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## MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE AND RELIGION IN WOMEN'S UNDERSTANDING OF TURKISH CULTURE

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### ABSTRACT

This study will compare the understanding of women in Turkish mythology and beliefs on the axis of mythology and religion. Discussions about the understanding of women continue in societies. Mythology or religious rituals are effective in evaluating the relationships between men and women. Academic studies on the understanding of women in Turkish culture on the axis of mythology and religions were investigated by Social Sciences Citation Index, Google Scholar, and Internet publications. Research shows that mythological practices rather than religious practices were effective in women's relationships with men and in the distinction between men and women. In Jewish mythology, Lilith was created before Eve as the first woman and was believed to bring evil to the world. In Greek mythology, it was seen that Zeus created woman as punishment to men and sent Pandora as a source of evil. According to ancient Turkish mythology, the woman called Eje came under the influence of evil forces called Erlik, Satan, or Körmös, and made people called *Törüngey* become instruments of their evil, and God punished them. From the moment the holy book, the Holy Quran, was first revealed in the Arabian Peninsula, it has defended the equality of men and women and women's rights with verses, and women have begun to take their rightful place in society. The basis of the discrimination between men and women lies in mythological beliefs rather than in the practices brought by known sacred religions. Mythological beliefs on the perception of women have also been influential in Turkish societies.

**Keywords:** Women, Turks, mythology, religion.

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## INTRODUCTION

While women and men should be equal, from time to time in different geographies of the world, as in our country, inequality between men and women emerges in many aspects of life in different ways. The religions, beliefs, and mythology that societies believe in are effective in this inequality. In this study, the view of women in Turkish culture will be investigated in terms of mythology and religion. In our study, how women are mentioned in mythology, world narratives, and Turkish narratives and the effect of religions on this will be compared in the axis of mythology and religion. It will be revealed how women in Turkish culture are restricted from their social lives thanks to mythological narrative elements.

Mythology is a folk narrative based on a tradition of unknown origin, spread traditionally as a collection of rumors, influenced by rites that convey apparently experienced events, influenced by the imagination. Mythological studies became important in the 19th century. Turkish mythology did not receive the necessary attention from Turkish intellectuals until the Republic. XIX. As a result of the breakthrough in mythology that took place in the West in the 19th century, Turkish mythology was introduced to the scientific world in Turkey and around the world (Kayapunar, 2009: p. iii).

The parts that ensure the continuity of the universe such as death, birth, disease, climate change, and natural disasters have given birth to myths with the symbolization of people. Through these myths, the lives of societies and their reactions to cycles such as death and birth have continued to be transmitted to other generations. Myths continue to live with societies (Duman, 2023:137). The narratives in myths have sometimes contributed to the removal of women from social life.

The middle of the Neolithic period paved the way for women to change in social order and mythological narratives. Men developed new tools for hunting and began to dominate women. In the belief system, women, perceived as the mother of the goddess universe, turned into priestesses in temples from the middle of the Neolithic period to the mining ages. The hunter-gatherer period in Turkish societies gave birth to the first mythological elements. The change that started in women with the cultures that the Turks were affected by through the wars they participated in was completed and caused the emergence of social narratives that allowed women to be excluded. In the narratives conveyed to protect the social order and normalize the exclusion of women in the social order, women have been called evil beings with some themes attributed to them. In mythologies, women were sacred beings that were the universe itself, but they became malevolent beings that harmed society. They were adopted as folk philosophy through proverbs, idioms, and folk tales (Duman, 2023:138-140).

