

Fatemeh is Fatemeh by: *Dr. Ali Shariati Introduction By Laleh Bakhtiar*

Islam admits to all realities - hunger, ignorance, drug addiction, the need for divorce, the weakening of the weak by the strong, oppression and suppression (realities, according to realists, must be translated into real forms so they have no problem with imagination, ideology and ideas which they ignore). "But as opposed to realism, Islam does not accept the status quo but changes the realities "Says Ali Shariati, "It changes their essence in a revolutionary way. It carries realities along with its ideals. It uses realities as a means to reach its idealistic goals, its real desires, which are non-existent by themselves. Unlike realists, Islam does not submit to realities, but rather, it causes the realities to submit to it. Islam does not turn away from realities as idealists do. It seeks them out. It tames them. Through this means, Islam uses that which hinders the idealists as a composite for its own ideals." With this approach, an independence of thinking develops which, in order to succeed as an answer and not to cause deviation, must branch out from the society's historical roots. Face up to your realities. Tame them. Work through them to reach your ideals. ... Shariati develops the concept of Islamic social justice. In Islam it is not sufficient to tell one's self, "Thou shall not ... this or that." For there is a commitment by which each individual is bound by and that is to be an active participant in society opposing social ills. That is, one should say to one's self, "Thou shall not be an oppressor," but one is equally obliged to say to one's self, "Thou shall help the oppressed." ... Shariati takes us to the heart of Shi'ism - Fatemeh, the beloved daughter of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). He describes the woman we could not see, the one we thought we knew but only after his guidance do we become aware of the fact that although we related each day directly to her spirit, she had been lost as a model for our daily lives. That is, we had an emotional attachment to her inner essence but we had removed her form. Shariati takes us to Fatemeh. He begins with the social customs of the Arabian Peninsula before her birth where according to custom, female children were buried alive at birth in order to save the family from the disgrace of having an unsuitable son-in-law. It was the revolutionary message of Islam which did away with this custom. God reveals through the Quran that the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) had been given the abundant river of Paradise and through that river, he shall have abundant progeny although according to Arab beliefs at that time, a man without a son is called 'cut-off'. How could it be? The father of a daughter will have abundant progeny? His wife, over 50 years old, gives birth to a daughter, Fatemeh. God has kept the promise to the Prophet for through her, the progeny of the Prophet multiplies. Shariati then goes on to further enumerate the honors that Islam has bestowed upon women. There is only one person buried in the Ka'baa, the 'House of God' and that is a woman, a slave, Lady Hajar, the second wife of Prophet Abraham and mother of Prophet Ismail.

Shariati then goes on to further enumerate the honors that Islam has bestowed upon women. There is only one person buried in the Ka'baa, the 'House of God' and that is a woman, a slave, Hajar, the second wife of Abraham and mother of Ismail. Fatemeh spent her life in struggle, resisting poverty and difficulties. Her father was forced to spend three years in a valley with his family when his tribe imposed economic and social sanctions against his message of Islam. After the migration to Madinah, her new life as a married woman begins but she continues to face the same hardships and difficulties that she encountered since childhood. We learn of Fatemeh as a Muslim female child who defends her father against the elders of her tribe. Fatemeh is the one who, holding her father's hand, accompanies him into the bazaar, listens to his debates and walks with him to her home. Fatemeh, the Muslim woman, who stands at the door and defends her husband and her home when usurpers try to burn it down. Fatemeh tells the newly elected Caliph that he has displeased God and God's Prophet by not listening to the Prophet's advice and taking his own interests to heart. Fatemeh,

who when she finds injustice and oppression speaks out with the totality of her being, not fearing the outcome of her words for she knows she speaks with the tongue of Truth. Let us turn to her last sermon and have her own words tell us what she really believed and practiced. When Fatemeh was ill with the final sickness which caused her death, the wives of the Emigrants and Companions of the Prophet went out visit her to ask how she was feeling. Abu Bakr had been elected Caliph and Ali was put aside. In reply to them, after asking for the blessings of God for her father, Mohammed, she said: "By God I am alive while I have nothing but contempt for this world. I detest your men. After I tried to show them who their real enemy was and they did not listen, I put them aside. "How ugly are the sharp edges of swords when they are broken and then play with people's efforts and struggles which so many have undertaken, destroying the fortifications, breaking spears, making devious decisions and standing on the precipice of material and personal self-desires. What a terrible future they are preparing for by causing the wrath of God and thereby bringing about permanent torment for themselves." ... "God says, ' If citizens are faithful and avoid wrong deeds, We will give blessings from heaven and earth to them. But they deny the truths so we captivated them for their deeds. From those who oppressed, the results of their actions will be returned to themselves. They cannot change the traditions of history.' ... "It is then that the destroyer of rights will lose and those who will come in the future will find and realize the terrible results of what the ancestors have done. So you should be satisfied with your daily affairs and live in peace prior to the storm and terrible revolts." For then, the sharp swords of the domination of the oppressors, anarchy and the rule of tyrants will overcome you. The oppressors will enslave you. No public assets except a small quantity will remain.. They will cultivate with force what you have planted with love. At that time you will only sigh for there will be nothing that you can do because you were blind and could not see the truth. They will oblige you because you have turned your faces from the right way and you did not accept it." Why have many Muslim women been lost to either outdated forms or new imports? Why has she been exploited? Shariati tells us in the words of Hazrat Ali, "two parties are required in order to bring about oppression. One is the oppressor and the other is the one who accepts oppression. Oppression cannot be one sided. An oppressor cannot perform oppression in the air. Oppression is like a piece of iron which is formed by the striking of the hammer of the oppressor upon the anvil of the oppressed." Thus, women themselves participated in the attack upon their values by allowing themselves to be oppressed and by not searching out their roots.

With the awareness which Shariati brings to us, our coming to know Fatemeh brings about a responsibility and a commitment to those who first ask, "Who am I" and then search out the answer in the Athens city and genuineness of their own culture. The responsibility and commitment grows through love and faith ... With Fatemeh as our model, we learn to fight injustice and oppression. We turn from ourself to the others. We become actively involved in society's ills because she as she really was, is our symbol, our model, our heroine. This is not to deny the spiritual presence and essence of Fatemeh who has inspired thousands of artists, poets, writers and artisans. At one point we learn that the Prophet gave her a prayer instead of the domestic help that she had asked for. She grew from this for this nourished her spirit and strengthened her commitment to God and the people. But it is rather to complement it for as Rumi tells us, "The physical form is of great importance; nothing can be done without the consociation of the form and the essence. However often you may sow a seed stripped of its pod, it will not grow; sow it with the pod, it will become a great tree." And as every artisan knows, it is the clay itself which determines the forms that can be created. Having awoken and become aware to the real Fatemeh presented by Shariati, the Iranian women were able to arise and play a major role in the Islamic Revolution of Iran. They fought against oppression

and injustice side by side with the men. Clothed in the modest dress of what Fatemeh might have worn, they found no impediments to their freedom to act, to fight, to resist.

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by: Dr. Shariati

FOR THE READER

The words you are about to read are from a lecture I gave at the Husayniyah Irshad. To begin with, I had wanted to comment upon the research of Professor Louis Massignon concerning the personality and complicated life of Fatima. I had wished to refer to the deep and revolutionary influence her memory evokes in Muslim societies and the role she has played in the breadth of Islamic transformations. These remarks were intended particularly for my university students participating in 'History and Knowledge of Religions', 'The Sociology of Religions', and 'Islamology'. As I entered the gathering, I saw that, in addition to the university students, many others had come. This spoke of the need for a more urgent response to the problem. I agreed to answer the pertinent question of womanhood so extremely important today for our society. Women who have remained in the 'traditional mould' do not face the problem of identity while women who have accepted the 'new imported mould' have adopted a foreign identity. But in the midst of these two types of 'molded women', there are those who can neither accept their hereditary, traditional form nor surrender to this imposed new form. What should they do? They want to decide for themselves. They want to develop themselves. They need a model, an ideal example, a heroine. For them, the problem of 'Who am I? and who do I become?' are urgent. Fatima, through her own 'being', answers these questions. I would have been satisfied with giving an analytical description of the personality of Fatima. I found that book shop had no books about her and thus, our intellectuals know nothing about her life. I was obliged to compensate for this lack to a certain extent. Thus this present essay is the same lecture-but expanded to include a biography based upon documented, traditional sources-about this beloved person, who has remained unknown or misinterpreted. In this biography, I particularly drew from historical documents. Whenever I reached a problem of faith and explicitly Jafari views, I chose Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafii sources. From the scholar's point of view, they are irrefutable. I cannot say that this lecture is without need of criticism. Rather, the reverse is true. It is in great need-waiting for those with pure hearts, those who like to guide, those who are willing to serve, rather than those who use hostility, abuse and slander.

INTRODUCTION

On this sacred night, it was not planned that such an unsacred person as myself speak. I have gained much from my contact with the work of Professor Louis Massignon. He was a great man and well-known Islamic scholar who had written about Fatima. I was greatly influenced by her blessed life as well as her effect upon the history of Islam. Even after her death, she kept alive the spirit of those who seek justice and oppose oppression and discrimination in Islamic society. She was a manifestation and a symbol of the Way and essential direction of 'Islamic thought'. As a student, I played a small role in the preparation of the great work of Massignon especially at the beginning of the research stage. The documents and information which existed had been recorded over a period of fourteen hundred years. They were written in all languages and local Islamic dialects. The historic implications of various documents and even of local odes and folk songs were studied. I have been asked to summarize this work

here. I said to myself, "I will offer this work here today because it has yet to be published, and the great man who began it, has left this world with this work uncompleted." People unfortunately do not know about this work. Even Europeans, who are familiar with Islam, do not know about this study. This has also affected our own scholars, who are familiar with Islam through the writings of Europeans, and, therefore, remain uninformed about this work. I accepted this invitation and I said to myself, "I will describe the manuscripts to my students, in particular, those who participate in my classes at the Husayniyah Irshad. I will give them the scientific and historic results of the deep research of this great man." But now I see and sense that this gathering differs. It is not a group gathered for a sermon or a discourse. The women and men who are now here are all intellectuals and educated representatives of the needy of today's generation in this society. They have not come to hear me speak of Fatima in order to gain spiritual reward from this gathering tonight. They have not come to hear a dry, scientific, historic lecture. They have a newer, more urgent, more alive need to answer the most sensitive question for those who are affected by our contemporary fate: Who am I?

CHAPTER ONE

WHO AM I?

In our society, women change rapidly. The tyranny of our times and the influence of institutions take women away from 'what she is'. All her traditional characteristics and values are taken away from her until she is made into a creature 'they want', 'they build'. We see that 'they have built!' This is why the most important and relevant question for the awakened woman at this time is, 'Who am I?' She knows full well that she cannot remain what she is. Actually, she does not want to accept modern masks to replace the traditional ones. She wants to decide for herself. Her contemporaries choose for themselves. They consciously adorn their personalities with awareness and independence. They dress themselves. They manifest an essence. They reflect a sketch. But they do not know how. They do not know the design of the real human aspect of their personality which is neither a reflection of their ethnic heritage nor an artificially imposed imitative mask. With which of these do they identify?? The second question which arises from this, stems from the following: we are Muslims, women of a society, who wish to make decisions through reason and choice and to relate them to a history, religion and society which received its spirit and basis from Islam. A woman in this society wants to be herself. She wants to build herself, 'herself'. She wants to be reborn. In this re-birth, she wants to be her own midwife. She neither wants to be a product of her ethnic heritage nor to adopt a superficial facade. She cannot remain heedless of Islam, and she cannot remain indifferent to it. Thus, it is natural that this question should arise for the Muslim woman. Our people continue to speak about Fatima. Every year, hundreds of thousands of Muslims cry for her. There are hundreds of thousands of gatherings, prayer meetings, festivals and mourning ceremonies in her memory. There are ceremonies of praise, joy, honor and majesty for her in which her generosity is remembered through unusual customs. They hold rituals of lamentation where they re-create her sorrows and speak ill of and damn those who offended her. In spite of all of this, her real personality is not known. Yet, in spite of the little Muslims know about her, they accept Fatima, her majesty and power, with their whole hearts. They offer her their hearts with all the spiritual strength, faith and will that a people can have or a human community build.

WISDOM AND LOVE

Each religion, school of thought, movement or revolution is made up of two elements: wisdom and love. One is light and the other is motion. One gives common sense and understanding, the other, strength, enthusiasm and movement. In the words of Alexis Carrel, 'Wisdom is like the lights of a car which show the way. Love is like the motor which makes it move.' Each is nothing without the other. A motor, without lights, is blind love dangerous, tragic and potentially fatal. In a society, in a movement of thought or in a revolutionary school of thought, men of letters (who are clear thinkers, who are aware and responsible) show, through their works, that there is a way to come to know a school of thought or a religion. They show that there is a way to give awareness to people. The responsibility of the people, on the other hand, is to give their spirits and their strength to a movement. They are responsible for giving the starting push. A movement is like a living body. It thinks with the brain of scholars and loves through the hearts of its people. If faith, sincerity, love and sacrifice seldom found in a society, people are responsible. But where correct understanding of a school of thought is at a low level (where vision, awareness, logical consciousness and deep familiarity with the goals of a school of thought are lacking, where the meaning, purpose and truths of a school of thought are missing) the scholars are responsible. Religion, in particular, needs both. In religion, knowledge and feelings are not treated as separate entities. They are transformed into understanding and faith by means of common sense and knowledge. This is Islam. More than any other religion, it is a religion of the recitation of the book, a religion of struggle in God's Way (jihad), a religion of thought and love. In the Koran, one cannot find the boundaries between love and faith. The Koran considers martyrdom to be eternal life. It blinds one to the pen and writing. If Muslims are unaware of this, who is responsible?

CHAPTER TWO

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Religious scholars! It is they who do not perform their responsibilities in respect to the people. They should give awareness, consciousness and direction to the people. They do not. All our geniuses and great talents occupy themselves with philosophy, theology, Sufism, jurisprudence, conjugation and syntax. Through all the years of research, thought and their own scholarly anguish, they write nothing other than 'practical treatises' on such subjects as purity for the prescribed prayer, types of ritual impurities, rules of menstruation, and doubts which arise in prescribed prayer. They leave aside writing treatises on how to speak with people, treatises on how to communicate the religious truths and the philosophy of the pillars of the religion, treatises on how to communicate consciousness and awareness to people, treatises on the understanding of the traditions of the Prophet and the personalities of the Companions, treatises on the revolutionary purpose behind Karbala, treatises on the family of the Prophet, and treatises on the faith of the people. All of these treatises are written, but all of them are written without responsibility, without the role of a commander. They pass their responsibilities on to the ordinary speakers in the mosques, not to the religious leaders whose directions for the practice of the faith are followed (mujtahids). This is why the task of introducing the Prophet's family, the task of understanding religion and the task of studying the truths of Islam fall prone to the 'failures of the old schools of religion'. It is for this reason that a group of young people, in order to study Islamic sciences and to carry jurisprudence forward, enter the schools. If talented, through great efforts, they become jurists or mujtahids or faqihs [theologians]. This group is imprisoned as teachers and removed from the community. Those who do not succeed in studying properly, because they do not have the ability, talent or spiritual strength but rather have warm, often artistic, voices, are obliged to

propagate and advertise the truths of the religion. The third group, who have neither this nor that, neither the science nor at least a voice, take the third way. They become dumb and speechless. They take themselves to the 'sacred door' and move ahead of both mujtahids and speakers in the mosques. In the midst of this, be just! What will the fate of the people be? What is the fate of their religion? It is not necessary to think very hard. No. Just look. We know a dream appeared to Joan of Arc, a sensitive and imaginative girl, commanding her to fight in order to have her king returned. For centuries, her dream has given a vision of freedom, of sacrifice and of revolutionary courage to enlightened, aware and progressive French people. Compare Joan to Zaynab, the sister of Imam Husayn, who carried a heavier mandate. Zaynab's mandate was to continue the movement of Karbala. She opposed murders, terror and hysterics. She continued the movement at a time when all the heroes of the revolution were dead, when the heroism and wisdom of the commanders of Islam at the time of the Prophet were gone. But she has been turned into only a 'sister who mourns'. I hear reproachful cries towards the scholars who are responsible for these beliefs, ideas and thoughts of the people. I do not know whether these cries come from the throats of people or from the depths of their consciences. With what are you busy? From where do you speak? Throughout all of these years, where is one book for people telling them what is in the Koran? In place of praise, eulogy, prayer, poetry, song, lamentation and the love of Rumi, why have you sealed your lips among people? An English speaking person cannot easily understand what the Prophet has said, but can he read all of the works of La Martine, the French lover. What do you say? All the songs of the ancient Greek woman, Bilitis, of dubious morals, can be read, but the words of the Prophet, one saying of the Prophet, cannot be read. You speak so much about the generosity and miracles of the Prophet's family but where are the books about them? You recount their miracles on their birthdays and days of their deaths. You have festivals and mourning ceremonies. Where are the treatises for Muslims, enamored of the Prophet, which say who he was and who Fatima was, which say how their children lived and how they thought, which say what they did and what they said? Our people, who spend their lives in love with the Companions and who cry over the difficulties they faced, who serve them for months and years, who glorify their name, spend money and give sincerity and patience to them, deserve to know the real lives of each one of them. The* lives, thoughts, words, silences, freedoms, imprisonments, and martyrdoms should give awareness, chastity and humanness to people. If an ordinary person mourns for Husayn and on the anniversary of his death [ashura] strikes his head with his dagger and bears the pain even with pleasure and still knows Husayn only in an oblique way and misunderstands Karbala, who is responsible? If a woman cries with her whole being, if the recollection of the name of Fatima and Zaynab burns her to her bones and if she would, with complete love, give her life for them, and yet, if she does not thoroughly know Fatima and Zaynab, who is responsible? Neither this man nor this woman knows one line of their heroine's words. None of them have read one line about their lives. They can only recall Fatima standing beside her father when someone threw dust on him. They only knew Zaynab from the moment when she left the tents to go to gather the bodies of the martyrs. They only knew her from the morning of the day of Ashura up until noon; from then on they lost her. Their awareness of Zaynab ends the day when her great mandate, the legacy of Husayn, just began. Their knowledge about Zaynab ends here. Then, who is responsible? And, thus, educated and open minded boys and girls judge the situation and say, 'What is the use of this religion? What can such a religion do? What knots do all this excitement, lamentation and cries for Husayn, Fatima and Zaynab untie for our backwards, imprisoned people who need awareness and commitment to negate oppression and to seek freedom. 'What pain does this religion of remorse, these ancient wounds, historic lamentations and curses create for our deprived, illiterate women who want their freedom and clear vision. Does one reach the heart of the problem by doing away with love and hatred? People are busy

with feelings which passed centuries ago in foreign lands. They relate to lives passed among strangers. They do not know persecution. They have not sensed the chains of oppression around their necks, nor the pain when falling upon their human shadow. They have never burst in anger nor boiled under the remembrance of the chains which a caliphate one day hung around the neck of a sick person. They have not thrown up their hands and struck their daggers upon their heads until they leave their senses. They have not seen them when their consciousness returns, when their heart grows quiet, when their sins become pure, when all responsibility falls from their shoulders, when they cheat the scales of divine justice and when they tamper with their deeds for the after life. As a result, when they have performed enough dirty deeds to compare with stars in the sky, with foam of the sea and with the sands of the desert, when with a small amount of surgery performed by striking their daggers upon their heads, they imagine that they have completely changed their situation and become as innocent as the moment they were born from their mother's womb. They feel that then even God owes them something. If people believe that the advantage of following Prophet Muhammad (SAW) will result in a chemical reaction which accords with the Koran, "God will change their evil deeds into good deeds" [25:71]; if people believe that the soul of this treason which they commit in this world will change its essence in the other world and will take the form of good deeds, then who is responsible? If this belief in Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which has for centuries had the strength of a movement desiring justice, seeking freedom and fighting oppression and despotic institutions; if this movement can free awakened and aware people and give them liberty, justice, chastity and independence; if it can change them both socially and individually; and if the movement can bring about an intellectual, revolutionary leadership fighting class distinctions and giving life and consciousness to a society and if they have not shown this to the people, then who is responsible? If the value, influence and effect of remembering the family of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is transferred from this world to another world and if its effect is only measured after death, then who is responsible? If the promises and covenants of our ancestors to this family have had no effect upon their thoughts, their time, their society; and if their sons and daughters (seeing this ineffectiveness) remain cut-off from these promises and links with this religion and this family, then, who is responsible?

CHAPTER THREE

INTELLECTUALS VS. THE PEOPLE

WHAT DID THEY MISS? THE FAMILY OF MUHAMMAD: Is it that this family is without effect or is it that our young generation and our intellectuals are in error? Or have our mothers and fathers failed in their responsibilities? Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the clearest of truth. He represents the most progressive school of thought which has ever taken human form. It is not a myth. It is a human reality (or should be). It is what could be but isn't. And his daughter, Fatima is a perfect example of an ideal woman whom no one has yet become. His grandchildren-Husayn and Zaynab-the sister and the brother, who brought deep revolution to mankind and who fought for honor and freedom and who opposed despotism and oppression. The house of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is like the Kabah in which the children and the inheritors of Abraham (AS) reside. It is a sign and a symbol. It is Real. It is made of stone whereas they are human beings. The Kabah is the place of circumambulation for Muslims; whereas, the house of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the destination of every heart which understands beauty, majesty, freedom, justice, love, sincerity, and strength. It is the destination of those who encourage jihad and sacrifice to preserve the lives and freedom of

the people. From another point of view, the palaces of the caesars (from which, historians say, waft culture, civilization, religion, thought, discipline and art) are turned around. Our intelligent, loyal, lovers of virtue who have known this household-luckless and quiet-have always been sacrificed. Our people have tied eternal links to them. All their faith, longing, thought and feelings have been devoted to them. Their hearts beat for them. Their eyes cry with their sorrow. They sacrifice themselves and their possessions in their way. They withhold nothing. Look at these poverty-stricken, starving people who show their feelings and the faith which they have in each individual member of this beloved family. What things have they not done and what things will they not do for them? The spending of money often shows with much clarity the power of faith and sincerity. Let us examine all the time, endowments and money which people have spent for this family. We see that the poverty among people is so advanced that the problems of bread and water, children's milk and medicine for the hospitals are the most important things in life. Still, any time and under any circumstances which relate to this family, we see that over one million ceremonies are held in their honor. Over 150,000 clergy and speakers exist for reciting the congregational ritual prayers. There are more than 700,000 descendants of the Prophet's family who speak at the lamentation ceremonies where eulogists restore the memory of this family. How much is spent for construction of the buildings for the ceremonies related to Husayn [husayniyahs], on places where the passion plays are performed [taziyahs], on neighborhood clubs where young men form groups which participate in religious ceremonies [hayats], on dastahs [the generic name of the groups]. How much is spent for lamentation ceremonies and food, for that which is held in the name of taxes [khums], for the religious leaders' share, for that spent in good works and feeding poor people. It is above and beyond counting. This is particularly important when we consider that this country is one of the most economically backward countries. Income, according to head count, is minimal. If we pay attention, in particular, to the great differences in classes which exists in Islamic societies, we see that half of the capital of the country is in the hands of a few thousand people. We see that two-thirds of whatever there is, is at the disposal of only 10% of the population. We see that, as opposed to the past, capital has been taken from the former landlords and the former merchants of the bazaar and has been put into the hands of new capitalists, new industrialists, modern bourgeois companies and middle men who sell foreign goods or produce new products themselves. We see that the money has moved from village storage areas, from the shops of the old merchants under the old roofs of the bazaar, from the hands of local handicrafts workers, from the hands of money changers and indigenous professional guilds, from traditional industries and classical professions to the banks, to stock exchange, to foreign companies, to agencies, to distributors, to contractors and to factories. A new class is created. It is characterized by foreignness and modernization. It adores the West. It is not religious. If it had a memory of or inclination towards religion, it has long since been stamped out. Luxury, transience, pretentiousness and foreignness prevail among this class. And their Islam, in the words of Sayyid Qutb, is an American Islam. People who follow religion without responsibility and without effort, most often give their opinions without acting or investing anything. Intellectuals spend no money. Our young girls and boys have for years given dancing parties in Switzerland, France, England, America and Austria. They have been most generous in their expenditure on such parties. Men and women of this materialist class go abroad with their money bags overflowing. In the stores and casinos, they put money into the pockets of the capitalists, the milkers of money. They are no more than cash-cows, seen by deceiving Westerners as donkeys with money, donkeys coming out of a backward country. They squander their wealth on expensive dancers. They go slumming and then return to their country-until once again they gather up enough money to go back to be milked. They do all this very naturally and without any understanding of their mistake or error even holding their heads high. With lies, people are turned in circles. They call this progress,

modern living and a sign of civilization. At the same time, a small merchant or villager gets ready for his pilgrimage (hajj) to Makkah or Karbala after a lifetime Of work and anguish. He goes on the principle that this is the only thing in his life which will be both a time of rest as well as pleasure-a journey, a tour, traveling abroad and coming to know other countries. He will see the world and renew his faith, his beliefs and his union with his history. He makes the pilgrimage to his beloved people. He comes to know the remains of his civilization. He sees art which relates to him. Because of his love, the longing of his spirit, and finally, the duty of his religious faith, once in a lifetime, he intends to make the pilgrimage. He takes a minimum amount of money. He pays for his plane ticket and the rest he uses for his expenses there and to buy gifts which he takes back home. What he spends there is the money to rent a tent or to take a bus or to buy a few days of food. The total of all this does not reach the cost of one night of Mr. and Mrs. so and so's champagne in the Lido or one of their caviar breakfasts in the George V Hotel. These pseudo-intellectuals who supposedly understand the subtle points of things, who are recently reborn (financially) look down upon a little merchant or a villager who lacks sophistication. All the feelings of such 'gentlemen', their knowledge, their class prejudice produce such hatred for the worker and the peasant that even Che Guevara could not stem it. We see this new moneyed class side by side with our general poverty. Town dwellers and village dwellers have become poorer, more afflicted and more hungry while the class of minor landowners and merchants has become weak and dispersed by the growth of new capitalist classes. The majority have remained in the same class. A minority of people change classes, moving either up or down. We see only two groups, modern types and traditional types Those loyal to their beliefs and religious rites in a sense are part of these two groups. The strength of religion and the great expenses incurred in respect to rites and the inaugurating of places for gatherings or buildings for religious purposes-all are a sign that the binding of our peoples' spirit with the Prophet's family is unbelievably deep and strong. It shows to what extent faith and sincerity are strong and pure. It is after considering these things that the question, 'Who is responsible?' suddenly drops upon our head like a sledge hammer. A person who has until now followed the problem logically and clearly uncovering all sides of the issue, studying it phase by phase, concludes that all is correct. Take a good look at Islam !

