

Chapter 1 : Women And Superstition

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It is unlucky to see your face in a mirror by candlelight. A mirror should be covered during a thunderstorm because it attracts lightning. If a mirror in the house falls and breaks by itself, someone in the house will die soon. It also cures many diseases, is an antidote to poison and brings good luck and fertility. A girl standing under a mistletoe cannot refuse to be kissed by anyone who claims the privilege. **MOTH** A white moth inside the house or trying to enter the house means death. **NOSE** If your nose itches, someone is coming to see you. **ONION** An onion cut in half and placed under the bed of a sick person will draw off fever and poisons. A wish will come true if you make it while burning onions. **OWL** It is bad luck to see an owl in the sunlight. **PENCIL** If you use the same pencil to take a test that you used for studying for the test, the pencil will remember the answers. A rainbow in the West that gleams, Rain tomorrow falls in streams. **RED** A red ribbon should be placed on a child who has been sick to keep the illness from returning. **ROBIN** A wish made upon seeing the first robin in spring will come true - but only if you complete the wish before the robin flies away. **SALT** Bad luck will follow the spilling of salt unless a pinch is thrown over the left shoulder into the face of the devil waiting there. Put salt on the doorstep of a new house and no evil can enter. Salty soup is a sign that the cook is in love. The seventh son of a seventh son has magic powers, according to Irish folklore, but is a vampire in Romanian legend. **SHOES** Do not place shoes upon a table, for this will bring bad luck for the day, cause trouble with your mate and you might even lose your job as a result. Your soul may escape otherwise. The devil can enter your body when you sneeze. Having someone say, "God bless you," drives the devil away. If you sneeze on a Monday, you sneeze for danger; Sneeze on a Tuesday, kiss a stranger; Sneeze on a Wednesday, sneeze for a letter; Sneeze on a Thursday, something better; Sneeze on a Friday, sneeze for sorrow; Sneeze on a Saturday, see your sweetheart tomorrow. Sneeze on a Sunday, and the devil will have domination over you all week.

Chapter 2 : About Your Privacy on this Site

Women Without Superstition is a collection of excerpts from the writings of female free-thinkers, almost exclusively American and white, which I think is the collection's greatest weakness, spanning the years from the founding of the Republic to the late '90s, when the volume was published.

I am well aware that the very question produces in most minds a feeling of awe, as if stepping on forbidden ground, too holy and sacred for mortals to approach. The very question strikes them with horror, as is owing to this prejudice so deeply implanted by education, and also strengthened by public sentiment, that so few are willing to give it a fair and impartial investigation, â€”knowing but too well that it casts a stigma and reproach upon any person bold enough to undertake the task, unless his previously known opinions are a guarantee that his conclusions would be in accordance and harmony with the popular demand. No is this the only impediment in the way of this inquiry. The question arises, Where shall we begin? The most strenuous believer has to acknowledge that it is only a belief, but he knows nothing on the subject. Where, then, shall we search for his existence? Enter the material world; ask the Sciences whether they can disclose the mystery? Geology speaks of the structure of the Earth, the formation of the different strata, of coal, of granite, of the whole mineral kingdom. Natural history gives us a knowledge of the animal kingdom in general; the different organisms, structures, and powers of the various species. Physiology teaches the nature of man, the laws that govern his being, the functions of the vital organs, and the conditions upon which alone health and life dependâ€¦. Mathematics lays the foundation of all the exact sciences. It teaches the art of combining numbers, of calculating and measuring distances, how to solve problems, to weigh mountains, to fathom the depths of the ocean; but gives no directions how to ascertain the existence of a God. Astronomy tells us of the wonders of the Solar Systemâ€”the eternally revolving planets, the rapidity and certainty of their motions, the distance from planet to planet, from star to star. It predicts with astonishing and marvelous precision the phenomena of eclipses, the visibility upon our Earth of comets, and proves the immutable law of gravitation, but is entirely silent on the existence of a God. In fine, descend to the bowels of the Earth, and you will learn what it contains; into the depths of the ocean, and you will find the inhabitants of the great deep; but neither in the Earth above, nor the waters below, can you obtain any knowledge of his existence. The Universe of Matter gives us no record of his existence. Where next shall we search? Enter the Universe of Mind, read the volumes written on the subject, and in all the speculations, the assertions, the assumptions, the theories, and the creeds, you can only find Man stamped in an indelible impress his own mind on every page. In describing his God, he delineated his own character: It was a great mistake to say that God made man in his image. Man, in all ages, made his God in his own image, and we find that just in accordance with his civilization, his knowledge, his experience, his taste, his refinement, his sense of right, of justice, of freedom, and humanity, â€”so has he made his God. But whether coarse or refined; cruel and vindictive, or kind and generous; an implacable tyrant, or a gentle and loving father; it still was the emanation of his own mind â€”the picture of himself. But, you ask, how came it to be that man thought or wrote about God at all? The answer is very simple. Ignorance is the mother of Superstition. The very name has a charm for him. Being unacquainted with the nature and laws of things around him, with the true causes of the effects he witnessed, he ascribed them to false onesâ€”to supernatural agencies. The savage, ignorant of the mechanism of a watch, attributes the ticking to a spirit. The so-called civilized man, equally ignorant of the mechanism of the Universe, and the laws which govern it, ascribes it to the same erroneous cause. Before electricity was discovered, a thunderstorm was said to come from the wrath of an offended Deity. Man has talked about him, written about him, disputed about him, fought about him,â€”sacrificed himself, and extirpated his fellow man. Rivers of blood and oceans of tears have been shed to please him, yet no one has ever been able to demonstrate his existence. But the Bible, we are told, reveals this great mystery. Where Nature is dumb, and Man ignorant, Revelation speaks in the authoritative voice of prophecy. Then let us see whether that Revelation can stand the test of reason and of truth. So far, so well; for less than perfection were unworthy of a God. The first act recorded of him is, that he created the world out of nothing; but unfortunately the revelation of Scienceâ€”Chemistryâ€”which is based not on