The United Nations Gender Inequality Index (GII) measures using reproductive health, labor market and empowerment parameters. The lower the GII value, the lower inequality between men and women. While Türkiye's GII index was 0.587 in 1990, the inequality rate decreased by decreasing to 0.259 in 2022. While this rate was 0.099 in 1990 for Sweden, the most developed country in the world, it decreased to 0.018 in 2022. On

the other hand, in Yemen, the value, which was 0.804 in 1994, increased to 0.820 in 2022 (GII, 2022). While our country is in the middle ranks in the world in terms of GII value, it is seen that this value has decreased over the years and therefore the inequality between men and women has decreased. There are not enough studies on whether religious mythological reasons are effective in the causes of gender inequality. In Turkey, value judgments showing the superiority of men over women are widely encountered in folk words and folk beliefs (Kırkpınar, 1998:26). These beliefs have their roots in myths and legends. Turkish mythology, legends, proverbs and the first written works provide valuable data to trace the journey of the female image throughout history (Toprak and Kılıçaslan, 2016: 83). In this study, the understanding of women in Turkish mythology, epics, and beliefs will be compared on the axis of mythology and religion. By addressing the narrative elements of women in mythological and Turkish narratives, it will be explained whether mythological narratives or religions are effective in the basis of women's inequality against men.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Model**

Discussions about the issue of women and inequality between men and women continue in some societies, as well as in our country. Mythological or religious beliefs or beliefs based on religion are effective in societies' perspectives on women, equality between men and women, patriarchy, and matriarchy.

In this research, academic articles on the effects of mythology and religion on the understanding of women in Turkish Culture were examined by scanning Science Citation Social Index, Google Scholar, and internet publications using the keywords "women, Turks, mythology, religion." The understanding of women will be compared on the axis of mythology and religion.

### **Data Collection Process**

The dataset of the research consists of articles related to the keywords "women, Turks, mythology, religion" published in the Social Sciences Citation Index, and Google Scholar database. In this research, analysis was conducted using 44 publications, books, theses and internet sources.

### **Data analyses**

The methodological tool chosen for the examination of articles that met the criteria for this research was descriptive analysis. Descriptive content analysis is a systematic study that includes the evaluation of all studies, published or unpublished, conducted on a specific topic and their trends and research results in a descriptive dimension (Ültay, 2021).

Based on this, a descriptive analysis was conducted that was largely based on the theoretical framework explained in the literature.

**FINDINGS**

In our country, as in many countries in today's world, women are not seen as equal to men in many areas, based on certain religious beliefs and rituals. When we get to the roots of this, it is necessary to investigate whether mythological practices or religious practices underlie these thoughts and behaviors.

The mythology and religious beliefs of the Jewish culture had a great impact on many civilizations established by the Arabs in the Middle East, West Asia and Africa, where Jews are located today. For example, in Jewish mythology, when it comes to the creation of women, Lilith was created from the soil with Adam before Eve. Lilith saw herself as equal to Adam and rejected Adam's authority and sexuality, and flew away, saying out loud the name that God did not want her to say. When Adam asks God to bring Lilith back, the three angels could not persuade her to bring Lilith back in the Red Sea because Lilith had sex with the demon and had children. Lilith said that she would kill a hundred children if the angels do not return and stated that she was created to cause babies' illnesses. (The Alphabet of ben Sira Question 23a-b ; Ünal, 2017:107). When Lilith did not return, God created Eve in Adam's bone and ensured that the woman was under the power of the man. (Unal, 2017: 107). Here, it is understood that Lilith's rebellion is actually the woman's rebellion against God's command and the woman's rebellion against the authority and her punishment as a result. This appears as a mythological narrative that portrays women as bad. The beginning of this change in women from the hunter-gatherer period was revealed with the story of Lilith and Eve. Lilith was a free woman with her body and sexuality in the hunter-gatherer period and did not limit herself and experienced the freedom of the body that comes from nature. There was no room for this rebellion in the order established with masculine gods. In the new order, women with controlled sexuality who obeyed men were wanted. Lilith did not accept Adam's sexual superiority and was accused of collaborating with the devil. While Lilith is the last representative of the hunter-gatherer society who wants to live her sexuality as she desires, Eve, who she replaced, represents the first woman wanted by the new order. The woman who owes her existence to the man and obeys him (Gezgin, 2020:294-296; Duman, 2023:79).

