



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 "In the name of Allah,
 The Beneficent, The Merciful".



THE CALL

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عِيدُ مَبْتَدَأِ

Festival of Ending of the Fast

THOUGHTS FOR EID

by

Khwaaja Kamaalud-din

FREEDOM OF ACTION ENJOINED IN
 THE QUR'AN

“Is one who goeth grovelling on the face (with head bent downward) better guided than he who goeth upright (with head erect) on a straight path Say, God hath brought you forth and gifted you with hearing, and sight and heart; yet how few are grateful.” – The Qur’an 67 : 22, 23.

How simple these words, yet full of meaning, engrained with a true philosophy of life. To emphasise freedom of action and liberty of opinion the Book of God, in the above quotation, takes two opposite illustrations from the animal kingdom, and thus brings home to us the truth that man was made to act as a free agent.

The first illustration is that of the quadruped who walks on the earth of God with head bent down; the other illustration is that of the two legged animal – i.e., man, who walks with head erect. Look at the muscles and formation, as well as position of the respective necks of the two, and two different objects seem to have been designed by Providence. Man can see his way at a long distance, and can make a choice between the right and crooked path, while a quadruped cannot do so. Man can move his head right and left, while the latter cannot do so easily.

This observation leads us to one conclusion: man has been made to find his own way and to discriminate between right and wrong, while the lower animals cannot do so; some one else should do it for them. Man is to lead, the animal is to be led. Therefore, one who cannot form his own judgement and is satisfied with the state of being led by others, has hardly justified his being created as man. He is a quadruped and ungrateful to his Creator, as the next verse in the above quotation shows:-

*God hath brought you forth with head and sight and heart,
but yet few are grateful.*

And what is gratitude to God? Do not take Him for an earthly potentate to be pleased with soft words of thanksgiving. Such a conception of gratitude we do not find in the Qur'an which says:-

"One who is grateful to God, he is so on his own behoof."

The Qur'an 31 : 12

Lip gratitude counts for nothing with God. It really consists in making proper use of His bounties. Your abuse or misuse and even disuse of them makes you ungrateful to God; and this idea has been brought home to us in the text. We have been given sight and hearing with head erect, to see everything before us in its proper light, we have been given a heart to come to a right conclusion with a view to

come to action to our best advantage. If we do not do so, we are ungrateful to our Lord. We are not animals with head downward to be led by others; we have to lead others if we can. If we follow others blindly, we have not done justice to the wise providence of the Creator in making our head erect on our shoulders.

A Lesson for a Muslim

Brother Muslims, - Are these Quranic verses simply to be read, or have they some real meaning for you? If they do not appeal to you, I am afraid for your Islam. Freedom of action, liberty of opinion, and pertinacity of character are to be in the Muslim nature, as these verses show. Leave alone questions appertaining to politics; keep up your entity in the moral, social, and intellectual sphere. Why should you be led by others in these matters like those with heads downwards? Political subordination is immaterial in a way, because you only need a good government; if you have that, it is enough.

Try to emancipate yourselves from moral and intellectual slavery. It has demoralised you. It really is at the bottom of all that blight and inertia which mars all your activities. Why all this slavish subjection to the morality, mind, and sociality of the West? Europe was sometime an idol; but it has fallen now. She was weighed and found wanting. Look what moral depravity, what inhuman propensities, what deplorable want of real culture she has shown in certain quarters within the last few years; she is no longer Christian even. Will you be led by her morality? Be a man and not an animal, and God be with you!

Eid Sermon, London 1913

If a woman gives away her jewellery or her wealth she is considered foolish, but let her give away her chastity and her honour and she is classed as liberated by the society we live in. How ludicrous!

The Islamic Concept of Religion

Some distinctive features of Islam as a Religion

The purpose of religion according to Islam is to edify man, and to bring out and develop his innate faculties to their full capacity. The Quranic expression for this idea of uncovering the latent faculties is 'Falah' which literally means to cultivate or break the soil. The idea is that just by breaking the virgin soil, one brings out the hidden faculties of the land, and consequently reaps a good harvest, similarly the Divine Religion brings out and evolves the inherent capabilities of man and helps in the growth and development of his faculties to a state of perfection.

