

The Status of Women in the Western World

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Humanity's affliction and the cause of its tragedy under the modern materialistic culture stems from the crisis of thought, the ideological loss, together with confused concepts and ideas, which impose weird attitudes, limiting outlook toward things around and rigidly defining fellowmen and society in an absurd manner.

If a researcher or an analyst casts a passing glance at the nature and appearance of the social, economic and psychological conditions in the contemporary ignorant materialistic culture, he will immediately recognize the tragic pictures of human sufferings, injustice, suppression, loss and deprivation in this complex civilization.

By tracing the origin of these social, psychological and intellectual catastrophes to their historical roots, one may realize that these are strongly linked to the superstitious attitudes of the history of ignorance on this planet. They draw a sketch whose lines passing across the dimension of the times of ignorance and cutting through the vacuum of the contemporary period, form the biggest circle of mankind's cultural confusion and loss, both mentally and spiritually.

They illustrate a disfigured image whose inborn nature has been polluted, and whose life has deviated from the law of human nature and the path of righteousness and justice.

The figure emerges of a confused personality, devoid of any humanistic values and concepts and unable to cultivate or express its true identity and its sound innate self.

From these concepts of distorted values and relations, stemming from the depths of the history of ignorance and pouring into the basin of the modern materialistic culture, the deviated theories about man.

woman, sex, family life, social relations, etc. have been formed.

The history of these concepts, values and relations presents a tragic picture of humanity and its brutal behavior that offends the very law of life, contrary to man's innate nature, miserably degrading the woman to a position which does not suit her natural self and upsets the social balance and the equation of man-woman relations.

Woman, thus, is greatly suffering from the misery of the modern society, being maltreated by man and inhumane social laws. This has been ever so since the primitive times up to the present modern materialistic civilization. These man-made laws and cultures have always viewed woman as a commercial commodity in life, a means of pleasure, a prisoner who has no

freedom and a creature who enjoys no human merits that have been bestowed on man. Actually, she is considered a source of evil in this world, a cause of sin, and a filth from which one needs to purify oneself.

Historically speaking, woman has been exploited. In the past civilizations like that of the Greeks and the Romans, she was deprived of her civil rights and was subjected to maltreatment by her father, brothers and her husband who only regarded her as a heavy burden, a means of pleasure or a slave to toil.

Women in Judaic Laws

According to Jewish concepts, deviated from the original laws of Moses, she was looked upon as a cause of sin. The myth goes even further, saying it was the woman who caused Adam to sin and be driven out of paradise. The Torah – the fabricated Torah of the Jews – says:

"Woman is more bitter than death" and "the good man before God should avoid her".¹

Under this Jewish misinterpretation of the divine religion of Moses, woman is regarded as an inheritable property. The Old Testament says: "And in all the land were no women found of so fair as the daughters of Job and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren". Job (42: 15)

The Jewish law further states that if a man dies without having any sons, his widow called 'Yabamah' in Judaic terminology should immediately become the wife to his next surviving brother whether she likes it or not, and he has to provide for her and inherits her when she dies.

We reproduce here for the benefit of our readers, the following from the Old Testament:

" If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.

Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, so shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.

And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."

Article No. 36 of the Jewish Personal law confirms this fact. It says: If a man dies without sons, and if he has a full, or a consanguineous brother, his widow is regarded as the lawful wife of that brother. She becomes unlawful to other than him as long as he lives, unless he releases her. Furthermore, this religion of the Jews, allows a poor father to sell his daughter like a slave, in order to relieve himself from misery.² In short, this distorted religion degrades the status of women and looks upon girls as saleable commodity.