ISLAM

Islam is the last historical, religious school of thought possessing the most perfect Prophet, the Koran, the Companions and their histories as models of life, chastity and civilization. Islam brings law, progress, strength and culture to society. Islam has had a history full of struggle in God's Way. Its believers show perseverance. They are inspired by freedom and justice. They are an avenging fire for despots and for the prejudiced. They have submitted to the way. Linked to the wrath of Truth, its followers are enemies of anything which conceals the Truth. They are enemies of a politics which reduces one to slavery. They are enemies of economic exploitation and spiritual despotism. We can see the issue from another point of view. Our people, warm with faith, melting with love, with more than religious belief, with truth in thought, give their love to the Prophet's family. Their names raise their spirits. The mere mention of them makes blood boil in their veins. In their longing for sacrifice, their zeal flows. They are ready to be martyred out of their love for them. They cry in pain from their sorrow. They are full of sorrow because they were not present on that bloody day of Ashura. Then bloodied tears run. Sometimes, nearly insane, they draw their daggers and strike their heads. They lament all year long. Their sorrow is real. All year they think about those who went before them. Then-full of praise for their positions and titles-united as lovers, dressed in black from head to toe, drowned in tears and pain, they long with their whole being to pay

with their lives. Their love brings on thirst, restlessness, anguish and it finally consumes them. From yet another point of view, our enlightened thinkers are sensitive people, awakened, aware of the fate of the world and the fate of their society. They are familiar with the spirit and movement of time. Their timely demands need a boiling faith. They seek out revolutionary thought. They think about freedom, equality and justice for people. They attempt to bring about awareness, and responsibility among their people. They see their people and the religion of Husayn and Zaynab. They see justice, strength, struggle in God's Way, torture, martyrdom, Karbala...and they wonder... Why are there no results when each member of that blessed family can inspire life, awareness, and enthusiasm in those who are faithful to these ideas, overflowing with life and liberty? Why do these perfect forms, whose origins lie in the majesty of humanity, not bear fruit? Then, who is responsible? In one word, the religious scholars. It is they who should have made Prophet Muhammad (SAW) understandable. It is they who should have taught his thoughts. In Islam, the scholars are not wise people. They guarantee nothing. They do not have a handful or a bucketful or a truckful of knowledge. Science does not consist of hundreds of pieces of information and knowledge. In their hearts is a ray of light, the light of God. It is not a question of divine science, illumination or gnosticism. It is also not chemistry, physics, history, geography, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, philosophy or logic, which are all types of scientific knowledge. A science becomes illuminated with light when its knowledge brings about responsibility, guiding knowledge, and organization of ideas. This is called jurisprudence in the Koran, but today it is known as 'the science of rules of the divine Law and things related to it'. This science should not remain in or with darkness. Rather, it lightens space and breaks the night apart. It shows the way. The learned Jafari religious scholar is the vice-gerent of the Mahdi. He takes the religious taxes on his behalf. The most evident of his responsibilities is to have people come to know who the Mahdi is. If a good translation of the Prophet's prayers is not available, religious scholars are to blame. If people only know a little of the virtues, good deeds and miracles of our Prophet and his Companions, then religious scholars are to blame.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Islam distributes freedom. People are in love with Islam and yet, the young intellectuals realize the weakness and decline of Islam's followers. The main reason for this contradiction is 'not having come to know'. It is coming to know which has value. Love and faith have no value if they precede coming to know and precede chose or commitment. If the Koran is read but not understood, it is no different from a blank book. The Prophet gave his followers awareness, greatness, chastity and freedom when they came to know who he was. When one reads a book mis-stating the Prophet's character or when a book of his sayings is not given to his longing people, what effect can loving him, praising and eulogizing him have? Love and faith follow coming to know something. It is that which moves the spirit and brings up the nation. This is why the face of Fatima has remained unknown behind the constant praise, eulogies, and lamentations of her followers. In Muslim societies there are three faces of woman. One is the face of the traditional woman. Another is the face of the new woman, European-like, who has just begun to grow and introduce herself. The third is the face of Fatima which has no resemblance whatsoever to that of the ethnically Muslim woman. The face of the ethnically Muslim woman, which has taken form in the minds of those loyal to religion in our society, is as far away from the face of Fatima as Fatima's face is from the

modern woman's. The crises which we are facing in the world today, in the East, and in particular in Islamic society, the contradictions which have appeared are all the result of the break-down of human qualities. It has come from the agitation which affects the way a society behaves and thinks. Principally, the changing human form has produced a particular type of intellectually educated man and woman, modernists, who contradict the religious man or woman. No power could have prevented the appearance of this contradiction. This is neither to confirm this change nor to deny it. That is not within the scope of this discussion. Rather, we refer to the change in society, the change in the dress of man, his thoughts, his lifestyle and his direction in life. Woman also follow this change. It is not possible that she remain in her same mould. In previous generations a son was inclined to fit exactly into his father's mould. His father had no fear that his son might be other than him. There was no difference between them. There were such strong feelings and ties between them that no doubt or indecisiveness could be heard in their words. But today it is not like this. One of the peculiarities of our generation, whether in the East or in the West, is the distance between the older and younger generations. From the point of view of 'calendar time', their distance is 30 years, but from the point of view of society's time, 30 centuries. Yesterday, society was permanent. Values and social characteristics seemed unchangeable. In a period of 100, 200, 300 years, nothing changed. The foundation of society, the forms of production and distribution, the type of consumption, the social relationships, the government, the religious ceremonies, the negative and positive values, the art, the literature, the language and all other things-were the same during the lifetime of a grandfather and of his grandchild.

THE WORTHY AND THE UNWORTHY

In such fixed worlds and closed societies, where society's time stands still, men and women are of a permanent type. It is perfectly natural that a daughter be an exact copy of her mother. If there is a difference of opinion between a mother and her daughter, it only relates to extraneous things or it arises from daily conflicts. In the world today, a girl, without having gone astray, without having fallen into corruption, creates a distance between herself and her mother. They are strangers to each other. An age difference of 15, 20 or 30 years separates them into two distinct people, two different human beings attached to two different social cycles, attached to two different histories, two different cultures, two different languages, two different visions and two different lives. Their relationship is such that only their home addresses are the same. In the external forms of society, we see this same contradiction and historic distance between two generations, two types of visions. For example, we see flocks of sheep grazing on the asphalt streets of Tehran, and being milked in front of the consumer-resident of the capital at the same time that pasteurized milk is available in the stores. Or, we see a camel standing next to a Jaguar sports car. The distance is the same as that which separated Cain and Abel from the electronic age and automobiles. We see a mother and daughter, with this distance between them, walking shoulder to shoulder down the street, one eating baklava and the other chewing gum. When you add these two together, you do not get a natural, permanent sum. It is obvious that the mother is beginning the last years of her life. She is pulled and preserved by habit. The daughter, on the other hand, is just beginning the first days of her life's journey. It is clear that the daughter will never become the type who eats baklava with relish. Yet the mother and daughter will eventually become identical. The mother will have the same relationship to her daughter that she had to her own mother. The change from this type of mother to the new type of daughter is inevitable. Only beginners write about this phenomenon of change. They have not sensed the abusive language, accusations, anger, punishments, and deprivations. They have not sensed the chains and irons around the necks. They have never kicked and screamed or cried out in pain. They have never

fainted from loss of strength. These observers of change in society are just beginning to touch upon these issues, but the work has already been done. They are wasting their efforts. The* results are worth less than zero. The opposition is strengthened. Those who act as guides, who give explanations, in the name of faith, religion and charity are also mistaken in trying to save forms inherited from the past. They try to preserve old customs and habits. They are referred to in the Koran as 'tales of the ancients', 'the ancients,' Segends of the ancients', 'fathers of old', 'fables of the ancients', and 'stories of yore'. These words all refer to the first myths and first fathers. But those who act as guides see old as synonymous with traditional. As a result, they call every change, including even change in dress or hair-do, infidelity. They mistakenly believe that the spiritual source and the belief in submission to God (Islam) can only be preserved through the worship of anything which is old. They turn away from anything new, from any change and from any re-birth . Woman, in their view, must also remain as she is today because, simply enough, her form existed in the past and has become part of social traditions. It may be 19th century, 17th century or even pre-Islamic, but it is considered to be religious and Islamic. It must, therefore, be preserved. Those who seek to guide accept this view because it has become part of their way of life and because it suits their interests. They try to remain the same and hold onto things of the past forever. They say, "Islam wanted it to be this way. Religion has taken this form. It should remain like this until Judgment Day." But the world changes. Everything changes. Mr. X and his son change. But a woman must retain her permanent form. In general terms, their point of view is that the Prophet sealed woman into her traditional form and that she must retain the characteristics which Haji Agha, [her husband], inscribed in her. This type of thinking tends to lead us astray. If we wish to keep the forms because of our own inexperience, time itself will outrun us. We must realize that destruction is also a reality. Insistence upon keeping these forms will bear no fruit as society will never listen. It cannot listen because these are mortal transient customs. Those who seek to guide try to explain social traditions which have come into being through habit, in religious terms. When we equate religion with social or cultural traditions, we make Islam the guardian of declining forms of life and society. We confuse cultural and historical phenomena with inherited, superstitious beliefs. Time changes habits, social relationships, indigenous, historical phenomena and ancient, cultural signs. We mistakenly believe the Islamic religion to be only these social traditions. Aren't these great errors committed today? Aren't we seeing them with our own eyes?

THREE CLEAR METHODS OF PROBLEM SOLVING

There are three well-known methods of problem-solving. Conservatism is the method used by the guardians of Traditions-as interpreted by culture. It is used by leaders who guard and preserve society so that the guardians have something to guard. The logic of the conservative is this: If we change the customs of the past, it is as if we had separated the roots from the trunk of a tree. The cultural relationships which are preserved in custom are connected to the body of society like a hierarchy of nerves. If the roots are destroyed, so is the rest of the tree. It is exactly because of this that after a great revolution, anguish, confusion and/or dictators come into being. Hastily digging out the roots of social and cultural phenomena in a quick, revolutionary manner will cause society to face a sudden void. The unfortunate results of this void will be made apparent after the revolution subsides. Revolutionism is a method used by leaders who tear out things by the roots, believing that all custom is based only on old superstitions and, is, therefore, reactionary and rotten. The reasoning of the revolutionary runs like this: by retaining outdated cultural customs, we keep society outdated and living in the past. We stagnate. Thus a revolutionary leader says that all forms inherited from the past should be eliminated because these forms are like chains around our wrists, feet, spirit,

thoughts, will and vision. All of our relationships to the past should be done away with. New rules should replace old. Otherwise society remains behind, fanatic, stagnant, and bound to the past. Reformism is a method used by people who believe in gradual change. These people lay the groundwork for gradual change in social conditions. Reformism is the middle way between the other two. The reasoning of the reformer is just as weak as that of the other two methods. He takes a third way, believing change should be quiet and gradual so that the different factions do not oppose each other. If change is gradual, reformers reason, the foundation of society will not take on a revolutionary form but rather change over a long period of time. Thus, programs should be graduated to reach this end. But the method of reformism or gradual evolution usually faces negative, strong reactions from internal and external enemies during the long time period this method requires. These forces either stop it or destroy it. If, for instance, we wished to change the ethics of our youth, or if we wanted to enlighten the thoughts of all people, we would be destroyed before we could reach our goal. Or, perhaps, corrupt, circumstances would dominate and deceive society and paralyze us. A leader who tries to gradually bring about change in society over a relatively long period of time believes that he used logic in calculating his programs. But such a leader does not take into account the powers seeking to neutralize change. One does not always have the time necessary to neutralize powers which are against change. Reactionary elements do not always give the time necessary to leisurely implement gradual changes. Factors considered minor make themselves manifest.

THE PARTICULAR METHOD OF THE PROPHET STEMMING FROM HIS TRADITIONS

The Traditions of the Prophet (ahadith), so important in Islam, consist of the words which he spoke, the laws he brought, the deeds he performed, things he remained silent about or did not disagree with and deeds he actually performed in his lifetime without telling others that they should themselves perform them. The Traditions of the Prophet, then, are his words and his conduct. These become the rules of Islam which are divided into two groups: first, those which existed before Islam but were confirmed by the Prophet (signed rules); second, those which had not existed previously but were established by Islam (created rules). Besides these signed and created rules and the words and deeds of the Prophet, a third principle can also be perceived. It is my belief that it is the most sensitive. It is the method that the Prophet used. The Prophet preserved the form, the container of a custom which had deep roots in society, one which people had gotten used to from generation to generation and one which was practiced in a natural manner, but he changed the contents, the spirit, the direction and the practical application of customs in a revolutionary, decisive and immediate manner. He was inspired by a particular method which he uses in social combat. Without producing negative results, without containing any of the weak points of the other methods, his method contained the positive characteristics of the others. Through the customs of society which apply the brakes, he quickly attained his social goals. His revolutionary method was this: he maintained the container of a social tradition but inwardly changed the contents. He used this method in reconciling social phenomena. He adopted a process and method which is a model for all problem solving. This method can be applied to two problems or two phenomena which in no way resemble each other. Recognizing how important this method is, we cannot fully explore it here. We can only clarify it by a few examples. Before Islam, there was a custom of total ablution which was both a belief and a superstition. The pre-Islamic Arabs believed that when a person had sexual intercourse, he or she incarnated jinn [spirits which inhabit the earth], thereby rendering both body and soul unclean. Until he or she found water and performed a total ablution, the jinn could not be exorcised. Another example is the pilgrimage to Makkah.

Before Islam, it was an Arab custom, full of superstitious ancestor worship. It was a glorified type of idol worship, holding economic advantage for the Quraysh tribe. It had gradually come to assume this form from the time of Abraham. Islam kept the pre-Islamic custom of pilgrimage, believing that Abraham, the Friend of God, had built the Kabah which (after a period of decline) had been purified of its idols and renewed. The basis of the pilgrimage had been twofold: to protect the economic interests of the Quraysh merchants in Makkah and to create an artificial need among the Arab tribes for the Quraysh nobility. It was revealed to the Prophet of Islam to take this form and change it into a most beautiful and deep rite founded upon the unity of God and the oneness of humanity. The Prophet, with his revolutionary stand, took the pilgrimage of the idol-worshipping tribes and changed it into a completely opposite rite. It was a revolutionary leap. As a result, the Arab people underwent no anguish, no loss of values or beliefs, but rather, revived the truth and cleansed an ancient custom. They moved easily from idol worship to unity. Suddenly, they had left the past. Their society was not aware that the foundations of idol worship had been torn down. This leap, this revolutionary social method found within the Traditions of the Prophet preserved the outer form but changed its content. It maintained the container as a permanent element but changed and transformed the content. The conservative, at whatever cost, tries, to the last bit of his strength, to keep his customs—even if it means sacrificing himself and others. (The revolutionary, on the other hand, wants to change everything into another form all at once. He wants to annihilate everything, to suddenly jump—whether or not society is prepared to leap in that direction.) When the conservative senses the possibility of revolution, he turns to anger, dictatorship, and extensive public murders not only against his enemies but also against the people themselves. A reformer, on the other hand, always gives a corrupter the opportunity to destroy. The Prophet, through the inspired method of his work, showed us that if we understand and can put his method into action, we can behave in a most enlightened and correct way. A clear-visioned intellectual, confronted by outdated customs, ancient traditions, a dead culture and a stagnant religious and social order, takes up the mandate of the Prophet rather than submit to prejudices from the past. By this method one can reach revolutionary goals without the danger of revolution, on one hand, and without opposing the basis of faith and ancient social values on the other. By doing so, one does not remove oneself from people, nor does one become a stranger on whom people may turn and condemn. This method works because the Prophet received knowledge from the divine Infinite, because he asked for the help of revelation and because he made use of what he received.

REALISM: A MEANS OF SERVING IDEALISM

One of the peculiarities of Islam is that it accepts both beliefs which are identical to it as well as coercive beliefs of society. It admits to the existence of both. Here the perception of Islam is special. The idealistic schools of thought embrace the highest values, the absolute and most desirable ideologies. Each and every fact is categorically rejected if it does not suit them. They have no patience. They deny unpleasant realities and dig out the roots of anger. Anger, violence, pleasure-seeking and greed are realities which do exist. Moral idealism or religious idealism (i.e. Christianity) ignores these vices and denies their existence. On the other hand, schools of thought which are based on realism accept all things as the basis of reality. For instance, sodomy is not accepted in England or in Christianity due to religious idealism, not reality. Divorce among Catholics is prohibited to preserve the family and to re-inforce the sacred nature of marriage. But reality is other than this. Some human beings cannot preserve the first, sacred marriage and remain loyal to each other. It so often happens that human beings grow apart during their lifetime. They become strangers. They live together like two pitiful people. That which has joined them is not love; it is only the ties of law. They are

afflicted. One might even become lucky with someone else. This reality has existed in the past, exists in the present and will exist in the future. Civilized and uncivilized people, the religious and the nonreligious, have felt it and continue to feel it. Statistics show it, but some Christian groups deny this reality. They bind marriage to the sacred. They force a family to stay together even when a real hell is behind the doors, and the family has become a center of murder, adultery and corruption. The door of divorce has been closed, but thousands of windows of swindle and illegality have been opened.

CONCUBINES

Social realities are such that if we do not open doors to them, they will spring out from the windows. Forbidding divorce brings about a type of concubinage. That is, a man who cannot live with his legal wife separates from her without being able to get a divorce. The same is true for a woman. She cannot get a divorce, so she lives separately. They each live for years separated from each other. Perhaps each finds another man or woman. The children born out of such a situation are natural but illegal. Such people often have sick beliefs and complexes. Their spirit is anti-social. Suppose a woman and her legal husband become strangers. They begin opposing each other. They both reach the conclusion that the relationship of husband and wife is not just sleeping together. It cannot continue. They cannot even live as neighbors. It is natural that they separate. The man leaves the household and goes looking for the type of woman he always wanted. Love, the need for a family life, and the pull of sex (one way or the other) helps him to find a natural tie. The man and his new partner find a place and live together. The wife's life follows exactly the same pattern and the same fate. As a result, we see that nature and reality build two new families, two incompatible types find compatible partners. But some Christian ideologies do not accept this reality. Therefore, no one, including that man and woman, is responsible. People close their eyes so as not to see it. As a result, they accept, in legal terms, a decomposed house which has no external existence. Its materials have all been used to make another house. It is the former empty marriage which is acknowledged as official, while these two natural families are denied. Here we see the distance between common law, civil law and religious law, and we see how natural forces, realities and oppositions arise. As a result, families which are Christian, do not actually exist, while families which are real and natural are considered to be corrupt and sinful Christianity, by denying this reality, causes the family which comes into being to be illegal. The children which are born of concubinage are also illegal. >From the point of view of a religious society, they are criminals. They do not have a share in the kindness of the family nor the purity of society. Society looks upon them as sinners. Complexes arise within them. They suffer anger and anguish which is beyond imagination. They take their revenge on society. Crimes which occur in Europe and, in particular, in America, do not exist in backward and underdeveloped countries. The reason is that in these Western societies (even though they have civilizations in the sense that they have culture, ethics, nourished minds, freedom of thought, etc.), there is something born into this generation which makes them take revenge upon society in the worst of forms. An Englishman had built something which resembled a very small bow and arrow. He had attached this to a box upon which he had displayed cigarettes, selling them along the streets and at movie houses. With this device, he shot a tiny poison tipped arrow into a group of people blinding or killing them. The police could not find the killer. They were looking for a motive connecting the murderer and the murdered. But the murderer had no particular reason for murdering those people. He murdered simply because other people were accepted by society and he was not. Such a murder can be explained as the result of complexes which the church refuses to accept. It thus has had a hand in bringing misfortune about. Fortunately, we have not yet seen such complexes here. Because there is divorce in our society, there are

no illegal families. Because there is divorce there is no family which is a non-entity forced to live with each other under common law. We do not bind people together through the force of law. A child wanted to go out of a room, but a samavar, a teapot and various dishes were in the way. He closed his eyes and tried to pass through. He thought all the obstacles were gone. Idealism is like a child who does not see reality. It does not want to see reality. It closes its eyes to that which it does not want to see. Because it does not see obstacles, it thinks they do not exist. The opposite of idealism is realism. Its followers see everything, no matter how ugly or unpleasant, simply because it has an external existence. They accept a thing, attach their hearts to it and find faith. They oppose and reject, however, all beauty, truth and correctness simply because these do not record with existing realities. Through this rejection, they become unbelievers. One of my students, who was among the pseudo enlightened of this country, drew only one conclusion from our conversations. As he was a supporter of dialectical materialism and I was religious, a believer in Islam, he rejected whatever I said because of his pre-conceived notions. Even if I said something which agreed with Marxism (with which he should have agreed) without attributing the idea, he rejected it. One day I was speaking about the murders committed by the Umayyids and the disagreements which existed between the classes. The Umayyids had a political dictatorship which dominated religion in order to justify their situation. They wanted people to believe that whatever happened was God's will. This, they said, was particularly true about their own government. I spoke about the people who opposed them and resisted the situation. I saw how my student suddenly became unhappy. I was opposing the Umayyids. I was praising the Prophet, the Companions, Fatima, Abu Dharr, Hujr and Husayn as leaders of a movement for justice and human freedom against prejudice, oppression and ignorance. What could this first class enlightened thinker do? He yelled out, 'The despot is history!' According to the Marxist philosophy of history, society must move through historic phases in a certain predictable sequence. Ali, Husayn and Abu Dharr were ideologists who opposed the despotism of history. I said, 'The Mercy of God be upon this enlightened one.' I see that I was right in re-iterating the fact that when the level of thought and vision of a society is transformed, the religious, non-religious, enlightened, reactionary and ignorant scholar are all the same. When a religious view prevails, all unknown and uncomprehended facts are called it calls it fate and destiny Such a view believes that whatever occurs is the When a society becomes Marxist, it believes in the despotism of history. It believes that whatever happens is beyond human will. Whatever exists is accepted because it is a reality resulting inevitably from the processes of history. I said, 'No look my friend, the sword is the despot here, not history.' We see that realists believe that whatever exists should be as it is! The members of the Parliament in England defend the laws of homosexuality because homosexuality is an objective reality which exists in society. Therefore, it must be made legal. To oppose this realism is to worship idealized fantasies which form the outlook of politicians and pseudo-intellectuals. You do not hear them argue that Israel is a reality. The settlement of the Palestinian people in lands occupied by Israel is a manifestation of someone who worshiped the ideal. Even though it is wrong, it is a reality which a realist must accept. Although it goes against the grain of humanity, although it is murder, it exists. Politicians and intellectuals accept it, and officially recognize it. A magazine entitled 'This Week' has recently been published for young people. All the articles, translations, news items and photographs are the output of only two or three well-known writers using pen names. These writers visit whore houses and then, damn them. They write for our young people giving them a point by point description of events which take place. One of the top writers (who is too knowledgeable) is a politician who officially represents Islamic culture! He advises women who are overweight and unhappy because of it to find an illicit lover as a solution to their obesity. This is all a reality. Most probably the writers of "This Week" had first scientifically experienced this form of weight loss. Abuse of the weak by the

strong is also a reality. Oppression and suppression of certain classes are also realities. Reality seekers are completely objective viewers. They see the external form which is a scientific and sensible reality. Then they judge. They face no difficulties with imagination, ideology and ideas which are not translated into real forms. We see that an idealist, a thinker, a reformer tends towards mental desires, ideals and sacred values, but denies or rejects the realities which deviate from his beliefs. It is impossible to negate them. He turns his back on them, or else, through inexperience, rejects them. He pulls himself away from realities. He thinks in terms of imagery. He occupies a sacred place but does not realize that he is in an idealistic environment. A realist, on the other hand, kills flights of thought, visions, efforts, mental longings of perfection. A realist keeps everything as it is. He builds walls around the framework of existing values and within the existing situation. He paralyzes creative thought, rebellion and the deep changes of life. His needs and desires tend only towards the present, external purposes of mankind. He surrenders to realities and nourishes that which exists.

