

Images of the Oriental Women in The Arabian Nights

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The Arabian Nights was a very important channel of information that provided the westerners with ample material and useful knowledge about the east, its people, and their social life⁽¹⁾. Yet, in their presentations of the oriental people and their life, they always concentrated only on the black sides. This was exactly applicable to their attitude towards oriental women. The western opinions of oriental women in *The Arabian Nights* were always prejudicial ones. They fluctuated between contempt and outrage. They always thought of oriental women as submissive and inferior to man. Further, they conceived that she spent her life in sexual preparations and intrigues. These wrong ideas were held and strongly expressed by western writers and public as well.

Despite moral restrictions, the East for the First translator of *The Arabian Night*. (1704-1712) Antoine Galland was always linked with sexuality⁽²⁾. In his turn, Alexander Pope (1688-1744) believed that oriental women were lazy and converse with eunuchs

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about sex⁽³⁾. Even Richard Burton (1821-1890) who translated **The Arabian Nights** in (1885) conceived oriental woman as chattel and sexual convenience⁽⁴⁾. To impress on his reader these ideas, he provided his translation with notes and explanations to such notions⁽⁵⁾. These exaggerated ideas were due to the fact that these translators "could not help falling victims of choosing to stress what would interest their reader and stimulate their curiosity⁽⁶⁾. Thus, they concentrated on all vices traditionally attributed to oriental woman. But these judgements of oriental woman are not fair and too much dogmatic. *The Arabian Nights* abounds with different images of women most of which are good and stimulating.

However, this paper first aims at giving some hints about the narrow outlook of the westerners on oriental woman and the role she plays in *The Arabian Nights*. More attention will be paid to certain images such as faithless women, old women and malicious woman. Second, it attempts to give other images of oriental woman and the prominent role she plays in *The Arabian Nights*. The focus of attention will be on some images of a different category of oriental woman.

The description of the oriental woman in *The Arabian Nights* can be arranged into two categories. The first category contains the negative stereotypes that embody all vices traditionally associated with woman, and ones that are peculiar to her. The second category

of woman includes pious, prudent, clever and all other positive values attributed to a good woman ⁽⁷⁾.

One of the most important images of oriental woman presented in the first category is the faithless and freckle woman. She is respectively malign and plots to achieve her desire in the most merciless manner. The frame-tale sets the tone for the rest of the stories. King Shahzaman's wife befouls her husband's bed, as soon as his back is turned, with one of his ugly black slaves⁽⁸⁾. Before he can digest this great shock, he has another shock when he discovers his brother's beautiful wife betrays her husband in the exact same manner with a black slave during her husband's absence. Having achieved their revenge on their unfaithful wives, the two kings set out a journey together. On their way, they meet a lascivious woman who forces king Shahzaman and his brother to have a sexual intercourse with her. Having satisfied her lust of them, and having added their rings to her collection, she starts to tell them her story, how she manages to outwit the jinni who captures her. Then she tells them the nature of women:

Rely not on women,	Trust not their hearts
Lying love they will swear thee	when a guile ne'er departs
Take Yousif for example	ware slight and 'ware smart!
Iblis crusted Adam	(see Ye not) thro' their arts ⁽⁹⁾ .

Assured of women's inherent lechery and treachery, the two wretched kings return to their kingdoms, with Shaharyar vowing to revenge upon women by taking a virgin in marriage to his bed every night and kills her the next morning.

Another example of lecherous woman, who betrays her husband by copulating with anyone and anywhere, is presented in the "Tale of the Ensorcelled Prince." In this interesting story, the prince's wife is faithless as she leaves her husband's bed every night, after having him drugged with sleeping-potion, in order to go to a hovel house on the other side of the city and lie with a black slave. He abuses her with various obscene epithets, makes her eat rat-stew and rages at her being late. When she tries to defend her, he becomes angrier and shouts:

Thou liest, down thee now I swear an oath by the
valour And honor of blackamoor men ...from today
forth if thou Stay a way till this hour, I will not keep
company with Thee nor I glue my body with thy body
and strum and Belly -bump. Dost play fast and loose
with us, thou cracked Pot that we may satisfy thy dirty
lust? Stinkard bitch; Vilest of the vile whites⁽¹⁰⁾.