written words, but demonstrable facts, says that Nothing has no existence, and therefore out of Nothing, Nothing could be made. Revelation tells us that the world was created in six days. Here Geology steps in and says, that it requires thousands of ages to form the various strata of the earth. The Bible tells us the earth was flat and stationary, and the sun moved around the earth. Copernicus and Galileo flatly deny this flat assertion, and demonstrates by Astronomy that the earth is spherical, and revolves around the sun. Revelation tells us that on the fourth day God created the sun, moon, and stars. This, Astronomy calls a moon story, and says that the first three days, before the great torchlight was manufactured and suspended in the great lantern above, must have been rather dark. The division of the waters above from the waters below, and the creation of the minor objects, I pass by, and come at once to the sixth day. Having finished, in five days, this stupendous production, with its mighty mountains, its vast seas, its fields and woods; supplied the waters with fishesâ€”from the whale that swallowed Jonah to the little Dutch herring; peopled the woods with inhabitantsâ€”from the tiger, the lion, the bear, the elephant with his trunk, the dromedary with his hump, the deer with his antlers, the nightingale with her melodies, down to the serpent which tempted mother Eve; covered the fields with vegetation, decorated the gardens with flowers, hung the trees with fruits; and surveying this glorious world as it lay spread out like a map before him, the question naturally suggested itself. What is it all for, unless there were beings capable of admiring, of appreciating, and of enjoying the delights this beautiful world could afford? Having thus made man, he placed him them in the garden of Edenâ€”the loveliest and most enchanting spot at the very head of creation, and bade them with the single restriction not to eat of the tree of knowledge , to live, to love, and to be happy. What a delightful picture, if we could only rest here! But did these beings, fresh from the hand of omnipotent wisdom, in whose image they were made, answer the great object of their creation, answer the great object of their creation? No sooner were they installed in their Paradisean home, than they violated the first, the only injunction given them, and fell from their high estate; and not only they, but by a singular justice of that very merciful Creator, their innocent posterity to all coming generations, fell with them! Does that bespeak wisdom and perfection in the Creator, or in the creature? But what was the cause of this tremendous fall, which frustrated the whole design of the creation? The Serpent tempted mother Eve, and she, like a good wife, tempted her husband. But God did not know when he created the Serpent, that it would tempt the woman, and that she was made of such frail materials, the rib of Adam, as not to be able to resist the temptation? If he did not know, then his knowledge was at fault; if he did, but could not prevent that calamity, then his power was at fault; if he knew and could, but would not, then his goodness was at fault. Choose which you please, and it remains alike fatal to the rest. Revelation tells us that God made man perfect, and found him imperfect; then he pronounced all things good, and found them most desperately bad. Why he saved them is hard to say, unless it was to reserve materials as stock in hand to commence a new world with; but really, judging of the character of those he saved, by their descendants, it strikes me it would have been much better, and given him far less trouble, to have let them slip also, and with his improved experience made a new world out of fresh and superior materials. The world was not one jot better after the flood than before. His chosen children were just as bad as ever, and he had to send his prophets, again and again, to threaten, to frighten, to coax, cajole, and to flatter them into good behaviour. But all to no effect. Did he succeed, even then? Is the world saved? It is all around us. From poverty, vice, crime, sin, misery, and shame? Look into your poor-houses, your prisons, your lunatic asylums; contemplate the whip, the instruments of torture, and of death; ask the murderer, or his victim; listen to the ravings of the maniac, the shrieks of distress, the groans of despair; mark the cruel deeds of the tyrant, the crimes of slavery, and the suffering of the oppressed; count the millions of lives lost by fire, by water, and by the sword; measure the blood spilled, the tears shed, the sighs of agony drawn from the expiring victims on the altar of fanaticism; â€”and tell me from what the world was saved? And why was it not saved? Why does God still permit these horrors to afflict the race? Does omniscience not know it? Could omnipotence not do it? Would infinite wisdom, power, and goodness allow his children thus to live, to suffer, and to die? Humanity revolts against such a supposition. Not now, says the believer. Hereafter will he save them. From the apple eaten by our mother Eve? If a rich parent were to let his children live in ignorance, poverty, and wretchedness, all their lives, and hold out to them the promise of a fortune at some time hereafter, he would justly be considered a

