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Book Reviews: Popular Books Section



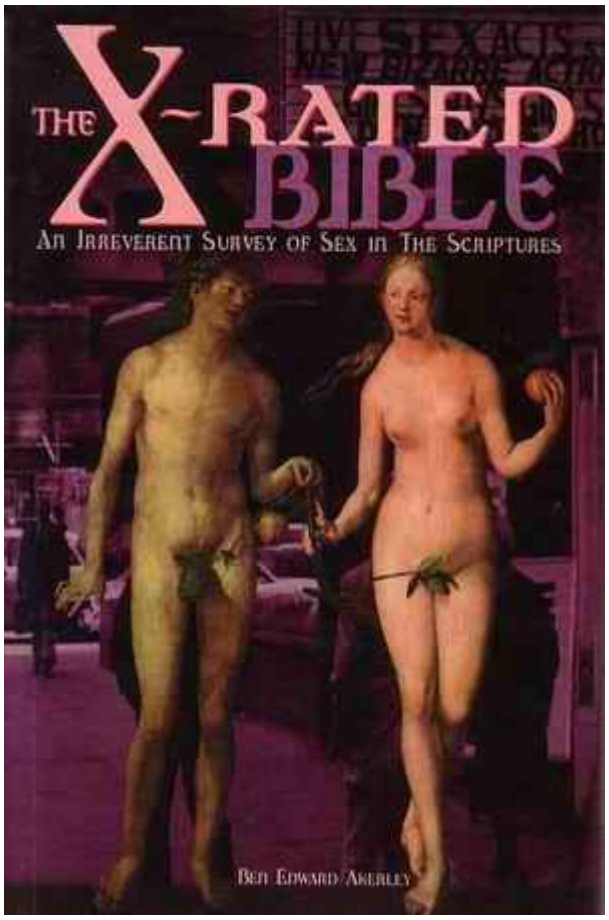
...IRRESISTIBLY CHARMING ...The book is amply illustrated with line art at several places. The stories are captivating and will keep you spellbound for hours together. I for one, did not put the book down, until I had completely read all stories. Highly recommended. Unputdownable! You must read this book, if you want to know the references to dirty sex, our Holy Bible gives. Akerley's X-rated Bible is one of the best books I have read in recent times...

The X-Rated Bible: An Irreverent Survey of Sex in the Scriptures, 2nd Revised edition by Ben Edward Akerley. Paperback, 9" x 6" x 0.6".
Feral House, PO Box 39910, Los Angeles, CA 90039, USA. . . Publication Date 1998. 245 pages, ISBN-10: 0922915555. ISBN-13: 978-0922915552. Price $14.95

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Traditionally we tend to associate our holy scriptures with piety, reverence and holiness. Since for most of us, sex is a dirty thing - don't worry if we enjoy it; we like saying it to others - we believe our holy scriptures would not mention it at all. Or if at all they need to mention it, they would do it with utmost care or only in passing. This is not the case, as I discovered only a few days ago. But not with the book under review. I did so with Hindu scriptures. Hang on!

For a book on paraphilias (sexual deviations) that I am currently writing for a major publisher, I was researching for instances of sexual deviations that occurred in history and were perhaps recorded in our scriptures. Guess what I found? That during a very important ceremony in ancient India, the horse sacrifice (known in Hindi variously as Aswamegha, Ashwamegha, Ashwamedha or Ashvamedha), the chief queen mimicked copulation with the dead horse! I was intrigued that Hindu religion had such explicit references to bestiality. I was curious to find if there were similar instances in other scriptures, and lo! I discovered Akerley's brilliant book.

The book is full of references to sex - mostly weird - from The Holy Bible. There are references to exhibitionism, voyeurism, bestiality, mate swapping, rape, incest, whoring and every other kind of abnormal sex that one can imagine - even scatology! When you read the same thing on the jacket of the book, you don't believe it. But when you get to read the book, you have to believe. There are neat references given to all instances of weird sex that Akerley gives. I even checked up with the Holy Bible myself and realized Akerley correctly quotes the Bible.

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Let me give some examples. We all know about Abishag, the Shunammite, a young woman of Shunem, known for her exquisite beauty. She was chosen to be a helper and servant to David in his old age. Among Abishag's jobs was to lie next to David and keep him warm. When David died,

Solomon fell in love with her. Sample these verses from the holy Bible where Solomon is expressing his love for Abishag.

Solomon praising the breasts of Abishag (from page 216 of the reviewed book)



Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins . [The Song of Solomon 7:3]

This thy stature is like to a palm tree,

and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

I said, I will go up to the palm tree,

I will take hold of the boughs thereof:

now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,

and the smell of thy nose like apples;

and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved,

that goeth down sweetly,

causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

I am my beloved's,

and his desire is toward me . [The Song of Solomon 7:7-10]

Part VIII dealing with references to prostitution in the Bible, gives the story of beautiful Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah. She was first married to Judah's eldest son, Er, who died. After her husband's death, she was married to Onan, Judah's second son, and Er's brother. When Onan also died, Judah promised to her that his third son, Shelah, would become her husband. Judah probably had no intentions of doing this, since both his elder sons had died at Jehovah's hand, and he thought that Tamar represented a curse to him. Not wanting to jeopardize the life of his only remaining son, therefore, he decided to send Tamar away from his home.