The Holy Qur'an in its very beginning says: "This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil) these it is that shall be successful or attain to 'Falah'. (2 : 2-5) The words "those who guard against evil" point out to a universal law which governs every growth in the world. No growth and no progress is possible unless we avoid all that is harmful. The weeding out of a field is essential to a good harvest. The natural phenomenon working in the universe around us shows that the progress of life depends on two things: (i) assimilation of the useful, and (ii) rejection of the harmful. The Holy Qur'an has come to uplift human society and aims at a harmonious development of man in all walks of life. So it has warned the people at the very outset that it will help only those who will guard against evil and avoid all that is harmful, and assimilate what is good and useful.

Man is the most beautiful work of the Divine Hand. He is made after the image of God and is the lord of creation. The Qur'an says: "Certainly We have created man in the best make" (95 : 4) and that everything in the earth and the heavens is made subservient to him (31 : 20). Man is therefore supposed to work out his vast potentialities and give full play to his faculties and thus bring them to per-

fection. But every thing in the world attains to perfection through obedience to certain laws, and religion provides man with that code of life to which he must submit in order to work out his salvation and reach the state of perfection.

Islam has given a new significance to the concept of religion. Firstly, it is to be treated not as a dogma, but as a science based on the universal experience of humanity. And the idea of the scientific in religion has been further strengthened by presenting its doctrines as principles of actions.

There is not a single doctrine of Islam which is not made the basis of action for the development of man to higher and yet higher stages of life. Secondly, the sphere of religion is not confined to the next world; but its primary concern is with life here on earth. And it provides man with the means which enable him to attain communion with God on the one hand; and on the other hand to be able to lead a happy and prosperous life through proper understanding of the world's problems. Thirdly, it lays down rules not only for individual progress but also for the advancement of society as a whole and for the nation and even humanity at large. The moral and social development of man to his present state, if due to any one cause, is due to religion. It is religion alone that has made possible a state of civilization which has again and again saved human society from disruption.

Woman in Islam is a radiant jewel. She is likened in the Qur'an to a brightly shining star enclosed in glass and she is found in houses (24 : 35, 36). Every jewel, every precious gem has a part to be exposed and a part to be concealed. Only when one part is properly embedded in finery can the radiance of the other part be manifested.

CHARACTER IN FAMILY LIFE

by

Nazim Khan

The theme 'Family Life' deals with almost every subject, from Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, History, Technological Studies to Modern Day Living.

Since each of these concern man, it involves family life. It is a very big, wide and varied subject. It's all in one and one in all. It's unity in diversity and vice versa. I cannot deal with every subject, so that I shall confine myself to just a small aspect of character training.

The type of person one becomes is influenced even before birth in the environment within his/her mother and it continues with the forces of the family life and lastly the outside world. From an individual this unit grows into a family, then into a community or jamaat, then a nation. Nations make up the world of which a family belongs. This therefore involves in a general way something concerning behaviour or Ethics and in this I shall merely attempt to make references to only a few qualities in the individual about his/her character.

What is character? It is a mark to know by; that which a person really is; reputation.

The Prophet Muhammad applied himself to character building. This is for the moral upliftment of man as good laws could benefit him. It is difficult to deal with the several qualities that make up the character or personality of one but I hereby emphasize:

- (a) Truthfulness as a basic teaching of the Quran. The Prophet's enemies had to acknowledge his truthfulness; He was known as the Al Amin (The Faithful One) also mean-

ing being Truthful. I quote, “Surely truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to paradise, and a man continues to speak the truth until he becomes thoroughly truthful.”

- (b) Perseverance. Under the severest hardships and where there seemed no prospects of success the Prophet stood adamant when threatened with death. During the flight to Madinah, hidden in a cave, with a search party at its mouth, He consoled his companion Abu Bakr with these words. “Grieve not surely Allah is with us.” (H.Q. 9 : 40) Also, “Patience and prayers are the two doors through which Divine help is received,” (H.Q. 2 : 153).
- (c) Courage. “Surely those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue on the right way, on them is no fear, nor do they grieve.” (H.Q. 46 : 13). Also “Now surely the friends of Allah, they have no fear, nor do they grieve,” (H.Q. 10:6).
- (d) Humility. “Surely Allah loves not the proud.” (H.Q. 16 : 23). These are just a few references.

