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## From the Ethical Point of View

In the last chapter, I explained the harm which music brings upon the spiritual well being of a man. Connected with it is the effect of music on ethics and morals.

Those intoxicated by music should try to reply to these questions:

Why those engaged in singing and dancing profession almost always sink to the lowest level of immorality?

Why the film actors and actresses change their wives and husbands with every change of weather?

Why singing and dancing was considered a 'Must' for prostitutes in Indian subcontinent?

Why marital sanctity and conjugal bliss are words without meaning in the world of singers and dancers? Why? Oh! Why?

The following quotations from 'The Bridal Bed'1 will provide an answer to these questions:

(Dance) is the start of culture. Though some of these dances are sensationally erotic, the sexual element is present in most of the world's dancing. It is sublimated even in ballet.

Many primitive dances, the world over, serve as preliminaries to mating, being closely connected with the choice of a marriage partner......A description or two will make this clear.

The Dinka, a gentle pastoral tribe, live on the east bank of the White Nile. They are astonishingly tall, sometimes more than six and a half feet high. Blacker than charcoal, often above a naked body, the hair glistens a longish pale gold mop, when it has been dyed with cow's urine....Dinka buy their wives......But first they see the women in dance.

Within a village clearing the drums and gourd rattles are ready. Possibly as many as three hundred Dinkas have been waiting an hour or more under the yet powerful and declining sun, the tall girls standing together in a line, by now worked up to a pitch of excitement bordering on hysteria as they await the moment for the dance to develop. But what is strange here is that although the dance will

mirror by no means deeply buried sexual desires, it remains curiously abstract and impersonal.

The magnificent nubile Negresses, with narrow hips and slim limbs, suggest bronze antiquely proportioned statues full of shy giggles; they begin to shuffle with their feet, beads and bracelets jangling on smooth wrist and dusty ankle. A laughing girl retreats, advances, invites her warrior partner, her arms tapering into the narrow palms of clasped simian hands stretched out behind her, her pointed breasts trembling. Her bead skirt rattles and sways, as she jerks her lacquer–like thighs forward and backwards as in love. Her partner guides her movement with his spear, thrusting his loins forward in a mime of pursuit."

In Sierra Leone the 'Dance of the Susu Bundu girl's has much more actual colour. Previously, the girls will have been circumcised in the Bundu Bush according to the ancient rites, and instructed in household accomplishments to prepare them for marriage. They are presumed to be virgins. It is night, but little fires flicker red in a moon–lightened darkness. Parents and relations of the participants cluster together with the rest of the village to watch. Monkeys chatter noisily from the trees.

As the girls step forward, they show gleaming teeth and the whites of their eyes. They are wearing their best finery: lengths of garish flower-patterned cloth are wound about their thin waists to the ground; high turbans composed of flaring coloured silk scarves decorate their small vivacious heads. Behind, over their skirts fall black velvet kirtles sewn with rows of bells. Each girl carries a showy handkerchief in one hand. Naked above the waist, her breasts, with prominent nipples, are thrust forward. Valleyed between the shoulder-blades, her upright back shines as though oiled. She dances with a proud, unspoiled grace of carriage.

No sudden crash of drums heralds the opening of this dance. Instead, a sweet wailing music from a native instrument, almost bell–like, blends with the controlled drums and the gentle swish of calabash, as the girls sway like dark columns of smoke, bending, skimming the earth with the fingers of first one hand then the other. More instruments join the rhythmic theme, emphasizing the flowing snake–like movements. On the girls' now serious faces appears entranced concentration. The orchestra speeds the tempo; the sensuous vigour of the Negresses changing to such a vibrating single energy of supple writhing forms that individually the dancers can hardly be separated. The speed is so great that the girls appear to be mingled in one florid streak of colour.

But from among the audience the boys have been watching with aroused attention, picking out the girls they would like for brides. Often at the end of such a dance, a girl will fall to the ground exhausted. Then, in a flash, a boy will dash out, pick her up in his alms and carry her into the bush nearby, where, with a sigh, she may thank the darkness for preserving the myth of her virginity.

The reader should not think that these rites of the primitive tribes have no connection with the 'refined' dances of the so-called civilized world. It has been quoted above that "the sexual element is present in most of the world's dancing."

European civilization celebrates a marriage with dancing. The bride is obliged to dance with the guests. Have you ever stopped to think what is the significance of this custom? In early feudal times the bride might have spent her wedding night not with her husband but with her feudal lord, who had the right to deflower her.

## For example:

Old writers of the history of Scotland say that King Evenus III — contemporary with the emperor Augustus — 'made a law by which he and his successors in the throne were authorized to lie with every bride, if a woman of quality, before her husband could approach her and in consequence of this law the great men of the nation had a power of the same kind over the brides of their vassals and servants. It would seem that this law remained effective throughout the kingdom, for more than ten centuries, until St. Margaret persuaded her husband King Malcom III to have it abolished. After this, any vassal or servant who wished to redeem the first night of his bride had to pay a tax in money.

In almost all countries of Christendom, "sometimes even monks, who were feudal lords, held the right of sleeping with the bride on her first night as a married woman.

Now, such customs have been diluted, and the dance with the bride has been substituted in place of sleeping with her on her first night.

In Swedish weddings it is still usual for the bride to dance with all the men; elsewhere in Europe, as in parts of Germany, there is tradition that every guest who dances with the bride must pay her some money!

In Hungary, for example, on the day of marriage, many rites are performed. "At last, at about midnight, comes the "putting bed" ritual. First every man present dances with the now almost exhausted bride, each giving her money for this privilege." Not only in weddings but even in social dances the erotic factor dominates and survives. You must have seen in Western countries (and in their blind `followers) that when a state guest arrives, the wife of the host stands with the guest and the wife of the guest stands with the host. And the same thing happens during the dances given in honour of the guest. Do you know the origin of this custom? In ancient times there was a custom which still survives in the Chukchee tribe of Asiatic Eskimos. It is the system of "Group marriage" which anthropologists believe to be the most primitive form of marriage.

(Dr. Bogoras) states that marriage among the Chukchee does not deal with one couple only but extends over an entire group. The men belonging to such a marriage union are called 'companions in wives'.....but takes advantage of his right comparatively seldom, namely, only when he visits for some reason the camp of one of the 'companions'. Then the host cedes him his place in the sleeping room.

As the author says, "the custom of loaning wives to strangers or friends, for a fee or just as an act of hospitality has been common and widespread over many lands from time immemorial and not only among savage tribes."

And this system survives in the form of loaning the wife to the guest in the dance room, in place of the bedroom.

Now that we have seen the relation between the dance and music on one hand and sexual promiscuity on the other, we can easily understand the following tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam: Music is the magic of fornication.

1. Joseph Braddock; published by Corgi books, Ransworld Publishers Ltd., London; 1960

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