them neglecting the house and being crowded together with men and neglecting their children, which they are not able to bear, mentally or physically?

Look at this simple comparison between the situation of women in Islam and their situation in

other systems and religions.

Firstly: Islam liberated women from enslavement to human beings and to whims and desires; other religions and systems have subjugated women to the devil and to whims and desires.

Secondly: Islam protects women's honour and dignity; other religions and systems cheapen their honour and dignity.

Thirdly: Islam makes spending on women an obligation so that their dignity may be preserved; other religions and systems make women a product to traded in, and they put too much pressure on women to spend on themselves and go out to work.

Fourthly: Islam protects women when they are young and honours them when they are old; other religions and systems make that a burden on society.

Fifthly: Islam protects women's wealth, children and life, and organize her life in a proper manner; other religions and systems neglect all of that.

So firstly: you should read the Book of Allaah (the Qur'aan) and study the commentaries on it (tafseer), such as the Tafseer of Ibn Katheer. [Translator's note: this is now available in English, published by Darussalam, Riyadh] Then read Saheeh al-Bukhaari and Saheeh Muslim [also available in English]. Listen to Islamic tapes, especially those made by the shaykhs of Ahl al-Sunnah (Sunni shaykhs).

Secondly: you should go to the nearest Sunni Islamic center to find out what programs they have for teaching women.

Thirdly: you can benefit from the many Islamic sites on the Internet which present pure Islam and will be able to answer your questions, and you could write to some of the trustworthy Sunni Islamic institutions and ask them to send you books and magazines that will be of use to you.

Fourthly: You can get to know some Muslim sisters who could help you and teach you that which will benefit you, because a woman is better able to make another woman understand than a man

is.

Fifthly: Beware of being deceived by some of those who claim to be Muslims but who in fact have nothing to do with Islam, like the Qadianis (also known as Ahmadis), Shi’ah, Baha’is and Sufis.

And Allaah knows best.