criminal, or a madman. The parent is responsible to his offspringâ€”the Creator to his creature. The testimony of Revelation has failed. Its account of the creation of the material world is disproved by science. Its account of the creation of man in the image of perfection, is disproved by its own internal evidence. To test the Bible God by justice and benevolence, he could not be good; to test him by reason and knowledge, he could not be wise; to test him by the light of the truth, the rule of consistency, we must come to the inevitable conclusion that, like the Universe of matter and of mind, this pretended Revelation has also failed to demonstrate the existence of a God. Methinks I hear the the believer say, you are unreasonable; you demand as impossibility; we are finite, and therefore cannot understand, much less define and demonstrate the infinite. But if I am unreasonable in asking you to demonstrate the existence of the being you wish me to believe in, are you not infinitely more unreasonable to expect me to believeâ€”blame, persecute, and punish me for not believingâ€”in what you have to acknowledge you cannot understand? But, says the Christian, the world exists, and therefore there must have been a God to create it. That does not follow. The mere fact of its existence does not prove a Creator. Then how came the universe into existence? We do not know but the ignorance mind of man is certainly no proof of the existence of a God. Yet upon that very ignorance has it been predicated, and is maintained. From the little knowledge we have, we are justified in the assertion that the Universe never was created, from the simple fact that not one atom of it can be annihilated. To suppose a Universe created, is to suppose a time when it did not exist, and that is a self-evident absurdity. Besides, where was the Creator before it was created? Nay, where is he now? Outside of that Universe, which means the all in all, above, below, and around? That is another absurdity. Then he can only be a part, for the whole indeed includes all the parts. If only a part, then he cannot be the Creator, for a part cannot create the whole. But the world could not have made itself. True; nor could God have made himself; and if you must have a God to make the world, you will be under the same necessity to have another to make him, and others still to make them, and so on until reason and common sense are at a stand-still.

