

Part 1

Prior to beginning my lecture, I would like to propose some practical suggestions. Speaking about women's rights, women's personality and Islam's view of women differs a great deal from the realization of the actual value which Islam gives to human beings, and to women, in particular. Often we are satisfied by pointing out that Islam gives great value to science or establishes progressive rights for women. Unfortunately we never actually use or benefit from these values or rights. We could benefit from these if we were to act according to the understanding which we acquire from them.

Many people are acquainted with Islamic views of society, social relations, women's rights, children's rights and family rights, but these same people tend to follow non-Islamic, ancient cultural traditions and do not dare to base their lives upon Islamic values. That is, they do not practice what they preach. Thus we always remain at the level of talking.

We must complete Islamic views and intellectual discussions with practical solutions. We must find a way whereby we reach these values and rights in practice. After proposing my views, the question should be asked, how we can actually put them into practice?

Throughout history the problem of women's rights and their role has always been considered to be an intellectual problem. Hence, various religious, philosophical, and social systems have reached varying views in this respect.

From the 18th through the 20th centuries (particularly after W.W.II) any attempt to address the special problem of the social rights of women and their specific characteristics has been seen as a mere by-product of a spiritual or psychic shock or the result of a revolutionary crisis in centers of learning or as a response to political currents and international movements. Thus, traditional societies, historical societies, and religious societies, in the East and in the West, have all been directly or indirectly influenced by these thoughts, intellectual currents, and even new social realities.

Unfortunately, the crisis of the problem of women and their liberation, which began in the West and has been strengthened by the ruling superpowers in the 20th century, has influenced all human societies, even closed traditional and religious societies. There are only a few cultural, traditional and religious

societies which have been able to properly stand against this flood.

Such societies have frequently been confronted by a peculiar modernism which they have adopted, under the guise of liberation of women, either by rejecting old traditions or by under-taking blind struggles. None of them have succeeded in standing against this attack.

In such societies the majority newly educated class, the pseudo-intellectuals, vigorously welcome this crisis. They themselves even act as one of the forces that strengthens this destructive transformation.

In traditional religious societies, neither groups could stand against the attack of the modern view of the liberation of women as announced by the West. The pseudo-intellectual and modern class of Islamic and non-Islamic societies in the East considered the modest dress to be the symbol of modern civilization, progress, and awareness.

The old traditional group passed through and confronted this crisis with non-scientific and illogical tactics due to their lack of experience. It is a general law that when there is a fire resulting from a spill of oil, trying to hurriedly and unskillfully put the fire out, only leads to the fire spreading more rapidly!

Thus such unskilled struggles against the West have frequently been performed in a manner that has created complexes and various reactions inside such societies. In this way they have paved the way for acceptance of Western ideas and innovations. There are very few societies who have been able to stand against, and show an effective reaction to the modern West by consciously selecting their manner of lifestyle.

One of the most important factors that can assist Eastern societies in confronting and standing against the intellectual and cultural attack of the West (as it relates to the view of modern woman) is to have a rich culture and history full of experiences, values, and ideas. It is important to have progressive human rights and, in particular, to have perfect and complete human models in the religious history of those societies and communities.

Fortunately, from this point of view Islamic societies have cultural power and possibilities and have a very progressive history. The value system and religion and are in this way very rich. Thus, they can, by relying on these values and sources and by reviving and progressing towards the high humanitarian values existing in their culture and their past history, encourage their new young generation to stand and resist the West's attack.

The most effective weapon to confront Western values and the most important factor for creating a conscious struggle within the new generation of our Islamic societies against the West's seduction is to hold up very high, distinguished, and characteristic symbols. An example of this would be real personalities of Islamic history. If the lives of such personalities are known in detail, shown precisely, and revived and introduced properly, the young generation will sense that there is no need to decline in the guise of modernism and accept the seductions of the West. Rather, they will sense that there are very

high, elevated symbols in their own history and religion to be considered as models for self-reconstruction.

It must be taken into consideration that all matters related to women, science, life-style, class, relationships, scholastic understanding, and one's world view all have been discussed in Islam. We have only to solve our present difficulties to answer the intellectual challenges and to reduce our sensual needs. How can we understand our values? How can we use and obtain actual results from them? Our essential aim must be to solve the problem of proper understanding and recognition.

The members of the Prophet's family, in the view of all of the intellectuals of Islamic countries (who possess a more distinguished image of them) have always been the manifestation of the most elevating and liberating humanitarian and Islamic values. These values are not limited to a particular tribe or even to all Muslims. Thus, all of the people of the world can easily see and understand these examples which have come out of a small house which is greater than the whole of history.

Anyone who believes in the values and virtues of humanity will admit that the symbolic role of the members of this family in various dimensions and fields is beyond historical values of class or tribe. They are rather the highest, meta-historical, meta-tribal values. They are permanent symbols and examples of humanity.

Thus, anyone who is a human being respects them. Anyone who is aware of the values of humanity, any committed intellectual in the world, will admit the values and virtues which this small house created within the arena of human history.

Therefore, when we describe the biography of Fatima, as one of the members of the Prophet's family, we must learn lessons from her personality, her role, her social, mental, and political status and use them to guide our lives in our groups and in our societies.