NEITHER IDEALISM NOR REALISM: BOTH

Islam is a pure tree which belongs neither to the East nor the West but has its roots in the heavens and its branches reaching towards the earth. Contrary to idealism, Islam recognizes the realities of life (in both body and spirit) of the individual, as well as the realities of community relationships and of the depths of a society seen only in the motion of history. Islam like realism only admits to the existence of life's harsher realities, but unlike realism, Islam does not accept the status quo but seeks to change. It changes essence in a revolutionary way. It carries the common idea of 'reality' along with its ideals. It uses such realities as a means to reach its idealistic goals, its real desires, which are without form by themselves. Unlike realism, Islam does not submit to realities, but rather, it causes the realities to submit to it. Islam does not turn away from realities as idealists do. It seeks them out. It tames them. Through this means, Islam uses that which hinders the idealists as raw material for its own ideals. For example, Islam accepts divorce, a new marriage contract and temporary marriage (in certain very exceptional cases). Islam accepts divorce in certain social circumstances. If it did not accept divorce, divorce would still exist, but it would be outside its control. By accepting an unavoidable, natural reality, it makes it into a legal form. As a result, one can conquer the sense of guilt one has in the eyes of God and society. Thus, divorce is based upon ethical principles and religion is preserved. Such people can nourish their environment. Society does not look upon them as sinners or on their children as illegal and impure. Islam succeeded the day it admitted the existence of these social and human realities. Because of this, it can control its results. It can give realities a corrected legal form. It can bestow an ethical and religiously accepted form upon amorphous 'facts' By confirming and admitting the existence of reality, Islam gains strength. It can then control, guide and dominate any reality within its framework. If we deny realities, they will dominate us. Without knowing it, we will be pulled wherever they want us to go, and we, like the realists, will be drowned in existing realities, whether good or bad. On the other hand, idealists make the mistake of imprisoning themselves in the chains of useless customs. Realists move along with realities and accept them. Idealists who do not recognize such realities, deny them through their ignorance and their attachment to imaginary ideals. Idealists are then attacked by realities. The idealists fall on their knees because they are defenseless, inexperienced and weak. They are destroyed. We don't see the form that girls who are raised in very strict religious homes take. We don't see how she covers her face so that, God forbid, the fish in the courtyard pool do not see her. What happens when she enters the ocean of society? She vigorously swims, but she is so afraid that she loses control of herself and drowns. In order to make up for what she lacks now, she pays her fine a thousand times over. The same is true for young men who grow up in a pious

society. The nouveau riche have just moved from the former world of their idealistic pseudo-religious environment in which they were prohibited from learning physics or chemistry, and in which women were forbidden to have a high school or college education. The men did not shave their beards. They sat in coaches instead of in buses or in taxis. They wore no neck-tie. They did not let their hair grow long. They did not change the form of their clothes or their hair-style. They neither bought radios nor did they spread the word of the Koran through a microphone! Suddenly, these young people faced the new world of realities, full of twists and turns. You see what confusion it has caused. The newly rich young person sees the pretense. He has learned certain airs through watching Western films and TV. He has learned about showing off luxury and being silly. He has seen the exaggeration of it all. It is so exaggerated that even foreigners laugh about it. Why? Because these pretenses exist side by side with reality whereas we deny the realities before we even come to know them. This is why we have been captured by our imagination. This new civilization has attacked all boundaries, toppled all the watchtowers of the world. The new generation has been caught in the whirling wind of the Renaissance, the 17th century intellectual movements, the French revolution and the industrialized life style. These historical events changed the weather of the world. The change of atmosphere of our country is also a reality. It is a most certain reality. It is clear that sooner or later lightning will strike. When it does, machines, printing presses, books, newspapers, democracy, electronic media, movies, schools, women's education, new industrial techniques, new sciences, and many other new things will come and will change us. The leaders of the people, those responsible for ethics, those who have been given the responsibility of guiding lives and thoughts, those who stand face to face with unavoidable realities have closed their eyes. They have given their hearts to mental ideologies and to their ancient thoughts. They have tried to preserve their horse drawn carriages side by side with taxis. They still light lamps when they have electricity. They correctly predict the rush to the inferior world. They know it will bring about the decline of much belief, faith, piety, health and independence. They know that corruption will find a home deep within people's brains. But face to face with this rush towards modernity (and knowing the relationship which it imposes on the furthest points and on the most backward tribes of society even those in the depths of the desert) they only say one thing and one thing only: Forbidden! Radio? Don't buy one. Movies? Don't see them. Television? Don't watch. Loudspeaker? Don't listen. University? Don't go. The new science? Don't study it. Newspapers? Don't read them. Vote? Don't do it. Office work? Don't do it and..woman? Shhh...Don't mention that word! Face to face with the flood of new technology covering the globe, face to face with civilization which sells refrigerators to the Eskimos, they attempt to completely defend the past. Their total army and strategy consists of only two words: 'Forbidden!' and 'No!'. What is the result? What we see is what happens. Contemporary events and realities break the barriers and tear down the watch-towers. Realities tear down the bricks of the walls and destroys the defenders of the past who hide with their eyes closed and faces averted in disapproval. The force of these modern consumerist realities ruins everything at once. They attack the city's inhabited areas, its bazaars, mosques and even our homes like wild bulls, wolves or chained dogs. They plunder everything. But they do not leave. They come, they kill, they burn and they take, but they do not leave as the army of Ghengis Khan left. Why? Because no one even sees them. Our border guards, our watchmen, don't like them. They are so exasperated that they don't even bother to look at them. They don't want to go and separate the good from the bad and correct them. They don't want to adapt them to the climate and the people of our country. They don't want to choose among them. They don't want to shame, control and dominate them. They stand in the middle of the road facing a driverless car. They are run over and crushed. This is why the veiled woman who wants to give birth to her children, screams, "Why men physicians? Why should women not be treated by women physicians?" She wants

her child to go to school and to the university. Her cries increase is this the faculty of literature or a fashion show? Is this an Islamic university? Is this an Islamic society? Does this school smell just a bit of Islam? Does it contain a bit of ethics and meaning? Is this the radio of a religious country or just a noise box? What kind of a translation is this of one culture by another-this full-scale importation of television, publications, laws, and banks? What film is this? What theater? What art? What craft? Really, what kind of a civilization is this? But then again, as Hafez [the great poet] has said,

As our destiny has been shaped in our absence If only a little fails to accord with our wishes, don't worry And, in our case, we have to say: If all of this is not according to our wishes, don't worry! When modernism came and found a place for itself, when it began to work, you were absent. You ran away. When you, a pious man, a religious, ethical Muslim (sensitive to people's feelings, responsible for the spirits and thoughts of society, preserver of the Islamic culture) sulk and retire into a corner, you allow a Reza Khan to bring a new civilization into effect and to employ a new industry and science. It takes great effort to effectively interfere in events which unfold. Yet it is only through this effort that one can guide the determined motion of society. People who believe we should preserve that which is incapable of being preserved which is dying (and who are in a position to advise those who inspire, those who appease and those who give condolences) do not recognize the dangers. They create believers from among those who accept the unacceptable. They delude the majority of society. They keep them in an unholy state of prostration-silent, weak and submissive. Those who seek a flowing, active society and want a better human life, acknowledge realities. They know pain. They take their strength from pain in order to heal their wounds. This group does not include those who, as demigods, defend that which is incapable of being defended, or those who take the public into their own hands, or those who follow the styles of the day, or those who praise according to what is fashionable, or those who try to attach themselves to something. Those who acknowledge realities are people who know time moves. They know that society has a skin which it sheds. They feel that the strong forces of the world have turned to us to make us change. Neither are they sufficiently without pain to sit down and watch, nor are they, without shame, able to take whatever job is handed to them. They are not so stupid as one who sees a flood covering his town but protects only his wife and children, pulls only his own carpet from the water. They know that today is not like the past when families were living in a closed society. Now, even if you hide your daughter in the back room of your house, national and international television will follow her, find her and show her the attractions of the outside world.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHICH MOLD DO THEY FILL?

In reality, in our society, those who ask, 'Who am I? Who should I be?' or 'What is my identity?' are of two types. One type is a person attached to out-dated, existing traditions which are called religion and ethics and which that person wants to impose upon others. He can't. Even though he knows he can't, he still adheres to outdated customs. He still retains them. He tries to impose them upon young people. There is another type afraid to act even under the pseud-name of intellectual, modernist or freedom-seeker because he thinks, "If I interfere or negate or agree or control the 'ifs', I will be condemned as being old-fashioned, eastern, backward and religious." So against the social changes, the changes in the types of young men and women, he plays the role of a dead person. In other words, his child acts while the mother

and father create possibilities for him. They are called intellectual parents But their silence and surrender does not stem from their ; intellectual abilities. Nor does it come from their beliefs, but rather from their impotency and weakness. He says to himself "If I interfere, I will give up my outer, external strength to this show and my inner emptiness." He shouts out, "Prestige, Papa! These are two types, two types of people who can be molded One is attached to the traditions of the Chahar Bagh in Isfahan-huge, ugly, crooked and decayed. The second is a product of European brick kilns-straight, subtle, with endurance, hollow and absurd. These are two types and two ways, both of which are lost. Why? One stands against the roaring flood of realities which is about to ruin everything. He tries to turn back the waters with his hands. He tries to stop the flow. He cries out, laments, sobs, and swears at the flood, but the flood just builds up, flows out and sinks everything in its way. The other one stretches himself out next to the flood waters like a dead person, like a useless observer. This dear man who has no personality of his own, is quiet and works from morning until night, committing murder, ripping people off, pickpocketing, and performing a thousand dirty deeds. He tricks people and then fills his pockets which he, in turn, empties into the pockets of the foreign companies.

WOMEN WE CANNOT KNOW

There are only some European women whom we have the right to recognize. It is they to whom we always have to refer. They are the women introduced through magazines, television and sexy movies. They are women made sexy by writers. They are introduced to us as a universal type of European woman. Let me tell you about the European girl we have no right to know. At the age of sixteen she went to the deserts of Africa, to the deserts of Algeria and Australia. She spent all of her life in wild places. She lived with the threat of sickness, death and wild tribes. Throughout her youth and old age she studied the waves emitted from the antennae of ants. When she grew old, her daughter carried on her work. The second generation of this European woman returned to France at the age of fifty. At the university she said, "I discovered the language of the ants and I learned some of their signs of communication." Also, we have no right to know Madame Gushan who spent her whole life finding the roots of philosophical ideas and the studying the wisdom of Avicenna, ibn Rushd, Mulla Sadra and Haji Mulla Hadi Sabzevari. She also studied Greek philosophy and many of the works of Aristotle and compared them with Islamic material. She showed what our philosophers received from them. She corrected that which had been badly translated and incorrectly understood for a 1000 years of Islamic civilization. We have no right to know the Italian Mme. De la Vida. She edited and completed the 'Science of the Soul' of Avicenna itself based on the ancient Greek manuscript on the soul written by Aristotle. We have no right to know Mme. Curie who discovered radioactivity. And what about Resass Du La Chappelle who knew more about the sanctity of Ali than all the Islamic scientists. Resass Du La Chappelle was a young, beautiful, free Swedish girl, born far from Islamic culture. She was distant from Muslim behavior and beliefs. From the beginning of her youth, she devoted her life to knowing that unknown spirit in the structure of Islam. She followed a man covered by the hatred of his enemies, caught in traps laid by hypocrites and meaningless friends. She discovered the most correct manuscripts about Ali. She came to know the most subtle waves of his spirit, the depth of his feelings and the highest peaks of his ideas. For the first time, she felt his anger, pain, loneliness, brokenness, fear and needs. Not only did she 'see' Ali in the Battles of Uhud, Badr and Hunayn, but she found Ali praying in the mihrab of the mosque in Kufa. She discovered his nights of complaining at the wells of Madinah. She gathered together the Nahj al-balaqah to which the Arab Muslims had access through the literary edition of Muhammad Abduh, the great Sunni religious leader, but about which the Jafaris

had only lectures of Javad Fazel which had to be read with the help of the Arabic text! This girl-a disbeliever destined for hell-gathered all of the writings of Ali from books, notebooks or manuscripts, hidden here and there. She read all of them and translated them and interpreted them. The most beautiful and deepest writings ever written about someone flowed from her pen. For forty-two years she has continued to study, think, work and research Ali. We have no right to know Angela, the American girl in prison who is not only the hope of two countries, but of all the free people of the world, of all the wounded, of all those condemned through racial discrimination-in other words, all the oppressed. We should not know that foreign women are not just toys of the Don Juans who take money and jewels-female slaves serving men as long as they want them, as long as they are interested. We should believe that they are worthy only of man's desires and lusts. The foreign woman has progressed to the point of becoming the embodiment of an ideology, of a country, of salvation and of the honor of a generation. But we have no right to know her. We only have the right to know fashion models and beauty queens. We have only the right to know movie sex goddesses in cheap exploitation films, the Queen of Monaco and all of the seven female guards around James Bond. Such women are the sacrifices made to European production. of Europe. They are the toys and wind-up dolls of the wealthy. They are the slaves of the houses of the new merchants. We Muslims only have the right to know these examples of the women of European civilization. I have never seen photographs from Cambridge, the Sorbonne or Harvard University telling about female university students who go to the library to work on 14th and 15th century manuscripts and to research artifacts from 2500-3000 years ago in China. I have not seen pictures of those who bend over Koranic manuscripts based upon Latin. I have not seen pictures of those studying Greek, Cuneiform and Sanskrit texts without moving and without allowing their eyes to rove. They don't take their heads out of their books until the librarian takes their books away or asks them to leave. You-men and women, seekers of knowledge, scholars, researchers-have you ever heard of the famous German scholar, Frau Hunekeh? Have you heard that she has recently written a very comprehensive study of Islam and its influence upon European civilization which has been translated into Arabic and is entitled, The Arab's Sun Spreads over the West. These are not today's women and they should not be known. Why? Because one group is made up of old fashioned, ethnic cultural-bound seekers. The other is superstitious, newly rich and hidden, but at the same time known and apparent. If they join hands, they will awaken us. They will destroy everything we have. So people are obliged to take the form of tamed consumers and quiet slaves. These two groups, old-fashioned and newly wealthy, for all practical purposes, work together to produce a new type. One does this under the name of ethics and religion while the other does this under the name of freedom and progress. The oldfashioned woman is abused by prejudice and fanaticism. They push her, leaving her without bread and water. They show her anger. They have no compassion. They treat her so badly that the woman, half crazy with her eyes and ears closed, throws herself into the skirts of those with goat-like beards, who welcome her, take off their hats respectfully and with correct manners, bend forward politely, smiling, and treating her gently. The European woman about whom I was speaking, is a woman of today. She delivered herself, but she is the progeny of the Middle Ages. She is reacting to the inhuman treatment and fanaticism of the priests of the Middle Ages, who, in the name of Christianity and religion, misguided women and cursed and enslaved them. They even said woman was hated by God and was the main cause of Adam's fall from Paradise to the earth! In the Middle Ages, people asked priests, "If there is a woman in a house, should a man, who is not related, enter?" The priests said, "Never. Because if the man is not related and he enters the house where there is a woman even if he does not see the woman-still he has sinned." In other words, if an unrelated man goes to the second floor of the house and a woman is in the basement, sin occurs. It seems that the sins of women spread through the air. St. Thomas

Dakin said, "If God should see the love for a woman upon a man's face even if the woman is his wife-he becomes angry because no love, other than the love of God, should sit upon his heart. Christ lived without a wife. A man can be a Christian without having touched a woman. This is why Christian brothers and spiritual fathers-and even Christian sisters-never marry. They believe marriage is a tie which arouses God's anger. We should only join with God through Jesus Christ because two loves cannot fit into one heart. Only those who remain unmarried can carry the Holy Ghost." In Christianity, the first sin was the sin of woman. Every man, as the child of Adam, who turns towards a woman, even if that woman be his wife, as Eve was the wife of Adam, repeats the first, primordial sin. The sin and disobedience of Adam is renewed in the memory of God! Thus one must do something so that God will forget Adam and his sin! This is why a woman in the thoughts of the people of the Middle Ages was hated, weakened and held back from the ownership of anything. Such hatred even extended to the point that if a woman, owning property, went to her husband's house, she lost the rights to her own property. Her ownership was itself transferred to her husband. A woman had no legal status. The effects of this can still be found in European civilization, which is completely unacceptable to us. Even today, if a woman marries, she changes her name. This is not just for use in her home or unofficially. Her education certificates, her identification, her passport-everything is changed from carrying her father's name to her husband's name. This means that a woman herself is nothing. She has no essential existence. A name is significant. A creature who lacks significance stands through others. In her parent's home, she uses her father's name. She lives with her first owner. When she goes to her husband's home, the name of another man (her new owner) distinguishes her. She does not possess sufficient value or credit to have a name of her own. Modern Muslims believe that European tradition has also influenced Muslim countries. They believe European traditions are better than ours. Even if it is a tradition from the slave age, even if it is a detested and ugly action, the very fact that it has a foreign mark upon it is sufficient for our modernists to attempt to imitate it. This is just an example which our pseudo-foreigners take from the foreign 'better' race. Whatever that race does is copied without even knowing its reason, purpose or value. Our modernists have no common sense. In imitating, whether by a modernist or by an old-fashionist, choice is impossible. There is no questioning or judgment about good or bad, no distinction between the useful and the useless. The basis of all imitation is the principle that "Whatever defect the king accepts is art." They confirm him until it reaches the point where if he says, aDay is night," they add, aYes. I see the moon and the stars." In the official European marriage forms, the two people to be married are asked, "Name?" Secondly, girl's family name. In answering the first question, the family name which will be taken after marriage, that is, the family name of the husband-to-be is recorded. In answer to the second question, her unmarried family name, the name of her father, is recorded In other words, a woman belongs to the owner of the house Even if a house had originally belonged to her, she could not continue to own it because she was a woman. In her father's house, it was her father's name and in her husband's house, it is her husband's name which is used. This is why she officially changes her name through marriage. Only an idiot ridiculously and unconsciously acts and thinks like a foreigner because he or she cannot distinguish values. This is why we say pseudo-foreigners have been born into our modern society who do not resemble foreigners. Pseudo-Europeans have come into existence for which no example in Europe exists. In Islam, from the very beginning, the purest form of Islam, (not the present composite form of Islam), a woman is completely independent in respect to woman's rights. She can even seek payment from her husband for nursing her child. She can carry on her own businesses without any interference from her husband. She can work. As to production she can independently and directly put her capital into effect. She has the most economic independence of any member of society. All of the anti-human and pseudo-religious pressures committed against European

women in the name of religion have caused a reaction. This reaction is directed against the Middle Ages. The memory of it has remained with her. In Italy and Spain where religion is still strong, women are denied many of their human rights in spite of the signs of freedom and the emphasis upon human rights. We are talking about human freedom and social rights, not sexual freedom and sexual rights. We see with what speed the latter becomes prevalent. In return for the second world's (the previous third world's oil, diamonds, rubber gum, copper, coffee and uranium which inexpensively enter Europe, Europe exports freedom, ethics, techniques, culture, art, literature and, in particular, sex, to our hungry, plundered world. All the means of advertisement, all the means of social, technical, artistic and educational expertise of an underdeveloped country are employed to serve propaganda, promotion and distribution. These things are all other than freedoms and human rights! Sexual freedom is deceiving. It is part of a new exploitation, a type of limitless deception, which the impure system of Western capitalism produces. It causes both the East and West innocently to reach out towards it-until things get to the point that the influencing West and the influenced East form a continuous culture. The young generation (in particular, those who are rebellious, audacious and have not been stupefied by religious stipulations and the hereditary chains of traditions falls into the Western trap. At any moment it is possible that, based upon rebellion, they take up a notion contrary to their interests and as a result put their heads into a cheap foreign lover's grasp and thereby, become so drowned and giddy in the artificial freedom presented by capitalists that they no longer know what the world is about. They so completely saturate themselves with materialism that they no longer sense their poverty and slavery. We see to what extent the internal conditions of despotism in Asia, Africa and Latin America have resulted in an insane emphasis upon the rights and freedom of sex as advertised by the Western capitalists. Sexual freedom is emphasized and strengthened so that the groundwork is laid for its daily increase. We can, with a little bit of caution and discernment, come to know what is behind these attractive forms of thunder-struck, sexuality. It is none other than the denial of the modern world. We have to come to know these great idols and the three faces of the contemporary religious trinity: exploitation, colonialization and despotism. This trinity makes Freud a prophet. From Freudism they build a supposedly scientific and human religion. From sexuality they build an ethical conscience. Finally, from lust, a blessed temple is built. They build their place of worship and create a powerful servant class. The first sacrifice recorded on the threshold of this temple is woman.

