



**THE MUSLIM WOMAN AND
THE MODERN WORLD**

IMAMIA STUDENTS ORGANIZATION PAKISTAN
KARACHI DIVISION
Adamjee Science College Unit

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THE MUSLIM WOMAN AND THE MODERN WORLD

The role and responsibilities Islam has bestowed upon Muslim women is not merely of academic interest that we simply talk about it. We also have to put the same in Practice in order to mould our life in Islamic pattern and according to Islamic values. It is not sufficient merely to state that Islam attaches great importance to the acquisition of knowledge or to human rights. Instead one must be informed as to how Islamic teachings are to be put in practice.

Women's rights and roles have been the subject of much discussion in different philosophies and religions throughout the history of civilisation. Since the second world war talk about women's rights has grown and today it has assumed prominence all over the world. The western influence and their mode of emancipation of women has over taken the world so much so that different cultural systems have been unable to defend and preserve their good aspects most of the old cultures have, without analysing the values, tried to stand by this standards, but could not do so against the movement having the pseudonym "women's lib". These old cultures were simply swept away under the pressure of western supported propoganda and "seemingly" better conditions of Western women. One group which comprised of westernised pseudo - intellectuals welcomed this wave and assisted in propagating the western version of the womens rights. The other tradition oriented people unintentionally helped the movement flourish by opposing the movement irrationally and illogically life an untrained fire fighter who pours water on petrol or gas fire.

Very few societies have responded in a responsible manner towards this new bargain from the west and stood their over life style. The Eastern societies can save and preserve their history and culture if they follow the progressive movement of human rights and derive inspiration and guidance from those personalities of the past who have been preserved in the pages of history of Islam and who came in this world only to give practical shape to the Islamic teachings and philosophy.

Fortunately the Islamic societies although they have not been able to stand their ground, do have a rich past and a progressive culture and by reviving these they can give the present generation, the strength to resist the onslaught of 'western values' In particular we in the past have had such personalities who stand out distinctly and much higher than any others in the history of mankind. If they are recognised and followed correctly, salvation is guaranteed. In the presence of such personalities it is quite unnecessary for the modern woman to accept west's invitation to get rid of the 'old' and 'retrograde' way of life.

Hazrat Fatima (S.A.) is in the forefront of such personalities whose entire life must be studied understood and practised. It is not only the belief but a reality that Islam has the answer for all the problems faced in life, be it social economic or religious. The art is to use the same. The intellectuals and those well versed in the history of Islam know that the Ahle-Bait (A.S.) personified all the human values. The personalities belonging to this modest house — the house of the Prophet — should be taken as a model and we should follow their footsteps. History has been enriched by the values enunciated by this house and life enriched by the examples set forth by the Ahle-Bait (A.S.). The importance lies in the correct and full comprehension of the acts and deeds of the Ahle-Bait (A.S.).

After the second world war the talk of womens rights assumed great importance. This war broke all previous family, religious and traditional values. Just as in war, so even after the war the next generation is affected by this deviation in

social and moral values. Even today after a lapse of more than three decades we see the war's destructive effects on the life-style, thoughts, art and philosophy. The more prominent effect of war has been the deterioration in moral values. Women have been the most affected.

Even before this the west had been on the war path with the ruling catholic clergy and as a result had destroyed most of these moral and intellectual's values which the church had supported in the name of religion. The church had made itself a guardian of old and illogical traditional and religious values for women which were considered part of religion. After renaissance and the victory of the Bourgeois class, the Bourgeois culture which is a culture of individual freedom destroyed the remaining clergy; as a result all those good or bad, negative or positive religious traditions that were supported by the church destroyed. Suddenly the age of individual and sexual freedom had arrived and woman who had been chained in by all those inhuman traditions, welcomed it with open arms till science entered the field. Science which had been serving the clergy during the middle ages is not free even in the war in the modern times when it has been taken in the service of Bourgeois and capitalists. Today if we see that religious and moral values are attached in the name of science it should be understood; that behind the name of science it is the rich Bourgeois who is talking just as in the middle age Feudal class was the actual power behind the rule of christianity.

Next on the scene enters Freud who is author of sameris calf, but with learning and education. Again the freedom seeking Bourgeois picks up the trumpet this time sexual freedom! This Bourgeois class is really a very contemptous class as compared to Feudal class who though followed an in human way of life yet had some values.