Women during the Jahiliyah Period

If we take a look at the Arabian society during the period of Ignorance before Islam, it also presents a sad picture of the bitter tragedy from which woman suffered. The Arabs used to regard woman as a shame, and hated her existence because they feared disgrace and the consequences of her captivity. An Arab would rather not have a female born to him, and if born, he would not see her face. Hate and spite overwhelmed the souls of those cruel men to such an extent that some of them babies started walking and playing around. As a result of this absurd and ignorant way of thinking, woman became a commodity or a property in the ignorant Arabian society, to the limit of allowing a son to marry his stepmothers. The Glorious Qur'an illustrates this horrible picture of Arab Jahiliyyah, denouncing all its customs, attitudes and thoughts about women.

"When if one of them receives tidings of the birth of a female, his face becomes dark, and he is full of wrath. He hides himself from the folk because of the evil of that which is announced to him. (Asking himself) Shall he keep it in disgrace, or bury it (alive) beneath the dust? Now surely evil is their judgement." Holy Qur'an (16:58-59)

"And when the one that was buried alive (girl-child) is asked for what sin she was killed." Holy Qur'an (81:8-9) "And marry not those women whom your fathers married, except what has already (of that nature) in the past. And surely it was ever lewdness and abomination, and an evil way..." Holy Qur'an (4:22)

The Regard for Women in the Christian Church

As regards the concepts of the Christian Church, they are a queer admixture of Jewish ideas and the pagan Roman state. The Church's attitude towards woman is explicitly explained opinion of Christianity about woman: "She is the entrance used by Satan to enter man's soul. She pushes one towards the prohibited tree, violating the law of God, and disfiguring the image of God, that is the image of Man."³ A noted Christian scholar, says the following about woman:

"She is an unavoidable evil, a desired plague, a danger to family and home, a murderous beloved, and a gilded calamity."⁴

Women in the Modern Materialistic Culture

Thus, it was natural the growth of the European modern materialistic culture to react and reject these savage, mythical and backward Jewish and Christian concepts which for centuries had ruled the thoughts of peoples of Europe, America and other places.

So, naturally, these misconstrued theories about sex and woman, and her relationship to man, life and civilization, fell to pieces and materialistic Europe consequently had to formulate its own theories to fill the resulting vacuum. It based them on the Greek and Roman cultural heritage on one hand, and the result of a counter-action against woman's tragic position under the inherited concepts, laws and values of distorted Judaism and Christianity, on the other.

But sadly, this modern theory, though calling for the destruction of those false mythical concepts, and voicing the slogan of liberty and woman's emancipation, actually fell a prey to its own pleasure-seeking conscience.

This materialistic concept of pleasure, sex, enjoyment and instinctive pursuits, advocated by the modern European culture distorted woman's status, the concept of sex and the relationship among man, woman and life, causing more harm than the fossil ecclesiastic concepts and the remnants of Jewish thought. Under this modern culture, the woman was dipped deeper into the filth of degradation, and the claws of social tragedy tightened closer around her neck.

This trend did not give her any chance to get out of the calamity of contempt, servitude and the state of despising her own humanity, and she plunged herself into the anarchy of wanton enjoyment, loss of values and the pains of family and psychological sufferings, imposed upon her by this sick and decaying culture. In a way, as if trying to escape from the frying pan she fell into the fire itself.

Thus, by analyzing the status of woman in Europe, America, Japan, Russia and other parts of the world affected by this materialistic current, one sees tragic and painful results. At the same time, we realize that the civilization of this ignorant man is finally going to collapse, as its caravan stumbles on rock upon rock while passing through the deserts of loss and stray. We recognize it to be a repetition of what had been experienced by the past ignorant nations, whose misery has been described by the Qur'an:

"Like those before you were mightier than you in strength, and more affluent than you in wealth and children. So they enjoyed their portion, thus have you enjoyed your portion as those before you did enjoy their portion. And you entered into vain discourses like the vain discourses in which

those before you entered. These are they whose works are null in this world and the hereafter.

These are they who are the losers."

The Holy Qur'an (9: 69) Despite the claims of this culture about woman's emancipation, rights and equality, the problems of woman, sex and her relationship with man and society have become more complex and dangerous, threatening the happiness of not the family alone but the society as a whole.