WHO IS THE CONTEMPORARY WOMAN SERVING ONESELF VS. SERVING OTHERS

In the 15th and 16th centuries (following the Renaissance and the passing away of customs and ancient religion) the thought of Descartes and the logic of analytical science replaced natural sensitivities and religious feelings. According to Durkheim, individual autonomy in one's dealings with one's society (family, tribe or country) and serving oneself as an independent entity replaced the unity of society and the serving of others. Utility replaces values. Realism replaces idealism. Instincts replace spiritual efforts. Welfare and the problems of life replace the search for perfection, consciousness of God and self-sufficiency. Intelligent logic is consciously chosen to substitute for the sacred and spiritual which, through an unacceptable materialist analysis are related to a kind of eternal pleasure. Finally, known phenomena, capable of analysis and synthesis, are considered to be relative and materialistic. They form the people, life, culture, all of the dimensions of the earth, the elements of society and the unlimited attractions of the new spirit. They replace the essence of inspiration and the composite truths which are above one's individual will. They do away with anything which is only understood by the supra-intellectual (spiritual faculty)*that is, everything which is

beyond logical science, such as the eternal, hidden Platonic dimensions. The roots of these dimensions exist in the depths of being. Since the beginning of humanity, they have poked their heads through. They are enigmatic attractions from another world. They are from the essence of fate. They are absolute. Their source is divine destiny. Alas, nature has replaced metaphysics; science has replaced inspiration; pleasure has replaced chastity; happiness has replaced perfection; and tranquility has replaced piety. As Francis Bacon said, "Power has replaced Truth." This spiritual and intellectual change in the deep evolution of human values has changed the main direction of culture, knowledge and feelings. New means of earning a livelihood, new view of love and the relationship between men and women, the place of women in society and their relationship to men have had revolutionary effects upon the roots of the fabric of our life, literature, art and sensitivities. All things are analyzed according to the science and positivist vision of Descartes. This includes the sacred and ethical principles always viewed as values above human knowledge that is, divine virtues. These are now analyzed as material things. Among these values are women and love, which had previously existed together in a halo of sanctity. They were hidden in the imagination, spirit, and inspiration where they remained untouched. Now they place them upon the blackboard and the billboard. One of the people responsible for this is Claude Bernard who saw human beings as corpses without a spirit. Freud considered the spirit to be a sick animal. For the bourgeoisie, life is money. The result is what we see now. Opposed to these were the Christian priests. Next to their laboratories were churches. They had nothing to offer other than 'excommunication'. They were club wielders whom no one feared. Compared to materialists who at least reasoned and gave examples, they simply cried out, 'Religion is dying!' They issued unreasonable cannon laws. They constantly threw the fire of hell into the faces of their parishioners but to no avail. A woman, as far as her life was concerned, was part of a family. Even though she had no independent human personality, at least she could easily be dissolved in the family, which was one spirit. Little by little she became economically independent. She began working outside of the home. With industrialization in full swing, with daily progress and improvement in social occupations, women went to work. From society's point of view, economic independence has also made her socially independent. Thereafter she found individual existence beside her husband and children. Today, before marriage and setting up a household, she has individual independence. Because she has developed intellectually and logically, this has of itself altered her relationship with others (her lover, her father and her family). Family life is no longer based on sensitive feelings or intuitive attractions or deep, unconscious, spiritual efforts but, rather, upon the linear principles of intellectual accounting and detailed calculation. She has been freed from many social, family and religious chains through her accountant's vision of the situation. She is now capable of seeing reality, of being able to analyze and intellectualize, of seeking herself, of finding her own interests and individual profits and spending for herself. She authentically seeks pleasure, encounters things, and looks for tranquility, intelligence and happiness. At the same time, however, many of her deep feelings have been taken away from her. Her hereditary feelings, which are other than the intellectual, have been removed. Her humanness has suffered (and has left her lonely). But it has made her independent. Durkheim has shown that in the past, the social spirit of command responsibility was strong. Whenever economics and individuality grew individuals lost family roots, sensitivities, traditional ideas and spirit. They became autonomous. This independence gave them multiple possibilities. The very fact that an eighteen year old girl can very easily get her own apartment and live alone without any supervision is one of them. A woman is allowed many freedoms in her home for economic reasons. Whenever she becomes angry over life, she can flee from her situation, as she has individual rights. In her view, bearing the sorrow of another does not fit with a healthy intelligence; therefore, whenever she must make a sacrifice, or give in abundance, she closes

her eyes. For peace of mind, pleasure, freedom, and for anything which affects her own well-being, she opens her eyes. This is because things like loyalty, sacrifice, generosity, gratitude, and love are all spiritual and ethical things. They are not capable of intellectual and logical demonstration. "Sacrifice your life so that others may live," or "bear sorrow so that others may have peace," are transactions which do not pay off, no matter how you account for them. Then who can answer her question, "Why should I sacrifice myself for he who needs me? Why should I remain loyal to him? Why should I remain with this ugly, weak man because of a promise, an agreement, made when he was handsome, strong, and the only creature around at that time? I bore him patiently. Why should I now close my eyes to the handsome, strong man who is available and who understands my spirit and my goals?" Sartre presents an example. A woman is the wife of a man who has no attractive qualities. In comparison to him, there is an attractive man who loves her. The intelligent way is clear. Both men need her. One needs her as a wife, the other as a lover. The woman does not need the first man but rather the second. By remaining loyal to her husband, two needs are sacrificed (those of herself and her lover) and one is satisfied (that of her husband). In fleeing from him and letting him go, two needs are satisfied and one is sacrificed. The duty of this woman is clear. Her intelligence makes the decision a clear mathematical formula. The reason behind why a woman would sacrifice two needs for one is not simply an intellectual, logical Cartesian or Freudian one. An intelligent woman thinks and acts logically. Economic freedom and social rights present her with the possibility of doing it. She does it. Children come into the world. A child restricts the freedom of its mother and father. Intelligence cannot accept the fact that the peace of mind and freedom of two people be sacrificed for one person. They either do not bring children into the world or they leave them with a nurse or in an institution. Among all of these illogical feelings and ethical and traditional bounds, there is a conscience, a spirit which a woman holds onto. She issued unreasonable cannon laws. They constantly threw the fire of hell into the faces of their parishioners but to no avail. A woman, as far as her life was concerned, was part of a family. Even though she had no independent human personality, at least she could easily be dissolved in the family, which was one spirit. Little by little she became economically independent. She began working outside of the home. With industrialization in full swing, with daily progress and improvement in social occupations, women went to work. From society's point of view, economic independence has also made her socially independent. Thereafter she found individual existence beside her husband and children. Today, before marriage and setting up a household, she has individual independence. Because she has developed intellectually and logically, this has of itself altered her relationship with others (her lover, her father and her family). Family life is no longer based on sensitive feelings or intuitive attractions or deep, unconscious, spiritual efforts but, rather, upon the linear principles of intellectual accounting and detailed calculation. She has been freed from many social, family and religious chains through her accountant's vision of the situation. She is now capable of seeing reality, of being able to analyze and intellectualize, of seeking herself, of finding her own interests and individual profits and spending for herself. She authentically seeks pleasure, encounters things, and looks for tranquility, intelligence and happiness. At the same time, however, many of her deep feelings have been taken away from her. Her hereditary feelings which are other than the intellectual, have been removed. Her humanness has suffered (and has left her lonely). But it has made her independent. Durkheim has shown that in the past, the social spirit of command responsibility was strong. Whenever economics and individuality grew individuals lost family roots, sensitivities, traditional ideas and spirit. They became autonomous. This independence gave them multiple possibilities. The very fact that an eighteen year old girl can very easily get her own apartment and live alone without any supervision is one of them. A woman is allowed many freedoms in her home for economic reasons. Whenever she becomes angry over life, she can flee from her situation, as she has

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LONELINESS

Loneliness is the greatest tragedy of the century. Durkheim has analyzed the situation in his book, *Suicide*. Suicide in the East is an exception. It is not a common event. In Europe it is looked upon as a social phenomenon. It is not an accident; it is a reality. Its incidence grows higher and higher everyday in developed societies. The rate of suicide in Spain, which is an underdeveloped country, is less than in other European countries. In Northern Europe the suicide rate is higher. This same pattern exists between villages and urban centers, between the developed areas and the more underdeveloped areas and between the nonreligious, modern group and the old-fashioned religious group. Why? Because people are lonely. Religion ties people together. It causes a common spirit which is born in its followers to be shared. It nourishes a sympathy between each individual and God. In the past, each individual was linked through hundreds of connections with others-family, friends and tribes. Social and economic self-sufficiency makes people needless of each other. It used to be society which gathered individuals together. Now instead of gathering individuals, the family defends the individual and his or her material needs. Intellectual studies and logic attack the spiritual and traditional religious connections. Intellectual growth, the logic of mathematics, the spirit of

materialism, cause the spiritual connections to become unstable. The individual becomes autonomous. Individual reasoning of necessity becomes self-seeking. It becomes needless of others. It stands alone. Because people no longer need each other, they uproot themselves, and each person then seeks out his or her own interests. Individuals are alone on their islands. Then the thought of suicide attacks them, for suicide is the neighbor of loneliness. Women choose their men and men their women. But the very fact that men and women are both independent, powerful and without needs, causes them to move towards each other only because of sex. Other factors such as love, kindness, social and traditional roots, friendship, and sympathy, are not taken into consideration. Today, these sorts of attractions have died. Then what remains? A frail intellectual calculation without light, a logical necessity, or a force. Sexual freedom in men and women's thoughts (although officially beginning at puberty) for all practical purposes begins whenever one wants. A new idea appears-namely, that in order to satisfy a sexual urge the only requirement is the sexual urge. It can be eliminated with money. Only money is necessary. At different levels or with different amounts of money, the sexual urge can be satisfied. One can at any time and under any government be a Don Juan or an Onassis. The First Lady of America can also be bought for a price. The difference between her and those who stand on the street is one of rate. Since boys and girls both enjoy sexual freedom, neither one wants to restrict him or herself for the whole of the* lives. It is not to their interest to restrict the power of their sexual urges. In such circumstances none of the answers of logic or wisdom justify an individual choosing one person for one's whole life-thereby restricting all future availability of pleasure and beauty in life.

FORMING A FAMILY

At the present time, men and women freely satisfy their sexual urges in universities, restaurants, outings, and various gatherings of this kind. This continues until a woman comes to herself and sees that it is empty around her. No one any longer seeks her out or if they do, it is to review, to revise a memory of the past. When a man has passed the freedom of his sexual cycle, when he has picked a flower from every garden and from each flower, taken its perfume, there is nothing any longer for him which is interesting or new. His sexual urge has subsided. It has been replaced by attachment to his position and his money. He seeks fame and worships position. His inclinations are now towards getting a house and forming a family. These feelings then appear in his being. A woman, face to face with the reality that no one seeks her out, and, a man, exhausted from his freedoms and indeed by sexual experiences which have finally turned his heart, confront each other. They reach out towards each other at the end of a long and tiring road. They want to form a family. family is formed but that which draws these two together that which causes them to join hands, is fear and fatigue. On the part of the woman it is fear of bankruptcy and no longer being noticed. The man is tired and no longer interested in anything. A family has been formed but in place of love and the intensity of an ideal, instead of creative happiness and imagination, exhaustion and ennui set in so that nothing is new. They know what is there. Nothing! There is nothing for which their hearts beat. They know why they have found each other. They know what needs they have from each other. Both, completely conscious, calculating, aware, seek each other out. Each knows what the other meant by the words, 'be my divine sacrifice'. Each has achieved their wishes. Both sacrifice for the other. Both die for the other. But in the opposite way from which we normally understand it. On the day of weddings, city hall is filled. Someone from city hall, with a medal on his coat, looking like a beauracrat attends to them, not a clergyman who is a symbol of spirit, faith, reverence and sainthood. Each couple is called forward exactly like molded sugar cones. Their names are read from a list. They answer, "Yes." Often several

children standing behind the bride and groom also answer yes. It shows their existences have influenced the yes of their mothers and fathers. They pay their money. They sign the register. The ceremony is over. Each returns to his mould, his home. From among the 200-300 brides only 20-30 wear a bridal gown. Most of them say, "What, at my age, in my condition, it would be degrading to wear a bridal gown. It is not right." Then the wife goes to work and the man as well. They have a rendez-vous with their friends to meet at noon in a restaurant and eat lunch together. This, of course, only happens when the wedding to some extent has been full of happiness and excitement. Otherwise they forget what had happened and what event had occurred. Most often, outside city hall-after the civil ceremony, the bride and groom (who have been living together for years and each one has probably spent a year or more living with someone else), give each other a cold look as if to say, "So what? Where should we go? Fun? We've gone out a thousand times together. Embrace each other? We've tasted each other a thousand times and we've fled from the taste. Home? We've come from home." What appeals to them? Do they excite each other's imagination and feelings? Not at all. Then its best if each continues his work each day like always. Families are formed in this way. Both the man and the woman have schemed to find each other and form an economic union. Or else, they were married because of the other pressures. Perhaps a child was born causing the father and mother of the child to become a bride and groom. They show no undue standing, feelings and desires towards each other. They do not sense any secrets in each other, no paradox in their union. Nothing begins. Nothing changes. No imaginary flights, no heart beats-not even a smile upon their lips. This is why the foundation of a family becomes frail. Once the foundations have weakened, the children in that family no longer see understanding, warmth and attractions. Because the mother and father will not sacrifice all of the freedoms for their children they put the child in a school or boarding school and they only give it money so that they can continue their free life. Afterwards, having formed a logical but deceitful partnership according to the laws and having created a family, they then separate from each other. The possibilities continue for the man who has experienced thousands of warm and young embraces. How can this woman who is tired and fallen in spirit and whose masculine actions cause disgust in the man, satisfy his needs? And visa versa? A woman who can make a thousand comparisons, takes the worn out man into her arms. Through her comparisons, his number is up. In such a situation, within a household which lacks understanding, he turns to bars, fraternities, new experiences, official and unofficial centers. Once again, contrary to the original invitation, the factor which keeps these two within the same household is an illogical one.

WOMEN IN THE CONSUMER SYSTEM: SEX INSTEAD OF LOVE

Societies which only authenticate things in the economic terms of production and consumption only understand economics. Women are no longer creature who excite the imagination nor speakers of pure feelings. Neither are they the beloveds of the great lovers nor do they have sacred roots. They are no longer spoken of in terms of mother, companion, center of inspiration and mirror of life and fidelity. Rather, as an economic product, women are bought and sold according to the value of their sexual attraction. Capitalism, as a result of producing leisure time, has shaped a woman to serve two purposes. In the first, she fills the time between two jobs which is part of the fate of society. The bourgeoisie exploit her and create a dry and absurd future for her without any purpose whatsoever. Should she not ask, "Why am I working? Why am I living? For whom am I suffering?" Secondly, women are used as an instrument of entertainment. As the only creature who has both sex and sexuality, has been put to work, office employees and intellectuals can think about ways of spending their capital during their leisure time (instead of thinking about the ideas of classlessness, for instance).

Women have been put to work to fill every empty moment of the life of society. Art quickly joins the market so that they can meet the orders of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie. The main purpose of art has always been beauty, spirit, feelings and love. This has now been changed into sex. The market of Freudism, the worship of the most vile and wretched sex has been made into an intellectual philosophy. Sex has been introduced as the virtue behind contemporary art. This is why we find instant paintings, poetry, films, theater, stories, novels etc. all concerned with sex in some form. Capitalism encourages people to consume more in order to make people more dependent upon it. It also wishes to increase the amount consumed and the products produced. Women are presented only as creatures who are sexy and, other than this nothing. In other words, woman is used as a one dimensional creature. She is placed in advertisements and used as propaganda for creating new values, new feelings and drawing attention to new consumer products. This causes artificial feelings in people. To protect the profits of capitalism, women are thrown in. In order to kill the great and spiritual feelings which destroy capitalism, woman works to prevent capitalism's death. Sexuality replaces love. Woman, the imprisoned creatures of the Middle Ages, has taken the form of a wage-slave in the new age. It is in great civilizations with progressive religions that woman has held a high place through the love she can give in and through the arts-even though she may not have had a direct relationship with art. But, she was looked upon as the source of inspiration, feelings and spiritual characteristics. Now she has taken the form of an instrument employed for serving social and economic purposes. She is used to change the form of society. She is used to destroy the highest values of the traditional societies. She is used to change ethics. She is used to change a traditional, spiritual, ethical or religious society into an empty, absurd, consuming society. She is used to pollute art which had been the theophany of the divine spirit of humanity. She is changed into an instrument for sexuality in order to change humanity.

BUT IN THE EAST

Now consumer society approaches the East. It is our turn. Here its work is very easy. Young eastern boys reach the age of puberty early. It is this early sexual awakening which causes eastern sociologists and psychologists to face many problems. Where is the owner of this generation? Who thought about them? There is a war between two groups. Conversations center on type of clothes, habits and tastes. Human problems, whether they are new or old, do not concern either side. The war is between being old-fashioned and modern. Winning is to the advantage of neither. One is called civilized and the other, is called pious, religious. Neither one relates in the least to either civilization or religion. One, the pious type, calls out for Fatima and Zaynab and the other calls out for the European woman. Both are insulting to each other. Europeans want to change eastern societies to plunder our property and to ride upon our thoughts and our feelings. They want to take the food from our mouths as well as to destroy our common sense values. Without destroying these things, they cannot take the food from our mouths or our property. First the West must break our moulds. We must be made to forget all of our human values and all of our traditions which were the very things which kept us upon our own feet. We must give these up and break them within ourselves. Once, empty-headed, with an impotent spirit, crippled and without content, we must become exactly like garbage cans which are filled with dirty and useless things and then are emptied. This is what the West is doing to the brain and spirit of the East. They are emptying them of their contents. When we have no faith in anything, we have no intelligence or awareness so that we have no hero, we think the past is completely without value. When we believe our religion to be empty and full of myths, we feel spiritual meanings to be old-fashioned, reactionary and that way of life to be ugly and detestable. We either do not know ourselves, our children and our

spirituality or else we know it badly. So what form does Western values change? They empty out our brain and heart so that we begin to thirst for exploiters. Whatever the plundering exploiters then want to pour into our interior, in whatever order they choose, they are free to do so. It is because of this that the exploiters assign permanent slogans to plundering the East, emptying the minds of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Iranians, Turks, Arabs, Blacks and others. All must take one form. All must have only one dimension. They must be consumers of Western economic products and have thoughts, but not think for themselves. Insistence upon old values, traditions and religions, which are full of meaning, close the way to the West and guard the East. Insistence upon traditional values stands like a watch-tower with a strong spirit against the West. They defend Islam and independence. Foreignness does not penetrate. Muslims are overflowing with honor, spiritual meaning, values and pride. Their history, people, culture, faith and religious characteristics give them independence, greatness a reason for which to hold their heads up high. They see the Westerners as nouveau riche and newly civilized. They criticize them, humiliate them and confront them. But the West falls upon the soul of the Easterners like termites. Little by little the head is emptied out of its contents. The West even destroys the forces of resistance which remain. In place of the brave guardians of the watch-towers, full of spirit and pride it builds a people empty of common sense, perseverance and pride. The Easterners go forward to meet the enemy. They take whatever the West gives and do whatever it wants them to do. They become exactly as Westerners will them to be.

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT ROLE DID WOMEN PLAY IN THE ATTACK?

Women in Islamic countries held a power whereby they could have changed the traditions, social relationships, ethics, spiritual values and, most important of all, the pattern of consumption in the same way that they held a power to preserve all this. Why? Because of the sensitive spirit of the East. It tends to accept the luxuries of civilized life and new products quickly more easily. This is especially true when confronted by bright, new, eye-catching things of beauty-especially when opposed to these, they find nothing but ugliness. During the time of the exploitation of Africa, European imposters would move among the black tribes offering glass beads and fake jewelry (which are usually even brighter than the natural stone). In all of the ceremonies, the better-off among the tribes, the kings, the large farmers and the feudal lords could all be pointed out. This was particularly true of the local ceremonies and weddings because their actions were based one hundred percent upon psychological laws. Those who liked the fake things the most were the most primitive. We see that today, those who worship luxurious ornaments are the Arab shaykhs, the heads of some African nations, the movie stars and the newly wealthy people. A few of fake lights and glass beads were given to the heads of African tribes and in return the colonialists received a herd of sheep or a great pasture land or the rights to mine diamonds or permission to plant coffee. It is obvious from this how important the role of the newly modernized African woman is. It is also apparent how sheltered, Eastern women suffer from social rules presented to them in the name of religion and tradition as is done by present day Islam. They are presently denied learning, literacy, human rights, social possibilities and freedom to develop. They are not able to explore and nourish their spirit and their thoughts. Even the rights and possibilities which Islam itself has given to women, have been taken away from them in the name of Islam. Present day Islam has placed woman in the same category as a washing machine. Her human values have been lowered to 'mother of the child'. She no longer even has a name but is called by the name of her child even if her child happens to be a boy. She is called Hasan's mother.

This is exactly like paralyzing her and then saying that because she is paralyzed, she is deprived of everything. The sorrow lies here.