The Prophet’s example is a beacon light in this respect. He was humble and never placed himself on any pedestal. In fact humility is said to be the essence of wisdom.

Faithfulness thankfulness and gratitude, honesty, forgiveness together with other good characteristic or traits of character each on its own merit make up for the elevation of man but above all stands out **Morality** and **Spirituality** which are on higher planes or levels of character; for the others are enmeshed within these two.

We find today, however, that man has been given second class status. He is threatened with fears of retrenchment, high cost of living, insecurity, recession, decline in foreign reserves and a rising crime situation. He has been degenerated from dog eat dog society to man eat man.

Few of us can tolerate the shocks of every day life. If it is not gruesome rape, it is cold blooded acts of murders, of robbers who cut out a victim's tongue or death of school children on roads or suspicion and corruption at all levels.

Our struggle therefore is the revitalization of family life which can only be done by calling to the soul of man, the family, the nation and the world at large.

We are to determine the quality of life in the terms of the spiritual foundations on which the family is to be built. Here is it that religion plays its vital role. We are therefore guided by the Holy Quran, the Prophet's examples and the Hadith to remind ourselves principally of the basic teachings – the Unity or One-ness of God, the five daily prayers, fasting, charity and Pilgrimage. Remember too Jihad or struggle which is a necessary sacrifice. Charity also means the love extended towards other fellow-beings.

The spiritual void, economic and social crises that do exist in families are symptoms of the greater crisis which is the spirit or soul of the person more so the mind or conscience that needs to be nurtured.

We do need a family life built upon the psychological basis of man so that old persons and those in need can be cared for or provided with (a) the physical necessities – food, shelter, clothing (b) spiritual wants – the knowledge for the worship and glorification of the Creator.

Children need to be loved and in return we can demand of that man that he gives his best. This can be achieved by good family upbringing and by a change in our general attitude and behaviour – by proper moral and spiritual standard.

In the face of the moral and spiritual breakdown this change to a new and just society must be guided by commonly accepted principles. Principles of teachings as recorded in the Holy Quran. Then and only then will there be a deliverance from the decay of society around us.

The Significance of the Miraj

Muslims are unique. They pay homage to their greatest leader, in commemorating his birth (Meelad), and his ascension (Miraj), never his death. For whereas his birth brought light to the world, his ascension exalted man towards the source of all light. It is from this viewpoint an attempt would be made to look at the significance of the Miraj, as experienced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (U.W. B.P.), with respect to man's spiritual development.

“And Muhammad is but a messenger – messengers have already passed away before him.” (Qur'an 3 : 143)

This verse clearly connotes the mortality of the prophet, the greatest exemplar mankind has ever seen. It is therefore not farfetched to assume that the exercise he gained through Miraj, bears some significance to the common man, the Prophet being the greatest exemplar of man.

Before we can approach this subject however, we must look at the purpose of religion in man's life, for it is only through the Divine, such an experience as the Miraj can be envisaged.

From time immemorial, man has always been seeking to come into contact with something which is beyond his material world. The heavenly bodies, the Sun, Moon, and Stars have always been a challenge to him, and in our age the recent landing of man on the moon, substantiates that this yearning for the unknown, which transcends man, is part of his evolution, as he now hopefully looks towards the planet Mars. In this century also, man has achieved the astonishing feat of heart-transplant, and hopefully looks towards the brain. In short, the magnetism of his spiritual being is always drawing him in search of the Unknown, of the reality of the nature of things around and within him. But as advanced as man's knowledge may appear to be, he knows that should he eventually reach the Sun, he has only scratched the surface of the Universe, in which there are

countless other solar systems like ours, and then a whole new field is opened to him. If he succeeds in the transplantation of the brain, his ultimate search would be the nature of the faculties of the brain – thought, reason, piety etc., abstract qualities which transcend the human mind. Thus it has led him to believe that the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual, and the basis of man's existence is also spiritual.

