

Social Responsibilities of Prevention of Cruelty to Women

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In the textbook of social sciences man is described as a gregarious animal. The gregariousness inherent in the human nature contributed to the growth and development of social institutions including the family. This paved the way for civilization.

Society evolved to sustain humanity. Among the social institutions the family is like a nucleus. It is a miniature society consisting of men, women and children. It is a matter of great regret that cruelty is rampant. An old woman of 120 years was burnt to death in Zinatia our society has become heartless and unfeeling and devoid of moral sense and permits this kind of cruelty to happen.

Poverty is not new in our country. But cruelty was not so pronounced. It seems that the whole society has turned to atrocity and is killing women of all ages. The rate of this is alarmingly increasing in spite of the Cruelty to Women (Deterrent Punishment) Ordinance of 1983 and Family Courts Ordinance of 1985. Rural or urban, rich or poor, literate or not women are being victimized for no fault of their own.

This phenomena is a cause of great social concern. Life is becoming miserable and unbearable to many women because of atrocious behaviour of their partners. Family is a sacred trust. But it is failing to give security to its inmates specially to woman. In the long run the family is disintegrating and giving way to more violence and helplessness. Conscious members of the society are perturbed to see the inhuman treatment the women are subjected to. It is the duty of the citizens to prevent cruelty to women, and to find out ways to stop it permanently. They must also find the real causes of this unnatural behaviour by their fellow citizens.

In majority of the cases greed and lust are the causes of cruelty to women. Greed is a vice which is reigning supreme in the minds of the husbands. They are not happy or contented with what they have. They press their wives to extract money and goods from their poor fathers-in-law. But this is not easily satisfied. Figuratively speaking the society has become carnivorous.

If not checked social evils take root and penetrate the system of the society the evils of wife beating, wife killing, raping of women and girls, is creating havoc in our country and causing great disturbance to the social progress. Education is a panacea for all evils. We need education for all to ensure safety, security and justice. Superficial or bookish education cannot contribute to the wellbeing of the society. We require the compulsory civic and moral education to be

imprinted in the minds.

Literacy is a crying need of the country. The phenomena of shameless cruelty to women have become predominant in the recent years, specially after independence. Moral education through literacy can create awareness among the members of the society against cruelty. Civic education should also be imparted to women and girls so that they are aware of what is going on around them. This kind of education increases their awareness about their surrounding. This can also allow them to take necessary precaution against possible danger. Economic solvency of the women folk should also be guaranteed through basic education along with income generating activities.

All social and religious functions and ceremonies should publicize against the evils of cruelty to women in all

parts of the country. Mass media should also increase people's resistance against cruelty to women.

Finally the practice of dowry from the bride's side should be stopped immediately. This is against Islam Muslim society has copied this death trap from the Hindus. Dowry givers should also be penalised publicly.

Cruelty to women not related to dowry such as man-handling and beating of maid — servants, raping and abducting of girls and women should also be stopped. All conscious members of the society should make sincere effort not to make their wards and neighbours go against the teachings of Islam. Responsibility cannot be dictated. It should grow within the minds of people. Then our lives and society will be freed from such evils that inflict pain and death to our women folk.



What education can offer.

The Enduring Heritage of al-Andalus

by Rachel Arie

ONE of the most striking features of the Muslim presence in Spain is the enduring influence it exerted over Iberian Christianity. In times of peace, the relationship between the Christian and Muslim kingdoms on the peninsula was marked by what the French historian Henri Terrasse has called "a sometimes cordial symbiosis". There were Christian and Jewish communities within Islamic Spain, just as Jews and Muslims were later to live in the crown lands of Castile and Aragon.

In cultural matters contacts never ceased; there was no clear-cut line of division between the Islamic and Christian worlds. From the earliest days of the Arab-Berber conquest, an extraordinary ethnic mixing took place in al-Andalus. In the Islamic melting-pot, Arabs, Berbers, brought up in the Arab culture and Christians, whether share-croppers or high-born landed proprietors, intermarried with one another and with the urban middle class to form a fairly homogeneous whole. Sustained contact between Muslims and Spaniards obliged the conquerors to learn Romance, a derivative of the Iberian Latin that was the language of the country, and one which the Mozarabs or Arabized Christians also used as a common dialect. Meanwhile, some young Christians in the ninth century began to turn away from Latin culture and their traditional religious education. Some of them could read and write in Arabic, knew pre-Islamic poetry and took up the study of Arabic literature.