OPPRESSORS AND THE OPPRESSED

Ali said two parties are required in order to bring about oppression. One is the oppressor and the other is the one who accepts the oppression. It is the co-operation of these two which brings about oppression. Oppression cannot be one-sided. An oppressor cannot perform oppression on the air. Oppression is like a piece of iron which is formed by the striking of the hammer of the oppressor upon the anvil of the oppressed. Not only is oppression a result of corruption, deviation and misery, but it requires two sides working together to come into being. In the defeat of a society, it is not just the victor who breaks. Society must allow itself to be broken. For instance, in the 7th century AH it was not Chengis Khan who defeated us. It was we ourselves who were corrupted from within. From the 5th to the 6th century AH, we were preparing ourselves to be defeated. It was because of this that Chengis defeated us. He only kicked the corrupted states once and they fell down and were defeated. The termites (who had built their homes inside our tree and had begun eating away the body from the inside) left it empty, dry and without roots. These termites caused the tree to fall to the earth and not the strong wind which blew upon the tree. Strong winds always blow in the forest. Why is it that just this tree or that one falls down? The creation of superstitions, the spreading of ignorant backward beliefs, the inherited systems of cultural servitude the tradition of 'father power' in the community, the lack of psychology, all weave themselves together like a spider's web. And it is this very web which impoverishes the woman within itself. She becomes known as 'someone who is behind the curtain'. All of this occurs in the name of Islam, in the name of religion, in the name of tradition and worst of all, in the name of 'similarity to Fatima'. It is explained to her in terms of chastity and the necessity to nourish her children. I don't know how a person who is herself incomplete and useless, who is missing a part of her brain and who is excluded from literacy, books, education, discipline, thought, culture, civilization and social manners could possibly be worthy of being the nourisher of tomorrow's generation. Most probably they mean fattening their bodies when they say nourishing the children. What can this weak creature of the house, (born to sit behind a curtain without thought or culture), who has not been educated do for the development of her child? How can she develop her child's sense of completeness? How can she awaken the depths of the spirit within anyone? How can she learn to accept the complicated ideas and feelings of her child? What can she do other than nurse her child and change her baby's diapers? In disciplining her child she can only swear at it or use lewd language or cry or curse her fate. If none of these has any effect, she implants the fear of an older brother or the father in the child. If this doesn't work, she calls upon the jinn and the angel of death or threatens the basement or the well. And if this bad child with a roguish father should die young, if he should be burned in the fire of brawls, there is nothing this hidden creature can do when news of the death of her child is brought to her. She in some measure created this situation. She had unintentionally called forth the dead, dark monsters. Yes! These are the ways and means of educating and disciplining a child in a system where the only duty of a woman is to nourish her children. It is perfectly natural to think that if she spent her time making use of her cultural and social abilities, if she were to become part of civilization, she would not be able to perform her special mandate which is to bring up children. If she were to develop and nourish her thoughts and her spirit and become aware of the system she is part of, some would obviously conclude that her mandate would suffer. Thus we see the fate of woman in our conservative society which has had false undertones of religion added to it. She grows up in her father's home without breathing any free air. She goes to her husband's home (her second lord and master)

in accordance with an agreement which is made between a buyer and a seller. She is transferred to her husband's house where the marriage license or ownership papers shows both her role and her price. She becomes a respectable servant. A married man means someone who has a servant who works in his house. She cooks food, nurses babies, watches the children and sees to the cleaning and ordering of the house. She manages the inside of the house. She is a household laborer and a nurse but because she works without any wages, she has no rights. She does the work of a servant in the name of common, ritual, or civil law, but since she cannot be a servant, she is called a lady. Because her lord is her husband, she is called wife. As she acts as a nurse to the children, she is also called mother. At any rate, she is working for herself. She is an expert at her work, even though the level of work she does is equivalent to the work of a servant or a nurse. It is no more than this because she has not been trained to do more than this. She is uneducated. We must point out here that our objection is to the well-established fathers and wealthy husbands who condemn their daughters or wives and who do so because they are women. They keep them from an education and from self-completion in the name of religion and faith. There are many women in Islam who reached the level of authorized theologians, established centers of learning and wrote important texts on science and ethics and spirituality. But girls who do not have the economic means to pursue education and those who work hard in their father's or husbands houses, are most worthy of praise. Such a girl is the woman of the tribe or the farm who helps her husband, who shares in production (either by taking care of the animals or by helping in the fields) who brings in an income as well as doing the household work. She weeds, gathers spades the earth, gathers grain, grapes and cotton. She gives water to the animals and milks them. She then makes butter, yogurt or cheese for her family's consumption or for selling at the market. She beats cotton and wool. She spins thread. She weaves cloth. She sews clothes. At the same time, she nurses her child, cooks food, and cleans the house. Often she produces handicrafts within the home as well. She is a wife, a nurse, a mother, a worker, and an artist. She grows as freely as the trees of the gardens. She gives her love with the purity of a turtledove. Like the deer of the plains, she gives loving, motherly birth. She remains faithful in this free house even though no force is applied. She gives freely of her love to her family. Yes! She has the freedom to give-and she has something to give, as well. Her freedom has not been taken from her so that she can no longer move. It is not as if she would want to run away if she were permitted to do so. Finally, she pushes her fingers into the earth of the fields to cultivate it. She plays with her child in her home. In the bedroom of her husband, she removes his tiredness. She creates the most beautiful and colorful handicrafts for the bazaar. She is the woman we praise. The most bizarre woman, on the other hand, who must be called 'absurd', is the lady of the house. She is a frightening creature. This absurd woman is neither traditional nor European. She is not like the European woman who is a member of a household of two partners where the husband and wife are equal, where both work outside of the home and where both do the household duties inside the house. When the European is a girl, she is free exactly like a boy. She is free to grow amidst everything society has to offer. She is experienced from her encounters. She has seen everything. She has come to know all types. She has seen corruption and the correct way. She has seen the right way and the wrong way, the bad way and the good way, treacheries and kindnesses. Finally, she has seen all of the colors, designs and architecture of life and society. She has seen all the things in her own environment. She has sensed them. She has received an education like any boy. Like a boy she has specialized. She has achieved social independence. She has her own economic income. She makes her own choice of husband or partner in life. But the absurd woman is the woman who sits at home and is good for nothing. As she can afford it, she has a maid, a cook, a nurse, and it is they who actually do the work. She is a woman who stays at home to take care of it, but others actually do the work for her. As she is not a village woman, she does not

work and co-operate with her husband in the fields. As she is not literate, she does not read books, nor does she write books. Because she has no artistic talents, she is not productive. Because she has a wet nurse, she does not nurse her children. Because she has a man servant, she does not do the shopping for the house. Because she has baby sitters, she does not care for her children. Because she has a cook, she does not cook. Because she has an F.F. system, she does not even open the door of her house! What does this living creature do? Nothing. What role does she play in the world? None! Can it be that a woman does not fit into either an eastern or a western mould, is neither modern or old-fashioned? Neither a woman of the office nor of the factory? Neither a woman of a school nor of a hospital? Neither a woman of art nor one of science, not of the pen nor of the book? Neither a woman looking after the home nor a woman looking after the children? She is not even the most common-place woman of women's magazines. Really, what is her work? Who is this person? She is the lady of the house, Daddy's lady of the old days. What is her profession. Consuming and only consuming. How does she pass her time? Her time? As a matter of fact, she is very busy. She is busy night and day. She is a thousand times busier than the village woman. For instance, what does she do? She gossips, she develops Jealousies, objections, affectations, ornamentation, rivalries, pride, false friendship. She complains, grumbles, ogles, has a mincing air, full of coquetry and falsity. This lady of the house is always busy. In her type of society, and in her social relationships, she fills her frighteningly empty life. The public woman's bath was a weekly seminar where all of the chaste women, who had nothing to do, who suffered no pain went. They gathered together and each one recounted the biggest and most important event of her life that week, either honestly or dishonestly through insufficient explanation. They sold each other on their pride; they told their stories one after the other; their imaginations took flight; their sweet ignorance implemented their lack of intelligence. Surprisingly, all of them were also aware of these groundless pretensions. Each one had such a scenario. Each one listened to the lies and exaggerations of the other one with relish, amazement deep understanding and faked feelings. Each would believe the other until it was her turn to be indebted to the others for listening to her. Thus, the others gave her a free chance to speak of all her bruised beliefs, lack of excitement, uselessness and ineffectiveness. Her existence, her inner emptiness and hollow life were spread out to show off her ability, her current price, her fantasies and her revenge. Now the public women's bath has been closed to women of this class. Modern living has prevented these women from such social halls of forty columns and forty windows, where one full day a week would be spent. To replace them, they have opened women's clubs under various names. Absurd women leave their homes and enter these cold women's clubs-which even lack the steam and water of the previous establishment. If our women today are crazy and look like foreign dolls (not foreign women), and if we look at the other side of the border, we may see the innocent economics of exploitation, whereas on this side of the border, we will see ourselves working hand in hand with them. We cause our women to run away. We call her the weak one', 'broken legged', 'servant of her husband', 'mother of the child', and even 'lacking manners' and 'goat'. We separate her from humanity. We thought that if she had beautiful handwriting, she would write to her lover. With this type of thinking, it would have been better if we had blinded her so she would never see a 'forbidden' person. In this way, Mr. Jealous, who feels the weaknesses of his own personality, would not have to worry about the disloyalty of his wife. He would be safe to the end of his life. The virtue and chastity of woman is preserved by walls and chains. She is not a human being who thinks and who nourishes common sense and comes to know things. We present her as a wild animal, incapable of being disciplined. She will never be tamed. The only thing to do is to keep her in a cage. Whenever you leave the cage doors open, she will slip away. Her chastity is like dew. When it sees the sun, it is gone. Women are placed in a prison which neither leads to a school nor a library nor to society. Like an unclean creature, like the untouchables of India, she is not

counted as a human being by society. People who are called human beings are men, social animals. Women are kept apart from society and given no credit for self-control. It was the Prophet who said, "Education is necessary for Muslims, both men and women." But it is always men who have had the right to be educated, and women (other than those wealthy women who are educated with private tutors) are denied education. They cannot take advantage of this important Tradition. Parties centering on old religious traditions are no longer open to today's young woman. Ceremonies for gaining favor and seasonal lamentations are not interesting to her-nor are the special animal sacrifices, nor the cooking of a special stew on the third day after someone departs on a journey. Wedding activities prepared without the groom and parties hunting for a groom don't interest her. The young women sense the loneliness and nothing-to-do-ness of their mothers, a loneliness barely covered over by religion and tradition. This, they know, gives their mothers a feeling of positive action. It gives them a sense of responsibility. They are busy with comings and goings, designs and false plans. But to the young women, these channels have all been closed. The opportunities which their mothers had to show their beauty and make-up skills are now gone. Younger women no longer force themselves into the falsity of these sessions. If they go, they take on an unattractive, cool, strange appearance, and it is obvious that they are looking for a way out. The daughter of this woman, who belongs to another generation and another season lives in an intermediate world of two meanings. The world of the grandmother is for her a complex of stupidity and structured rites, full of ugly men and restrictions. The grandmothers want to keep their gathering, their circle of friends, their lamentation ceremonies as they were in the olden times. While for the young woman, books, translations, novels and art are important. She has more or less sensed the cultural spirit of the world. She has caught the scents of learning, knowledge and progress in school. The sermons given for women at their ceremonies-mostly ceremonies of praise or lamentation-are usually given by illiterate lamenters. The exhausting continuation of this is unbearable to the young woman. She wants to fly away. But to where? There are hundreds of invitations for parties. There are dancing parties, night clubs and dirty bars which look upon her as easy prey. They pull her to themselves. But she wants to retain her human characteristics of faith ethics and loyalty. She sees that what her mother, father, uncle and other members of her family, offer her (in the name of religion, ethics, character, chastity and strength) is a collection of, "No, don't go, don't do that, don't sing, don't see, don't say, don't know, don't write, don't want, don't understand!" We see that the mother lives in a type of comfortable, empty wasteland. She has no direction, no responsibility, no philosophy of life and no meaning to her existence. She has money and no problems and no reason for living. Day and night she turns her house around but there is nothing to fill her life. Out of boredom, she leaves the house to go shopping and then, under a veil, she tries to fill her empty life with amusement, jewelry, make up, and redecorating. She makes expensive purchases of strange things so that she can induce wonder and amazement in others. But her daughter is not moved by these wonders. She breathes a different air. She is like a doll caught between two children who understand nothing. Each one pulls her towards himself until the doll is torn to shreds. She becomes crushed and steamrolled. Now, her heart experiences romantic thoughts, the attractions of freedom and love, the whisperings of her budding sexuality, the blossoming of intellectual endeavors and the attractive images of a new world outside her wall. Sometimes she looks through a peep hole or turns to the windows like a thief. Her body is under the influence of the commands of her mother and the advice of her father. She is like a fly caught in the spider's web of no! no! She remains imprisoned. She feels that the only crime she can be convicted of is being a young girl. She is an illegal, dangerous entity who must remain hidden in a corner of the house until an authorized thief comes and takes her as his mate to his harem. And there, the whole range of her existence will be the space between the kitchen and the bed. It is only the

man's stomach and that which is under his stomach that give her existence meaning! The man doesn't even allow her to attend religious meetings or entertain religious feelings-Even religion is separated in this system of thinking. Speaking, chanting, the lamentation ceremony and table offerings for gaining favor-these are the religion of women, whereas centers, schools, libraries, lessons, discussions and lectures constitute the religion of men.

THE CRIES OF EXPLOITATION

What has prepared the groundwork for exploitation which cries out, "Free yourself!" From what? It is no longer important to know from what. You should be freed. Your breath is cut-off. You have nothing. Free yourself! Be free of all things. The one who is burdened under the heaviest of loads and is drifting off only thinks about awakening, getting free and rising above her burdens. She does not think, 'How should I arise?' They said, aWomen will be freed-not by books or knowledge or the formation of a culture or clear-sighted vision or by raising the standard of living, or by common sense or by a new level of vision of the world-but rather with a pair of scissors. Yes. Putting scissors to the modest dress!" This is how they think that women will all at once become enlightened! The complexes of Muslim and Eastern women have become the playthings of psychologists and sociologists in the service of exploitation and world economics. They say of her: "A woman is a creature who shops!" The description such as, "A human being is a rational animal," is transformed when it relates to women. It becomes, aA human being is an animal who shops." She knows nothing other than this. She has no feelings and essentially, plays no role. She has no spirituality, no beliefs. She is valueless. In one of these magazines devoted to Eastern women the amount of cosmetics and beauty ads increased 500 times. 500 times is a very great quantity. It is a miracle. It has never happened before in the whole history of humanity. The consumption of economic goods usually increases 8%, 9%, 10%, 20% but not 500%! This is a symbolic consumption. In present day society, the desire to consume one new item is followed by the desire for more. For instance, as soon as the traditional coat changes, a new coat and trousers replaces it. The old type of shoes are replaced by leather shoes. Traditional styles of hats are replaced by new ones. In homes, carpets are replaced by modern furniture and old houses are replaced by new ones. Thus, when Europe sends a new product to our society, it paves the way for consumption of further new products. When consumption changes, it is a sign that people are changing because there is a very sensitive relationship between a consumer and the product consumed. Women in Islamic societies must not only be transformed into consumers of goods exported from Europe and America but they must also become active participants within their house-holds. They must learn to relate according to today and tomorrow's generations. They must change the form of society. They must have an effect upon ethics, values, literature and art. They must have a deep revolutionary effect upon everything. They should be put to work upon this way. Time, culture, social possibilities, new economics, changes in social relationships, new thoughts-all of these conditions in an Islamic society, themselves, change the types and traditions. Women become obliged to change internal and external conditions because past modes are no longer practical nor sufficient. Now that things must be changed, isn't it logical that capitalists should get busy and prepare their moulds so that as soon as a woman puts aside her traditional mould, their mould can be forced upon her? They make her into a form they want and then place her, instead of themselves, in a position to corrupt society.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

In the midst of this disruption-which has been imposed upon us and will continue to impose itself upon us what can we do? Who is it that can take up the mandate? The one who can do something, and, in saving us plays an active role, is not the traditional woman asleep in her quiet, tame, ancient mould nor is it the new woman, the modern doll who has assumed the mould of the enemy. Rather, she is the one who can choose the new human characteristics, who can break old traditions (presented as religion, but in fact, only national and tribal traditions ruling the spirit, thoughts and behavior of society). She is a person who is not satisfied with old advice. Slogans which are given by doubtful sources do not interest her. Behind the prepackaged slogans of freedom [of the monarchy], she sees ugly, frightening faces which act against the spiritual, and which oppose the human. She sees that they contradict the spiritual, the rational, the human. They are against women and the human reverence of women. It is such people who know where those things which are forced upon us come from. They know from where they get their orders. What creatures they have sent to the market place! Creatures without sensitivities, without knowledge, without pain, without understanding, without responsibility and, even, without human feelings. Fresh, clean dolls-'worthy ones'. It is obvious what their worthiness is in and for. Their means of support and its derivation are also obvious. This is tossed to our women and they know why. It is because of them that "Who am I? Who should I be?" is pertinent, since they neither want to remain this or become that. They cannot surrender themselves to whatever was and is without their own will and choice playing a role. *They want a model. Who? Fatima.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF THE HEJAZ

Fatima was the fourth and youngest daughter of the Prophet of Islam. She was the youngest daughter of a household in which no sons survived. She was a girl born into a society in which special value was placed upon a son. Centuries before Islam, the social order of the Arabs had passed beyond the Age of the Matriarch. During the Age of Ignorance, prior to the mission of the Prophet, the Arabs had established the Age of the Patriarch. The gods had become masculine whereas their idols and their angels were feminine (that is, daughters of the great god, al-lah). The tribes were governed by 'white beards,' and the family was ruled by the grand-fathers. Essentially, their religion was a kind of ancestor worship. They adhered to whatever beliefs and practices their fathers had maintained. It was against the religion of ancestral fathers that the great prophets, mentioned in the Koran, revolted. When confronted with these prophetic revolts against ancestor worship and myths of the first fathers, the Arab tribes preserved their masculine traditions. It was a kind of inherited, imitative worship based upon the principle of father worship. The Prophets brought a revolutionary message. They tried to awaken thought based on the principle of worshipping God. Beyond this, the difficult life of the tribes of the dry desert was filled with mutual hostilities. The basic principles were 'defend and attack' and 'keep your promises'. In this society, the son played a special role based upon the 'uses and needs' of the society's social and military principles. According to a universal principle of sociology, where profit is substituted for value, being a son is by and of itself of the highest essence. A son embodies virtues, meaningful social and ethical values and human nobility. For this very reason, being a girl or having a daughter, is humbling. A girl's frailness is 'being weak'. Her 'being weak' pushes her towards slavery, which lessens her human values. She becomes a creature who is a disgrace to her father, the toy of a man's sexual urges and slave of the home of her husband. Finally, this creature always threatens her kinsman's sense of honor, as she is considered the highest form of shame and disgrace. For the betterment of society and the relief of one's mind, how much better to kill her while still a

baby! Thus the honor of her fathers, brothers and ancestors, of all men for that matter, was not stained. As Ferdowsi tells us in the *Shahnameh*:

It is better to bury women and dragons in the earth
The world will be better off if cleansed of
their existence.

An Arab poet tells us, "If a father has a daughter and thinks of her future, he should think about three different sons-in-law:

one, the house which will hide her; two, the husband who will keep her; and, three, the grave which will cover her! And the last one, the grave, is the best."

The saying which refers to the grave as being the best son-in-law has existed in all languages of the wealthiest and most honorable men. All of the honorable fathers and brothers who are bound to and place emphasis upon their male ancestors, all who understand the ideals of name and honor live in anticipation of ridding themselves of their sister or daughter through marriage. A poet reminds his daughter of the most beloved of sons-in-law, "The most beloved son-in-law is the grave." This is that very same poet who says women and dragons are both better covered by the earth. "Covering the girls with earth is a way of preserving honor." This is why the Koran, in the strongest terms, warns of the dangers of this frightening 'highest honor' when it says: He hides himself from the people of evzl for the tzdings given him. Should he keep her with disgrace or bury her alive in the dust? Behold, evil is what they decide" [16.59]. As an Islamic commentator on the Koran has shown, this tragedy essentially has economic roots. Society's fear of poverty was prevalent in the Arab Age of Ignorance. Girls have been buried alive because of the fear that they might bring dishonor in the future by marrying an unsuitable husband or fall into the hands of an enemy during a war thus becoming slaves in a strange land. All of these are secondary phenomena. But the basic reason is an economic one. As we previously indicated, in the old Arabic tribal system, people were faced with the hardships of life (particularly in the deserts of Arabia) and the constant difficult relations among the tribes. Such a life required strong and powerful support. Automatically, a son became an important factor in economic and social life as well as in the defense of his family or tribe. He was a necessary social element of the family and the tribe. A son brought bread, but a daughter ate it. It was natural that the sexual differences caused class differences. Men fell into the class of ruling and owning, and women fell into that of the ruled and the owned. The relationship between a man and a woman was like that between a landowner and a peasant. A man and a woman, as economic entities, had different human and spiritual values placed upon them. A landlord, for example, might embody a noble blood-line and possess inherited wealth and princely virtues. The opposite might be true of a peasant or a woman. Poverty sends all the male gains or can gain to the four winds. Through poverty, a woman may become the cause of the family losing self respect. The possibility always exists that she will "disgrace" the family by marrying someone who is her social inferior. In my opinion, this fear (although disguised as an ethical phenomenon) is related to economic factors of inheritance law whereby the son preserves the ownership of land and assures the continuation of centralized wealth for the next generation of the family. In patriarchal societies, when the father dies, the oldest son inherits everything-not only the land, but also the wives of his father, including his own mother! So, if daughters did not inherit, the wealth of the father would not be divided up and distributed to other families through the daughters. This is the reason why in our old wealthy families, there is still a very strong emphasis placed upon the daughter marrying within the family. They pledge an uncle's daughter to an uncles' son 'in heaven'. Thus the uncle's daughter cannot take her inheritance out of the family as she

would if she were to marry a stranger. This is why ancient historians and modern scholars who write the history of religion have different explanations for the L burying alive of female children in the Age of Ignorance. Some of the scholars say, in primitive religions, girls were sacrificed to the gods. But the Koran most strictly and clearly says that the reason for their murder was the fear of poverty. In other words, it was an economic factor. The other explanations are just words. In my opinion, this clear interpretation and description is not only scientifically correct but also emphatically rebuts those who talk about the ethical, chaste and noble responsibility a tribe had in burying new born females alive. This crude, cruel action resulted from baseness, vileness, fear of poverty and love of wealth. It was a direct result of their fear greed, and weakness, although they tried to hide their deed by explaining it with noble words of honor, integrity, chastity, respect. The Koran emphasizes, "Do not kill them from fear of pouerty for We will provide foryou and your children" [6:151]. It expresses the main reason for the tragedy. It awakens people. It directly and straight-forwardly says that this practice is neither ethical nor noble but rather is one hundred percent economically motivated. It stems from greed and wealth, from weakness and fear. Before Islam, the public was not aware. The majority of the people believed female infanticide to be a reaction of the public conscience. They believed it showed a brave spirit. and that it protected the family honor. Arab tribal society gave all the human values to a son, whereas a daughter was considered to lack all virtues and human authenticity. A boy was not only capable of earning his livelihood, but he was also a help to his father, a protector of his family, a tribal hero, the bearer of his heritage, the continuer of society, the spirit of his family, and the flame which lights the family lamp upon the death of his father. A daughter was a living piece of furniture. After she married, her personality dissolved in a stranger's house. She became the furniture in another house where she could not even retain her family name. Her children belonged to a stranger. They carried his name and were/inheritors of his heritage. A boy had the material power to g*erate capital, aides society and perpetuate the patriarchal system. He had prestige, fame, value and spiritual credit. He supported the authenticity of the family. He was the giver of security and subsistence and the future authority of that family. But a girl was nothing. She was considered to be so weak that she must always be protected. Like a bird whose foot is tied to a stone that prevents it from flying freely, she prevented a warrior from freely attacking the tents and castles of his enemies. And when defending his tribe, the warrior was always anxious that she not be taken as a slave. His slightest negligence could put her into the hands of the enemy. Then the entire tribe would suffer the shame of her enslavement. During times of peace, the family must be careful that she didn't cause them shame by marrying an outsider. After all of these efforts, expenses, and anxieties, a stranger might come and take her away. She was like a field that one cultivates and whose crops another bears off. This was why the best solution was naturally to kill her at an early age. She should be given in wedlock and call the cold grave, 'son-in-law'. A man who had no sons was called 'cut-off'. He had no progeny and no continuation; he was barren. Yet the word kawthar in the Koran means fullness, advantages, blessings as well as progeny and many children. God in answer to the disbelievers who called His beloved Prophet 'cut-off' gave the Prophet the good news that he would have many offspring. In such an environment, the moment was ripe for fate to rend the veil. It was the time to direct the state of things. Life had become a stagnant, spoiled lagoon. It was time for a serious, creative revolution. It was the moment for a strong wind to blow. Suddenly an amazing plan was put into action, sweet but difficult. Two people were selected to carry out this plan, a father and a daughter. The Prophet (the father) must carry the heavy load and Fatima (the daughter) must reflect within herself the newly created revolutionary values.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BIRTH OF FATIMA

The largest Arab tribe was the Quraysh. The Kabah was in their hands which naturally gave them tribal nobility. They were divided into two families: the Bani Umayyid and the Bani Hashimi. The Bani Umayyid were the wealthiest but the Bani Hashimi were the most honorable for they were in charge of looking after the Kabah. Abd al-Muttalib from the Hashimi clan had died. His son, Abu Talib, was the new leader of the Bani Hashimi, did not have the power that his father had. He had gone bankrupt in trading. He was living in poverty and had distributed his children (to be cared for) among his family. A very strong rivalry had broken out between the two tribes. The Umayyids were trying to gain control of all of the property and honors of the Quraysh. They wanted to, at the same time, break the spiritual hold of the Hashimis. Among the Hashimi tribe, the family of Muhammad (SAW) had received new credit. The grandson of Abd al-Muttalib had just married Khadija, a wealthy, well-respected widow of Makkah. This gave him a stronger social position. The honorable standing and personality which Muhammad (SAW) showed, the trust and credibility which he had among people and, in particular, among all the Hashimis and the leaders of the Quraysh, made everyone see that he reflected the honor of Abd Manaf and was the protector of the nobility of the Hashimis. People sensed he would be the reactivator of the honor and nobility which Abd al-Muttalib had possessed. Hamza was a youth, an athlete. Abu Lahab was a man without credit. Abbas was wealthy but without character. Abu Talib honorable but without money. It was only Muhammad (SAW), who along with his wife, had character. He had youth as well. He and his wife had a respectable amount of wealth and were part of the family tree of the Bani Hashimi. Great developments were expected from this family. Their shadow fell over Makkah. Everyone was waiting for the sons to be born to this family, sons to bring strength, credit and nobility to the family of Abdul Muttalib. The first child born was a girl, Zaynab. But the family was anticipating a son. The second child was a daughter, Ruqiya. The anticipation grew stronger and the need also increased. The third child was a girl, Umm Kulthum. Two boys, Qasim and Abd Allah were born. They held great promise. But they did not blossom. They died in infancy. Now there were three children in this house, and all three were girls. The mother had aged. She was over fifty years old. The father, although he loved his three daughters, shared his tribe's feelings and their anticipation. Could Khadija, who was almost at the end of her life, bring forth another child? Hope had become very dim. Yes! Happiness and hope once again filled the house. The excitement reached a peak. This was the last chance for the family of Abd al-Muttalib, the last hope. But once again, a daughter. They name her Fatima. The happiness and hope of the Hashimi tribe fell to the Umayyids. Enemies whispered, "Muhammad is cut-off. The man who was the last link in his family chain, had four daughters. Nothing more." How sad. What a beautiful and strange game fate was playing. Life passed on. Muhammad (m) drowned in the storm of his mandate and his appointment as the Prophet of God. He conquered Makkah and freed all the Quraysh prisoners. All of the tribes were under his leadership and his shadow was thrown over the whole of the Arabian peninsula. His sword crushed the Emperors of the world. His song rang through the heavens and the earth. In one hand, strength, and in the other, prophecy: the full honors. And now, Muhammad (SAW) was the Prophet. In the city, filled with waves of happiness, he had power and greatness the like of which a human being could never conceive. A tree, which did not grow from Abd Manaf nor Hashimi nor Abd al-Muttalib, grow, rather, from a light under the mountain of 'Hira'. It extended from one end of the desert to the other, from horizon to horizon. Till the end of time, it encompassed (and will continue to encompass) all of the future. And this man had four daughters. But no, three of them died before he did. And now, he had only one child, a daughter, the youngest, Fatima.