Actually, such claims have become the cause of woman's misery, destroying her human nature. Figures and statistics come out everyday with terrifying and painful facts, warning of an incoming destruction, that forces the contemporary man to reconsider his understandings and concepts about sex, man, woman and social relations.

In order to place before the reader a testimony a testimony backed by statistics and figures obtained from relevant studies, here are some examples that speak of the terrible pictures of loss and tragedy under the modern materialistic culture, concerning family problems, such as divorce, adultery, illegitimate children and the misery of the family life of the contemporary man and woman.

" Al-Qabas" newspaper in its issue of 11-7-1979, reported that: 12713 housewives had fled their houses during the year before in Japan, on an average of 35 housewives a day. The Japanese Police disclosed these figures on Mother's Day, as a result of demands by children and husbands looking for their absconding mothers and housewives. Most of those disappearances were caused by family disputes, cruelty of husbands and the like, the police said.

The number of housewives who elope with other men, deserting their husbands and children, is on the increase. The police also added that 400 housewives deserted their homes because of debts."

Dr. Homer, a Swede, when asked by the United Nations to study the status of women in Arab countries in 1975, announced: "It is the Swedish woman who should demand her freedom, as the woman in the Arab countries has already reached the peak of her freedom under Islam". She added "the Swedish woman tries these days to have this year announced as 'The International Year of the Woman', and then declare another year for the man, so that he may extract his rights from the woman."

Dr. Homer continues in her report: "25% of Swedish women suffer from psychological and nervous sicknesses, and 40% of Sweden's income is spent on these diseases caused by the so-called freedom which the Swedish woman attained and which she is practicing. In fact the tragedy of the Swedish edge of such a terrifying and perilous precipice."

Premarital pregnancies are at epidemic proportion in the U.S. where adultery runs rampant.

Homosexual and bisexual men and women often openly express their sexual preferences. With unwanted pregnancy comes the moral question of abortion – taking the life of an unborn child.

Immorality in the West

A recent study reported by Associated Press showed: Four out of every five single American women in their 20s have had sex. One in three had lived with a man out of wedlock. One third of all these women had been pregnant at least once, and 40% of those who became pregnant had an abortion." Those statistics seem to be symptomatic of the nation if not most of the

Western World. Husbands and wives are too often unfaithful to their marriage vows. Children learn this lack of values from parents and the cycle is perpetuated. So once again we are faced with another problem unsolvable at the human level.

In another report disclosing the human tragedy under the materialistic culture, the American Association for Family Services says: the disintegration of the family, which has reached an epidemic stage, tops the list of social problems. Every year more than one million persons are separated or divorced, which is seven fold higher in percentage compared with that of a century ago.

reports that in murder cases within families, the husbands are mostly the murderers of their wives; and in 15% of family crimes the children are the victims of their parents.

According to recent statistics released by UNESCO, 60% of the housewives in the U.S.A. and Europe feel discontented, disappointed, and miserable. In the U.S. 6,500 people are divorced each day, in other words well over a million each year. Recent surveys show that between 21 and 43 percent of married women in U.S. have committed adultery.

Juvenile crime and violence has increased since World War II in the U.S. In 1950 1 out of 8 serious crimes were committed by youths under 18 years but in recent years the figures have soared to 2 out of every 8. Youth suicide is on the increase, children are neglected.

Between 1900 and 1985 in the U.S., the divorce rate increased by 70%. Today one out of every 3 marriages (1 out of 2 in many large cities)

ends in divorce or separation. Illegitimate births among certain segments of society is over 50%. The West and other non-Islamic societies continue to produce illegitimate children in great proportions. Wife-beating, run away children, parent beating, child abuse, broken marriages are rampant in such societies.

The October 1985 issue of Woman's World has disclosed the following startling facts which

prove the decadence of non-Muslim societies: One in every 6 children born in U.K. in 1984 was illegitimate.