Andalusian Jews spoke Romance and Arabic in addition to Hebrew. Installed in Spain since Roman times, Jewish communities gave proof of their loyalty to the Umayyad dynasty and were not

persecuted. Eight generations of Jews in al-Andalus were to benefit from the tolerance and protection of the Umayyad rulers.

An intellectual and linguistic ferment

A substantial proportion of Spain's Islamic population was bilingual. The Muslims of al-Andalus used Romance colloquially and even in their palaces. 'Abd al-Rahman III, caliph of Cordoba from 912 until 961 and himself the son of a

employer obtained for him the bishopric of the small Andalusian town of Elvira.

Among the dignitaries of the Cordoban court was a Jew from Jaen named Hasday ben Shaprut, a man of great culture. The director of a financial department, he knew Arabic, Hebrew, Latin and Greek as well as the Romance dialects. He acted as interpreter into Arabic when Christian envoys arrived in the capital, and also translated into Arabic Descartes' medical treatise, sent

Contact between the three cultures of al-Andalus took many forms: ethnic intermingling, intellectual exchange, multilingualism, and shared customs and festivities

Christian captive, switched easily between Arabic and Romance when talking to his courtiers. Impermeable to fanaticism, he displayed exceptional tolerance and open-mindedness.

Two examples of his magnanimity are particularly striking. Rabi b. Zayd, baptised as Reemundo, was a cultured Christian of Cordoba who worked as a secretary in the offices of the Umayyad chancery and spoke Arabic as well as Latin. The caliph sent him as a legate to the German Empire and to the court of Constantinople, tasks he performed so zealously that his

Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII.

A distinguished doctor as well as a capable diplomat, he successfully carried out a difficult mission to the Christian territories. In the course of which he helped cure King Sancho I of Leon of obesity and also obtained ten strongholds from the king's grandmother, old Queen Toda of Navarre, in return for a Cordoban alliance. Thanks to the caliph's protection, Hasday was able to act as a patron for the Jewish writers of Islamic Spain, and the symbiosis of Jewish and Arabic culture was evident in the work



A page from an Arabic version (12th-13th century) of De Materia Medica, a treatise on pharmacology by the Greek physician Dioscorides.

tive of the archbishop, Don Raimundo, translated the most influential works of Arab culture into Latin, notably treatises on astronomy, medicine, physics, natural history and philosophy. The translators of Toledo spread through medieval Europe the works of Aristotle, Galen and Hippocrates, with commentaries by thinkers as distinguished as Avicenna and Averroes.

A century later, in 1251, the Infante Alfonso of Castile, the son of Ferdinand III the Holy, had the famous collection of fables known as the *Kalila wa-Dimna* translated from Arabic into Castilian. In the following centuries this was to have a pronounced influence on Western literature, notably on the Roman de Renart, on Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, and on the *Fables of La Fontaine*.

When he became king in 1252, Alfonso surrounded himself with jurists and men of science, with historians and troubadours. He set in motion the work of translating and adapting into Castilian the heritage of Arabic culture. Muslims, Christians and Arabic-speaking Jews all collaborated in the task, among them Fernando of Toledo, Juan of Aspa, Rabi Zag, Moses ha Cohen, Abraham Alfarqui of Toledo and Master Bernaldo el Arabit.

In Murcia, Alfonso X founded first college in which adepts of the religions could follow the courses of the Arab scholar Muhammad al-Riqit, originally from the district of Ricote, who had stayed in the town after the entry of the Castilian forces in 1266.

A model of civilization

The pattern of in Christian Spain was strongly influenced by Arab civilization. From the early Middle Ages onwards, the refined customs of the Muslim towns penetrated the little Christian courts of the north of the Iberian peninsula. They brought the aristocracy a state for luxury and a sense of comfort.

Later, Muslim ways were adopted by the Christian elites of Castile and Aragon. The enthusiasm for things Arabic and Jewish shown by Pedro I of Castile (1350-69) is often quoted by way of example. In 1418, King Alfonso V of Aragon wore a silk-bordered tunic and gold-embroidered vestments sent to him, along with other gifts, by the Sultan of Granada, Muhammad VIII.