CHAPTER NINE

ISLAM REVOLUTIONIZES THE POSITION OF WOMEN

THE KORANIC WORD, KAWTHAR

Muhammad (SAW) was heir to all of the family's honors, inheritor of a new kind of wealth based not upon blood, not land nor money but upon the phenomenon of revelation. Born of faith, struggle in God's Way (Jihad), revolution, thought and sensitivity, he was beautifully woven. He received the highest spirit. Muhammad (SAW) was joined to the history of mankind, not to that of Abd al-Muttalib, Abd Manaf, the Quraysh nor the Arabs. He was the inheritor of Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus (AS). Fatima was his only heir. "We gave you kawthar, oh Muhammad. For your Creator, establish the prayer and sacrifice a camel. It is he, that very hated enemy of yours who is cut-off" [108]. His enemy with ten sons was cut-off. He was useless, cut-off without the highest form of inheritance. "We gave you kawthar,"-Fatima.' It was in this way that revolution appeared in the depths of the conscience of time. Now, a daughter became the owner of the values of her father, the inheritor of all the honors of her family. She was the continuation of the chain of great ancestors, the continuation which began with Adam and passed through all of the leaders of freedom and consciousness in the history of mankind. It reached Abraham (AS) and joined Moses (AS) and Jesus (AS) to itself. It reached Muhammad (SAW). The final link in this chain of divine justice, the rightful chain of truth was Fatima, the last daughter of a family who had anticipated a son. Muhammad had known what the hands of fate had in store for him. And, Fatima, also, had known who she was. Yes! This school of thought created such a revolution. A woman, in this religion, was freed like this. Isn't this the religion of Abraham and of them, his heirs?

THE HONOR BESTOWED UPON A FEMALE SLAVE

Nobody had the right to be buried in a mosque. The greatest mosque in the world was the Masjid al-haram in Makkah. The Kabah. This house belonged to God. It was devoted to God. It was the direction to which all of the prescribed prayers were oriented. The house was ordered by Him and Abraham built it. It was a house which the Prophet of Islam honored with the mandate of freedom. He freed this 'House of Freedom', circumambulated it and went down in prostration towards it. All of the great prophets of history were servants of this house. But no prophet had the right to be buried there. Abraham built it, but he is not buried there. Muhammad freed it, but he was not buried there. In the whole history of humanity, there was one, and one person only, who had been given this privilege. The God of Islam allowed one person to be buried in this way. Who? A woman. A slave. Hagar, the second wife of Abraham and mother of Ishmael. God ordered Abraham to build the greatest house of worship of humanity and, alongside it, the grave of this woman. Humanity must forever gather around the tomb of Hagar and circumambulate it. The God of Abraham chose a woman from among this great human society as his unknown soldier. God chose a mother and a slave. In other words, The God of Abraham chose a creature who, in all systems of humanity, lacked nobility and honor.

THE HONOR BESTOWED UPON THE PROPHET'S DAUGHTER

Yes, in this school of thought such a revolution took place. A woman was freed in this manner in this religion. This is how Islam appreciated the position of womanhood. The God of Abraham has chosen Fatima. Fatima, a girl, replaced a son as the inheritor of the glory of her family, maintaining the honorable values of her ancestors and continuing the family tree and prestige. In a society that felt the birth of a daughter to be a disgrace which only burying alive could purify, where the best son-in-law a father could hope was called 'the grave', Muhammad (SAW) knew what fate has done to him. Fatima knew who she was. This is why history looked in amazement at the way Muhammad (SAW) behaved towards his young daughter, Fatima, at the way he spoke with her and at the way he praised her. We see that the house of Fatima was next to the house of Muhammad (SAW). Fatima and her husband, Ali, were the only people who lived next to the Prophet's mosque. Only a court-yard of two meters separated the two houses. Two windows faced each other, one from the house of Muhammad, the other from the house of Fatima. Every morning the Prophet opened his window and greeted his young daughter. We see that whenever the Prophet went on a journey, he knocked at the door of Fatima's house and said good-bye to her. Fatima was the last person who bade farewell to him. Whenever he returned from a journey, Fatima was the first person he sought out. He knocked on the door of her house and he asked how she was. It is recorded in some of the historic documents that the Prophet would kiss the face and hands of Fatima. This sort of behavior was more than just the relationship of a kind father and his daughter—a father kissed the hands of his daughter, his youngest daughter! Such behavior struck a revolutionary blow against the inhumane relationships of that time. "The Prophet of Islam kissed the hands of Fatima." Such a relationship opened the eyes of important people and politicians. The majority of the Muslims gathered around the Prophet in amazement at the greatness of Fatima. This sort of behavior on the part of the Prophet of Islam taught humanity to discard bad habits and fantasies of history and traditions. It taught man to come down from his Pharaoh-like throne, to put aside his pride and rough oppression and to bow his head when meeting a woman. It taught women to aspire to the glory and beauty of humanity and to put aside old feelings of inferiority and baseness. This is why the words of the Prophet not only show the kindness of a father but also bring out his responsibilities and strict duties. He showed his appreciation for Fatima and spoke about her in the following terms: "The best women in the world were four: Mary, Asiyah [the wife of Pharaoh who brought up Moses], Khadija and Fatima." And, "God is satisfied with her contentment and becomes angry from her anger." Or, "The contentment of Fatima is my contentment. Her anger is my anger. Whosoever loves my daughter Fatima loves me. Whosoever makes Fatima content makes me content. Whosoever makes Fatima unhappy makes me unhappy." And, "Fatima is a part of my body. Whosoever hurts her, has hurt me, and whosoever hurts me has hurt God." Why all this repetition? Why does the Prophet insist upon praising his young daughter? Why does he insist upon praising her in front of other people? Why does he want all of the people to be aware of his special feelings towards her? And finally, why does he so emphasize the contentment and anger of Fatima? Why does he so often use the word 'hurt' in relationship to Fatima. The answer to this is very sensitive and important. It is clear. History has answered it all: the secret of these wondrous actions was unveiled, in the few short months after the death of her father.

THE MOTHER OF HER FATHER

History not only speaks of the 'great ones', it also attends to them. Children were always forgotten. Fatima was the youngest child in the family. Her childhood passed in a storm. Her birth date is debated. Tabari, Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hashim give it as five years before the Prophet's mission. Murravij al-Zahib Masudi mentions it as five years after the Prophet's mission. Yaqubi says, "After the revelation." Thus, there is a difference of opinion among the recorders of the Traditions. The Hanafi, Malikis, Hanbalis and Shafiis, say, five years before the mandate of the Prophet, and the Jafari say five years after his mission. We leave it to the scholars to enlighten us as to the exact date of her birth. We are concerned with Fatima herself and the reality of Fatima. Whether she was born before or after the mission of the Prophet does not concern us here. That which is clear is that Fatima remained in Makkah alone. Her two brothers died as infants and Zaynab, her oldest sister, who acted as the mother of this beloved child, went to the home of Abi al-Aas. Fatima bitterly accepted her absence. Then Ruqiya and Umm Kulthum's married the sons of Abu Lahab. Fatima remained even more alone-if we accept her birth as having been before the mission of the Prophet. If we accept the second date, then, essentially, from the time she opened her eyes, she was alone. At any rate, the beginning of her life coincided with the heavy mandate of the Prophet. It was filled with great struggles, difficulties and punishments whose shadows fell upon the house of the Prophet. While her father bore the mandate of consciousness for mankind upon his shoulders and suffered hatred from the enemies of the people, her mother consoled her beloved husband. Early in childhood, Fatima tasted the suffering, sadness and anger of life. Because she was very young, she moved about freely. She made use of this freedom to accompany her father. She knew her father had no life of his own, had no opportunity to take hold of his child's hand and walk freely and easily down the streets and into the bazaar. He always went alone. In the sea of the town's enmity, he swam with dangers on all sides. The small girl, who knew her father's fate, never let him go alone. Many times she saw her father standing amidst a crowd of people. He spoke to them softly and they, in turn, harshly sent him away. Their only answers were to mock him and show him enmity. He felt lonely and friendless again. But quietly and patiently he gathered another group. He began his speech all over again. At the end, tired and having achieved no result, like fathers of other children who returned home from their jobs, he also returned home seeking a bit of rest. He then returned once more to his work. Once when he had gone into the Masjid al-haram, where he was vilified and beaten, Fatima, still a small child, stood alone a short distance from the scene. She watched and then returned home with her father. One day while prostrating himself in the mosque, his enemies threw the intestines of a sheep at him. Suddenly, little Fatima, reached towards her father, picked up the intestines and threw them away. Then with her small, loving hands, she cleaned her father's head and face, comforted him and led him to their home. People who saw this thin, weak girl, alone, beside her champion father, saw how she comforted him. She supported him through his troubles and sufferings. With her pure, child-like heart, she sympathized with him. It was because of this that she came to be called umm al-abiha, the mother of her father.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CONFINEMENT

The black and difficult years of hunger began in the valley of Abu Talib. The Hashimi and Abd al-Muttalib families were imprisoned-with the exception of Abu Lahab who has joined the enemies. Men, women and children were placed in this hot, dry valley. A notice was written by Abu Jahl, in the name of all the wealthy people of the Quraysh, and it was placed on the Kabah wall: "No one should have any contact with the Hashimi tribe. All relationships with them are cut-off. Do not buy anything from them. Do not sell anything to them. Do not marry any of them." They were forced to live in this stony prison until loneliness, poverty, hunger and the difficulties of life made them surrender to either the idols or to death! They all had to bear torture both those who had accepted the new religion and those who have not yet turned to the new religion. Those who had not yet embraced Islam, nevertheless admired Muhammad (SAW) and presented a united front to the enemy. They defended him and even though they did not know Islam, they knew the Prophet. They had faith in his purity. They knew he was not interested in personal gain. They sensed his faith. They heard what he had to say about the worship of the Truth. They knew he sincerely wished to free the people. They were worth far more than the intellectuals filled with fear-such as conservatives like Ali ibn Umayyid, who, having discovered progressive ideology, supposedly opposed reactionaries, the foulness of aristocratic society and the Arab regime with its class distinctions. Yet, these same people, knowing all of this, in order to protect the wealth of their fathers, their social position and physical health remained on the side of Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab. They watched the torture of Balal, Ammar, Yasser and Somayyeh. They did not move their lips to object. Throughout these difficult years, these men left their compatriots and their friends in this small compound, alone. They busied themselves with their lives in the bazaar, their homes and families. They past their time with the pagan leaders. They even joined hands. Years later, the followers of this way and its religion were more than the followers of the religion of the Prophet himself. On the opposite side was Ali, Abu Dharr, Fatima, Husayn, Zaynab and all of the Emigrants and Companions. But those like Ali ibn Umayyid were the first Muslims to continue the practice of dissimulation [pious fraud]-even though the Prophet had forbidden it. They remained loyal to this principle and did not relinquish it until their death. - It is when the fire of a new faith lights up their spirits and a movement full of danger begins in society (based upon experiment, choice and obligatory tests in which one speaks to the self clearly and without deceit) that the wonders of humanity appear. The glories were accompanied by feelings of inferiority, by feelings of strength as well as weakness. All these were hidden within the spirit, and all of them revealed themselves. Now in this frightening compound were people who, although not Muslims, yet bore the difficulties with patience, silence and three years of hunger and loneliness. They shared the shadow of danger. They also took part in God's great revolution for humanity. In this most sensitive moment of the beginning of the history of Islam, they shared the pain, and understood the position of the Prophet and his Companions. But the black cloud of ignorance covered the comfortable and happy city filled with conservatism, contradiction, and shamelessness. Some Muslims could be seen whose skirts were contaminated and their hands frail. They were busy gaining security and comfort. Were they the viewers or the players in this tragedy? The question arises because in their imagination they believed they had religion. They loved religious people. They felt themselves to be enlightened. The families of the Hashimi tribes cut themselves off for three years from their city, their people, their freedom and even their means of livelihood and lived in this confinement. Was it possible to leave the valley in the middle of the night and, hidden from the eyes of the spies of the Quraysh, get food for the hungry waiting in jail? Could it be

that a liberal family member or friend might, out of kindness, bring some bread. Hunger sometimes reached the point that they looked like 'black death'. But as they had prepared themselves for a 'red death', they were patient. Saied ibn Ali Vaqas, confined with the others, wrote, 'Hunger had brought on such dizziness that, if at night I kicked a soft, wet material, without even realizing it, I would put it in my mouth and suck it. Two years later, I still do not know what it was.' All of the Prophet's family bore the difficulties of hunger, loneliness and poverty for his sake. The Prophet personally assumed responsibility for them. When a child cried from the pain of hunger, when a sick person cried from lack of medicine and lack of food, when an aged person (man or woman) reached the limits of suffering after three years of hunger, physical torture and the rigors of the climate, they hid all the* suffering within themselves. The light and blood drained from the* faces, yet they denied any problems when speaking to the Prophet. At the same time, despite all the difficulties, they remained loyal and generous in faith and love. All of this was an expressions of spirit and of faith and greatly affected the sensitive heart of the Prophet. Know for sure that whenever food arrived in the darkness of the night and was given to the Prophet to be shared among the people, the portion of his wife and daughter was the least of all. The family of the Prophet, in this compound, consisted of Khadija, the* small daughter, Fatima, and her sisters, Umm Kulthum and Ruqiya, the daughters-in-law of Abu Lahab. After the mission of the Prophet, Abu Lahab ordered his sons to divorce Ruqiya and Umm Kulthum in order to hurt and show contempt for the Prophet. But Uthman, a young, wealthy, handsome man, married Ruqiya-thus answering the act of Abu Lahab. Ruqiya then immigrated to Ethiopia with Uthman. Umm Kulthum, whose life had fallen apart and who had lost her happiness because of her faith in her father, now found herself in the compound. She preferred hunger and remaining with her generous and heroic father in the way of faith and freedom to living in comfort and ease with her malicious and conservative husband, Utayba. The days passed with difficulty in this compound separated from life. At night, the black tent of darkness fell upon the residents of this mountainous area. Weeks, months and years of hardship passed slowly over their tired bodies and spirits, but all continued in sympathy with each other and with the Prophet. The family of the Prophet had a special position in the midst of this group. The head of the family bore the heavy weight of their bitter fate upon his shoulders. Umm Kulthum, her happiness destroyed, had moved from the home of her husband to that of her father. His other daughter, Fatima was still a young girl of either two or three or twelve or thirteen-depending on whose reckoning we follow. She has a weak constitution, but a sensitive spirit full of feelings. Khadija, his elderly wife, had lived through the ten years of the Prophet's mission and three years in the compound. She had suffered hunger. She had witnessed the constant torture of her husband and daughters. She had borne the death of her two sons. She has not lost patience, but her body had been severely weakened. At every instant death appeared to her. In this state, hunger cried out so loud that the aged, sick Khadija (who had lived her life in wealth and had now given everything in the way of the Prophet) put a bit of leather in water and held it between her teeth. Fatima, the young, sensitive girl was worried about her mother. Her mother was worried about her last, frail daughter whose great love for her mother and father was common knowledge among the people. In the last days of their imprisonment, Khadija, who sensed the approach of death, was bed-ridden. Fatima and Umm Kulthum sat beside her. Her father had one outside to distribute the rations. Khadija, aged, weak, remembering the difficulties she had lived through, said with a sense of regret, "If only my approaching death could wait until these dark days pass and I could die with hope and happiness." Umm Kulthum, crying, said, "It is nothing, mother, do not worry." Her mother replied, "Yes, for me, by God, it is nothing. I am not worried about myself, my daughter. No woman among the Quraysh has tasted the blessings that I have tasted. There is no woman in the world who has received the generosity which I have received. It is enough for me that my fate in this life, in this world, has been to

be the beloved wife of God's choice. As to my fate in the other world, it is enough that I have been among the first who believed in the Prophet and that I am called 'the mother of his followers'." Then whispering to herself, she continued, "O God, I cannot count the blessings and kindnesses that you have given me. My heart has not grown narrow because I am moving towards you, but I do wish to be worthy of the benefits you gave me." The shadow of death fell upon the house. Silence and deep sorrow filled Khadija, Umm Kulthum and Fatima. Suddenly, the Prophet appeared illuminated with hope, faith, strength and victory. It was as if three years of loneliness, hunger and heavy spiritual asceticism had produced no effect upon the body and spirit of the Prophet other than to increase his courage, will power and faith.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FREEDOM, TRAGEDY, SPIRITUAL STRENGTH, KHADIJA DIES

The dark years of confinement ended. Khadija lived to see the salvation of the Muslims and to care for her beloved husband and her noble and loyal daughters. The Prophet experienced his first great victory over the Quraysh. But the destiny which had been sent to change our history allowed no peace or pleasure, for two great tragedies fell upon him simultaneously. Abu Talib and Khadija both died within a few days of each other and within a few days of their freedom. Abu Talib had raised the orphan Muhammad (SAW) and had made up for his missing father, mother and his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib. He had looked after the young man, Muhammad (SAW), and cared for him. He had found work for him in the service of Khadija. Finally, it was he who acted as the father at the marriage of Khadija and Muhammad (SAW). He had supported the prophecy of Muhammad (SAW). With all of his influence, character, personality and social credit, he had protected him. He even bore the three years in confinement, bore the difficulties and hunger and yet remained with him. It was because of him that the Prophet was saved from death and the horrible torture which his companions suffered. Now, he had lost Abu Talib, his only protector against the anger, danger and hatred of the city. And Khadija was the woman who had given up the privacy of their life to his destiny the woman who at forty or forty-five had married Muhammad, the twenty-five year old orphan and poor shepherd. He came to know her through love with the faith of a fellow sufferer and thinker. He sought refuge in her from the difficulties of poverty and life. He received the kindness of a friend and the love of a mother which he had never had. He benefited from her advice and the great protection which she gave him. Later, when he was appointed as God's Prophet, she was with him, step by step. She was beside him, beside his heart, beside his spirit. During the whole time of the thunderstorm of difficulties, fears, dangers, loneliness, during years of hatred and enmity, during battles, fights and treacheries, she was with him from the first moment of the revelation until the final moments of her death. She was with him during all of the moments of his life. She gave all of her life, love, faith, and wealth at the moment when he needed it most. Now the Prophet had lost his protector and compassionate, fellow sufferer, the first person who believed him, the greatest giver of sympathy and, finally, the mother of his Fatima. Fatima had lost her mother. Difficulties and tortures increased. Abu Talib had died. The Prophet was left defenseless before hatred. Hatred and enmity became violent when they witnessed the patience, perseverance and faith of the Prophet and his Companions. The roots of hatred become firmer and more merciless. The Prophet was very much alone. Abu Talib was no longer in the city, and Khadija was no longer at home. Fatima now more than ever sensed the heavy burden of the hatred and grudges. She was called 'the mother of her father'. At the time that her sisters went to their husbands' homes, she was still tied to her mother's skirts. aMother, I never want to replace this home

with another one. Mother, I will never leave you," Fatima may have said. Khadija smiling, may have answered, "They all say that and we say, 'My daughter, the time will come.'" Fatima, imploringly, might have continued, "No. I will never leave my father. No one will separate me from him." Her mother would then remain silent. Fatima sensed she had such a mandate. Her message was not a child's desires. Her faith in her mandate gained strength when she heard her father speak. How surprising that the Prophet called upon her in the presence of the leaders of the Quraysh and the leaders of the Hashimi tribe and the Abd Manafs. Her? A young girl? She alone and only she from among her family? The child-like feelings and loving kindness of the young girl, who hundreds of times reiterated that she would never marry and that she would never leave her father, were growing into a serious covenant and took on the quality of a responsibility and a commandment. The first years of her life coincided with the first years of the mission and the difficulties and tortures of the beginning of the mandate. Fatima, from among all of the children of the Prophet, was the worthiest to bear the suffering to bear the heavy weight of the responsibilities of the mandate which lay upon her father's shoulders. She was aware of her fate and so were her mother and father. On one of the last days of her life, Khadija, worried, turned to her and said, "After me what things will you see, my daughter. My life will end today or tomorrow. Zaynab and Ruqiya, your two sisters, are at peace beside their kind husbands. My mind is not worried about Umm Kulthum because her age and experience are enough to keep her. But, you, Fatima, are drowned in difficulties. You have to suffer many sorrows and tribulations which increase daily." Fatima, who shared in bearing the burdens which had been placed upon her father's shoulders, answered, 'Rest assured, mother. "Don't worry about me. The idol-worshipping Quraysh will torture and punish Muslims and they will show no mercy. The souls and hearts of Muslims must rejoice in accepting this despotic torture." Fatima was the most worthy, having suffered great torture. She was special because the blessing of being the daughter of the Prophet was offered to her and because of the kindness and respect which continue to be shown her.

CHAPTER TWELVE

A NEW HISTORY BEGINS

After the death of Abu Talib, enmity and hatred reached its peak. One group of the Companions and followers of the Prophet went to Abyssinia, while another group suffered loneliness and poverty under the increasing torture of the Quraysh. The Prophet, then fifty years old, whose life had been spent in difficulties, was living alone with Fatima, his young daughter. But...no. The hand of fate brought a son to this house and no one knew what role he would play. Yes. Ali did not stay in his father's house. He did not grow up there. From childhood he lived beside Fatima. He was raised in the home of Fatima's father. The fate of this young boy was strangely connected to the fate of this father and this girl. Destiny was taking its course. In the mysterious quiet, full of ambiguity, a stormy design was nourished to break the stone idols that had created barriers and discrimination. The first of the deceitful priests of the royal court died in the fire temples of the Persians. The great, frightening palaces of Madaen were pulled down. The lustful, blood-thirsty Emperor of Byzantine was pushed into the sea. But the greatest of all to fall, to be erased in the hearts and minds, was the rusted tradition and the chains of habit, the pue of superstition and rotted myth, the prejudice and discriminatory beliefs that poison humanity . They were dismantled. They were washed. The previous values and honors were turned upside down and changed. In an environment polluted with vile fairy tales of racism and pride with aristocracy and power, with epics of plunder, the worship of blood and idols always causes the earth to revolt against false gods.