The prince's wife is so impudent that she is not offended by such a bad language, and continues to humiliate herself before her lover until he agrees to lie with her.

The Arabian Nights tales abound with other examples of faithless women .In the "Tale of the Trader the Jinni," "The Story of the Third Shaykh" the Shaykh's wife deceives her husband with a black slave. A similar image of oriental woman is presented in "The Tale of Kamar al-Zaman" In this tale both queen Budur and Hayat al-Nufus betray their husbands, as each loves her sister-wife's son. Queen Hayat al-Nufus attempts to seduce her husband 's son, Amjad, while queen Budur does the same shameful deed with Asa'ad⁽¹¹⁾. A question may be asked: to what extent *The Arabian Nights* is precise in portraying the oriental woman as freckle, faithless and lewd? This question has given rise to much controversy. Suhair Al- Kalamawi says that these attributes are universal and could be found among womenfolk everywhere and anytime So it is natural to find such qualities among the oriental woman..She also adds that *The Arabian Nights* has exaggerated too much in attributing these traits to women⁽¹²⁾. Another critic, Bahjat Al-Hadithi believes that the Arabized society is a mixture of peoples of different nationalities, Persian, Turks, Byzantine and Indian who lived side by side with the Arabs. Then he adds that these peoples were known for their indulgence in pleasure and immoral practices especially among femaleslaves⁽¹³⁾. From this speech we can infer that *The Arabian Nights* reflected the spirit of the age in which it was set. Muhammad Al-Shahatt confirms that "by portraying

women in this way. *The Arabian Nights* wanted to criticize the court corruption presents the most acceptable point of view. In other words, the sashes of sex are used to cover up an objective intended i. e. political and social criticism. However, *The Arabian Nights* expresses its anger at and indignation against faithless woman that is always punished at the end of each tale⁽¹⁴⁾.

The other important image of the oriental woman presented by *The Arabian Nights* is the old woman. The old woman in these oriental tales plays different roles, but she is given rather a similar physical description. She is presented as:

A witch...past mistress in sorcery and deception, wanton and wily, debauched and deceptious, with foul breath, red eyelids, yellow cheeks, dull brown face, eyes bleared, mangy body, hair grizzled, back humped, skin withered and wan and nostrils ever ran⁽¹⁵⁾.

This presentation of the old woman does not differ too much from the traditional description given by world literature⁽¹⁶⁾. However, the old woman in *The Arabian Nights* can be arranged into two kinds: the first that embodies all vices associated with bad and corrupted people. The second one contains women who are pious, good and helpful.

The old woman, in the first kind is portrayed as a witch, cunning, malign, and has all other vices. Zat al-Dawahi in the "Tale of King Omar bin al-Nu'man and his Sons,"⁽¹⁷⁾ is a typical example of the old woman of the first kind. She is a very eccentric woman as she masters magic of men and demons. Further, she practices sapphism and cannot exist without it. More than this she teaches damsels the art of rubbing clitoris against clitoris till they gain voluptu.

Not only this, but she is a hypocrite. She pretends to be a pious and religious woman, a trick by which she manages to enter the palace of Omer al-Nu'uman and whenever he visits her, he finds . Zat al-Dawahi absorbs in prayers. Moreover, she understands what men like and hate. So to control king Omer and revenge upon him, she gives him a gift of five beautiful girls. Her objective is to divert the king's attention from ruling his country and leading his army against his enemy⁽¹⁸⁾. Her plan succeeds to weaken king Omer and kills him, and later his son Sharkan.

Furthermore, vindication and hatred are two ugly images attributed to the old woman of *The Arabian Nights*. She hates Muslims and conspires to harm them. This attitude is clearly expressed in a speech delivered to the allied forces she leads herself against the Muslims:

When once ye brought me into the Moslems camp,
and I mix with them.. .you shall see how I will make
shift to beguil them and slay them all, even to the last
man⁽¹⁹⁾.