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Some well known such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and many new to me. Reminds me of a collection I read years ago, Herstory. Both books share backgrounds, achievements, and contributions. A few favorite quotes: Obedience and subjection have been the lessons taught her In return, the whole tone of church teaching in regard to woman is, to the last degree, contemptuous and degrading. Because of this it is a book that has a lot of content that is anti-religion. But even if you are a person of religious bent it is worth reading as it is a close look at 51 women who ha Women Without Superstition is a book about women who do not believe in anything that is not logical or reasonable or without proof. But even if you are a person of religious bent it is worth reading as it is a close look at 51 women who have shaped our country. Women of courage who have given of their time, their safety and dignity, their very lives so that we can do simple things like vote, own property or receive property in wills, wear what we want, have reproductive options, divorce men who abuse us or our children, and so on and so on and so on. I can not imagine the dark country we would live in today without the sacrifices of these women. Many of these women were also abolitionists who worked courageously against slavery until it was finally outlawed. The women range in ages from the oldest, now dead, of course, Mary Wollstonecraft, born in to the youngest, Taslima Nasrin, born in Of the 51 Taslima is the only one covered who is a woman of color. I can only speculate that this is because there is not as much information available about the women of color who also surely worked alongside these women in their efforts to better the lives of all of us. The quotes and the looks into the lives of these women is very inspirational: From the first woman - Mary Wollstonecraft who said, 1C 26the being cannot be termed rational or virtuous, who obeys any authority, but that of reason. A physician she is outspoken about the atrocities she sees done to women and children everyday in the muslim society and calls for abolishing all religions. Outside the scope of this book, according to Taslima Nasrin 19s official website, she is still writing and lecturing. She is still in and out of hiding due to muslim persecution. She, and her written works, are not allowed back into her country of Bangladesh or in certain parts of India. To every woman in between -they changed our country for the better and their back story is well worth the read.

Chapter 4 : Superstitions Old Wives Tales Beliefs & Misconceptions M-Z

A first-of-its-kind anthology, Women Without Superstition is a superb collection of original writings--many of them never before published, out of print, or generally unavailable--by fifty feminist freethinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Edited by Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-founder of.

She does it to the best of her ability but without any training in nutrition and health. She knows a little bit about traditional cooking passed on to her by her mother. Some times she makes some fancy, exotic dishes if she can afford it. But she is not trained or even informed regarding the constituents of food, their nutritional values, the different diets needed by different members of the family, etc. The buying power of an ordinary Indian family is so little that members hardly get enough to eat. Under such circumstances the housewife is the worst hit of all. Our culture tells us that a wife lives for the husband and his family. She is supposed to eat whatever is left over after every one has had his fill. The girls in the family too remain malnourished and unhealthy like their mother. The malnourished girls are married at an early age before they physically grow up into a woman. In case the young girl does not produce a son, the family blames the girl and the husband deserts her. It never occurs to any one in the family that the husband might be the guilty party. Instead of consulting a physician the poor girl is taken to a Baba who uses charms and spells and other mumbo jumbo. In most families, no attention is given to the health of a woman or her delivery. People show little concern only when a woman is unable to do any work being very ill. The malnutrition caused affects the woman in several ways. Pregnant women are given iron tablets by the government free of charge. If the woman who cooks food for everyone in the family, is given training and information as to how to provide a square meal for all, including herself, instead of distributing pills, it will surely go a long way. Poverty of course is at the root of the problem. But one must keep in mind that poverty is not the only cause of malnutrition. Within four to five years after a girl starts her periods, the growth of her body is complete. Generally a girl starts her periods at 12 to 13 years. That means she may marry at the age of 18 years but not before. However, girls are still married off at 15 and 16 years! Due to early marriage, especially in villages, a girl conceives and delivers at a very early age. Her womb is not grown enough to conceive. Her food intake is inadequate. The growth of the baby that is born to her is stunted as a result. The infant mortality in India is ten times that of even other developing countries, leave alone comparing it with developed countries. Five hundred out of a lakh of women die during delivery in India while in other developing countries the figure is 20! She takes resort to vows and observances to overcome her chronic physical and mental afflictions, which are in reality caused by malnutrition. Many times the cause of her chronic illness is taken to be a spell and a lot of time, effort and money are spent on Devrishis or sorcerers. The responsibilities of married life weigh down on her immature body and mind, as she is married at a very early age. All this causes mild or severe mental illness, which of course is taken to be an attack by a ghost and usual measures are taken to repel the spell cast by them. Most women are under continuous mental strain for various reasons; the husband does not love or the mother-in-law harasses or recognition and prestige are lacking or there is no harmony in the family or lack of satisfaction in sexual life and so on. The strain causes a split in personality of the woman that is related to specific period, place and person. For example, at the temples of Ambabai and Dattatray one finds many possessed women and it is generally not pretence. It is either a deep state of self-hypnosis or mild mental illness to hysteria. Hysteria is an incidental affliction. The patient suffers from palpitation, shivering and twitching of the body, feeling of being choked or of chest being compressed. All these are mental disorders. The patient gets used to it, that is, it stops for a while but re-emerges before long. It may not be cured completely even after medical treatment because more than the treatment what is needed is to change the situation that has caused it in the first place. If the harassment by the mother-in-law or the addiction of the husband remains unchanged, the illness recurs. Sometimes, on the other hand, the patient is cured spontaneously or because of the positive suggestions given by the sorcerers and the patient and her relatives are convinced that it surely was an affliction caused by a ghost or spirit. Other symptoms like sudden lassitude of limbs, blindness despite perfectly healthy eyesight, becoming dumb with vocal apparatus intact, etc. Any cure for this disease brought