All these things, large or small, prevent freedom, equality, justice, spiritual struggle and self-awareness for the unknown masses who lack glory and tribe. Instead of seeking history in rotten bones, fallen gravestones and rich rulers of the sword, seek history in the blood, life and poverty of the people! Seek the line which begins with the heirs of the last chosen Prophet! Each one had a finer cloak of martyrdom than his predecessor. Each one either spent his life on the battlefield or teaching people or in the prison of the oppressors. This important mandate in history began with Fatima. It is the kind hand of poverty which caused the child of Abu Talib (even though he had a father) to go to the house of his uncle's son so that his spirit might not become polluted by his own family's ignorance. He was present from the time of the first revelation. He was there from the moment that the mission began. He lived through the purifying fire of difficulties and problems so that he could play the difficult role he had to play in the migration, so that he could participate in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khaybar, Fath and Hunayn, thereby guaranteeing the victory of the Islamic Revolution, so that he could grow up close to Fatima and, finally, so that with Fatima, he could establish the 'exemplary family' which (in the continuation of the work of Abrahams) began a new history .

MIGRATION

Thirteen years of difficulty, resistance, confinement and, torture in Makkah ended. Fatima, from early childhood, patiently stood alongside her father in the city, in their home and in their imprisonment. Even with her weak constitution, she withstood the angry blows of envy and the difficulties of resistance in the savage environment of ignorance. With her little hands, she caressed her hero father like a mother. The migration began. Muslims went to Madinah. The Prophet and Abu Bakr secretly left Makkah. Fatima and her sister, Umm Kulthum also left Makkah. Suddenly one of the evil men of the Quraysh, who had a history of causing the Prophet difficulties, caught up with them and violently threw them down. Fatima, who had a weak constitution and who had suffered from the effects of three years in prison, was greatly affected by this event. She suffered pain the entire way to Madinah. This uncalled for act of Huyrath ibn Naqiz had such an effect upon the Muslims and the Prophet that, even eight years later when conquering Makkah, they had not forgotten what he had done. His name was mentioned among those who should not be spared. They said that even if he were hanging on the cloth of the Kabah, he should be killed. It was no accident that Ali carried out this order.

IN MADINAH

Now they were in Madinah. The Prophet had built his mosque and, next to it, his house which he constructed from mud and the leaves of palm trees. Then he announced the ceremony of 'the covenant of brotherhood'. "Every two should become brothers in the way of God." Jafar ibn Abu Talib became the brother of Maaz ibn Jabal, Abu Bakr became the brother of Khariji ibn Zahir, Umar ibn Khattab became the brother of Utayba ibn Malik and Uthman became the brother of Aas ibn Sabet. But what of Ali? Then the Prophet said, "I am his brother." Muhammad (SAW) became the brother of Ali. Once again, from among all the figures, Ali was placed beside the Prophet. Ali took another step closer to the Prophet. Fatima bint Asad, the mother of Ali, had nursed the Prophet. Abu Talib, the father of Ali, had protected the Prophet. The Prophet grew up in the house of Ali. Ali grew up in the house of the Prophet, beside his daughter Fatima. Ali was nourished in the lap of Khadija, the mother of Fatima. The son of the uncle of the Prophet, the child of the Prophet, had now become the brother of the Prophet.

THE SEALING OF THE LINK

There remained one more step before Ali could reach the final stage foreseen for him in the fate of the Prophet and in the honor of Islam. Fatima has kept her promise. In the home of her father, she lived quietly alone. She rejected Umar and Abu Bakr's offers of marriage. All of the Companions knew that Fatima had a very special fate, and they knew that the Prophet would never give her hand in marriage without consulting her. Fatima grew up with Ali. She saw him as a dear, older brother and as a beloved butterfly around her father. Fate threw these two together for very special reasons. Neither one of them was tied to the age of ignorance. They both grew up from the beginning with the mission. They developed under the light of the revelation. What feelings did Fatima have towards Ali? What appeared from the great, brave, courageous heart of Ali towards Fatima? We may conceive of them but the words to express them are missing. How can we describe the complicated feelings which arise from faith, love, spiritual strength, and worship. How can we describe the kindness of a brother and a sister who share the same belief. How can we describe the familiarity of two spirits. They shared the difficulties and troubles of fate together. Fellow travelers, step by step, moment by moment for their whole lifetime, they encountered kindness and inspiration mixed with faith. Why was Ali silent? He was twenty-five years old. Fatima had reached puberty. She was either nine years old or nineteen. In my opinion, the obstacles before Ali were clear. Fatima had promised herself to her father. She knew herself to be the mother of her father and to be a person who ran his house. How could Ali take her from this house where the daughter was so attached to her father that they could not be separated? How could Ali ask the Prophet for her hand in marriage? Ali shared the same feelings as Fatima. Suddenly the picture changed. Ayisha came into the house of the Prophet. The Prophet, for the first and last time in his life, took a young, alive, virgin as his wife. Fatima, little by little sensed that her father's young bride would replace Khadija and herself-not in his heart-but undoubtedly in his house. Ali also sensed that the moment which destiny has prepared for them had arrived. But he had nothing. He was a boy who had grown up in the Prophet's house, who had spent his youth struggling in the way of his beliefs. He did not have an opportunity to gather or save things. The only capital he had in the world was the faithful sacrifice he had made for the Prophet. Capital? Not even a house or a piece of furniture. Nothing. At the same time we see that he approached the Prophet. He was seated next to him. He had put his head down and spoke with his beautiful shyness. "What do you want son of Abu Talib?" asked the Prophet. Ali answered full of modesty and inner peace, "I want to take the hand of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet." The Prophet answered, "Wonderful! Congratulations!" The next day in the mosque the Prophet asked him, "Do you have anything?" Ali replied, "Nothing, oh Prophet." The Prophet asked, "Where is the shield I gave you in the battle of Badr?" "It is with me," Ali replied. The Prophet said, "Give that." Ali quickly went, got the shield and returned and handed it to the Prophet. The Prophet ordered that it be sold in the bazaar and with its small price, he should begin his life. Uthman bought the shield for forty-seven dirhams. The Prophet called his Companions together, and he himself performed the wedding ceremony. He said, "Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, according to the ruling traditions, is given to Ali." They prayed for their progeny and then brought out a dish of dates. And this was the wedding ceremony. The list of Fatima's property? A hand mill, a wooden bowl and a cotton rug. At the beginning of the second year of the migration, Ali found a house beside the mosque of Quba, and he took Fatima there. Hamza (one of the first martyrs, the great hero of the religious crusades, and uncle of the Prophet and Ali) sacrificed two camels and invited the people of Madinah to his home for the wedding celebration. The Prophet instructed Umm Salama to accompany the bride to Ali's house. Then Bilal called the people to the evening prayer. After the prayer, the Prophet went to Ali's house. He asked for a bowlful of water and after reciting some verses from the Koran, he asked the bride and groom to drink from that water. He then made his ablution with it and sprinkled it upon both of their heads. When he began to leave, Fatima

began crying. It was the first time that she would be separated from her father. The Prophet comforted her with these words, "I am leaving you with a person of the strongest faith, a man who is the most knowledgeable among those with knowledge, the most ethical among those with ethics and the highest of spirits among the spiritual."

STRUGGLES CONTINUE TO RENEW THE SPIRIT

This departure from the Prophet began the second part of Fatima's life. Destiny brought new difficulties and sorrows to this most beloved and precious being of humanity. Fatima, who had grown up in poverty and with hardships in the home of her father, now had come to the home of Ali, a home whose only decoration and furniture was love and poverty. The difficulties of life in Ali's house began. But the greatest difficulty of all was that Fatima had the same responsibilities she previously had had, but they were now in connection with Ali. A youth whom she had, until yesterday, looked upon as a brother became a husband. Fatima knew that the life of Ali would remain such. She knew that he only thought about spiritual struggle in God's Way, about God and about the people. He would return home with only empty hands. Fatima found herself more responsible here than when she was in her father's home. She had the responsibility of being the wife of a man who was more serious than lucky and who was greater than life. Fatima ground the wheat herself. She baked the bread. She worked in the house and brought the water from outside her home. Ali, who knew the generosity and majesty of Fatima (whom he loved for many reasons) knew the difficulties of her childhood which had made her physically weak. He, therefore, was sorrowed by all the work and labor which she had to perform. One day in a tone of sympathy, he said, "Fatima Zahra, you have placed yourself in so many difficulties that my heart breaks for you. God has given many workers to Muslims. Ask the Prophet to give one of them to you." Fatima sought out her father. "What is it my daughter?" he asked. "I came to see how you are," she said. She returned home and told Ali she was too ashamed to ask anything of her father. Ali, struck with wonder, called Fatima, and they returned together to the Prophet. Ali himself asked the question. The Prophet answered without hesitation, "No! By God I will not give you even a prisoner of war. The stomachs of the Companions are hungry. If I find nothing to give them, I have to exchange the prisoners for food to give to the hungry Companions." Ali and Fatima thanked him and, with empty hands, returned home. It is recorded. The husband and wife returned home to an empty house. Both remained silent thinking about what they had asked of the Prophet. The Prophet thought all day about the answer he had given his beloveds. Suddenly the door opened and the Prophet appeared. It was not only the darkness of the night but also its coldness which caused Ali and Fatima to shiver. He saw that they had placed a thin cloth upon themselves. It was so short that when they pulled it up over their heads, their feet were exposed and when they covered their feet, their heads were exposed. Softly he commanded them, "Do not move from your places." Then he added, "Do you want to know about something which is better than what you had asked of me?" "Of course, O Prophet of God," they replied. "It is something which Gabriel brought for me which I now share with you. After every ritual prayer, say Allahu akbar (God is Greater) ten times. Say al-hamd al-Lah (praise belongs to God) ten times and subhan al-Lah (Glory to God) ten times. When you have quietly crawled into bed, say Allahu akbar thirty-five times, al-hamd al-Lah thirty-three times and subhan al-Lah thirty-three times.' Once again, Fatima took this as a lesson and a gentle reminder. She learned something which reached the depths of her being: She is Fatima. This was a lesson which she knew. Although she had learned it from childhood, such lessons must follow continuously. They required successive teaching and learning. This was not a lesson in knowledge but rather a lesson in becoming. 'Becoming Fatima' was not easy. She was a holy trust. It required that she ascend many steps and fly many flights into higher

worlds while remaining step by step and wing to wing with Ali. She must share with Ali in his sorrows and in his difficulties. She had the greatest responsibility in the history of freedom, jihad and humanity. She was the link in a chain which extended from Abraham to the Prophet, from Husayn to the Guided One (mahdi), from the beginning to the end of history. Fatima had the responsibility of being the link between prophecy and the Guided One (mahdi). These were the values of Fatima herself. For her to 'be Fatima' obliged the Prophet to be strict with this special and exceptional companion. She must not have a single moment of peace in life for that might keep her from constant 'becoming'. Sorrow and loneliness were the water and earth of this girl who must grow under the light of revelation and bear the burdens of freedom and justice. She was the pure roots of the tree, each branch of which was appointed to take the 'fire of God' from heaven and give it to the people on earth. She must carry the heavy globe of the earth upon their shoulders. This is why Fatima must always learn. Her learning must be as light and air and food are to a tree-never ending. A word instead of a servant! Only this wonderful bride and groom could understand that one can live by a word. They were happy. They drank it and ate it and were filled by it. These words, like the rain, must continue to fall and only these two thirsty creatures grown from among the highest form of humanity, were obliged to drink it and grow with it. The sudden sound of the Prophet in that dark night and his meaningful silence heralded the blessed coming of this rain.. It was not without reason that Ali, a man engaged in religious struggle, full of effort and work, a man who prayed not out of habit (just busy moving his tongue and chin) twenty-five years after this night, said, "May God be my witness that from the night that I received this lesson from the Prophet, I have not forgotten it for a single night." In amazement, they asked, "Even the night of Siffin?" And Ali said again, emphasizing even more, "Even the night of Siffin." Fatima also lived with this lesson until she died. These prayers were registered in her name. It was these heavenly words which came to help her in her home instead of a servant. They were the wedding present the Prophet gave his daughter. The Prophet was very strict with his beloved daughter, Fatima. He has learned this method from God. There was no Prophet in the whole of the Koran who was so punished and so criticized as the Prophet. Why? Because none of the other Prophets were so beloved in the eyes of God and none of them were so responsible to the people. One day, like any other day, the Prophet entered Fatima's home. His eye fell upon a patterned curtain. He frowned, said nothing and left. Fatima sensed it . She knew what her sin was. She also knows what her repentance was. She immediately took the curtain from the wall and sent it to her father so that he could sell it and give the money to the needy of Madinah. Why so rough and strict? Zaynab, her sister, lived in luxury and splendor in Abu al-Aas's house. From the Prophet's way of expression and his type of discipline with her, it is clear that Fatima was something special, another kind of daughter. The Prophet addressed her, "Fatima, work now, because tomorrow I can do nothing for you." You can see the distance between this Islam and the Islam which says, "One tear for Husayn will put out the fires of hell," or "Even if one's sins are greater than the foam of the oceans, the grains of sand and the stars in the sky, they will be forgiven," or "Friendship with Ali will turn all of one's sins into benefits on the Day of Judgment." This means, essentially, that anyone who does not sin in this world or who sins little, is a fool because he can do nothing which can not be changed into benefits in the next world. More terrifying than this are the words which God is supposed to have said, "The friends of Ali are in heaven, even if they disobey me. The enemies of Ali are in hell, even if they obey me!"

INTERCESSION

There are not two religious systems-one of God and one of Ali. The system is very strict. The Prophet cannot even support Fatima when she stands in the presence of the Creator for God's judgment in the other world. He cannot protect her from deviation. Fatima must become Fatima herself. Being the daughter of the Prophet does not mean anything there, but it might be useful here in order for her to become Fatima. If she does not become Fatima, she is lost. Intercession means this: not cheating at an exam or 'knowing the right people' or being at the mercy of one's family relationships in accounting for the truth and justice of God or changing the numbers in the record book of this world or bringing in relatives over the wall and through hidden doors to paradise. According to the Koran, the Prophet and Imams can only intercede with God's permission, a permission given only to those who are capable. Fatima knew this. The Prophet had taught her. He has also taught others. This Islamic intercession takes the books and responsibilities which religion brings into account. It is quite different from the intercession referred to in the Age of Ignorance, where people appealed to their idols to intercede for them. They committed murder and thousands of dirty deeds, then offered a cow or a camel to Lat, Uzza or their other large and small idols and, through cries of regret or pleas of sympathy, sought intercession from them. I not only accept the intercession of the Prophet but also that of Fatima and even the intercession of the Companions and great martyrs. What are we saying I also believe that visiting the grave of Husayn removes sins. I believe that the spirit and thoughts of human beings who meditate on such great examples of humanity can be altered. The faith of such people can bring about a revolutionary change in them. Faith in intercession transforms people. It kills weaknesses, fears, idol worshipping, and the worshipping of one's own self. From this spring comes the inspiration for human wisdom, beliefs and virtues. It inspires institutions to struggle in God's Way. It inspires permanence, sincerity and the blossoming of spiritual meanings. It brings about a new set of values. It strengthens human values. It does away with sicknesses of the will, habits, and sinful, attitudes deep in one's mind. It builds a great person. It is natural and logical that the past errors belong to the past and no longer exist and will never again be. Hurr, the great hero or Karbala, through the intercession of Husayn, came out of the hell of slavery and was saved from being a sinner and murderer. With just a few steps, he reached the highest peak of liberty, truth and humanity. And Fatima, through the intercession of the Prophet became Fatima. In Islam, intercession is the means of reaching 'the most worthy of salvations'-not a means of 'saving the unworthy'. It is the individual who must receive the intercession of an intercessor and-through this means-change his or her fate. In other words, the individual must change his character and behavior in order to become worthy of changing his destiny. Yes, an individual takes that from an intercessor. But an intercessor does not give that to an individual. No polluted and valueless person can pass the exam on the day of judgment unless he has learned in this world how to pass through to the next world using the techniques of life, struggle, work and service. An intercessor is one such teacher-not a supporter of the illegal. Husayn acts as an intercessor for people who love him, have faith in him, and who, remembering him and his story, recall his having been a martyred warrior and nourish him through their recollection. He guides those who are wandering in the ways of ignorance. "Fatima, work today because tomorrow I can do nothing for you." No exceptions are made for her in God's system of justice and the laws of Islam. She is responsible for her position. She must answer for every step that she takes. One day a Quraysh woman who had become a Muslim stole something. The Prophet heard of this. Her fingers must be cut-off," he said. Many people's hearts bled for her. The large families of the Quraysh, who were the wealthiest of the Arab tribes, counted this as an insult, the stain of which would remain with their tribe. They went forward to seek intercession. They asked Fatima to intercede with God for this woman. She did not accept. They went to Usama, the son of Zayd, who was the step-son of the Prophet. The Prophet loved Zayd and his son, Usama, very much. His special kindness

towards the young Usama was famous in history. Usama, with all of his personal kindness and special closeness to the Prophet, with his reputation for loyalty and sacrifice and with the prestige of his father who had been Khadija's servant and the dear one of the Prophet, came from the Quraysh to ask that the sin of this woman be overlooked. He asked the Prophet to forgive her. The Prophet answered in no uncertain terms, "Do not speak to me, Usama. Whenever the law is in my hands, there is no way of escape. Even if she were the daughter of the Prophet, Fatima, her fingers would be cut-off." Why did he choose the closest among all of his beloved, the daughter of the Prophet? And why the name, Fatima? The answer to this question is clear. When he spoke of his calling, he chose his youngest daughter, Fatima from among all of his close family. It was only to her that he spoke of Islam. With his clear announcement, Fatima was to become one of the four highest women in the history of humanity: the other three were Mary, Asiyah, and Khadija. Why was Fatima the last? Because she was the last complete link in the chain (among all of the creatures) for the whole duration of time, for all of the cycles of history, the last. Among the saints, she was the last. She was Fatima, an ideal image of the day of judgment. The value of Mary lies with Jesus Christ whom she delivered and nourished. The value of Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, lies with Moses, whom she nourished and befriended. The value of Khadija lies with Muhammad (SAW) whom she befriended and with Fatima to whom she gave birth and who she nourished. And the value of Fatima? What can I say? To whom does her value belong? To Khadija? To Muhammad? To Ali? To Husayn? To Zaynab? To herself!!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WHY FATIMA?

Ali and Fatima were now in their home outside of the city. They lived away from the daily bustle of the city, near the village of Quba (eight kilometers to the south of Madinah) next to the Quba Mosque. During the migration, the Prophet rested for one week at Quba where Ali, following three days behind, eventually joined him. After that, the Prophet went for the first time to Madinah and established Islam freely in that city. He laid the foundation for his new mosque, and history began. Fatima and Ali later moved back to Madinah where they lived next door to the house of the Prophet which functioned as a mosque. The similarities between the beginnings of the Quba mosque and the Madinah mosque are most exciting to whomever is acquainted with the story of the Prophet's mosque and the house of the Prophet. If people do not understand it logically, they will emotionally sense it.

THE SPIRIT OF MUHAMMAD

While Fatima and Ali were far from the Prophet in Quba, it was most difficult for the Prophet. These two-the spirit of the Prophet's house-lived far from him, outside the city, in a home fraught with difficulties and poverty but also filled with love and faith. Ali, from the beginning of his childhood, had lived with poverty, loneliness, difficulties, hatred, religious struggle and asceticism. He had borne his hard and bitter life in Makkah patiently. His youth and early childhood had been nothing other than immersion in belief and religious struggle. He was a very serious spirit, who had no thought about a house, life, pleasure, wealth or comfort. He had a thirst which was only satisfied by bitterness. He was formed built from worship, asceticism, thought and work. Fatima was also a product of sorrow, piety and poverty. She bore the tortures that her father, her mother, her sisters and Ali had borne for years in Makkah. They left a deep impression upon her body and upon her spirit. Her body

was weak, but her feelings were deep. She had a most sensitive heart. Now in the house of Ali, she forced herself once again to live with difficulties, work, poverty and asceticism. Ali did not bring trivial entertainment to their house. Fatima also brought no routine desires and petty excitements to their new home. She did not pull Ali from heaven to earth nor drain his internal strength, depth and seriousness. It was only the Prophet alone who would bring about the happiness of his beloveds through good feelings and words. Each kindness contained an ocean of meaning, sweetness and power for Ali and Fatima. The Prophet was himself aware of this. He knew the needs of his beloveds who lived because they loved. He knew, "Whosoever loves Him has no life and for whosoever loves Him, this is life itself." He brought his Fatima and his Ali close to him. He made their house next door to his. It was made just like his of branches and palm leaves. Its door opened to the mosque wall to wall. The windows of the house of Fatima directly faced the window of the Prophet's house. These two windows which faced each other spoke of two hearts open to each other-the heart of a father and the heart of a daughter. Each morning their windows opened onto each other. Each morning there were greetings and laughter. Each evening, promises to meet the next day. It is this window about which it is said, "The Prophet, everyday, without exception, unless he was on a journey, sought out Fatima and greeted her." Why from among all of the Companions, from among all of his close family, from among all of his daughters, should only Fatima live next to the mosque and share a wall with his home? The house of the Prophet was the house of Fatima. The family in which Ali was the father, Fatima the mother, Hasan and Husayn, the sons, and finally, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum the daughters, was the family of the Prophet. The family of the Prophet was this unique family, this unique home so emphasized in the Koran and the Traditions. The family of the Prophet, cleansed of all impurities, was chaste and protected for all generations to come. Whosoever knows this family does not need reasoning and lengthy explanations. Even if there were no words expressed, intelligence itself would admit its uniqueness. Now in Madinah, sharing a wall with the house of Ayisha, this house built within the mosque, Fatima's family grew. Hasan, Husayn, Zaynab, and Umm Kulthum were born. A new history had begun. With the dawn of these stars, new horizons had been found. The Prophet found the meaning of life Islam found the proof of belief. Humanity found the witness of all things!