In addition to this, the story of "The Porter and the Three Girls"⁽²⁰⁾ presents an image of the old woman, which by no means, differs from the traditional image. She is depicted as a hideous creature with deeply wrinkled face, and wild shaggy hair and her teeth are broken. Though she is greatly aged, she is strong, clever and cunning to swindle and gull a very beautiful woman whom she visits at her home. She manages to persuade her to befoul her husband's reputation during his absence. Consequently, she brings her matrimonial life to total destruction as she is taken away to her father's home.

However, *The Arabian Nights* presents another image of the old woman that is rather different from the previous one. In many tales the old woman is presented as good and helpful. In the tale of "Ghanim Ibn Aiyub, the distracted slave of love", the old woman helps Zubaida to achieve her aims. The old woman uses her cleverness and devices a trick by which she separates between Harun Al-Rasid and Kut el-Kulub. The old woman gives her drugs and has her locked in a chest and carried to the market⁽²¹⁾. These examples show that the old woman in *The Arabian Nights* is not a

human crippled by time and circumstances. On the contrary, she plays an active part in society as we find her a military leader, a wicked and sometimes helpful.

In *The Arabian Nights* there is a considerable number of tales and stories that center on the theme of malice of woman. The frame story of "The Seven Viziers" introduces an interesting example of the malicious woman. In the story the queen tries in vain to tempt her husband's son who makes no response. Fearing that he might tell his father, she maliciously tells her husband that his son tries to seduce her and she repels him⁽²²⁾. This false accusation consequences upon passing sentence of death. Before carrying out the penalty, the king's counsel tries to turn the king from his decision. Each member of the counsel tells him a story about malice of women.

In the tale of "The Wife's Device to Cheat Her Husband", the woman character, as usual, is depicted as beautiful and has no equal of her time. Though her husband loves her, a young man with the help of a wicked woman easily tempts her. When the old woman goes out to bring the young man, she can't find him. Being evil and malicious, the old woman brings a strange man without knowing that he is the lady's husband. As soon as she opens the door, she sees her husband. Fearing the scandle, she pulls her husband off her outer boot and cries at him:

Is this how thou keepest the contract between
us? How can't thou betray me and deal thus with
me? Know that, when I heard of thy coming, I
sent this old woman to try thee: and she hath made
warned thee; so I am certified of thine affair and
that thou hast broken faith with me... Divorce me⁽²³⁾.

By this cunning craft, ready wit and malice, she gets out of this
critical situation.

The story of "The Lady and Her Five Suitors" provides us with
a better example of woman's craft and malice. The woman in this
story is presented as young, beautiful, rich and malicious. Since her
husband is always absent, she betrays him with a handsome lover
who is, one day, imprisoned. She wants to save him. She
respectively goes to the governor of the city, the Cazi's houses. The
Wazir's and the carpenter. When they see her, they are ravish with
her and desire her. But she lacks neither malice nor knowledge of
the ways of men, she makes a plan to make fun of them. She invites
them to her house, each in a certain time. The first to arrive is the
governor, when he is trying to throw himself on her, they hear a
knock on the door. She makes him believe that he is her husband.
So she pushes him in the cupboard. She does the same thing with all
other. After taking the governor's orders, she releases her lover; and
she leaves them imprisoned in the cupboard one over the other. The

king urinei on the Wazir's head and the Wazir on the Wall's head and the Wall pisses on the Cazi⁽²⁴⁾.

It is clear that the tale portrays oriental woman in a traditional way, she is beautiful, clever, faithless and above all malicious. Again the woman is used by *The Arabian Nights* to mock at and criticize the political institutions of that time as represented by the governor, the wazir, the Wali and other members. The tale says that instead of protecting people, they try to exploit them. In addition to this, the tale sheds light on their tomfool life⁽²⁵⁾. At the same time, the tale, through woman character bears men the responsibility of women corruption because they leave their wives for a long time.