The narrative of Eve disobeying God's command by eating the forbidden fruit and being expelled from Heaven and dragging Adam is also widely accepted in Arab belief, and women are believed to be weaker than men, do not obey orders, and are inferior to men (cnnturk.com: 2016). The fact that before Islam came to the Arabian Peninsula, girls were buried alive and left to die, and the fact that women were in the background compared to men, have an effect on the fact that the mythological Lilith incident and Eve's forbidden fruit incident was considered sinful.

In Greek mythology, Zeus asked his son Hephaestus to create the first woman in order to take revenge on the people who were spoiled by Prometheus. Hephaestus named the woman he created Pandora. Zeus gave her a mysterious box as a gift and told her not to open it. When she opened it, good things would go away and bad things would enter the box, which would disturb Pandora for the rest of her life. Pandora was sent to earth as a spouse candidate for Prometheus' brother Epimetheus. Epimetheus could not resist Pandora's beauty and

married her. Out of curiosity, Pandora wondered what's inside the box and opened it. All evils such as diseases, lies and hypocrisy come out of the box. Closing the lid of the box, Pandora left only the state of hope in the box. It's too late, now all the evil is outside. Thus, Zeus took revenge on people by sending the woman he wanted to create to earth with Pandora's box filled with evil. (Yılmaz, 2004:113; Kocabaş Atılğan, 2013:21). Women are seen as the carrier of evil. This Greek mythology belief demonstrates the mythological origin of women's inequality. Inequality in gender roles in Ancient Greece could be seen from many areas. According to Aristotle, the most appropriate age for marriage for girls was 18, while for boys it was 30. (Kocabaş Atılğan, 2013, p.16). According to Aristotle, women and men were not created with the same structure, and women lack intelligence compared to men. For this reason, they should be trained in a separate area from men and should not leave the house. He argued that a man should get a woman to manage. According to him, men manage better than women. Women have talent, but because they do not know how to use it, they have bad results. Aristotle sees the man as the creator and the woman as the bearer in the birth event (Kocabaş Atılğan, 2013:17). Hippocrates argued that men could be created from quality sperm and women could be created from poor-quality sperm. Philosophers Empedocles and Parmenides stated that a boy would be born with the sperm coming from the right side of the body, and a girl would be born with the sperm coming from the left side of the body, leaving the religiously unlucky side to the girls, thus portraying girls as unlucky. In Greek mythology, while the gods took care of administrative affairs, goddesses were described as having frightening powers that caused destruction and fatal consequences. In mythology, woman was, on the one hand, the source of irresistible life, and on the other hand, was a destructive seducer and ruthless (Kocabaş Atılğan, 2013:22).

Although in ancient Greece, women were seen only as child bearers in marriage, pregnancy and postpartum were considered unclean and they were not allowed into sacred areas and temples. It was accepted only after 40 days after birth when it was cleansed of dirt (Kocabaş Atılğan p.16). Only men could participate in the Olympic games (Kocabaş Atılğan. 2013:16).

According to the creation myth compiled by Radloff from Altai, God (Kuday) forbade eating the fruits of the four branches of the nine-branched tree he created. But later, when the person (referred to as Erlik and later Körmös and Satan later in the legend) learned of this, he ate it. He told Törüngey and Eje to eat the forbidden fruit. Orbit obeyed God's word and did not eat the fruit. His wife Eje could not stand it and ate it. The fruit was very sweet and she put some in her husband's mouth. Woman (Eje) fell under the influence of evil forces (Erlik, Satan or Körmös) and then used humans (Törüngey) for their evil, and God punished them (Işık, 2017:84).