Tamar seducing her own father-in-law Judah, posing as a prostitute (from page 84 of the reviewed book)



Tamar sensed this, and not wanting to remain barren forever, she decided to get her revenge on Judah by disguising herself as a prostitute and offered herself to her father-in-law Judah. As her payment, Judah agreed to offer her a young goat. As a security pledge for Tamar to hold until the arrival of the young goat, he gave her his ring, bracelets and staff. Then they fornicated.

She claimed his staff, signet and cloak as pledge of payment. From this union, Tamar became pregnant. When Judah accused her of fornication, and wanted her to be burned to death, she produced the staff and signet and identified Judah himself as the father. Judah had to pardon her. Tamar had twin sons, Zarah and Pharez.

Akerley completes this discussion by asserting that this story reveals that there was little or no prejudice in Israel against purely secular prostitution.

In Part IV giving references to rape, Akerley gives several examples. Among them are when Reuben rapes his father's mistress, when Shechem, the rapist, loses his foreskin and his life and the all night gang bang. The last is quite interesting and needs mention. In this instance, the act of gang rape even kills the victim! A certain Levite, was returning home from his father-in-law's house in Bethlehem, along with his concubine-wife and his servant. They travel as far as Jebus when the sun sets, but they decide against spending the night there since it was not a city of Israel. They continue

on to Gibeah, a city of the tribe of Benjamin. Upon their arrival in Gibeah, an old man offers them lodging for the night at his home. Soon many men of the city surround the house and demand the host to hand his male guests over to them so they could sodomise them. Since the old man wanted to protect his guests, he offered them his own virgin daughter, but they reject her. Finally they agree to take the Levite's concubine-wife, whom they rape the whole night. The next day the Levite finds that his wife is lying dead at his host's doorstep. In grief he loads her body onto his jackass, and on arrival home, dismembers her body into twelve parts, and sends one part each to the twelve tribes of Israel to apprise them of what had happened to his wife at the hands of the Benjaminites of Gibeah. Here is what the book of Judges says [Judges 19:22-30]:

Benjaminites of Gibeah gang raping the wife of the Levite, who was a guest in their city (from page 53 of the reviewed book)



Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Be'li-al, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.

Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.

But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light.

And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold.

And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place.

And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.

And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

To be sure, the Bible prescribes many punishments (albeit not so severe) for the rapist. However despite the punishments prescribed for rape, there are several instances of rape in the Bible. Perhaps the most telling of them all is where Amnon, the son of David and Ahinoam rapes his half sister Tamar (daughter of David and Maachah). Amnon was so much infatuated with Tamar that he became physically ill as a result of his amorous ardor. He wanted to see her privately, but because of the custom of segregating young men and women from one another, he couldn't get to see her. Finally his crafty cousin Jonadab suggested him a trick to get to meet Tamar. The suggestion was that Amnon would feign illness and request his father David to send Tamar to him to nurse him. Amnon succeeded and Tamar finally came to his room. Amnon sent all the men away from his sick chamber so that he and Tamar could be alone. As soon as they were alone, Amnon asked Tamar to go to bed with him. Tamar - quite rightly - refused, saying that it would amount to a crime of incest. She however suggested that Amnon speak to David and ask him for her hand in marriage, so that there would be no scandal about the affair. In Biblical times, it was okay to have sexual intercourse with close relatives, if they were married, but not otherwise. Amnon however did not listen to Tamar and forcibly raped her. And after he was through, he expelled Tamar from his chamber, because he hated her, for she had refused his request for sexual intercourse.

Amnon raping his own half sister Tamar, by deceit and trickery (from page 5 of the reviewed book)



And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. And she said unto him, There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her. And she had a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins appareled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying **[II Samuel 13:11-19]**.

Part XIV dealing with the theme of sexual betrayal gives the stories of a honeymoon with the wrong bride, when Delilah double-crosses Samson and when king Ahasuerus ditches queen Vashti for Esther. Kind Ahasuerus, who is none other than the Persian emperor Xerxes, once asks his queen Vashti to promenade before his drunken guests. When she refuses to do so, he expels her from his palace. A kind of advertisement is placed so a new queen could be inducted. Mordecai, who is already in the king's palace, brings his cousin Esther to the palace to enter the competition for the

queen. Esther, so nicely pleases the king that he immediately makes her his queen. Akerley gives an interesting account of the whole story and quite rightly surmises that Esther must have been quite a bedroom virtuosa in accomplishing this feat!

Maidens preparing a new bride Esther for the eagerly awaiting Ahasuerus, who expelled his chaste wife Vashti, because she refused to promenade before his drunken guests (from page 204 of the reviewed book)



Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Ab'ihail the uncle of Mor'decai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what He'gai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

So Esther was taken unto king Ahasue'rus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.[**Esther 2:15-18**]

The book is amply illustrated with line art at several places, some of which I have tried to excerpt in this review. Readers can guess from these figures, how interesting this book should be! The stories are captivating and will keep you spellbound for hours together. I for one, did not put the book down, until I had completely read all stories. Highly recommended. Unputdownable! You must read this book, if you want to know the references to dirty sex, our Holy Bible gives. Akerley's X-rated Bible is one of the best books I have read in recent times.

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