Another image of woman presented by *The Arabian Nights* is a witch. Witches in *The Arabian Nights* are of two kinds: the first one has evil magic powers, and the second uses her magic power to help other people. Woman in the "Tale of the Trader and the Jinni" the third shykh's story is the best example of the first kind. The woman in this story deceives her husband during his absence and practices love with a black slave. Not only this, but when he sees her, she rises and sprinkles' upon him some water and after uttering some words over him, he beomes a dog⁽²⁶⁾. In the same story, there is an example of the good witch who helps people. The butcher's daughter practices magic to release the man from the evil magic power and changes the first witch into a mare mule. Another

example of witch image is to be seen in "The story of the First Shykh". The woman in this story is a wife of a merchant and she is barren. So her husband marries a concubine who brings him a male child. But his first wife who learns gramarge and geometry and clearly craft from her childhood bewitches his son to a calf and his second wife is transformed into a heifer. At the same time, the story presents another example of a good witch who employs her craft for good intentions. So she helps to release the child and to transform her into a gazelle.

The woman in the second category is also presented in different images. She is highly learned, a faithful and passionate lover, demoness, woman warrior, pious woman and some other images of less significance⁽²⁷⁾.

One of the best examples of wise and learned woman is Scheherazad, who is described both good and physically desirable, intelligent and highly learned, She exceeds other women of her time as she:

Had perused the books, annals, and legends of preceding kings, and the stories, ...She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and sciences, art..... She was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred⁽²⁸⁾.

She uses her learning and her gift of story- telling to capture the attention of the mad and sadistic king. Not only this, but she sides with the king against the crafty and malicious wiles of women in the tales of *The Arabian Nights*. After passing of thousand and one nights, she changes his attitude towards the other sex and becomes devoted to her.

Nazhat al-Zaman is another example of the learned woman painted by *The Arabian Nights*. She is peerless in her time for unmatched beauty and learning. She is acquainted with all branches of Knowledge. When the merchant, who wants to buy her, asks about her learning, she eloquently answers:

I am acquainted with philosophy and medicine and the prolegomena of science and commentaries of Galen, the physician. I have studied the simples of Ibin Baytar...! am skilled in logic and rhetoric and arithmetic.. .and I understand all these branches of knowledge⁽³⁰⁾.

All these gifts raise the position of this slave- girl socially and economically, as she marries Sharkan, king of Damascus. The slave-girl Tawaddud is another example of highly learned and educated woman presented by the tale of "Abu al Hassan and his slave Girl Tawaddud". She is a merchant's beloved who squanders his wealth until he has nothing left but his beloved Tawaddud. She

advises him to put her up for sale to the Caliph. He sells the girl and when she is examined in what branches she excels; she replies:

I am versed in syntax and poetry..'. I know the sublime Koran by heart .. .I have studied the exact Sciences, geometry and philosophy and medicine and logic...In fin, I have reached a pitch of perfection such as can Be estimated only by those of them who are firmly rooted in knowledge⁽²⁷⁾.

Not only this, but when the Caliph demands that she should prove her claim before a committee of philosophers and scientists, she defeats all her opponents one by one. The Caliph bestows her royal gifts.

All these examples prove that the oriental woman is not illiterate but she is highly learned and richly educated. This shows us that facilities for teaching woman during the Abasid period were great.

One of the best images of women presented by *The Arabian Nights* is the image of love. There are various stories and anecdotes in which the plot centers around a loving couple. Let us take as an example "The Tale of Aziz and Aziza" She is a symbol of a high conception of womanly love and devotion⁽²⁸⁾. Despite her wearisome and continuous weeping, she is a girl of high intelligence and wit that she uses to further her love affair of her cousin. Thus,

when Aziz falls in the clutches of a wicked woman who is called crafty Dalila, she tries her best to join him. Her speech to Aziz is very expressive:

O son of my mine uncle, if thou soughtest my
 eye, I would tear it for thee... I can not but aid aid
 thee to thy desire; for she is whelmed in
 passion for thee even as thou for her⁽³¹⁾.