History bears testimony to this, for if we should delve into the old civilizations of the world, we would note that no single society has ever failed to project some sort of religious conviction, even if it may have taken the form of ritualism, mysticism, or the supernatural. In fact the development of religious belief of any of these societies, was the impetus for the evolution of thought, and consequently the development of that civilization. It is therefore most revealing to note, that the desire to transcend the material world and delve into the region of the spirit, is a characteristic latent in man, lying deep within him, yearning for ascension. To awaken this yearning which lies deep within man, is the purpose of religion.

But man differs within his own species as far as character, intellect and various other traits are concerned. These he must develop himself. They can neither be inherited nor gained, but must be developed according to environment and knowledge. Similarly the spiritual being of man, must be developed, if he wishes to explore the world of truth and reality of his existence. Each individual, depending upon his religious and social environment, and how much he is aware of them, possess within his spiritual being the potential to ascend intellectually, morally, and spiritually, the advancement of which again lies with the individual. The significant thing to note however, is that the spirit is wombed in man, and how well it can be nourished and developed, depends upon the degree of religious consciousness into which it is housed. Religion is therefore a necessary institution, just as eating and drinking, in the development of the "ideal-man" – man, who is at peace with himself, his fellow beings, and his Creator,

The Miraj experienced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (U.W. B.P.) is the highest form of spiritual development ever attained by man. It is perhaps impossible for us to attain the degree of spiritual upliftment as experienced by the Prophet. But as shown in the opening verse which was quoted above, the Prophet of Allah was a mortal like us. It is therefore not unrealistic to think, that Muslims following closely in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah, can attain some degree of spiritual upliftment. Again, the degree of which can only be determined by the amount of religious consciousness and knowledge, with which the spirit of the individual is nourished for development.

IQBAL HYDAL

'Recreation and Entertainment in Islam

by

Shaheed Mohammed

In Islam 'recreation and entertainment' are two subjects areas that need attention for the welfare, or well-being, of the muslim community. Hence, the Holy Qur'an says in Ch. 92 Verse 4: "Your striving is most surely directed to various ends." And also in Ch. 53, Verses 39 to 41, it says: "And that man can have nothing but what he strives for; and that his striving will soon be seen; then he will be rewarded for it with the fullest reward; and that, to thy Lord is the goal."

The word 'recreation' has four different meanings according to the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary. Firstly, 'recreation' means a 'new creation', in other words, something new, or a change

from the daily, regular, routine. This is why it is said, that a change of job is 'recreation'. Secondly, 'recreation' means 'a pleasurable occupation of leisure time'. That is to say, what we do usefully in our spare time. For example, we can study, do different forms of art and craft, develop certain skills with our hands and brains, or pursue some educational course. These are certainly few of the many ways by which we can pleurably occupy ourselves.

Thirdly, 'recreation' means an amusement, or sport. For example, playing cricket, football, tennis; or engaging oneself in other sporting activities such as: swimming, wrestling, boxing or running. Gambling, drinking of alcohol and disco dancing are also forms of amusement to certain people but they are not allowed in Islam. Music is permitted in Islam where the music of the soul is not 'soul music' but rather, the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and the dance of the soul is not 'soul dance' that is seen on the television nowadays, but rather, the performance of namaaz (salaah) or prayer.

Fourthly, 'recreation' means a refreshment after work, sorrow, etc. This, I will take to mean, rest, or relaxation. This then brings us to a very old, but well known saying that goes as follows: 'All work and no play makes Jack a lazy boy.' In a like manner, we can say, all play and no work may produce the same result.

'Entertainment' comes from the root word 'entertain,' which means to maintain, or keep up; to treat; to receive; to provide lodging or refreshment for; to treat hospitably. So, 'entertainment' would mean, the act of entertaining; reception of, and provision for quests, amusement; hospitality at the table; a performance, or show intended to give pleasure.

As far as Islam is concerned, the Holy Qur'an lays special emphasis on 'entertainment' in the following words: "There is no blame that you eat at your houses, or your fathers' houses, or your mothers houses, or your brothers' houses, or your sisters' houses, or your paternal uncles' houses, or your paternal aunts' houses, or your maternal uncles' houses, or your maternal aunts' houses, or houses

whereof you possess the keys, or your friends' houses." (H.Q. Ch. 24 : V. 61).