about by means other than medical treatment, has a dramatic effect on people and strengthens their belief in supernatural powers. Along with the approval of tradition, sense-excitation and self-hypnosis, a woman feels she is possessed and begins puffing and panting for hours, becomes insensitive to physical pain, starts talking in a strange language. Ignorance of scientific reasons behind these phenomena increase the mystery and consequently gives a boost to superstition. Ignorance and poverty are necessarily accompanied by disease and superstition. These unfortunate malnourished women and the members of their family fall pray to many easily avoidable diseases. Lack of cleanliness causes skin diseases, which are widespread in the rural areas. Similarly common are occurrences like premature deliveries, child mortality, deaths during childbirth or pregnancy and so on. Even the small countries like Srilanka and Bangladesh have been able to reduce child mortality much more than in our country. No wonder that women surrounded by so many adversities- malnutrition, neglect in childhood, ignorance, early pregnancies, deliveries without any medical help, rigors of bringing up the children and facing responsibilities without receiving proper training and education-become victims of superstition.

Chapter 5 : Secular Web Kiosk: Women Without Superstition

The Collected Writings of Women Freethinkers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The first anthology of women freethinkers, featuring more than 50 activists and writers critical of religion.

Dust Jacket Precis The untold story of the feminist movement is that it was sparked and nurtured by women without superstition, by the religious nonconformists and liberals, the unorthodox, the heretics, by the freethinking sceptics, rationalists, agnostic and atheists. It is thanks to the freethinking women who challenged religious sway over civil laws and practices that women have the rights they possess today. Women Without superstition is the first compilation of the writings of women freethinkers and sceptics. Most of these writings are out of print or generally unavailable. It is likewise the first anthology to focus on the freethinking writings of historic feminist leaders. This is the first book that highlights the freethinking views of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. It contains an exclusive "freethought reader sampling her iconoclastic views on the harm of religion. In addition to documenting the criticism of religion by many feminists figures, Women Without Superstition compiles the provocative, original, timely and eloquent views of other freethinking women, past and present, including social reformers, authors, leaders in the freethought movement, as well as current feminists. Robert Green Ingersoll dedicated his first book to Eva, "a woman without superstition. Ever since encountering it I have felt is expressed in a nutshell the feminist viewpoint toward patriarchal religion. One should not have to spend hours of often discouraging labor at the computer terminal, or tramp through university libraries, or experience eyestrain in front of microfilmed documents just to be able to read some of the views of women freethinkers! Their nonreligious views often have been suppressed, as if shameful, when in fact repudiation of patriarchal religion is an essential step in freeing women. Most are or were activists and doers, movers and shakers, with lives as fascinating as their writings. Finding biographical information often was as daunting as locating their freethought writings, therefore more background is offered than in the usual anthology. These contributions for the most part, have been recognised, whereas the contributions of women freethinkers have been marginalized. Freethought means the use of reason in forming opinions about religion, rather than basing belief on faith, authority or tradition. Some use a looser definition applying it to any system of philosophy or ethics, not necessarily the supernatural. They eschew superstition "a belief inconsistent with the known laws of science and reason. Among the pioneers of social change striving to move humankind forward, they have directed their energies to this world, not toward an unseen, improvable and unknowable one. Includes biographical sketches, selected writings, 51 photographs, and full index. ISBN with links to information and some of their writings.

For fifty years the women of this nation have tried to dam up this deadly stream that poisons all their lives, but thus far they have lacked the insight or courage to follow it back to its source and there strike the blow at the fountain of all tyranny, religious superstition, priestly power, and the canon law.