The problem of proper understanding is the most important and essential problem of our time. At the present time, the struggles of the committed Muslim intellectuals should be directed to a proper understanding and recognition of Islam's history and religion. This proper understanding, including the proper understanding of Fatima, is the key to our salvation. After W.W.II, the problem of women was designated as being the most important and sensitive problem in the West. The war itself was the main cause for family relations to be split and destroyed. Traditional religious values such as ethics, morals and spirituality collapsed. Also due to the war, crimes, cruelty, aggression and plunder increased.

From the intellectual and ethical point of view, it had a very diverse effect, causing a decline upon the post war generation. Its inauspicious effect after a quarter of a century [since W.W.II] can be seen in the spirit, thought, philosophy and even the art of the present time.

Those who have seen France, Germany, England and even the USA [the last of which was far from the actual field of battle], prior to the war and visited those countries after the war, can clearly see that

although it seems as if centuries have passed, actually the cultures collapsed within one generation. Therefore, the fall of ethical values was one of the natural results of the war.

But the point must be noted that prior to the war, the West had already started a multi-dimensional fight from the various philosophical, mental, and social aspects with the Catholic religion, the ruling religion in the Middle Ages. Thus they had unconsciously destroyed all ethical value and limits which the church had defended in the name of religion.

One of the values which the church defended in the name of religion was women's spiritual and social values and rights. This defense combined with the declining, anti-female traditions, bonds, and limitations.

But after the Renaissance and the development of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois culture which is the culture of individual liberty, defeated the church and consequently the rule of the church over values was abolished. Thus, all of the restrictions and values concerning women which the church had defended and supported in the name of religion, succumbed to the rise of the bourgeoisie and its culture.

Then suddenly the problem of sexual liberation appeared. Women realized that through the slogan of sexual liberation, all of the anti-human limits, restrictions, and bonds which restrained them could be destroyed. Women welcomed this change vigorously to the extent that sexual liberation entered the arena of science!

What is normally designated as scientific understanding of religion is not a pure scientific and scholastic understanding. It is rather a bourgeois cognition. After the Middle Ages, science was made to serve the present ruling bourgeois system. If nowadays science appears to oppose religion and moral values, it is not really science that opposes these, but it is the ruling bourgeois which does so just as in the Middle Ages.

It was feudalism which defended aristocratic social-moral traditions in the name of religion. It was Christianity which was defending feudalism, and now it is science which defends the bourgeoisie. It is intellectuals those who believe that economic and materialistic social foundations are the basis of all social transformations who will more easily accept my argument and logic.

Up to the appearance of Freud (who is one of the agents of the bourgeoisie), it was through the liberal bourgeoisie spirit that scientific sexualism was manifested. It must be taken into consideration that the bourgeoisie is always an inferior class. Although feudalism was an anti-human system, it nevertheless relied on an aristocratic elite and their moral values even though these moral values led to a decline. Bourgeoisie mentality negates all of the high ascending human values and believes in nothing except money.

Therefore, a scholar or scientist who lives, thinks, and studies during the bourgeois age, measures collective cultural and spiritual values (the sacrifices of mankind, the martyrdoms, struggles, literature, art

etc.), with only the scale of naked economy, with production and consumption and with nothing else. One who studies psychology or anthropology, looking at all the dimensions and manifestations of the mystic spirit of human beings that which religion believes to be the spirit of God and the manifestation of metaphysical virtues sees only unsatisfied sexual appetites.

Belief, culture, mental illnesses all are related to the struggle to release an imprisoned and condemned sexual complex. The bourgeois social scientist looks at all of the delicate human sensations and feelings (even a mother caressing her child, the worship of the beloved by the lover and all other issues) in relationship to sex.

Freud, a modern bourgeoisie, armed himself against all moral and human values, and all high and ascending manifestations of the human soul and called it realism. Freud's "realism" was not that of the bourgeoisie, but rather of the scientist who serves the bourgeoisie class because of these bring the human being down to the level of a sexual and economic animal. Thus, the bourgeoisie, by alienating all values and virtues, made only one religion for all miserable men of this age for whom all must be sacrificed.

This messenger was named Freud. His religion was sex. His temple was Freudianism, and the first one who was sacrificed on the threshold of this temple was woman and her human values.

We who live in the East always speak about Western colonialization, but I would like to explain that this does not mean that Western colonialization only colonizes or exploits the East. It is a world-wide power and class that exploits and colonizes both the East and the West.

If I had the opportunity, I would explain that this power has alienated the European masses even more than the Eastern masses. The European has been captured by colonialization's legacy of unemployment and misery and will continue to be so in the future. They will continue as victims of anti-colonialism. This ruling colonial power influences Eastern people in many ways such as, emphasis upon unimportant, sensational and emotional matters; rumors, discrimination, and hypocrisy; and sowing discord and pessimism to keep Easterners occupied with mundane and unimportant issues.

By these means Easterners are kept in a state whereby they are unaware of what Western colonialization is doing to them, unaware of their fate and destiny. These conspiracies, then cause young Europeans, likewise, to become alienated and destructive, and perform more tricks and crimes. All of these acts are performed in the name of colonialization in Eastern countries without the Easterners realizing it.

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