In the mythological narrative, God gave birth as a punishment for the woman to experience a forbidden pleasure and she was punished with pregnancy. Turks see wet dreams as a game of the devil and bowing to the devil, and they see it as an undesirable situation by society. The association of women with the devil in mythology, even the portrayal of women as devils, daily language and the dominant religion will undoubtedly affect the perception of women in Turkey. Even though it doesn't make any sense when it comes to the

prohibition of sexuality, women were in league with the devil rather than lust, or they were the devil themselves. (Işık, 2017:84).

In Radloff's Altai creation myth, God gives Erlik the power to create. Erlik takes a hammer, a pair of bellows and an anvil, but when he uses his power for evil, God takes back the hammer, anvil and bellows and throws them into the fire. The bellows turns into a woman, the hammer into a man. God's resentment towards the world she left and the woman turns into a bird and flies away. The meat of this bird called Kurday is not eaten Its feathers are not used as fur. It is sad that the man of God and history swim and the man turns into a bird called the Yalban bird and flies away. Turkish created the Radloff version, as well as a second version compiled by Verbitsky. In both versions, Ak Ene (White Mother) encouraged God to create the world (Işık, 2017:84)

Here, the existence of a woman, even if she was an imaginary one, and above all, the fact that she was created, requires interpretation. Since Akana did not have to be with, she became a mother without having a man.

The fact that motherhood can occur without prior sexual contact is consistent with Turkish society keeping motherhood away from sexuality. The second striking issue is that this woman, called "ana" [mother], is wise enough to give advice to the Creator. However, no matter how important she is, she is not the one who creates and transforms with her own power. strength; In fact, she is in a passive position, which is consistent with the widespread passivity attributed to women (Işık, 2017:85).

In a Uyghur myth, Böğü Khan was born from a heavenly light and his wife was a holy woman sent by God. In a Yakut myth collected by Gorokhov, the hero Akoglan was nursed by a radiant woman emerging from a tree; When she was full, she was lost. The important thing here is that the woman's sole function is to keep the hero alive. In the Er Sogotoh myth, which describes the creation of the Yakut people, it is stated that women gave the hero the idea to fight against difficulties and even defeat the demons of hell (Sevinç, 2007:13; Ögel, 1997).

Women are depicted as angels and as people who make more sacrifices than men in the Kuzu Kör-peç and Bayan myths of the Bashkirs and Kazakh Kyrgyz (İnan, 1987, p. 271). In a very old Altai legend, the birth of a Kyrgyz daughter of a Kazakh ruler is described as follows: When Sağın Khan came to the edge of a river with his forty concubines in the early hours of the morning, a pillar of light descended from the sky onto the river and the waters shone like silver. The girls were fascinated by the beauty of the waters and they dipped their fingers into the water and they all became pregnant as a result of this (Ziya Gökalp, 1974:99). This story draws attention to the fact that women become pregnant through non-sexual means (Işık, 2017:88).

The roles given to women in myths do not indicate that they played a role. In myths, women do not play a role as makers, implementers or transformers in the time and place they live. Women appear as supporting actors in men's adventures and are indispensable only as long as they serve men. This fact contradicts the belief, widespread in Turkey today, that women were given great importance in the early Turkic peoples. This parallels the discrimination women face in many cultures. The false belief that equality existed in the past legitimizes the

roots of current inequality and hinders the struggle for a more ideal future, hiding the need for a transformation that will test the foundations of this order. For this reason, questioning the myths hidden in the depths of social perception is important in neutralizing the codes that maintain this gender inequality (Işık, 2017:88-89).