In addition to this, Aziza is a patient lover. She endures Aziz's continuous rejection and ill treatment. It happens one day he kicks her savagely and open a cut in her face, but for his sake, she smiles and utter s no word. Aziza's grief and weeping for her cousin, who jilts on the very day that to be her wedding day, falls ill and dies⁽³²⁾.

In the tale of "Nur Ed Din Ali and Enis El-Jelis" a different image of a woman lover is painted. Enis El-Jelis is a slave-girl with surpassing beauty and a challenging character. More important of all these attributes is her educational gifts, which raise her price and values in the slave market. She loves Nur Ed Din and she is ready to sacrifice her life to make him happy. When her lover becomes penniless as a result of extravagance and squandering his wealth, she asks him to sell her in the salves- market and this is a great self-sacrifice for the sake of a lover. When she is gifted to Harun al Rashid. she makes no objection her husband's desire.

In the "Tale of Ali Bin Bakkar and Shams al- Nahar"⁽³³⁾ the woman lover is presented in the traditional manner, Shams al-Nahar is a woman of complete beauty and loveliness. This is the reason why Harun al Rashid chooses her as his favorite and endows her everything, money and all means of luxurious life. Moreover, she is sensitive and can not look at her lover without weeping and fainting. Despite all goodies of life, which she enjoys in the palace of Harun al- Rashid. she suffers too much for the sake of her lover, Ali. One day she falls ill. and the doctor who examines her, finds that her sickness arises from love and longing.

From these tales we can say that woman lover is always of surpassing beauty that no one can resist loving her from the first sight. Moreover, most women lovers are slave girls who have many gifts and qualifications that raise their value and price in the slave market.

The Arabian Nights contains a heterogeneous and at the same time repetitive tales or stories where woman characters are demonesses who play active roles in the sequence of events. Demonesses, as presented by *The Arabian Nights*, are of different types: The first one, which is the majority, contains demonesses who are good and believe in God. The second group is demonesses who are bad and practice magic and sorcery⁽³⁴⁾.

In the "Tale of Kamar Ez-Zaman", the central woman character is a demoness whose name is Maimuna, the daughter of the renowned demons' king. The demoness here, as in other tales, is dealt with as a human being, i.e. she behaves like human beings, speaks their language, loves like them and imitates them in everything. The only basic difference between them and human beings is that the former processes supernatural powers⁽³⁵⁾. Accordingly, Maimuna loves Kamar Ez-Zaman in the same traditional way a woman loves. In other words, she loves him and he does so from first sight. In addition to this, the demoness languishes and pines away as a true lover does.

"The Second Shaykh's Story" introduces another example of demoness who is Moslem with the capability of transforming any one to any shape she likes. As it often happens *in The Arabian Nights*, she meets a human being by chance during a sea voyage.⁽³⁵⁾ Being a pious demoness, she appears disguised as a real woman lest she might scare him. Moreover, she possesses supernatural power by which she saves her husband when he is thrown overboard by his two wicked brothers. She is also capable of transforming anyone to any shape she likes.

"The Tale of Sidi Numan" presents a different kind of demoness who embodies all vices and evils. The hero of this tale has misfortune of marrying a young woman of surprising beauty

who turns to be a ghoul of the race of devils. She has the interest of digging up the graves corps that have been recently buried and devours them, and she practices sorcery into the bargain. As soon as she learns that her husband spies her abominable doing, she changes him into a dog⁽³⁶⁾.

"The Story of Hassan of Bassorah" has a fascinating example of demoness. The woman character of this adventurous story belongs to the world of Jinn. She is the daughter of the king of jinn who haunts Wak Wak Islands. As described by the narrator, she is a female of surpassing beauty, fairer than the moon, and a face-sheneer than the sun⁽³⁷⁾. Although she is a demoness, she loves a human being and has two children.

All these examples of woman as demonesses, as Suhyar Al-Kalamawi says, are drawn from the imagination of the narrator. The use of Demons and Jinn enjoyed wide popularity at the age in which the tales were set. They catered for their desire to escape their real life⁽³⁸⁾. Whereas Ahmed Al-Shahatt believes that woman as demoness or jinn were used as a sash to criticize some social and political issues⁽³⁹⁾.