The real cruelty behind the superstitions or blind faith is that, it creates the mental slavery, person stops thinking and opens the doors for the exploitation. They believe that, these are not superstitions but the beliefs or customs which gives meaning to their life. The women who are exploited due to blind faiths become carrier of them. Then they are passed from mother to daughter and Mother-in-law to daughter-in-law. There are many reasons, which make the women superstitious. One of them is unending family problems at her home front. She is not equipped with the ways to escape these situations. She faces more failures, frustrations, grieves in her life. Fact that makes women helpless is their inferior position in family, society and religion. In 21st century also, she is unwelcomed from her birth. Long ago we had matriarchy in society. Every major work was done by women; they were able to take decisions etc. But now the scene has changed. Today women spend their whole life in male dominance. She is brought up with a teaching of her role in life as daughter, wife and mother. She has to do everything for the man in her life. Her every fast, vow is for her husband or son. If her husband died due to any reason, she is considered responsible for the death and ostracized by her family and society. As a widow, she is not invited to any religious function or celebration of any auspicious day. Every religion in the world has given the poor treatment to women in every aspect of life. For thousands of years, this religiousness is being engraved on her mind. The inferiority complex, sorrows and helplessness of hers leads to the superstitions. Due to early marriage, especially in villages, a girl conceives and delivers at a very early age. Five hundred out of a lakh of women die during delivery in India while in other developing countries the figure is 20! Most women are under continuous mental strain for various reasons. Torture by in laws, ignorance of husband, lack of recognition and prestige in family, household homely conflicts, sexual dissatisfaction etc. Sometimes she sits sullenly, suffers from palpitation, shivering and twitching of the body, feeling of being choked or of chest being compressed. All these are mental disorder called Hysteria. She was doing all these rituals full of superstitions with blind faith, just because it was told by her forefather. Also shares the experiences gained during awareness programs on superstitions eradication. In our society, it is observed that female are more superstitious than their male counterpart. But reaction by old lady aged around 55 to 60 years is worth mentioning. When we were enjoying our snacks, she approached and asked what, exactly we are trying to convey by doing this, without waiting for answer she enquired are we pregnant? Then she slap back, then Why eclipse should affect you, it affects pregnant ladies only, who take food in eclipse. Two things can be learned from this, superstitions pertaining to celestial bodies or phenomena or snake like species has too much influence on us, because they are imbibe on us since child hood, we take them for granted and if someone tries to justify us, we keep giving various branching to problem and support our behavior on the basis of some pseudo science. The real cruelty behind the superstitions or blind faith is that, it creates the mental slavery. As I mentioned earlier women are found to be more superstitious. The women who are exploited due to blind faiths become conveyor of them. Then these rituals are carried out and passed on from generations to generations ie. They never ask how and why? Page 2 of 7 The root cause of women being more superstitious lies in the circumstances and society in which they are born and brought up. One of them is the continuously stressed situation in which she lives. She is ignorant about the ways to escape these situations. She faces failures, frustrations, grieves in her life. This happens due to misconception that taking last sip of water from boy ensures your heaven seat or at least he will support his parents during their old age. A daughter is a daughter all her life. After independence our constitution has approved the male-female equality. But still this equality has yet to touch many segments, may be legislative assembly and parliament. May be about job opportunities as well as equal remuneration for the same work, privilege in property. The controversy is that those are only women who are the toppers of many exams in different fields and those are also women who are deserted, abandoned and become victims of dowry. The backward position which women