- A poll conducted for women married 5 to 15 years showed that 2 out of 5 women admitted having an extra-marital affair.
- A poll at a high school for girls showed that three quarters of the girls did not want to marry at all and preferred sex without marriage.
- The number of this year, compared to the same period last year. The Home Office disclosed that a total of 780 rapes occurred in England and Wales alone, compared to the official figure of 613 in the first half of 1984. - According to a leading psychologist of the National Children's Home, one in every 5 British children suffers from sexual or physical abuse.

Blaming the epidemic on the breakdown of family life, he said that the children were abused by their step-fathers or their mother's live-in lovers. - A national survey conducted by an educational psychologist indicated that as many as 1 in every 10 adults in the U.K. were sexually abused during childhood.

Still another report says: "Nine out of 12 girls in Britain are subjected to rape and kidnapping." The British News Agency 'Reuter' in its dispatch of December, 3 1985, said an average of 4 children a week are killed in Britain by their parents or guardians, according to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Saying that the problem is far more serious than anyone realizes, a spokesman for the NSPCC disclosed the horrible figure of 200 children dying each year from parental abuse and besides every two weeks a child is slain in Britain by strangers or other relatives.

Council registers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were found to list a total of 30,000 child victims of abuse, representing an increase of more than 5,000 new cases discovered in the past two years.

The figures were revealed by Brian Roycroft, leader of the Association of Social Service Directors at a judicial inquiry into child abuse in Cleveland, Northern England. He said that the rise was even higher than 22 percent in some areas and described the situation in Cleveland as "alarming." the numbers showed significant increases in regions where separate statistics were kept for sexual offences against children, he pointed out.

The breakdown of family stability in Britain which has dramatically increased the numbers of unmarried mothers, of unmarried people living together and people living alone, is much to blame for these social ills.

According to new figures published by the U.K. Government on Jan. 14, 1988 the percentage of illegitimate births has soared from 4 percent in the 1950s to 21 percent of all births in 1986.

Only Denmark with 43 percent has a higher rate in Europe. The statistics of social trends confirm that Britain has the highest divorce rate in Europe and nearly twice the rate in France and West Germany. Between 1979 and 1985, it was found that the proportion of people cohabiting without marriage nearly doubled. Some 15 percent of all single women between the age of 18 and 49, and including many divorced, were illicitly cohabiting in 1985.

The breakdown in family life has also seen a rapid rise in people living alone. Nearly 25 percent of all households contained only one person in 1986 compared with an average 10 persons in 1951.

The way the woman is treated in the western countries who claim to be the champions of freedom and equality is evident from the International Meeting on Women and Mass Media held at Athens, Greece, November 20. 1985.

One of the participants, Petra Kelly, a member of the West German Parliament bitterly complained. "In Germany they treat us like a minority, equal to invalids, the lower strata of society and like children. They portray us pornographically and consider using violence against us as natural. Every 15 minutes one woman is a victim of rape."

The Meet urged the Greek Parliament to pass a law banning exploitation of women on the TV. Though criticisms of the exploitation of women is fully justified, the women of these so called advanced countries are themselves to be blamed. If women did not consent there will be no pornographic publications, sex films and nude advertisements.

Turning to the east, we find the decadence of society, in the communist world equally shocking. The Magazine, 'Interphase' in its April 1977 issue reports:

"The grave problem of the Soviet communist society is that, out of every two marriages one ends in divorce in most parts of Western Russia. In Moscow, for example, nearly 49% of the marriages ended in divorce, after the birth of the first child. In the Mavadansk region the percentage of divorce is as high as 72.9 percent.

The Physicians' Conference held at Moscow University in 1975 called for urgent measures to tackle this grave social problem, concerning the high divorce rate and the low birth rate..."⁵ It is evident from the report that according to the latest statistics. the number of Muslims in the Soviet Union have been increasing at a rate much higher than the usual population growth, while, at the same time the birth rate in non-Islamic regions of the Soviet Union is falling lower, a fact which is worrying the Russians. The reports and statistics confirm that all attempts to separate the Muslims from Islam have come to naught, and that the Islamic spirit has shown unprecedented growth, and the underground Islamic movements have started to grow and

spread out.