The Bourgeois has petty outlook about everything in life except money which is valued most. In a world ruled by Bourgeois, the economist while studying the economy ignores human qualities, sacrifices, martyrdom concentrates

on monetary aspects, bargains and deals when the same type of person makes a study of human nature he in his psychological studies attributes every action to sexual desires. All the Godly struggles, qualities of a human being are shown as an expression of unfulfilled sexual desires, beliefs and search for truth, even a mother fondling her baby or a man praying to his God are all seen as expressions of hidden sexual problems.

Freud had taken stand against all finer human qualities and called this science Realism and he does not explain this from the point of view of a Bourgeois but is presenting the point of view of scientists, psychologists, humanists etc. All these people belong to the Bourgeois class and they have changed a Human being into an animal with two faces a consumer and a sexualist.

This Bourgeois culture has made this new religion replace all other religions and schools of thought, the prophet of this religion is called Freud and woman with all her human values is the first sacrifice on its altar.

If I had more time at my disposal I would have explained how, when we talk about western colonialism we don't only mean the West colonising the East but it is this power which is colonising and exploiting both the Eastern and the Western masses.

This power of capitalism which now rules the (so-called free) World is not only affecting the Eastern and Islamic societies, nullifying our culture, mechanising our people, changing our values, propagating internal fight, (and so keeping us busy, with minor issues) it is also spoiling the youth in the West. To take an example; in spite of having the best crime detection centres and equipments in the world we see that still tons of drugs of addiction are moved round the world from the East to the West in the ships and aeroplanes and different containers belonging to the largest Capitalist organisations in the world, but these specially trained drug squads supported by the powerful governments of Europe

and America seem completely helpless to control this flow. I feel it is done intentionally as these drugs of addiction are one of the most effective items that can keep the young generation occupied and under control.

Now that Freud's sexual theories have replaced all other human values we see another expression this view in modern art especially in films which are based on two factors:

1- Violence

2- Sex

And both these are the outcome of the war.

This has not happened because of a co- incidence but the sociologists and humanists that are employed by the system have done this knowingly, so that the Cinema which is one of the best ways of propagands, should be in their service making this religion the successor of all the Previous Schools of Thought, the religion called Freudism.

Then these third and fourth class pseudo - intellectuals in these small under- developed countries think that Freudism is really the new science and become unpaid lackyes for the West and present this new science as the latest discovery in the recent age to their younger generation and the un- educated masses.

How sad is the lot of these "philosophers and intellectuals" who work unsalaried for these inhuman powers of Capitalism and are under the delusion that they are serving Humanity, freedom and science!

Thus for this power the youth has to be sacrificed, in the East or in the West (sacrificed on the altar of Freudism, sacrificed by addiction.)

This Youth, which is alive thinking and feeling and hasn't yet been pulled completely into this evil culture should be made to stay in a state of sleep by every means at hand, science, art, sports, literature or religion.

The most effective way to keep them in this state is sexual permissiveness; it is logical, modern and very acceptable to the young, and science, art, politics, logic and money, all

these means are employed to bombard the young from all direction with this (new) school of thought and we see how rapidly it takes over. On then factor which helps to spread the invitation of sexual freedom to the young and especially women, is the group of traditionalists who are fighting it. They, by trying to adhere to old, outdated and even inhuman traditions want women to remain in statusquo. Woman who justifiably rebels against these ferrets, gladly accepts the invitation breaking all chains and even all moral and religious codes just to be free. Statistics prove that in traditional societies where women's rights have been more abused, Freudism has been very successful so the right, and in fact the only way to fight this force is not to the basic human rights away from women but to let women be given all her Human and Islamic rights so that she herself is fully equipped to fight this wave and will do so to protect her own rights.

One basic problem with most of us is how to deal with the two separate issues of religion and tradition, which, through passage of time, seem to have amalgamated into one.

When Islamic laws, values and rules enter an established culture, with its own values, the resulting product of the two is considered sacred by that society and is defended on religious grounds by the traditionalists.

When the new intellectual tries to free himself and his society of old, useless or harmful traditions he fights this combination and when the old timer tries to defend religion he is really defending tradition. Neither the intellectual nor the traditionalist can separate one from the other.

Why is it important to separate these two issues?

Because we are Muslims and we believe that as the Islamic laws and rules are taken from the laws of Nature and made by the Lord of Nature, they do not age with time and are never out-dated.

On the other hand the laws based on traditions, based on productivity consumption and even those based on new cultural systems age with time, become out dated and either

have to be changed or, if they remain, oppose progress. If religion is based on these laws it may be alive and progressive one day, but, with passage of time and increasing knowledge becomes a barrier to progress, and is in-effective through all ages and all the coming generations.