The Arabian Nights presents other images of woman which might be included in the two categories. One such image is the woman warrior. Such images are drawn from the narrator's imagination rather than reality⁽³⁶⁾. However, *The Arabian Nights*

presents two types of woman warrior: the first type is a human being, and the second is demoness. In "The Tale of Omer bin al-Nu'uman and his Son", the woman warrior is not a Muslim, but Nazarene whose name is Abrizah. She is brave, daring and fights on the side of Muslims against their enemies⁽⁴⁰⁾. In the same tale, Zat all-Dawahi plays the same role. Though she is an old woman, she leads a huge army and fights on the side of the Muslims enemies.

The second type of woman warrior contains demoness. This image is based on the narrator's imagination and used for the sake of entertainment and prolonging the tale⁽⁴¹⁾. One of the most stimulating examples is a woman warrior whom Hassan of Bassorah meets in the Islands of Wak Wak. Whether the woman warrior is a human being or a demoness, she is always of unmatched beauty and her beauty is only her weapon by which she wins the combat. Then we have pious woman who is usually either well-brought virgin who falls victim to a cruel fate before being corrupted or pious wife or mother. She is kind and good and her kindness causes troubles to her. In "The Tale of the Miser and the Loaves", for instance, a king prohibits the giving alms, on the penalty of having a hand cut off. But a pious woman gives two loaves of bread to a poor man. So she loses her hands. But God rewards her by marrying the king for her beauty⁽⁴²⁾.

Another woman image, which is less recurrent, is the shrewish woman. The story of "Ma'aruf the Cobbler and his wife Fatima", presents elaborately Ma'aruf's wife as spiteful, termagant, violent, stormy, uncontrollable and disobedient⁽⁴³⁾. In a similar manner the shrewish woman in the story of "The Ball and the Ass" is briefly depicted. She is disobedient, and stupid. She makes her husband's life a burden and a torment⁽⁴⁴⁾.

To conclude, images of oriental woman in *The Arabian Nights* were curiously variant with European ideas concerning her role and position in society. Oriental woman was not, as the European wrongly thought, cattle or a sexual connivance. It is true that *The Arabian Nights* had exploited the physical traits of the oriental woman, and accused her of being corrupted. But such presentation was too much exaggerated and they were purposefully used to criticize social and political corruption at the time when they were set.

Beside these negative images. *The Arabian Nights* perpetuated a different kind of oriental woman. Oriental woman appears more remarkable than man for her action, qualification and role in society. Thus, she was presented as educated who excelled man in all fields of knowledge. Not only this, but she uses her wit and cunning to gull man and control him. Finally, oriental woman with both physical beauty and mental power used to exert supreme influence on public and private lives.

Notes

- (1) Issam Al-Khatib, "The Orientalism of Alfred, Lord Tennyson." unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Western Reserve University, (1967), p. 9.
See also: Martha Conant P. "*The Oriental Tales in England in the Eighteenth Century.*" New York. Octagon Books. 1966, p. 242.
- (2) H.L. Carl. JV. Ed "*Race.*" *Writing and Difference.* Chicago, 1986, p.25.
- (3) H.L. Carl, P.30.
- (4) H.L. Carl, P. 63.
- (5) سهير القلماوي ، "الف ليلة وليلة" القاهرة، دار المعارف، 1976 ص 22.
- (6) Sahair Al-Kalamawi, in her book *The Arabian Nights*. 4th edition, Cario, 1976, pp. 300-323, makes another classification to woman. She classifies them into two categories: The first is drawn from the narrator's environment / reality. The second is drawn from the author's imagination.
- (7) H.L. Carl, P.21.
- (8) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. I, p. 13.

All quotations of *The Arabian Nights* are taken from:
Richard F. Burton, *The Arabian Nights with
Introduction and Explanatory Notes*. Beirut, 1966.