The demonstrations held in the streets of Baku, the capital of Soviet Azerbaijan, after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, are a proof of the Islamic resurgence in Soviet Union, as also the sympathy shown for Afghan Mujahidin fighting against the Russian-imposed communist regime in Kabul. Moreover there have been frequent reports of desertion by Muslim soldiers from the occupying Soviet army in Afghanistan.

*. It is worth noting that the said family problems are confined to the non-Islamic regions of the former Soviet Union. Despite communism's suppression of Islamic teachings in the Muslim lands under the Russians, Islam still exercises its influence on the life and social conducts of the Muslims there, reducing family instability and the exploitation of women.

It is possible that this increase in the Muslim population was responsible for the recent principal amendment of the Soviet Constitution which formerly allowed the so-called autonomous Republics under Russian colonial control to withdraw from the Union on the basis of self-government. The Soviets fear that the Muslims in the Soviet Union may become a majority by the end of this century.

Thus, by analyzing the above facts, we discover the significance of the political and social connections in the Islamic system which exercise a deep influence on the life of Muslims. We also realize the importance of the Islamic family system in positively effecting the lives of the Muslims, even if it is not strictly adhered to.

The following statistics reveal how alarming the family breakdown epidemic has become in non-Muslim societies:

FRANCE:

One in four marriages ends in divorce; in cities the rate may be 50 percent. Each year 600,000 couples marry, 100,000 choose to live together without marriage and 100,000 divorce.

CANADA:

Almost 40 percent of first marriages end in divorce. The divorce rate doubled between 1972 and 1982.

THE SOVIET UNION:

About 70 percent of marriages will break up in 10 years, according to Moskovskaya Pravda. Factors involved include drunkenness, lack of money and lack of privacy.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA:

The UNESCO Courier stated that single-parent families are often created by women migrating to the cities and having children in a series of unstable unions. Due to alcohol abuse or the inability of husbands to find adequate work locally, the family breaks up and mothers and children are left in poverty. The nations with the highest percentages of illegitimate births in the world are in the Caribbean and in Central and South America.

CHINA:

Although China's divorce rate is lower than most Western nations, it has risen 70 percent in five years. The Peking Review reported that "the divorce rate" is rising dramatically.

BRITAIN:

The divorce rate in the U.K. is the highest in Western Europe. Nearly one in seven single women age 18 to 49 lives with a man she has not married.

UNITED STATES:

Half the marriages this will probably end in divorce. Sixty percent of the children born this year will spend part of their childhood in a single-parent family.

JAPAN:

The divorce rate has doubled in the past 20 years. Before 1947, men were allowed to evict their wives into the streets with only a short note of divorcement. Now, about 70 percent of divorce cases are initiated by women.

Relations in the West

Going back to the analysis and evaluation of the sexual relations, and woman's status and position under the European materialistic culture, we realize that not only did it ruin society and family life through divorce, illegitimate children, abortion, rape, misery, frustration, increase of juvenile delinquency...etc., but actually this evil plague even affected physical health of both man and woman, because of the disordered, abnormal and beastly sexual relations practiced by both sexes, under the patronage of this declining culture of ignorance. Reports of physicians, health institutes and other relevant statistics testify what has been said, and give warning signs.

Below are some examples:

Dr. Lirbete, a French physician, reports that, "In France 100,000 people die every year from diverse venereal diseases as a result of adultery. Abul A'la la-Mawdudi, in his book "Al-Hijab" (The Veil) writes, "...It is estimated that 90% of the US population are afflicted with venereal diseases."

The Encyclopedia Britannica mentions that in 650 government hospitals in U.K. 100,000 patients are treated for syphilis and another 160,000 for gonorrhea. But the figures fade into insignificance, when compared with the private clinics who treat and estimated 61% syphilis patients and 89% gonorrhea! it adds.