Orhun Monuments written by Göktürks are among the oldest known Turkish sources. The name of İlbilge Hatun is mentioned in the Orhun Inscriptions. In this 8th century inscription, İlbilge Hatun was mentioned as "The Turkish sky above has only regulated the Turkish holy place and its water. God actually kept my father İteriş Kağan and my mother İlbilge Hatun on the hill and lifted them up quickly so that the Turkish tribes would not be destroyed and there would be tribes." These statements show that women were important in politics and administration at that time ([wikipedia.org/wiki/İlbilge\\_Hatun](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/İlbilge_Hatun)). In Turkish mythology, there are narratives showing women as leaders. The myth of Mother Umay mentions that the Turks have a matriarchal social structure and the leadership of Tomris Khan, the female ruler of the Scythians (Acar, 2019:397; Çolak, 2016:59). Tomris Han was described as a brave Turkish female ruler who lived between 500-600 BC and did not bow to the Persian king after the death of her husband (Acar, 2019:397; Özmenli, 2018:350). Again, the importance given to women can be seen in some Turkish mythological narratives. In the state administration, Hatun was next to Hakan, who ruled the country. The woman, like her man, rode a horse and wore a sword, and when necessary, she could defend herself like a man in case of danger. In this respect, it shows that women could do every job that men do in the mythological narrative (Atacan, 2023:1).

The first studies on the mythology of the Turks, one of the most ancient nations in history, began in the 19th century. The first thing that draws attention among these studies carried out by foreign researchers is that Pastor İ. Biçurin published a three-volume work by translating the creation and descent myths of Turkish mythology from Chinese Sources into Russian. Raddloff's research on Shaman mythology and the work titled *Altai Studies*, published by Vasili Ivanovic Verbitskiy to christianize the Altay Turks in the 19th century on the same subject towards the middle of the 19th century, are important for Turkish mythology research (Kayapınar, 2009:9; Bayat, 2007:23). Written sources in Turkish mythology were made by foreign researchers such as German Turkologist Doerfer and Russian Turkologist Radloff, Potapov and Stebleva. In our country, Zeki Velidi Togan, Abdülkadir İnan, Bahaeddin Ögel, Fuzuli Bayat and Emel Esin enlightened Turkish history by working on Turkish mythology (Kivrak, 2020:1; Atacan, 2023:4).

Although studies on Turkish mythology started before the republic, they have come a long way during the republic period. It is seen that the studies accelerated in the 2000s. Difficulties in accessing the main sources of Turkish mythology, the vastness of the area inhabited by Turks and the fact that individual studies remain "local" in this sense, the inability to carry out joint studies on discovering the living aspects of myths for various reasons, etc. These reasons slowed down the progress of Turkish mythology (Kayapınar, 2009: 346).

Shamanism has an important place in Turkish culture. It continued its existence until Islam and its traces continued after Islam (Atacan, 2023, p. 7; Erdoğan, 2020, p. 58). There are theses stating that shamanic religion

and beliefs were born with a matriarchal origin, before a patriarchal understanding, and that the first shaman was a woman. The representation of the tree as Mother Tree and water as Mother Anbar shows the bond with women. While shamanism was initially matriarchal, it later turned into a patriarchal structure and understanding as men dominated the affairs, and even women were not included in the rituals (Çemberci, 2019). In Turkish mythology, Oguz Khagan's two wives were born, the first from light and the second from a tree, and both of them were considered sacred. Both of them are described as extraordinarily beautiful (Atacan, 2023: 9).

In Turkish mythology, three women types have been defined: God and Goddess; heroic; and intelligent, beautiful and loyal. Mother Goddess Umay is an example of woman with divine qualities. (Bars, 2014:126; Atacan, 2023:12). Stories about women such as Ak ene (white ana), Alahçın (darhan) ana, Umay ana, Ötügen ana, Ateş ana (od ana /ot ene), Al ana (al wife/albastı/albız), and Kurt ana are notable. Ak Ana She has horns on her head, looks like a mermaid from the waist down, and lives in the Mediterranean. Ak-ene is one of the 14 female spirits accepted by the Altays and gives Ülgen the title of creating the sky and earth. Alahçın Ana (Darhan Ana) protects and preserves the world and gives life to it. Umay is seen as a horned spirit who protects women and children. Mother Earth (Ötügen Mother) is the female spirit that protects the soil, plants and animals. Ateş (Fire) Mother (Od Ana / Ot Ene) walks around on a red female horse and takes the fire in houses and tents under her protection. Al Ana is ugly and while one of her lips points to the ground, the other one points to the sky. Kurt (wolf) Mother protects the wolves, and all Turkish tribes believe that they reproduced from female wolves (Atacan, 2023:12-18).