A European traveller, Leon of Rosmihal, Baron of Bohemia, was astonished at the welcome he received at Burgos in the palace of a powerful lord when he visited Spain in 1466. Among the Castilian count's entourage were several women dressed in Muslim fashion, and he was offered Arab-style food. In Segovia, King Henry IV of Castile surrounded himself with Muslims and Jews. Rosmihal recorded that he ate, drank and dressed in the Muslim manner.

Some games were popular in both communities. Chess, known in Arabic as *skitrandj*, was introduced to Cordoba in the ninth century by the muslimian Ziryab. It won great popularity in al-Andalus, and was soon introduced to the kingdom of Leon under the name of *ajedrez*. In King Alfonso X's reign, it was the favourite pastime of Castilians. The king and his wife, Queen Violante of Aragon, shared their passion for the game with knights and ladies of the court, soldiers and monks, nobles and peasants, Muslims and Jews.

Muslims and Christians also both staged jousting tournaments. Lists were set up in the main squares and gardens of Granada, and even in the Alhambra itself. In the Jaen region on the Feast of St John, the Andalusian nobility fervently competed in the *Juego de canas*, a sport at which Muslims also excelled. A delegation of the Kings of Granada achieved great success at the court of John II of Castile by practising this form of jousting before the monarch.

As early as the twelfth century, the Muslims of al-Andalus bought pastries to celebrate the Christian New Year and Maundy Thursday. In the second half of the thirteenth century, Andalusians began to celebrate Christmas and New Year in imitation of their Christian neighbours. On 1 January by the Julian calendar, the day they called *Yannayr*, Andalusians gave each other presents and cooked raised pastries shaped like towns, called *mada'in*, thereby anticipating the later Christian custom of making Twelfth-cakes for Twelfth Night, though without small gifts hidden within the pastry casing.

The transmission of knowledge

In terms of cultural exchange, Islamic Spain was a link in the transmission of Hellenistic science and Greek philosophy to the Christian West. In Toledo throughout the twelfth century, scholars brought together on the initia-

Fun Science Gallery for Indian School Children

by G. S. Mudur

PEDAL, and make a ball resist gravity, watch the solar system take shape, and gaze at the sight of a friend's head in a fruit bowl.

These are among the 1200 exhibits at the National Science Centre in New Delhi that seek to make modern scientific knowledge entertaining and fun and provide glimpses of ancient Indian contributions to science and medicine.

The Rupees 150-million centre set up by the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) and inaugurated by the Prime Minister in January is the largest and latest of 18 science centres established around India.

The exhibits, designed and developed by in-house staff at the centre, are primarily intended to attract school children, but curators at the centre believe many contraptions

will evoke interest from adults too.

Spread over 17,000 square metres and designed to handle 1.5 million visitors a year, a unique feature at the centre is its large number of participatory exhibits through which visitors can get a first-hand experience of science at work.

The centre has the world's largest energy ball exhibit, a complicated mechanical system with 16 balls moving up and down along a maze of pathways, displaying several principles of physics including the conservation of energy.

In-house staff at the centre designed all the exhibits. "We have to be creative ourselves if we want to inculcate scientific creativity in children," says Dr Saroj Ghose, Director General

of the NCSM.

Among its other creations is a portable inflatable planetarium that can be carried inside a suitcase. Twenty people can

The fun science gallery makes principles of high school physics entertaining through gravity wells, pendulums and optical instruments and magnets

sit inside the semispherical cloth dome and watch stars and planets projected on its roof.

Elsewhere in the centre, visitors can pedal into a stationary bike and make a ball float, resisting gravity, an exhibit portraying the power of compressed air.

And to show what mirrors can do, a special mirror arrangement has been used to create an illusion of a human head resting in a bowl of fruits.

"This is a unique centre," says Dr Ghose. While the trend is generally to either display a country's heritage or provide insights into the basic concepts of science, this one does both," he said.

The centre's section called "Heritage" portrays through working exhibits Indian contributions to science, tracing out achievements over the past 5000 years in medicine, astronomy and metallurgy.