Furthermore, some 30 to 40 thousand children in the U.S. die from inherited venereal diseases every year. Reliable sources say that at least 60% of the youth population, irrespective of singles or married are afflicted with gonorrhea. Venereologists stress that 75% of women that undergo venereal operation are found to be infected with venereal diseases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated there are between 30 million and 50 million cases of venereal syphilis in the world and more than 150 million cases of gonorrhea infection. Director-general of the WHO, Halfdon Mahler, estimates there may be 10 million carriers of the AIDS virus in the world's population.

During the 1960s gonococcus organisms became increasingly drug resistant. Then during the 1970s genital herpes swiftly cut through the sexually permissive.

But the most infectious sexual disease threatening the very foundations of Western society is the recently discovered disease called AIDS*, which is forcing people to reconsider man, woman and sexual relations. It is spreading like wild fire especially in the U.S. where millions are believed to be afflicted. No cure has yet been found for this dangerous disease, the result of promiscuity and homosexuality. The victim after losing all bodily resistance dies a miserable lingering death.

In the West in the 1980s, AIDS, caused by the HTLV-3 virus, swept first through homosexual ranks. It was then spread by bisexuals to heterosexuals, who in turn spread it to their mates or partners.

W.H.O. has recorded 73,747 cases of AIDS but at least twice this number is thought to be more accurate and that up to 10 million may be infected by the virus, which can take up to five years to develop.

The worst affected is the United States which has 49,700 cases with other hard-hit countries well behind with France reporting 2,500 cases, Uganda and Brazil with 2,300 each, Tanzania with 1,600, West Germany 1,500, Canada 1,400 and Britain 1,200.

An analysis of the British figures shows that the overwhelming majority of cases, 1,032, are

among homosexual and bisexual males and from which 577 have died. Most of the other sufferers have contracted the disease as blood recipients or through sharing infected needles. The epidemic has caused a reversal of opinion about homosexuality in Britain, which was legalized among consenting adults over 20 years ago. In a poll by Harris for Britain's commercial television channel in 1987, 43 percent were now found to disapprove the law while in 1985 only 27 percent had said that they disagreed with the unnatural law. The number of people suffering from AIDS disease has more than doubled in Britain during the past year, according to figures released by the Health Department in January 1988. The figures show that at least five people everyday are becoming infected with the fatal virus and each day someone is dying of it. The Health Department recorded 32 sufferers dying from AIDS last month, bringing the total of deaths to 679 out of a total of 1,227 known cases. A total of 8,016 people are registered as HIV-positive carriers - an increase of 459 in the past three months - but the real extent of the epidemic is unknown. Some researchers believe that the true total of infected people could be at least 50,000, with the overwhelming majority unaware because of the years it takes in some cases, if at all, to develop the disease. The figures confirm that AIDS is still a disease virtually confined to homosexuals, where 84 percent of all cases are said to be homosexual and bisexual men. That is a brief account of woman's relations with man, and of family life under these materialistic non-Islamic cultures, especially the modern European culture, which has been driven to sexuality and wantonness, justifying the resulting chaos through absurd philosophization and sciences as claimed by their theorists, such as Freud who explained man's human activity as entirely caused by sexual motives. He considered human conduct, human civilization and all innovations, tragedies, excitement and frustration, merely to be different aspects of man's sexual instincts. In his researches on diseases and psychological sickness, he attributed them to sexual restraint, and demanded sexual freedom as the only way to get rid of sexual repression and ailment. But the scientific facts, statistics and figures recorded by the concerned institutes, physicians' clinics and sanatoriums all confirm that man's psychological crisis is aggravated, and the venereal diseases are spreading more and more as the sexual liberties are increasing. According to the materialistic philosophy, in which the modern ignorant culture believes, all sorts of sexual practices and expressions are regarded lawful, however abnormal and deviated they may be. Thus, these ignorant materialistic cultures, with their absurd and unnatural philosophies,

theories and practices in respect to woman and sex, have come to a calamitous stage
seriously undermining their civilization and way of life