The responsibility of a learned intellectual is to take out Islam, which is alive for all times, from the framework of these un-Islamic traditions and Islam should be understood and practised in today's framework and I have experienced (not researched, but experinced) that the most modern scientific and even rebellious outlooks when they are faced with naked pure Islamic values surrender and accept these Islamic values.

Fatima's personality; it is understood correctly as to what she really was, her role as woman, wife and mother, her role in the socety, in the mosque, in time, her struggles, stand out as a symbol for all humanity, let alone Muslems. Any woman would be honoured to pattern her own life on Fatims's. I have seen this happening with people who had no religious affinities, that when they were faced with any one of the personalities from the Prophet's house-hold they bowed down their heads and this is what proves that the Ahl- Al - Bait still live today.

When we say that Islam is alive we are saying its philosophies and beliefs are alive, its rules are alive and even its personalities are alive today. Show me one human society that if it comes to know Hosain it would not accept him as an all time symbol of an all time human being, to be remembered and followed; and which woman, if she believes in the ideal woman with ideal human values, would see Zainab in Karbala or Zainab as a prisoner in Yazeed's court and not accept her as a symbol of leadership of society and of all women in all times.

Thus we see that they are alive today, they are Islam personified; they are alive because they still act as symbols to be followed for every generation, for every period and for every land-timeless!

But, unfortunately we have mixed traditions with religion, made one group of religious and traditional values, one component of this group is alive, (immortal) the other (mortal) changeable, one for all times the other for a certain period and a certain people, one inherited from man, the other sent from God. We have mixed these two up and poured this mixture in to a framework of popular, cheap and static habits and then we defend this mixture as religion.

The modern intellectual sees that this mixture has ignored and suppressed all the women's rights, he also notices that the opposite party is talking about women's rights more than any thing else so he is naturally attracted to the latter.

When people who claim to know about religion fail to separate two issues of religion and tradition it is ridiculous to expect the educated modern young men and women to be able to do so, and if the religious personalities of an Islamic State do not perform this task who should we expect to do it? Which other organisation?

We have the life of the Prophet of Islam as an example for us. He, with all his power and a personality that has changed the course of history, is so gentle and kind at home that his wife is dis-respectful, so that Omer gets angry with his daughter and asks the Prophets permission to punish her for being disrespectful to her husband. We have that example to follow but we still give examples of our near relative and friends who are quoted as religious men, treating their wives harshly and this harsh treatment is taken as an Islamic practise rather than as a deplorable Eastern custom, which it really is.

In Islam and in the Prophet's life I'll give another example; during the battle of Hunain girls from Madina volunteer as nurses to attend to the wounded and the Prophet takes them all with himself to do so.

The Mosque, Masjid- Ul- Nabi, is the centre of all social activities, every corner of the mosque is active, alive; in one corner we see Rukaiya, who with the Prophet's approval is arranging nursing facilities for the wounded . Sa'ad-e-Bin —

Ma'az who was injured in the Battle of Khandagh was there for a long time till he finally died and Rukauya, with some other women, on the Prophet's orders, kept the place open for the wounded for sometime. This tradition was kept alive in Islam for many centuries.

In Divan-e- Ibn-e-Yamin I have read about a hospital in a village near Sabzwar in which women nurses used to work in the 7th, and 8th, century. When, in a tiny place like that we had such institutions, we can imagine the hospitals that were surely present in cities like Rai, Toos, and Baghdad.

After having examples like that we still find ourselves praising the American woman in the first world war claiming to be the pioneer of nursing and the pseudo-intellectual who is unduly impressed, again attacks religion lamenting that Islam is the cause of our backwardness! That's how we see that great Islamic ideologies are sacrificed in the course of the modern intellectual's fight with old customs.

Here a great responsibility lies on the shoulders of those who understand Islam in its true form and are also alive to the progress of the modern world, as, in order to present the true Islam to the modern world, they have to fill up a gap of about 10-12 centuries, centuries in which Islam gradually lost its true message and came to exist in its present form.

This responsibility lies with them because they are living in the 20th century and their beliefs and ideals lie far back, 12-14 centuries back, and they always feel this great gap in trying to present to the world the real Islam, as it was then, and should be today.

As I have mentioned before, the best thing that an Islamic society can offer against this new religion which is worse than Kufr, is true Islamic ideology and a rich Islamic culture, especially in the East. Because Freudian thinking, which acts as an addiction for the western youth, is one of the greatest powers of imperialism in the East.

This export of sexual freedom from the West to the East kills all struggles for freedom of human beings in the

third world. They are told "You want freedom? This is freedom! Sexual freedom!" As if they are paying the East in return for all the riches and valuables and the natural produces (like Oil, Diamonds, etc.) that they take from the East for their own progress.