According to some researchers, in Turkish legends and mythologies, women are valued not for their femininity but for their motherhood or fertility. They are glorified as wives by being able to give their lives for their husbands or by placing their husbands' instructions above the most sacred beliefs. (Duman, 2023; Kılıçarslan, Toprak, 2016:84)

Before Islam in societies contemporary with the Turks, for example in the Chinese, which is one of the cultures closest to the Turks, if the child born is a girl, it is not considered worthy of being given a name and is addressed with a number. Among the Indians, if the child is a girl, she is under the protection of her father, or her brothers, until she gets married. The purpose of this protection is to believe that girls have weak characters, are prone to sin and are too weak to continue their lives on their own. However, the most extreme example on this subject is the Arabs. For Arabs, if the child was born a girl, it was considered a shame (Tellioglu, 2016:132; Duman, 2023:75).

Nowadays, the prohibitions on equality between men and women are generally attributed to Islam. However, the negative developments in the view of women stem from the Arab-Persian and Indian traditions passed down to us from the Arab-Persian cultural circle we entered after the adoption of Islam (Günay, 2000:4-9).



While there is no gender inequality in the Islamic religion's approach to women, attempts have been made to place women under the domination of men based on judgments based on social beliefs and used as a religious element. They sometimes tried to attribute this to religious values by trying to give examples from the Quran (Duman, 2023:75).

Elif Duman in her thesis explained in detail about the women's demon profile drawn in Türkiye, In her thesis, Elif Duman talked about how women's social lives were restricted and started to be considered bad in Turkish narratives by using narrative elements (Duman, 2023: 135-280). In the 16th and 17th centuries, women who were considered heretics in Europe and America were declared witches. Demon women profiles were drawn. When we look at Turkish societies, it was seen that women similar to these definitions appeared in the narratives in various aspects (Duman, 2023:80). According to Elif Duman these were as follows: *Acuri* [demonic female spirit who apparently lives in the forest. Any disrespect or loud noise made in the forest disturbs her and she punishes these people by killing them (Beydili, 2005: 66-67)], *Al Karısı* (deadly entity that is thought to harm especially postpartum women and children under the age of forty), *Cazı* [witch smear human dung in order to fly, eat children's and women's livers (Turan, 2020: 71)], *Alyabani* [a witch, has messy hair, red eyes, covered with feathers, kidnaps and kills the people, (Turan, 2020: 39)], *Anakhai* [one-eyed supernatural being, shines like a cat, (Turan, 2020: 42, 43)], *Ardov* [spirit of Mongolian origin, a tall blonde, very beautiful woman, a water demon, eating the flesh of dead people (Turan, 2020: 50)], *Biçura* [a sarcastic, capricious, annoying evil, disturbs the landlady (Yıldız, 2017: 43)], *Bit cadısı* [mite, pite or flea witch, a dirty old witch, sucks blood from knees, and causes girls to die, (Turan, 2020: 157)], *Bulut Kızlar* [soul of a dead woman, changing the habit of person, (Yılmaz, 2008: 87)], *Çarşamba Karısı* [malevolent female entity, a scary looking woman (Toven, 2004: 113)], *Çay Ninesi* (a malevolent female entity, a great danger to humans), *Çer Fezi* (Yer İyesi is a female ugly evil being (Yılmaz, 2008: 90)], *Çertegri* [worst of evil beings, (Turan, 2020: 78)], *Dağlar Anası* [loneliness protecting the mountains, her groaning many people who heard and died (Polat, 2020: 83)], *Dakhul* [evil spirit, tortures children by squeezing their throats, (Turan, 2020: 82)], *Demir Tırnak* [evil female beings, has long and sharp iron nails, Her head resembles a dog's head, while her feet resemble goat's feet (Bayat, 2007: 321)], *Domuzcu* [Pork, the soul that causes fire at home (Bayat, 2007: 299)], *Ebede* [A tree spirit that causes people to lose their memories, (Turan, 2020: 85)], *Erlik Kızları* [evil-spirited girls], *Kıştey Ana* [ancestor of prostitutes, is the Goddess of Adultery (Turan, 2020: 145)], *Erke Solton* [a powerful warrior, an influential sultan, connected in terms of lethality (Bilgili, 2022: 35)], *Ev Kızı* (encountered in Nevşehir, shows various similarities with nightmares and karakura), *Geçkinciler* (a source of noise, confusion and chaos), *Gelincik* [the poppy lives in a house. If a person talks about the poppy, disasters will happen to the person (Polat, 2020: 103)], *Gelin* [evil being mentioned in the Heybeliada (Öztürk, 2009: 43)], *Hal Anası* (appears in Azerbaijani narratives, derived from a husbandless woman, most dangerous of the Albis spirits), *Hıbilik*, *Hıbilik*, *Gıbilik* (similarities to Karabasan and Albasti, haunts everyone), *Hirtık* [evil beings, being half animal and half human), *Hu Hanım* [has a big belly, Its face resembles a stove (Bayat, 2007: 29)], *Huri* [huri who do evil), *Hut* [a large-bodied animal, mixture of a human and a bear, kidnap people for marriage purposes (Polat, 2020: 109-110)], *İfrit* [a female shaman who turned into an evil spirit after death. She sends infectious diseases to people (Dilek, 2014: 161)],