Actually, what is meant by the Chapter and Verse quoted above is that, among relatives and close friends, one may eat (and also drink) at another's house if the time has arrived for meal; though he or she may not have been invited to a feast, wedding, function, etc. Acceptance of an invitation, is of course, a duty that a muslim owes to another muslim brother or sister. In this connection, the Holy Prophet Muhammad said:-

When a person is invited and he or she does not accept (or reply), he disobeys Allah and His Messenger.' (A.D. 26 : 1)

'Entertainment' of guests is also emphasized by the Holy Prophet himself. It is said that when he (the Holy Prophet), came to Medinah, he sacrificed a camel, or a cow, to feast his friends. (A.D. 26 : 4). In the time of the Holy Prophet, a married man who had nothing to feast his friend, came to the Prophet, who gave him his last sack of wheat (flour).

Inviting the followers of other religions, and accepting their invitation, is expressly spoken of in the Holy Qur'an. In Chapter 5 Verse 5 of the Holy Qur'an it says: "Lawful for you, is the food of those who have been given the the book, and your food is lawful for them." The Holy Qur'an also emphasises that one may eat together, or separately, as one wishes. Hence, Chapter 24, Verse 61 of Qur'an says: "It is no sin in you that you eat together, or separately." Islamic tradition also recommends social functions, in which people should eat, drink and talk together: "Gather together at your meals, you will be blessed therein." (A.D. 26 : 14)

What then is the purpose of 'recreation?' Rest, or Relaxation, as a form of 'recreation,' builds back lost energy. So too, sports as another form of 'recreation,' keep us fit and healthy, by developing the different parts of the body. Work also, as a third form of 'recre-

ation,' keeps us trim and makes us look youthful. Those of us who have attained the age of pension are advised by our medical practitioners to keep the blood in our bodies circulating regularly, by occupying our spare time in doing some light form of activity in, and around our homes. This of course, will facilitate in maintaining a good, healthy, standard of our bodies.

Where then, or how does 'recreation' fit itself into the religion of Islam? We know fully well, that the philosophy of Islam lies in trying to develop to the fullest extent all the aspects of the human individual such as the moral, social, spiritual, intellectual, aesthetical and physical aspects. 'Recreation' therefore, fits itself into the physical aspect in the development of man, and here is where, or how, it finds a rightful place in Islam.

Again, let us look at 'recreation' from the standpoint of sports, and let us examine how some of the Islamic Laws entwine themselves with same. In the playing of any sport, be it cricket, football, tennis, or whatsoever, the Islamic principles should be adopted. For example, in playing any of the games mentioned above, we must exercise fairplay (justice). We must be honest in dealing with certain situations or affairs of the game. We must be kind and respectable to our opponents in, and off the playing field. We must at all times display a high standard of discipline and good sportmanship.

We must create a lasting friendship with our playmates and also bring about the bond of Unity and Peace among them. It is believed, then that the world can become more united and peaceful through the medium of sports (recreation). Therefore, this is how in Islam 'recreation' can enhance our personal development.

But some muslims today, adopt ways of 'entertainment,' which are not in consonance (agreement) with Islamic rulings, or principles. For example one may celebrate his birthday by inviting others for feasting on alcohol and disco type music. Another may keep up the farewell night of his wedding by feting and playing records with songs that are meaningless or objectionable. Some

others may entertain at the 'wake night' of a funeral, by drinking alcohol, playing cards and gambling for money. These forms of entertainment are very uncommon to Islam, and every effort should be made to stop them from infiltrating our muslim society.

'Recreation' and 'Entertainment' both add greatly to the all round development of the human individual. May we, as muslims, find more time to be engaged in both Recreation and Entertainment so that, we will equip ourselves with the proper moral and spiritual values, in order to develop our own, human, personalities.



from the Religious Head



O—M

ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO MUSLIMS

The Importance of "O — M"

The word "O—M", "A—O—M" or "AUM" has assumed such reverence and importance to Hindus that it is now even considered to be the name of God. There is no doubt that although no trace of this mystic syllable is to be found in all the four Vedas, philosophers and commentators of the ancient scriptures have laid great emphasis on the importance of this word "O—M" as a means to salvation and prosperity.

