

Influence of Music

Often people are heard saying: "But music has so much influence upon our feelings; so why such a thing should be forbidden?" But it is precisely because of its great influence upon heart and mind that it is forbidden. There would have been no need to ban it if it were with out any effect. The thing which is to be decided is whether its influence is good or bad. And it has been shown in the previous pages that music and dance have harmful effects physiologically, spiritually and ethically upon human beings.

Music is like intoxicants in that it makes one forget one's surroundings and one does not know what is happening to him or her. The following episode is a good example of the effect of music:

Frank King is reported in 'Reader's Digest'^{[1](#)} as saying:—

"I returned home one evening and noticed a large red mark that looked like a burn on my wife's right cheek. When I asked her what had happened she sheepishly told me the story. She set up the iron-board in the living room so that she could watch a favourite television programme while doing the ironing, the telephone table was also near at hand. As she was intently watching TV, the phone rang and she reached out automatically and answered the iron."

Another interesting story was published in the Tanganyika Standard^{[2](#)} some 23 years ago. A pregnant woman attended a musical programme in a local cinema. She became so much engrossed in it that she gave birth to a baby on the spot without realizing what was happening to her. 'Was it a cinema hall or maternity home?' asked the paper.

Realizing the importance of this engrossing quality of music, the scientists are trying to use it as an aid in surgery. Reader's Digest^{[3](#)} writes:

"Audio-analgesia or painkilling by sound is one of modern science's newest discoveries. The combination of music and other sounds have alleviated pain in dentistry, surgery and childbirth. Nobody can predict how widely the technique will be used but those who have experienced it entertained high hopes —like the new mother who wheeled from the delivery room exclaiming, 'What a wonderful experience! I'll always remember south pacific."

Palcetry Galiard while on the operation table asked for one of his own musical tapes to be played in the room. The effect was a spate of grief which made all present cry and the operation was performed without any anaesthetic.

All this goes a long way to prove that the music has the same effect on nerves and mind as the anaesthesia. Nobody in his right mind would suggest that chloroform should be daily used by the general public because it is such a good thing in the operation theatre. If music is a good anaesthetic let it be used in surgery and deliveries of children. But can that use ever justify its common use in every home at all times and in all circumstances?

Appendix: Television, A Blessing or a curse?

by Muntazir

All quotations in this article unless stated or otherwise, have been taken from "Eternity " October, 1971 and July, 1972 Issues.

If a child is afraid of something expose him to it often and his fears will diminish or disappear.

Dr. Victor B. Cline, a University of Utah (U.S.A.) Psychologist and four year research assistant, wrote, "Psychologists have for years demonstrated for example that you can overcome a person's fear of snakes by gradually exposing him to others who casually play with snakes."

He then adds, "It stands to reason that you can also change attitudes and emotional responses to violence, sex and various antisocial behaviour by repeated exposure."

Everyone, especially a Muslim, should seriously consider the effect before he exposes himself or his children to anti-religious behaviour.

These days it is a sign of "Education" and "intelligentsia" to have Television at home giving little thought to its long-term effect especially on children.

Much research has been done in the United States of America on the effect of Television on its viewers. President Nixon had appointed a Commission to study Causes and Prevention of Violence. The commission in its Report published in 1970 said that Television networks were "pandering to a public preoccupation with violence that television itself has helped to generate." The Commission concluded that on the basis of many experimental studies "observed violence stimulates aggressive behaviour."

Dr. Robert M. Liepert of the State University of New York at Stony Brook (U.S.A.) after considerable research concluded: "There is a link between televised violence and aggressive behaviour for the majority of normal children." Although it has previously been assumed that only abnormal children would be affected by viewing scenes of violence, Liepert strongly disagreed. He writes, "The data show no evidence that only a minority is influenced. This is a factual error."

Dr. Victor B. Cline, the Psychologist, says that "The media are powerful teachers of values and ethical

behaviour and sometimes may play a more significant role than the Church."

To this "Newsweek" commentator, Joseph Morgenstern, adds: "If the effect of Television violence on children has been finally demonstrated, it's not unreasonable to assume that ultra-violence in the movie has some effect on adults."

The real danger of films shown on Television lies in the philosophy of life or value system that they propagate very subtly in many cases. This underlying system does not get edited out for television, as do most of the sex scenes and profanity.

And one cannot switch off the set as soon as something objectionable appears because often the viewer does not even realise the subtle moral implication of the film. Even an intelligent and educated person can easily be affected by such films.