*İrle Han'ın Kızı* [god of the dead, takes the form of a black fox (Turan, 2020: 123)], *Kaftar, kafter* (Kaftarküski, old, witch, senile and hyena, haunts the dead in cemeteries), *Kapoz* (a creature seen after birth. There are regions where it is also called as albasti, hafdar and karabasan), *Kara- Ura, Karakura, Garaura* [appears in Azerbaijani and Anatolian narratives, scare people, psychologically shake them with bad dreams (Duman, 110, 2023)], *Kara Umay* (Karay May, wants to harm and kill children and mothers), *Karakoncolos* [evil spirits that appear in winter, steal children (Abdurrezzak, 2020: 37)], *Karamat / Kiremet* [evil beings, harms people and brings illness, causes pessimism, reason for mental breakdown in people (Bayat, 2007: 298)], *Kurt Kadın* [Wolf Woman, semi-demonic beings (Beydili, 2005: 23-24)], *Kuzey Nineleri* [located at the top of the southern sky, cause of women's diseases (Yılmaz, 2008: 88)], *Küpegiren* (live on earth, in the sky and underground. According to the information given about her shapeshifting, turns back into a very ugly creature), *Kocakarı Cebelek* [eared, an old woman with copper earrings, a copper nose like a teapot, a pointed head, and needle teeth (Turan, 2020: 147)], *Lohusa Cini* (the jinn that are similar to Albasti, a malevolent being), *Mayısa* ( Cadı Cemile, has a scarf carries on her, associated with death), *Meçkey* (an evil witch, drinks people's blood, settles inside them and grows as she eats away at people's insides), *Mekir* (an evil entity that haunts children), *Örümcek Kadın* [Spider woman, a mixture of human and animal, curse the house (Polat, 2020 p.132, 133; Duman, 2023, p.120)], *Perşembe Karı* [On Muslim holidays, she visits houses and punishes them by throwing them into the cauldron (Bayat, 2007: 274)], *Peri* (The female demons, beautiful and helpful and can change their appearance (Duvarcı, 2005: 131)], *Pir Nine* (an old, evil, extraordinary being), *Pira Roy* [old woman, transports the people they haunt (Duman, 123, 2023)], *Pirabok* (kills babies, takes people's minds), *Rom Ana* (the spirit of nature, punishes people for their disrespect), *Sahab* [a house fairy., wants the house to be kept clean. Otherwise, they punish the people (Beydili, 2005: 482)], *Sarıköz* (accepted as Albasti), *Settur* (an evil spirit that disturbs children), *Şeri* (a pregnant creature in the form of a frog), *Şimildey* (the evil female spirits thought to live underground), *Şubat Karısı* [a folk narrative from Şanlıurfa), naked, with huge breasts over its shoulders (Sarpkaya, 2021: 298)], *Şureli* ([a forest spirit. It resembles a human, but its fingers and nails are long and hard, (Tural, 2001: 365)], *Tırnakçı* (evil spirits), *Ubur* (If the person with Ubur dies, Ubur rises from the grave and continues to bother people (Polat, 2020: 164, 165)], *Uker* (evil feminine beings), *Vurgun* (an evil spirit associated with the tree cult), *Yallı Gelin* (a creature with claw), *Yamyam Kız* (a witch in some narratives and a bloodsucker in others), *Yirih* (a house spirit) (Duman, 2023: 135-280).