Although the word "O—M" is not to be found in the Vedas, the most ancient Veda viz. "Rigved" does mention a single syllable possessing knowledge and power:

"All the mantras of the Rigved are in the high heaven, where all

the gods reside. They are condensed and concealed in a single syllable; what good will the Veda do to him who has no knowledge of that syllable, and those who know it are happy and prosperous in this world.” (RidVeda 1 : 164 : 39).






The most authentic commentary in the Vedas – “Nirukt” page 593 commenting on this verse identifies that mystic syllable as “O–M”:

“That mystic syllable is “O–M”, wherein all the gods have come together and assembled. To him who knows nothing about this “O–M”, the Rigveda cannot bring any good; but the one who has knowledge of this “O–M” will have happiness and success, peace and prosperity in this world.”

In the “Katha Upanishad” 1 : 2 . 15 it is written:

“Yama said: That word which all the Vedas regard, which penances proclaim, which men desire when they live as religious students, that word I tell Thee briefly, is “O–M”.”

The Writing of “O–M”

There are five ways of writing the word “O–M”, but only two of these are considered to be the most ancient and authentic. In both these forms of “O–M” it is significant to note that the “M” sound in “O–M” is represented by the Arabic letter ‘Meem.’ “” “M” sound in sanskrit is “”. yet this letter is not to be found in the word “O–M”. How did the Arabic letter “Meem” “” come into writing of this most Holy Word of the Hindus is still a mystery! Obviously there is a message here! It is to be noted, too, that the “M” as represented by the Arabic letter “Meem” “” always carries a “” – a miniature representation of the crescent moon and star – again symbols of the Muslims!

Pronunciation of “O—M”

The word “O—M” has a special method of pronunciation. It must always be carefully and correctly pronounced. “O—M” is said to possess three different syllables “A”, “O” and “M” yet they are not pronounced separately but in one breath. This is why it is considered as one syllable and not three, as there must be no break in its pronunciation. Firstly the throat is opened wide and the sound “ah” is started. This sound is brought forth from deep inside the throat. Next “oh” is pronounced with the mouth still opened fully. All the air is expelled while pronouncing it. Then the lips are sealed to pronounced “m”. This symbolizes the end of speech.

In the ‘Chandogya Upanishad’ 1 : 1 it is stated: “The first place of the birth of speech in the mouth is the throat, and the last one is the lips. Of the three letters “A” rises from the throat and is spoken with the mouth open; “O” consumes all the air of the mouth; and is uttered by squeezing the throat. But in pronouncing “M” the lips are tightly sealed and it predominates over all places.”

“O—M” in its very pronunciation is an indication of Divine speech or revelation that began with “A” i.e. ADAM and ended with “M” i.e. MUHAMMAD.

The Meaning of “O—M”

“O—M” is a combination of two words “O” and “MA”. “O” is a particle used in calling and is equivalent to the English “O!” “M” is an abbreviation for a person whose name begins with “M”. The Prophet Muhammad is no doubt the person meant here for his name is abbreviated with the Arabic letter “Meem”, which letter is found in the Sanskrit word “O—M”. Thus the pronunciation of “A—O—M” indicates that Divine Speech or Revelation came to an end with Muhammad — he being the last prophet of God. The crescent moon and star above the “meem” is symbolic of Islam and no other religion. Finally “O—M” is always followed by “Shanti”

which is the Sanskrit translation of Islam – peace.

The word “O–M” therefore, has great significance to Muslims in that it is pronounced “A–O–M SHANTI which means O Muhammad! ISLAM (peace) and it represents Divine Speech or Revelation which began with Adam and attained finality with MUHAMMAD.

THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

or

Women's Lib and Islam

There are some Muslims who think that the cause of Muslim

There are some Muslims who think that the cause of Muslim progress is inseparably bound with the adoption of the western call for women's lib and the rejection of any restrictions on women laid down in the Holy Qur'an. There are other Muslims who think that the re-introduction of the eastern custom of pardah or the seclusion of women is the only solution to raising the status and dignity of womanhood and that any departure from this pardah is a departure from the religion of Islam itself.

The attire of women has unfortunately been set up as the criterion of women's status and dignity. On the other hand the west argues that the more a woman *denudes* herself the greater is this an indication of her freedom. On the other hand, the east rebuts, the more a woman clothes herself the greater is this an indication of her chastity and piety.

History has shown that as in the case of men, the education and enlightenment of women is in no way connected with the amount of clothes she has on or off. What is clear however is that woman has often not been recognised for the species that she is. Her personal worth has more often than not been estimated in relation to the achievements of the male species.

In the eastern and western worlds the attitude towards women has been manifested in two extreme positions. Whereas women in the east have been so segregated from men, and considered so different, she has been likened to a creature without a soul. She has however in the west been so integrated that her physical and biological differences are no longer perceived. Small wonder then that nowadays in the west Steve has replaced Eve.

Throughout the ages Islam has always come to the rescue of civilization by formulating ideology and giving practical advice. With the perfection of religion in the time of Muhammad however, perfect laws have been given which, if adapted by both men and women will ensure the advancement of both. It is for this reason that when the Qur'an gives regulations peculiar to the treatment of women and attitudes towards them, it addresses both men and women.

The fact that Islam has given further regulations regarding the person of women in no way can be construed that women occupy an inferior position to men. On the other hand the opposite is to be considered true. That is, with any species that is rare and in danger of extinction conservation becomes necessary. It is precisely because in modern times the differences between men and women have so disappeared that womanhood is on the verge of becoming extinct and Steve has replaced Eve to bring happiness to Adam in the modern Garden of Eden in which the capital is Sodom and Gomorrah.

The advancement of women in Islam is seen to be restricted because of the so-called concept of seclusion in Chapter 24 verses 30 - 31. Because an extreme form of *pardah* is practised by some Muslims on the basis of this verse, it is surmised that Islam is responsible for the social exclusion of women and the sometimes degradation of Muslim women.

A closer examination of this verse, however, would show that there are four salient points mentioned here, only two of which apply to women alone. The two injunctions which are enjoined on men first and then women are the retraining of looks and the observance of continence. Both of these are essential qualities for developing modesty in any social structure. Restraining of looks is an appeal to be conservative in ones outlook rather than be too liberal, while observing continence is an appeal to respect ones own need for privacy.

Islam preaches the conservation of women rather than the liberation of women in respect of relations between the male and female species. Is this not the same message of Jesus who preached "Lead us not into temptation"?

The additional injunction to women given in Chapter 24, the Chapter of light is that as an aid to her own and others respect for privacy she should hide what modesty requires to be hidden and she

We accept Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement as the Muiaddid of the 14th century and we affirm that he never claimed to be a Prophet.

should expose what necessity requires to be exposed.

It is obvious here that by enjoining the guarding of the person of the woman, the Holy Qur'an places an extremely high value on the worth of her person. Only that which is precious needs to be guarded and protected. Islam thus places greater value on honour, chastity and integrity than upon material things which it encourages to give away freely. Woman is so precious that she needs to be protected. We do not protect that which is not valuable.

How peculiar it is that we are made to think of a man who steals a dollar as a criminal and a crook though the owner of the dollar may not have had his happiness diminished in the least. But another man who steals a wife or a daughter or a sister or robs them of their chastity is a hero and an idol though his action brings with it ruin and misery upon a whole family and destroy all its happiness by committing adultery with another's wife or by seducing his daughter or his sister. Shame it is that the law whether moral or legal does not look with equal if not greater disfavour upon sexual larceny as it does upon petty larceny.!

Islam would have none of this. The Muslim is made to feel equal if not greater guilt when he merely steals a look at a woman not belonging to him, than when he steals a dollar not belonging to him. This was the Islam of Jesus who preached: "He that looks at a woman with lust has indeed committed adultery." And adultery in the time of Jesus was punished by stoning to death.

Name :

Address :