A chemical laboratory for making iron and zinc smelting is intended to highlight early Indian achievements in chemistry and metallurgy. Among

the participatory exhibits is a multiple barrel canon-cleaner off the Mughal period.

The Heritage section also has on display replicas of surgical instruments used in the second century A.D. in India for many surgical procedures including complicated fractures, skin grafting and hernia, and removal of gall stones.

The fun science gallery makes principles of high school physics entertaining through gravity wells, pendulums and optical instruments and magnets.

A section called "Information Revolution" traces out the growth of communication technology from stone age cave paintings from Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh to the modern era of satellite networks.

(PTI Science Service)

Lesson in Vocational Training Gaining Ground

THE Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the southern part of the Republic of Yemen (formerly the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) have been cooperating since 1988 in a vocational training project supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Designed under the umbrella of Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries (TCDC), the project involves the twinning of vocational training institutions in the two countries.

The origins of the project lie in the efforts by southern Yemeni planners to increase industrial production, which has been severely hampered by a shortage of skilled personnel. A major reform of the educational system, instituted in 1975, fell short of meeting industry's demands, and the Government began to look for a partner country to help in filling the gap in needed skills.

In 1984, when the World Bank and UNDP completed a regional study on vocational and technical training, Jordan was cited as an example of a country that had succeeded in establishing a comprehensive training system in close collaboration with industry. It was to Jordan therefore that the Yemenis turned for assistance.

Cornerstone of the Jordanian system is the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), founded by the Government in 1978. The VTC is a public but autonomous body, unaffiliated with any particular ministry.

It is governed by a board of directors appointed by the cabinet every two years and consisting of private employers, trade union representatives and members of government bodies. VTC provides both occupational instruction and training of instructors and supervisors. Courses for the preparation of skilled workers and craftsmen last between two and three years.

The Corporation's counterpart in southern Yemen is the Central Commission for Technical Education (CTTE), established by a Ministerial Council resolution in 1985 under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labour and Civil Service. The CTTE is charged with organizing the activities of vocational schools and technical institutes.

In 1988 the two institutions began working together under the two-year UNDP project, implemented by the CTTE.

UNDP funds came from regular Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) country resources for the then People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The role of the World Bank, appointed by UNDP as executing agency, was to assist in formulating the project proposal. The project itself, however, was a collaboration between the Jordanians and Yemenis.

Munther Masri, now Secretary-General at the Jordanian Ministry of Education, was the head of VTC when the project was conceived. An electrical engineer with an industrial

background, Dr. Masri has strong views on providing education relevant to the country's real needs. His approach involves three days of classroom instruction and

Jordan has a highly successful vocational training system, which it is sharing with other developing countries. One of the places that has benefited is southern Yemen, as Ian Williams reports.

three days of work experience each week, with instructors accompanying the trainees from the classroom to the workplace.

An essential element in the

system is the collaboration of more than 2,500 employers, ranging from small workshops to large factories. These enterprises provide the necessary space and equipment for

premise to ensure that safety and working conditions are up to standard and that trainees have the opportunity to learn a variety of skills and are not kept working at repetitive

tasks. The project has so far brought 23 Yemenis on fellowships to Jordan. The fellowships were extended to heads of directorates and sections of

tasks.



A VTC instructor and two trainees during a course on office machine repair

the CTTE, as well as to 12 principals and technical assistants of vocational institutes. However, much of the training, especially for instructors, was done in southern Yemen.

In addition, a series of 400 Arabic language manuals, written and produced in Jordan, was supplied to the Yemenis for training courses in vocational schools.

"For auto mechanics, we have separate course units for the chassis, the braking system, the electrical circuits and the engine," Dr Masri explained. "We also provide performance tests to assess competence. Each trainee has to pass in each course unit before moving on."

Project funds are used to finance training courses and pay for equipment and educational material.

VTC offers technical assistance through the release of experts, and subsidized travel fees and internal travel for fellows in Jordan.

UNDP's contribution to the project is US\$174,000, with \$13,500 contributed by the Government of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and \$12,000 by the VTC.

Dr Masri emphasizes that the cost would have been considerably higher if consultants had been brought from southern Yemen from developed countries to do the training. "All the technical experts had Arabic as their native language, which made communicating easy."

— UNDP