- (9) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. I, p. 13.
- (10) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. I. p.72.
- (11) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. IV. pp. 3 10-3 12.
- (12) سهير القلماوي، ص 221 - 322.
- (13) بهجت عبدالغفور الحديثي، دراسات نقدية في الشعر العربي، وزارة الثقافة
والإعلام، بغداد، 1922 ن ص 116
- (14) الشحاذ، ص 184
- (15) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. II. p.233.
- (16) For more details see: the three witches in Shakespeare's
Macbeth.
- (17) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. II. p. 77.
- (18) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. II. pp. 9 1-92.
- (19) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. II. p.238.
- (20) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. I. pp!04..82-
- (21) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol.. pp.45- II 49.
- (22) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. VI, pp. 122-128.
- (23) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. VI. p.155.
- (24) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. VI, p. 172.
- (25) احمد محمد الشحاذ الملامح السياسية في حكاية ألف ليلة وليلة، الطبعة
الثالثة، بغداد، 6.

- (26) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. I. p.36.
- (27) أفاق عربية، العدد الخامس، كانون الثاني، 1970، ص 40.
- (28) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. I. p. 15.
- (29) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. 1, p. 1 5,
- (30) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. V.. p. 194.
- (31) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. II, p.302.
- (32) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. II. pp.14-15.
- (33) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. III, p. 163.
- (34) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. III, pp.3 12-3 13.
- (35) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. I. pp. 34-35..
- (36) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol.. pp.325-338.
- (37) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. VIII. p.46.
- (38) سهير القلماوي، ص، 314.
- (39) الشحاذ، ص 184.
- (40) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. II, p.238.
- (41) القلماوي، ص 315.
- (42) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. IV. pp.28 1-282.
- (43) آداب الرافدين، العدد 15، ص 53.
- (44) *The Arabian Nights*. Vol. I. pp.20-23.

ملخص

صوم المرأة في حكايات "الف ليلة وليلة"

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تعد حكايات ألف ليلة وليلة من القنوات المهمة التي زودت الأوربيين بالكثير من المعلومات عن الشرق وحياة شعوبه وتقاليدهم الاجتماعية. وعلى الرغم من ان ألف ليلة وليلة تزخر بالكثير من الصور المشرفة للمرأة الشرقية، إلا أنهم تعمدوا الإساءة إليها وتشويه صورتها المشرفة من خلال تركيزها على الجوانب السلبية وإهمالهم عن عمد ما هو مشرق وإيجابي في شخصيتها. فقد ركزوا في تراجمهم لحكايات ألف ليلة وليلة على كل الصفات السلبية للمرأة الشرقية منها الخيانة، الشذوذ الجنسي، السحر والشعوذة، المكر والخديعة، وكل سمات الانحلال الخلقي. إن الهدف من ذلك هو الإساءة إلى المرأة الشرقية وعلى الأخص المرأة العربية وهم بهذا يتماشون مع الذوق العام في عصرهم.

إلا أن ما قدمته ألف ليلة وليلة من صور رائعة للمرأة يفند ما ركز عليه أولئك المترجمون. إذ أن الحكايات قد صورة المرأة الشرقية تصويراً رائعاً بالعديد من الصور الجميلة التي تليق بمكانتها ودورها في المجتمع. لقد قدمت الحكايات المرأة الشرقية كمنابغة في كل العلوم والمعارف وتتفوق على الرجل حين تنافسه. وكذلك صورت لنا الحكايات المرأة العاملة، المحاربة الشجاعة، المخلصة التقية الورعة وغيرها من الصفات الحميدة. وحتى عندما تكون المرأة ماكرة، فهي تستخدم المكر والحيلة من أجل تحقيق أهدافها.

إن الهدف الذي تتوخاه ألف ليلة وليلة من تقديم هذه الصور المتنوعة للمرأة هو النقد اللاذع للسلطة أمثال الولاة والقضاة وغيرهم ممن أداروا ظهورهم لهموم العامة ومشاكلهم من أجل تحقيق مصالحهم الخاصة.

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