The West is very clever, in return for all these it says "now you are free, you don't need any more freedom!" It is usually the young who struggle and make a stand for freedom. If given sexual freedom their demands decrease (as they are kept busy with this new toy). When they are satiated and lift up their heads for more they find themselves so tied up with the problems of modern life, (insurance premiums, mortgages, loan instalments etc.) that they never get time to demand any more freedom.

The only thing that will make the Muslim youth stand fast in front of this sordid invitation from the West is having symbols in the history of Islam, symbols to follow; Faces which should be stamped on the forehead of this century, so that the new generation, who does not want to be imprisoned by inhuman traditions and neither does it want to become a tool for the West, should be well equipped.

This modern woman wants to have a choice. She is not ready to accept the role of the traditional woman because the tradition is unIslamic and outdated, the tradition belongs to the days of patriarchy or even slavery, neither is she ready to accept the package deal from the West, because this new deal is neither science nor humanity, not freedom, not liberty and is certainly not based on respect for women; not liberty and is certainly not based on respect for women; it is based on cheap tricks from the cheap contemptuous forces of the Bourgeois.

She wants to choose! What shall she choose? Which face?

She wants to understand the face of a true Muslim woman and fortunately to understand this we have enough material in our history the best of which belongs to the Messenger's little house. These faces are all present in one little home,

Each member of this family is a model human being.

To be like Hasan in Peace, like Hosein in Jihad and Shahadat, like Zainab in carrying the message of Justice and righteousness, like Fatima as a woman, like Ali in every aspect of life!

I don't want to repeat myself, but the important factor is how to understand and how to change one's life according to these models.

When the Prophet of Islam tells Fatima that she is one of the four greatest women in history he is not being polite or paying an undeserved compliment to her. When he sees her Quietly facing the difficulties and pains of her life he still says "Fatima work for yourself today because tomorrow I can not do anything for you" He tells her that she has to bear this great burden because she is Fatima, she has to undergo, tests, it is a heavy responsibility. Her sisters are ordinary Muslim women, so they live happily and comfortably in their husband's homes. But she is special, she is FATIMA she is SAYYEDA, the leader of all women, not so that all women can make an idol of her and worship her, or just praise her, or just cry for her but so that they should understand her, recognise her and follow her path and try to live their lives as she lived hers this is the meaning of being "SAYYEDA".

How to learn and follow?

You know more or less all about Fatima's short life. Now what lessons are there to learn.

You know about FIDAK - see what we can learn from it. Her struggle to get FIDAK back is not just to get a small farm back, we must not belittle her and her struggles so much because this fight to take back Fidak is to present an example of unlawful confiscation by the ruling regime.

It is a political example to show that despite what is being talked about Islam and Justice and what every religious explanations have been given, the regime does not always rule according to the Islamic laws and is deviating from the right pattern, Fidak being one example.

So when we see Fatima's continuous, extraordinary struggles for getting back Fidak, for trying to get Ali's rights we should not limit ourselves just to these subjects and keep repeating them.

Today there is no Fidak and no Saghifeh, but this is not a historical subject these problems are alive today and happening to all of us; the story of these struggles should be told again, but not just as a repetition every year. It should be discussed and lessons learnt from it, what lessons?) Lessons that can be learnt from this great personality who is a symbol for a woman, and mother, are numerous.

She is a lady who throughout her life feels responsible for the future of the Ummat and fights against deviation and abuse of rights in the society and although she knows that she will not win still she fights on till her death.

This is what the lesson is!

She is a little girl of 5-10 years old in Mecca and is always seen with her father; although she is very young and it is not her duty in these difficult times still she feels responsible about the future of the movement; even when the Messenger is attacked in the streets still she is with him.

During the very difficult time of three years exile and imprisonment, such a time that a great person like "Sa'ad Ibn-Vaghas" remembers the period as the most difficult years of his life, again she is there with her father.

Then there is Hijrat, she comes to Madina and enters Ali's home. Again, in choosing Ali as her husband she shows her strength of character and sense of responsibility. She knows that Ali is a man who has nothing of the worldly goods; in fact, he has nothing except love of God and his sword, he comes back home at the end of the day with empty hands.

By marrying him, she knows what a big social, and intellectual responsibility she is taking on. Fatima understood very well what she had chosen and what a great choice! What a message she has to spread till she dies! And what a home she made! A home that stands out in history.