It has been determined that women are made monsters or are made afraid of women of their own gender with the characteristics. This fear is not only transferred to women but also to children. In mythologies, women were sacred beings that were the universe itself, but they became malevolent beings that were harmful to society. They were also adopted as folk philosophy through proverbs, idioms, and folk tales (Duman, 2023:144-145).

In the findings of Nizamü'l-Mulk, written in the 11th century, it is stated that women did not have a political influence during the reign of Persian rulers, but Turkistan khans and Turkmen sultans listened to women's

opinions in state affairs and women were recruited into the military. Although Islam gives important rights to women, women's power in society has progressed in a negative direction (Güngör, 2000:212).

According to Ziya Gökalp, in the ancient Turks, women participated in every work of men in war, banquets, meetings and in general religious, political, moral, fine arts, language and economic fields (Gökalp, 1987: 257-258). Turkish customs strictly prohibited distortions such as female slavery, female trafficking, and female gifts (Ülkütaşır, 1967).

Islam has abolished practices such as burying girls alive and denying them inheritance. In the Holy Quran, in Verse 40 of the Mümin Surah, the rights of women are protected by saying that those who do good deeds, whether male or female, as a believer, will enter heaven and will be provided with unlimited sustenance. In verse 32 of Nisa Surah, there is a share for men and women from what they have earned; Equality was explained to women by telling them that they also had a share of what they earned. Verse 124 indicates the equality of men and women by mentioning that men or women who believe and do good and peaceful deeds will enter heaven. In the 72nd verse of the Tevbe Surah, believing men and believing women are friends of each other, and 195th verse of Ali Imran is about the equality of men and women by mentioning that their Lord replied, "I will not waste the work of any of you, male or female." Verse 7 of Nisa Surah shows the equality of men and women with saying say that men have a share and women have a share of what their parents and relatives leave behind.

### **CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION**

The reason for the inequality between men and women seen in some societies today is not due to sacred religions and books, but rather the mythological worldview dominates this inequality. In mythological narratives, inequality between men and women is seen and attempts have been made to erase women from social life. In mythologies, women are seen as spoilsport, rebellious and sinful. Women, like Pandora, the first woman in Greek mythology, were created only to punish people in the world, or Lilith, the first woman in Jewish mythology, was considered a rebellious person who brought evil to the world. Unfortunately, these beliefs have been tried to be based on holy books. Turkish culture has also had its share of this. The inequality between men and women, which is based on some beliefs that have roots in mythology, has been perceived and made to be perceived as a requirement of the Islamic religion by some circles.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Inequality between men and women is related to mythological wrong believe rather than sacred religions and books. Turkish culture has also had its share of this. Future studies in the field will contribute to the literature.

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