On U.S.A. T.V. a film "Easy Rider" was shown which made heroes of two young men who "earned their freedom to take a cross-country motorcycle tour by smuggling heroin into the United States from Mexico. No criticism of their offense or even of their own indulgence in drugs was implied in the film. In fact, smoking marijuana was portrayed as perfectly normal and very agreeable and even the use of hard drugs left no ill-effects. When these points were discussed with a group of College freshmen—all of them from highly religious homes admitted that the film had left them confused about using drugs. "It (the film) made it look so nice," he said"[4](#) .

In some films the main characters are portrayed as sweet, gentle, loving and admirable young people, in spite of the fact that they are in bed with partners whose names they do not know. Even a person with firmly grounded sexual morals and little temptation to change them begins to sympathize with these gentle youngsters and to feel that, after all, such behaviour is not particularly damaging.

When children are exposed to such films, it gradually changes their attitude and undoes what the poor Mulla or Maulana has been trying to instil in them.

Almost every evening he sees ngomas, dances, kissing, dating, violence, scenes of night clubs and eventually he accepts all these things as normal and starts considering all those who oppose these things as "abnormal".

It might be argued that not much violence or immoral films are shown on local Television. It should, however, be borne in mind that poison, however small the dose, seeps in and does damage.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the standard of morality of those who control showing of television programmes is different from ours. Things which in their eyes are "innocent" are most objectionable from our point of view. Drinking, dating, dancing, kissing, etcetera, may be "innocent" to them but we would not like our children to accept these ideas and follow them.

Even with much noise being made by those in authority about guarding the morality of the public, quite

often extremely objectionable films, even from their own point of view are shown on television. Once such a highly objectionable film was shown on Nairobi television about which "East African Standard" had to write as follows:-

"The 'Nana' controversy is just dying out the film having now been "deported" to Mombasa. But another 'Nana' in the name of 'Celestina' appeared on V.O.K. television last Wednesday, as the Midweek movie. Part of this otherwise excellent drama depicts Celestina's husband indulging in massage treatment to a charming and highly romantic young girl.

The exercise develops into proper romance when Celestina's husband starts undressing the girl, and she obliges. The bedroom scene continues until: Enter Celestina, looking furious. Having suspected what was taking place she picks up a knife and drives it into her husband's heart. I would not mind seeing this film, and particularly the sex scene, in a cinema, as it would be my individual decision to see it by paying for it.

What V.O.K. has done is to bring right in our homes such a film with highly romantic scenes. What are we expected to do in our houses with children around? Just look at such scenes and laugh them off? One wonders what sort of society we are trying to build."[5](#)

The "Perry Mason" and "Falk" series films which are often shown on our television are American films showing violence, immorality, etc, which is likely to have an effect, specially on children. Some of these films propagate "ends justify the means" slogan.

In a film called "Evening Rider" shown on Cost television, a teenager was shown married to a man her father's age and being tempted by the husband's own son of the same age.[6](#) . It left one with the impression that adultery, for such a teenager was justified.

"Grab Game" was shown on Nairobi television which showed a person looking for a job attacking the manager of the firm and the manager tells him in fear to "come next Thursday"[7](#) it was nothing but propagation of "Might is right".

That such films have an effect on even adults can be judged from the reviews of these programmes from accredited journalists who are not only intelligent but highly educated.

A reviewer of Television of East African Standard once wrote, "I have in mind the fact that a procrastinating father finds himself sharing a girl friend with his own son. One may turn round and blame the poor girl for having extended both hands, but what about difficult time when the father, and I bet he was doing it without the knowledge of his perhaps halfway starving family, offers assistance, including paying overseas academic fees and all that goes with it. ?[8](#)

It can be seen that instead of revolting against the immorality of the girl viewers are made to sympathize with her and condone her actions.

The censor Boards controlling showing of programmes on television change and we may see a time when the Board is more lax and permissive. We may then see highly objectionable films being shown on our television which have brought chaos in the United States of America.

It will then be difficult to tell our children to stop viewing TV when we have introduced it to them and made them its addict.

However strict we may be at home in trying to control what programme our children should see, but once they are addicted to it they will see even the highly objectionable programmes as and when they get an opportunity. We shall be held responsible before God for introducing televisions to them and weakening their moral fibre. God says in Quran,

"O ye who believe, save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones."
(66.7)

Let us not expose our children to immoral behaviour and turn them into fuel of fire.

- [1.](#) Vol. E No. 481; May 1962
- [2.](#) Dar-es-Salaam
- [3.](#) Vol. 80, No. 477; January, 1962
- [4.](#) Eternity–October, 1971, pp. 29
- [5.](#) East African Standard — 15.5.72.
- [6.](#) East African Standard, 19th April, 1973.
- [7.](#) East African Standard, 12.3.73.
- [8.](#) East African Standard, 26.3.73.

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