A home in which Ali is the father, Fatima the mother, the sons are Hasan and Hosein and Zainab the daughter. Each one of them great, each one of them unique, each one of them a model to follow. We do not have to search history to look for them, they are all her, under one roof, in one house!

Having such a culture and such a religion and then having such a present it is indeed tragic and painful. Fatima's personality makes Ayesha say that historical sentence "I have not seen any body better than Fatima except her father!" Any woman who can read should be able to read, understand and recognise such faces in Islam and then compare them with the modern woman of today. She should look at these faces not the face of the woman which tradition has painted for us because that had nothing to do with Islam, and she will make her own choice.

Today's woman should read and then she will read about those women in the battle of Siffeen who accompanied Ali's soldiers and by their songs and speeches gave them the impetus to fight. Years after the battle, Muawia summons one of these women and tells her that she had a hand in the bloodshed of his soldiers by Ali's friends she smiles with pride and says that it caused her great happiness to know that she had been useful.

This is what a Muslim woman is! One of the books that I have read about the women in Islam shows how, when Islam was practised in its ture form, women had specialized in all fields of science and knowledge; this was when Islam was not passive like today; today Islam is at a standstill and so is the Muslim woman. Neither do men have any rights nor do women.

Let us discuss Hijab-neither men nor women have Hijab today.

One of the subjects which Agai- Mutaharri has discussed in detail is the question of Hijab. Hijab is an unchangeable and completely logical Islamic rule but "chador" is a national dress, varying with place, time and climate. These two have however become synonymous so that the modern intellectual

attacks Hijab when he thinks he is attacking the "chador" and the group who should defend Hijab really defend the "chador" negating all other forms of dress as "Unislamic" and how many important issues are lost in this fight!

This new intellectual, in refusing Islam does not get time to look at Zainab. Zainab, when she sees that the movement has started she leaves home and husband behind and accompanies the leader of the movement who also happens to be her brother, she is not answerable to her brother, she comes because she is answerable to herself and her God. She comes every where with Hosain and is with him till his Martyrdom after which she takes up the message. In that most painful and difficult time as a prisoner, she, a woman, without any hesitation picks up the banner and carries the message through hostile towns and cities into the court of the callous and brutal ruler.

She spreads the seeds of the revolution wherever she goes, for all times, this is what a woman does, a Muslim woman!

When the modern woman is searching for a model let her look at this lady from Fatima's home and she will find what she is looking for, be it any land or in any period! Because these values are not outdated with time or change with different cultural systems they will only fade out when there is no humanity left.

The modern woman must know and understand Fatima. Fatima, whose whole life is a shining example, She is a fighter as child, a comfort to the Prophet in the years of exile, a helper in his work, then she is a companion to Ali — the poor lonely and brave fighter. She marries him of her own choice and stays in his home as the ideal companion, friend and helper in all his struggles, and finally she is the mother of Hasan and Hosain and Zainab.

Hosein himself is unique in history and then there is Zainab who is more important, why? Because Hosein grew up in the Prophets mosque, in society, among struggles, fights and victories, while Zainab grew up at home, with her

mother, and the mother's role in bringing up such a daughter, who carries the message of Islam in Karbala, is of immense importance.

That is how Fátima's home stands out as a symbol of all goodness and of every Islamic value for all times; and more important, this home shows the true picture of Islam in all ages.

When the hard times come, again we look at Fatima, a lady who, when her father and her husband had all the powers was still undergoing hardship, pain and hunger; now when her father is dead and her husband is quiet at home, her period of struggles for the establishment of right and justice has started. When all brave men are quiet she is continuing her fight. She tells every body what is happening and predicts the tragedies and excesses that will happen in Islam if this continues.

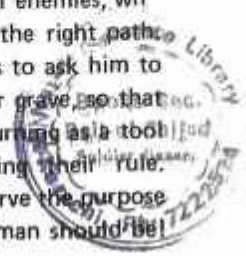
Today she creates the perfect example of a Muslim woman.

As a perfect mother who brings up sons like Hasan and Hosein and a daughter like Zainab, as a perfect wife and companion for Ali. One who accompanies him and helps him in all his struggles and lives as a responsible woman in the society from childhood till her death. She dies in loneliness and anonymity fighting for justice.

Till Hijrat her fight is with Kufr (Atheism) and then, especially after her father's death, with internal enemies, who are making the course of Islam deviate from the right path.

Even after her death her message to Ali is to ask him to bury her quietly and to tell nobody about her grave, so that they can not make her remembrance or mourning as a tool for spreading their propaganda and justifying their rule.

A woman who wants even her death to serve the purpose of Islam, such is how the modern Muslim woman should be



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