acquire in the society, religion, culture, economy, and politics is related to superstitions in different ways. We know long back we had matriarchy in society. Every major work was done by women; they were able to take decisions. To get married and give birth to a child is just like other work for man but for woman it is her entire being. The intent of this two vratas with all ritual together is logically impossible to attain, because one ensures same husband for seven life cycles, who needs to be elder than her, other ensures her death before her husband dies. Today India has progressed in many fields. Still some casts or religions do not allow remarriage of young widow. She does not deserve freedom. This first woman-the Eve- committed the sin of eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, because of which both Adam and Eve the first man and woman of the human race were condemned to leave paradise and live their lives on earth. Among the Jews, a wife can be divorced on as flimsy a cause Page 3 of 7 as burning a bread even if inadvertently. Among the Muslims the woman is made helpless and insecure by subjugating her in two ways. Polygamy is sanctioned and the right of a very easy divorce to the wife without alimony, is bestowed on the man by the religion. Thus all religions seem determined to subjugate women. Her health is always purposely ignored, from her birth. She is never given healthy diet. In addition to this; when she gets around 15 years old, her marriage is held. Immediately after marriage she gets pregnant. Now how can a malnourished mother, can nourish her foetus. The child born with very low weight. In India the child- death rate is higher than any other undeveloped country. This fact is then related to superstitions. This is also related to the heavenly wrath, some ones curse or a spell or sorcery. Lack of recognition, respect and prestige in family puts most of the women under continuous mental strain, there are other reasons too, torture by in laws, ignorance of husband, household conflicts, sexual dissatisfaction etc. These all factors shatters her personality. Sometimes she sits sullenly, sometimes starts murmuring, talking anything, cries, suffers from palpitation, shivering and twitching of the body, feeling of being choked or of chest being compressed. People ignorant of scientific reason of such behavior of any women think that she is possessed by some goddess. The exploitation of this myth is then well known. Our customs and traditions also contribute significantly to superstitions in women. She neither had right to diagnose the rituals nor to question them. Page 4 of 7 In Hinduism, the devadasi tradition servant of god is a religious tradition in which girls are "married" and dedicated to a deity God or Goddess or to a temple and includes performance aspects such as those that take place in the temple as well as in the courtly or home context. In the state of Karnataka in the region of South India the devadasi system was followed for over 10 centuries. Chief among them was the Yellamma cult. We can find many premature mothers in India especially in small towns and villages. Legal age for marriage in India is 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. Just imagine the situation of a girl who gets married at an age of 10 to 12 years. She is so innocent and young to even understand the meaning of the relationships; that little child, who is still at the stage of playing and kidding is sent to her in laws after marriage and her parents expect her to be happy. We are snatching the childhood pleasure, experience and all innocence by doing this. This tradition is known as Dakin Pratha. In Vidarbha more than cases were registered in respective police stations since and they continue to occur. They just manage their livelihood by doing some menial jobs. However their relatives or neighbors have an eye upon their landed property or house. As such they need some pretext to throw them out or kill them. These people benefit from their deaths or banishment from their home and property. The female black-magic practitioners are generally known as Chetakins. Generally mentally deranged woman or someone who has turned very vindictive due to some injustice done to her, turns into Chetakin. No wonder that women surrounded by so many adversities- malnutrition, neglect in childhood, ignorance, early pregnancies, deliveries without any medical help, rigors of bringing up the children and facing responsibilities without receiving proper training and education-become victims of superstition. Solution to the problem of superstition involves solving all these related problems. Women shall be guided to remove the inferiority complex. They have to develop themselves with a confidence.

Chapter 7 : Besant without superstition

Annie Laurie Gaylor's new book on Women Without Superstition is an outstanding contribution to Freethought literature. Most Freethought anthologies include selections from the famous male freethinkers of history, and except for a few outstanding individuals, female writers have been ignored.

Ninety women are portrayed And yet, what a tremendous difference they made in the life of our nation as they challenged the Christian church, the clergy and organized orthodox religion. I can tell you that the happiest period of my life has been since I emerged from the shadows and superstitions of the old theologies. She fought tirelessly to free women from legal constraints and from the blight of religious superstition. Stanton wrote and said over and over again Its greatest outrage upon her was to forbid her to control the function of motherhood under any circumstances Over population is the root of the most serious problems in the world. Women were not only trapped into economic and social slavery, they were also in biological slavery. The church hated her and the medical profession denounced her. She was often jailed and once had to flown to England to avoid a potential forty five year sentence. When the weight of governmental and clerical opinion fell heavily upon her, Ghandi, who in his own country realized the blight of overpopulation, came to her defense. So did Clarence Darrow and H. One of the greatest tributes paid her or any historical figure came from the pen of H. Both he and Napoleon were forced into fame by circumstances outside of themselves and by currents of the time, but Margaret Sanger made currents and circumstances. When the history of our civilization is written, it will be a biological history and Margaret Sanger will be its heroine. The power of the written word! The immortality of the written word. Great ideas are a force for change. There is an immortality in that, as the great Roman and Greek thinkers years ago still remind us. It is through their written words that Stanton and Sanger

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Chapter 9 : Women Without superstition "No gods "No Masters

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