THE CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHET

In the third year of the migration, one year and a few months after Fatima and Ali married, Hasan was born. Madinah celebrated the end of its waiting for its messenger. The Prophet, who for the first time during sixteen long and drawn out years (filled with torture, hatred, ugliness, treachery, with news of the torture of his friends and the death of his beloveds) now tasted the new and sweet message of the birth of Hasan. This news soothed his tired spirit. Full of happiness, he entered Fatima's house. He held the first fruit of the union of Ali and Fatima in his arms. He recited the call to prescribed prayer in the baby's ear and finally distributed silver to the poor people of Makkah (silver in an amount equal to the weight of the hair on the baby's head). A year passed. Husayn was born. The Prophet now had two 'sons'. Fate decreed that his two sons, Qasim and Abd Allah should not live. Thus the sons of the Prophet came through Fatima. As the Prophet said, "The generation of each Prophet was from his own body, but mine is from Fatima." It is the Prophet's progeny who continued. These two spirits joined to produce the successive generations. In the mission of the Prophet, Ali was present and in the succession of Ali, the Prophet was present. In the pure faces of these two children (Hasan and Husayn), the Prophet saw three faces in these two: Ali, Fatima and his own. Fate decreed that Hasan and Husayn should take the place of his sons. These two were the fruits of the union of Ali and Fatima-Fatima, the mother of her father. All the Companions

knew 'his smallest and most beloved daughter'. And Ali was his guardian, his brother and, through Fatima, the father of his beloved grandsons. The roots which join Ali and the Prophet to each other cannot be counted. Both stemmed from Abd al-Muttalib. The mother of Ali looked after the Prophet from the time he was eight years old, and Ali's father, Abu Talib, was like the Prophet's father for seventeen years. The Prophet grew up in Ali's house from the age of eight to twenty-five, and Ali grew up in the Prophet's house from early childhood until the age of twenty-five. Khadija was like Ali's mother, and the Prophet was like his father! What more similar and close union could there have been! Their relationships were comparable in every way. These two human beings were symmetrical, were twins and reflections of each other. Ali was the second person who accepted Islam from the Prophet. His wife Khadija had been the first. Ali extended his hand to the Prophet when the Prophet was preaching in secret and alone. They joined together and, from then on, stood together through all dangers and difficulties until the Prophet's death. Before the mission, Ali was a small boy of six or seven years old when the Prophet took him alone to Mt. Hira. Ali participated in the depth of asceticism and wonderful prayers. Ali accompanied the Prophet day and night. The Prophet would stand in the moonlit silence in the cave on Mt. Hira or sit down or slowly pace back and forth. Sometimes underneath the rain of inspiration, his head fell forward. Sometimes he raised his head to the heavens and cried until he found his way. He was waiting. He saw something still unknown to him. During all of this, a small child, like his shadow, was with him-sometimes on his shoulder and sometimes beside him. Once when Ali was a child of nine or ten years old he entered the room of Khadija and the Prophet! He saw them kneel on the ground, sit for awhile and then rise and say something under their lips. Both did this together. Neither one noticed him. He remained in wonder. Finally he asked, "What are you doing?" The Prophet answered, "We are performing our prescribed prayers. I have been sent as the messenger to spread the word of submission (Islam) and to call people to the worship of the One God and my own mission. Ali, I call you as well to it." Ali was still a child of no more than a few years, living in the house of the Prophet, drowned in his kindness and his greatness. Ali did not say yes without thinking. Faith had to filter through his wisdom and then find its way to his heart. At the same time, his tongue had the tone of his years. He said, "Allow me to talk to my father, Abu Talib, and then make my decision." Immediately afterwards, he ran up the stairs to his room to sleep. But this invitation was not an ordinary invitation which Ali, even though only eight or ten years old, could take quietly. He stayed awake thinking until dawn. No one knew what effect the words that night had on the thoughts of this boy, but in the morning, they heard his foot-steps, light, but decisive and quiet. They stopped behind the door of the Prophet. Then the sweet beautiful voice of Ali was heard: "Last night, I thought to myself, 'God, in creating me, had not consulted Abu Talib, first. So why should I now ask his opinion about worshipping Him?' Tell me about Islam." The Prophet spoke to him saying, "I accept." From then on Ali found himself upon this way and in the midst of this union. He directed every second of his life towards this end. He became a wonderful symbol of one who worshiped God, was loyal to the Prophet, a friend to humanity and devoted to the spirit. He joined the heart and mind of the Prophet in a thousand ways, both hidden and manifest. Everyone knew this. The Prophet knew it more than others. He sensed the thousands of rays of light falling from his spirit upon Ali. One day, much later when his spirit was filled with the light which shone upon him from the Prophet, he became excited. His heart deeply desired to hear the Prophet's feelings towards him. He asked, "Among these two, which is the most beloved of the Prophet, his daughter, Fatima Zahra, or her husband, Ali?" The Prophet was at the other end of a difficult question. At the same time that he was required to answer 'an impossible question', while smiling kindly and softly, he had to find an answer right for all concerned. With a tone full of the pleasure of victory, he answered, "Fatima is more beloved to me than you, and you are dearer to me than she." The

Prophet never tried to show himself different from others. Rather, it was the opposite. He would say, "I am a human being like you. The only difference is the revelation which I receive." He always declared that he did not know the hidden world and other than that which was told him, he knew nothing. He always tried not to stand out or seem peculiar and, as far as possible, not to call attention to himself. One day an old woman approached him to ask him something. All the things that she had heard about him and the greatness she knew he had, so affected her that when she found herself in his presence, she trembled and stuttered. The Prophet, who sensed that she had been struck by his presence, moved simply and quietly forward. He placed his hand kindly upon her shoulder and in a gentle and intimate tone, said, "Mother. What is it? I am the son of that Quraysh woman who milked sheep." The depth of his sensitivity, sympathy and the softness of his heart was most amazing. Sometimes, inside the house, he would so humble himself that the hands of little Ayisha easily reached him. He kissed the hands of Fatima. His analogies which came from kindness were something special: "Ammar is as the space between my two eyes," "Ali is from me, and I am, from Ali," "Fatima is a part of my body." And now Hasan and Husayn were born. What things did the Prophet not do with these two beloved children! He loved them, the mirror and fruit of his 'most beloved and dearest ones' and 'the dearest of his beloveds'. He had always showed special kindness to Fatima and given her spiritual strength the extent of which cannot even be found among men today. And now, from his only remaining daughter came two sons whom he must have loved very dearly. He was so fond of them that everyone expressed amazement. One day, he entered Fatima's house as he did everyday from the time the children were born. He saw that both Ali and Fatima were asleep, and Hasan was hungry and crying. He found nothing to eat. The Prophet could not bring himself to wake his dearest and his most beloved. Quietly, with bare feet, he found their sheep, milked it and gave the milk to the child until he became quiet. One day, when he was hurriedly passing Fatima's house, the cries of Husayn reached his ears. He returned and entered the house. With his whole body shaking, he shouted at Fatima, "Don't you understand that his crying causes me pain!" Usama ibn Zayd (whom we have mentioned before) said, "I had business with the Prophet. I knocked at his door. He came out. As I was talking to him, I realized he had something hidden under his clothes. He was holding onto it with difficulty, but I did not know what it was. When I had finished saying what I had come to say, I asked, 'What is that which you are holding, Prophet of God?' "The Prophet, while his face filled with delight and pleasure, pulled apart his cloak and I saw Hasan and Husayn. At the same time that he wanted to explain his unusual behavior to me, he could not take his eyes off of them. In a tone full of joy and happiness, as if speaking to himself, he said, "These are my two sons, the sons of my daughter." Then as his voice, full of wonder, in a melody which cannot be expressed, continued, "Oh, God, I love these two. I love these two and love those who love them." In the words of a contemporary Arab, "If they were to have asked the Prophet which of his daughters should continue his line and which son-in-law, he would have chosen the same two which God chose." The children of Fatima and Ali felt that the Prophet was their grandfather, father, friend, relative of the family, guardian, companion and playmate. They were closer to him, more intimate and free than with their own mother and father. One day, during one of the congregational prayers, the Prophet went down in prostration. The prostration continued for such a long time that the people who were praying behind him began to wonder what had happened. [In the congregational prayer, the congregation performs the prayer behind an Imam or leader whose movements they follow in unison.] The Prophet had always been swift in his prescribed prayer. He always took the weakest people into consideration. They thought something had happened or, else, that a revelation had reached him. After the ritual prayer, they asked him. He said, "Husayn had climbed on my back when I had gone down in prostration. As he had the habit of doing this in my home, I could not bring myself to hurry him, so I waited until he himself crawled down.

This is why the prostration took so long." The Prophet insisted that all people, especially the Companions, know and see with their own eyes how he loved these two children, Hasan and Husayn and their mother and their father with more love than anyone's heart can hold. If not, why did he treat Fatima with so much respect? Why did he kiss her hand and her face in the mosque so much and with such insistence? When he spoke from the pulpit, he constantly tried to show everyone his feelings for this family. After his prayers, he added the words, "God love them as well," referring to Hasan, Husayn, Fatima and Ali. "Their satisfaction is my satisfaction and my satisfaction is God's satisfaction. God, whoever bothers them, has bothered me, and whoever bothers me, bothers You." Why these words? Why all these expressions of feelings of love? Why this show of affection especially for this family? The near future answered all of these 'whys'. The fate of this family, the fate of each and every member of this family, gave the answer to these 'whys'. They all began with the Prophet. The first sacrifice was Fatima. Then Ali. Then Hasan. Then Husayn, and, finally, Zaynab. In the 5th year of Ali and Fatima's marriage, one year after Husayn, a girl was born to this family. She had to be born, and had to closely follow Husayn. She was Zaynab. In the following year, another girl, Umm Kulthum was born. Zaynab and Umm Kulthum-they had the same names as the daughters of the Prophet. Yes. Fatima was becoming 'everyone' to the Prophet. She was his 'only one'. His Zaynab died. Ruqiya and Umm Kulthum also died. In the 5th year of the migration, God gave him a son, Ibrahim, but he also died. Now there was the Prophet and his only remaining child, Fatima-Fatima, and her children. This was the family of the Prophet. The love of the Prophet for Hasan and Husayn increased. These two children had become his whole life, and he spent all his free time with them.

THE COMPASSION OF MUHAMMAD (SAW)

The Prophet was a man who showed great strength of will and speech, whose sword was feared by all the caesars, kings and powerful rulers of that time. His enemies trembled before his anger. At the same time, he was a most sensitive person. His heart beat with kindness. His spirit was excited by the slightest touch of truth, sincerity and kindness. At the terrible battle of Hunayn, where his enemies united to put him under their swords and destroy him and to drag him down to defeat and death, miraculously 6000 enemies were taken prisoner and 40,000 camels, sheep and other plunder were seized. A man came out from among the defeated enemies and said, "O, Muhammad, among these prisoners are your wetnurse and your aunts and uncles." He then added, "If we were in the presence of your nurse, we would expect kindness from her, and you are greater than any of us." They brought a woman forward who said, "I am the nurse of your Prophet." The Prophet asked, "What sign do you have?" She bared her shoulder and said, "These are the marks of your teeth which you made when I carried you on my back and you became very angry and bit me." The memories flooded his mind as he recalled the kindness of his nurse and her daughters and the time of his childhood in the desert amidst this tribe. He was so affected and put into such a state of wonder that tears gathered in his eyes, and he said, "I give away my share and the shares of all of the children of Abd al-Muttalib. Be present in the mosque tomorrow. After the ritual prayer, announce your request to the gathering. I will give my family's answer to you, and perhaps other tribes will follow me." The next day he did as he said he would and freed all of them. The few victorious warriors who objected to giving back everything were satisfied when promised something later. In his home and among his family, he was like this. To the outside world, he was a warrior, a politician, a commander full of strength and power. But inside the home, he was a kind father, a humble husband-simple and intimate. Even though his wives were sometimes rude to him, he never once struck them [wife-beating was customary before the mandate of the Prophet]. They caused him to suffer by complaining about the poverty in his home. He

would leave them and go out and sleep in the storage area. He would put up a ladder and sleep on the second floor, or he would sweep the floor and sleep on the earth. He lived like this for one month. Finally, his wives, who both loved him and had faith in him⁷ would surrender and become still, ashamed of their greedy behavior. He told them to choose divorce and this world or him and poverty. All, except one, preferred the second proposal and remained with him. Whenever he left his home and wherever he went, whether walking in the streets or the bazaars of Madinah, he carried either Hasan or Husayn on his shoulders. In the mosque, he went to the pulpit to speak to the people standing and listening to him. His grandchildren were in the house next to the mosque. They left the house, began walking and fell down. Suddenly the Prophet's eyes fell upon them. He could not take his eyes off of them. He saw that they walked with difficulty. They fell and got up again. He could no longer bear it. He stopped in the middle of his words, anxiously came down from the pulpit, picked them up and (as he had done when they were babies) held them in his arms and again returned to the pulpit. He saw the people were amazed. They were surprised by the extent of the spiritual sensitivity of this powerful man. They sensed that he wished to ask their pardon. For the sake of his children, he had interrupted his sermon. Kindly holding the children, he returned to the pulpit and said, "God spoke rightly when He said, 'Your children and your wealth are your trials and tribulations.' My eyes fell upon these two children. I saw that each step the children took, they fell down. I could not bear it so I stopped speaking and went and got them." They say his compassion towards Husayn was different. The power and depth of his sensitivities exceeded all limits He took hold of Husayn's shoulders, played with him and sang for him. He put his feet upon Husayn's chest and took his hand. Full of love and tenderness, he kissed him and from the bottom of his heart, he said, "God love him. Love him." One day he had an invitation to go some place. He left the house with a few of his Companions. In the bazaar his eyes suddenly fell upon Husayn who was playing with his playmates. The Prophet stood before the children. He extended his hands to take his grandchild, but the child ran from one corner to the other. The Prophet, trying to catch him and laughing, caught hold of him. He put one hand on the back of the child and with his other, he took hold of his chin, kissed him and said, "Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn. God love whoever loves Husayn." His Companions wondrously looked on. One turned to another and said, "The Prophet treats his grandchild in such a manner. By God, I have a son, and I have never kissed him." The Prophet turned to him and said, "Whosoever shows no kindness, receives no kindness." Days and nights came and went. Fatima tasted the sweet moments of happiness and the bitter memories of the past. The poverty she had suffered faded. The Battle of Khaybar came. The Jews gave the grazing area of Fadak to the Prophet. He gave it to Fatima. Fatima, who now had four children, found life less difficult.

THE CONQUEST OF MAKKAH

Makkah was conquered. Fatima accompanied her victorious father and hero husband who held the flag in his hand. They enter Makkah. She witnessed the greatest victory of Islam. She revisited the city where she had been born. She remembered the good and bad times she had had in Makkah. The Mosque of the Kabah and what had happened, the house of her father, her life with her sisters who were no longer alive, the 'birthplace of Fatima,' the valley of Abu Talib and the grave of her mother, Khadija. She returned full of the happiness of victory and satisfaction, drowned in honors and goodnesses. Her father was little by little freed from the hatred of his enemies. His shadow fell upon the whole of the peninsula. Her husband was a force to reckon with at the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar and the conquest of Makkah. One blow of his at these battles (or even at Hunayn and Yemen) was worth more than the prayers of men and jinn until the day of judgment. She had her children-the only

fruits of a life of sorrow and difficulties, the fruits of the union of love and faith and the only continuation of the seed of her father and of she herself. Her children were the heart of the family, center of the home and center of the pure family of the Prophet. Yes, it was as if Fatima had been compensated for all of her sorrow and bitterness, as if she had been rewarded for her virtues. That which fulfilled her the most was the fact that her children so filled the heart and soul of her father. She compensated for the sufferings of her beloved father, for whom no son remained and all of whose daughters, except herself, die in their youth. Now, with her beloved children, Hasan and Husayn, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum, she felt blessed. As for the Prophet, the sweet taste of seeing them erased the rawness and bitterness of his life. He at last had a chance to become familiar with the happiness and pleasure which life can offer. Now aged over sixty, his feelings and needs for these children grew more than ever. Life had been kind. A sweet smile appeared upon Fatima's face. A halo of goodness, honor and generosity fell around her house. Fatima, enjoyed the unexplainable kindness of her father, the greatness of her honorable husband and the pleasure which her children brought her. She ascended a throne of good fortune with her desires and aspirations fulfilled. But all of this peace was just the quiet before the storm. The storm came. It was black, frightening and like a whirlwind. It took all of her peace and destroyed her home. The Prophet was bed-ridden. He could no longer rise.

THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET

All images suddenly changed in her eyes. The pure and good Madinah now writhed with hatred and fear. Politics pushed faith and piety from the city of the Prophet. The promises of brothers were broken, and tribal oaths again renewed. The Prophet was no longer a leader. Ali was sent for Ayisha and Hafsa called their fathers. The voice of Umar was heard saying the ritual prayer, then the voice of Abu Bakr. The army stood without words. Against the words and even insults to her father, they would not move. >From all corners came objections about the choice of Usama as the leader of the army, although the Prophet had himself chosen Usama and had given him the banner of leadership. It was Thursday, and what a Thursday. "A rain of tears fell from the eyes of my father. He ordered, 'Bring a tablet and a pen so that something can be written. Then that when I am gone, you will not be led astray.' Those opposed caused an uproar. They did not allow it. They said he was just mumbling. They said the book of God existed, and there was no need of anything more. As Fatima recalled: "And now, father no longer spoke. The house of Ayisha, which shared a wall with my house, was silent. The Prophet's head was in Ali's lap. His eyes were beginning to close. He spoke to me only with his eyes. "I could no longer bear all of these difficulties. He was my father, and I was his mother. I feared he might leave me in this city in this uproar! "He did not take his eyes off me. He was very worried about me. He read in my face that I was suffering. His heart bled for me, Fatima, his daughter, his youngest daughter, his most beloved daughter. "He indicated things to me with his eyes. I leaned my face forward and placed it on his. He whispered to me that his sickness was death. 'I will die.' "I picked up my head. Misery and terror so overcame me that I lost all my strength. The misery of remaining alive after my father almost tore my heart apart. "Why did he give just me this message? I who am the weakest among all the rest?" I wondered. "But his look was fixed upon me. His heart burned for his youngest daughter who, like a baby, needed him. He again indicated that I should draw near. It was as if he wanted to continue what he had been saying, 'But, you, my daughter, will be the first person from among my family who will come after me and who will join me.' Then he added, 'Are you not satisfied, Fatima, that you will be the leading woman of these people?' "What a significant condolence. Only this news could lessen the pain of my misery over the death of my father! 'May God bless you, father. How well you know how to give

condolences to Fatima.' I understood why among all these people, I alone must hear the news of his death. Now I had found the strength to cry and mourn. The man was dying. The protector of orphans and the refuge of widows was dying "Suddenly the Prophet opened his eyes and said, 'Fatima, this poem is in praise of Abu Talib. Don't recite a poem in my praise. Recite the Koran. Recite!' "Then the Prophet continued: 'Muhammad is no more than a Prophet. Other prophets have been sent before him. If he dies or is killed, you will go backwards and return to the reactionary, despotism of ancient time.' "Then he said, 'God curse those who set up the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.' While whispering to himself, he said, 'Is there a place in hell for oppressive dictators?' "He continued, 'We have given that home in the next world to those who do not oppress and create corruption. Whosoever opposes oppression and corruption should not seek them and should not do them.' "The politicians did not allow him to write anything, but asked him to just say what he wanted to write. 'What do you want to write?' Annoyed, he looked at them and said, 'What I intend to do is better than what you call me for.' He also answered, 'I counsel you to three things: first, push the polytheists out of the Arabian peninsula; second, accept the agents of the tribes in the way that I accepted them; third, ...!' "Suddenly they all looked at Ali. He was silenced by his sorrow. The father was silent. His silence continued. Looking into a corner, tears welled up in his eyes, and he pondered long. Fatima continued: aI screamed in pain. My grief was from your grief, father. In a tone of peace, in answer to me, he said, 'There will never be any sorrow for your father again.' "My father's lips were sealed, the lips which recited the revelation, the lips which had kissed me and my children. He looked at us for awhile, and then his eyes closed. Blood flowed from his throat. His head rested upon Ali's chest. Ali kept a frightening and heavy silence. It was as if Ali died before my father. Ayisha lamented upon my father's head, as did his other wives. "The moments passed in the silence of death. Suddenly his hands, which were in a position of prayer upon Usama's head, fell to his sides and his lips moved, 'To my highest Friend.' Then all things ended. "Father, oh father! You accepted God's invitation. You have gone to Gabriel,' I cried. "Outside there was an uproar. The city was crying without hesitation or fear. I heard the cries of Umar, who said, 'The Prophet has not died. He rose to heaven like Jesus Christ. He will return. Whosoever says the Prophet has died is a hypocrite. I will cut-off his head.' "Several hours passed. It became quiet. I saw that Abu Bakr and Umar entered the room. Abu Bakr pulled back the covering over my father's face. He cried and left. Umar also left. aAli began the work of ablution and putting on the white cloth of the dead. My husband, Ali, Abu al-Hasan [father of Hasan, one of Ali's titles], washed the pure body of my father while he continued crying. He poured water upon him and fire upon my soul. People had lost their Prophet. People remained without refuge, the Companions without a leader but Ali and I lost everybody and everything. Suddenly, I sensed that in this city, in the world, we were exposed. "All at once everything turned around. Faces changed. Terror fell from the door and wall. Politics replaced truth. The handshakes which had bound brothers together in their oaths moved apart, and relatives moved closer [that is, old tribal blood ties began to replace the new national, religious ties]. The elders and aristocracy took on a new life beside the cold body of my father, the Prophet of God and Messenger to the people. "For Ali and myself the event was so terrible that we could think of nothing but the death of the Prophet. The city was full of plans, plots and conflicts. For us existence, all at one time, emptied itself. The shadow of fear upon his face, Abbas, our oldest uncle, came and in a tone full of meaning and fear, addressed Ali. 'Put your hands forward so that I can give my allegiance. Then they can say the uncle of the Prophet of God gave his allegiance to the son of the uncle of the prophet of God. The members of your family will also give their allegiance to you. When this is finished, no one will be able to oppose it. "What? Is there someone who wants this position?' asked Ali. "Tomorrow you shall know,' replied Abbas. "Ali sensed the danger. But this sense of danger passed through him like lightening

and left. He was inwardly over-flowing with sorrow. The Prophet was his relative, his father, his guardian, his teacher, his brother, his friend. The Prophet embodied all his faith and feelings. The Prophet was the existence of Ali. Ali could not bring himself to think about the events taking place outside of this home. He sensed the Prophet's spirit under his hands. He sensed a trembling. He did the ablution. He was busy with the Prophet and with his children, our children." Hasan was seven, Husayn six, Zaynab five and Umm Kulthum only three. Destiny had planned a life of enmity for the young children after the Prophet's death. Outside the city at Saqifa, the Helpers of the Prophet gathered together to choose the Prophet's representative from among themselves. They felt that the Quraysh of Makkah had their own plans. Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaydah arrived and convinced them that the Prophet had said, 'Leaders are from among the Quraysh.' They reasoned that the replacement for the Prophet must be from among his family. As a result, Abu Bakr was chosen at Saqifa.

RECALLING FATIMA'S LIFE

Fatima 's childhood occurred after her mother had given all of her wealth for the cause of Islam. The peacefulness of the life of her father and the happiness of her youth with her sisters had passed. Her mother had become old and broken. Her mother's age was beyond sixty-five. Happiness, wealth and the good fortune of life were replaced by weakness, poverty, difficulties, an environment of hatred, and the treachery of strangers. Her mother, Khadija, before being the mother of Fatima and wife of the Prophet, had been the first associate and the greatest companion of a man on whom the heavy mission of heaven had fallen, the mission of removing the blackness of ignorance, the mission of returning the fire of God to mankind, the mission of freeing people from the chains of bondage by changing the economic system of slavery and the mission of freeing people from the mental prison of idol worship, Khadija was now the mother of Fatima, but completely occupied with the Prophet who had received inner inspiration about that which is above life and happiness. Around Khadija a fire full of hatred, the troubles of the worship of materialism and enmity spread. The mother of Fatima was busy with the difficulties and the revolution of the Prophet. The Prophet lived amidst his troubles and his revolution giving the message of God to his people. There is no heart which could sense what Fatima was feeling. The love of Fatima for the Prophet was much more than the love of a daughter for her father. She was the daughter who was also the mother of her father, the sympathizer with him in his exile and loneliness, the acceptor of his troubles and his sorrow, the companion in the religious struggle, the link in the chain of his line; his last daughter and, during the last years of his life, his only child. After his death, she was his only survivor, the light of his home, the only pillar of his family and, finally, the only mother of his children, his inheritors. Just when Fatima needed the love of her mother and the kindness of her father, she sensed that her mother and father, (both of whom had lived only with pain, loneliness and misery) needed her child-like kindness and caresses. There is a saying that a heart which finds a friend through trouble and sorrow develops a friendship which, when compared to a love based on happiness and pleasure, is much deeper and more certain. The feeling with which one views how one has lived one's life and how one's friend has answered one's needs is not the same as the feeling of familiarity one senses from the friend in one's own being. For when one sees that one has sacrificed one's life and that the needs of the friend have been met, the spirit-in the heights of its subtleness and the depths of its feelings-forms another spirit within the self-the spirit of friendship. And Fatima gave such friendship to the Prophet that there is no comparison to one who gives love to one's father. The intimacy and purity of feelings which she had for him created a continuous link and a situation incapable of being described. With the spirit of her father within herself, she was able to bear the years of difficulties, hatred, fear and torture. She bore the fact that her hero father was sacrificed and

remained a stranger in his own country, unknown in his own city, alone among his family, alone among those who spoke his language. He remained without anyone to whom he could talk. He had to stand face to face with ignorance and idol worship. He had to stand face to face in savage conflicts with untamed elders, petty aristocrats and hated slave dealers. His shoulders were bent under the heavy weight of the divine mission of the One God. He was alone in this long walk from slavery to freedom, from the dark valleys of Makkah to the peaks of the mountain of light, alone and without a companion while his soul was suffering from the hatred, plots and blindness of the people. His body was wounded from the troubles and blows of the enemy. He tried harder than anyone else to bring happiness and salvation to his tribe, and yet he and his family suffered because of the trouble his tribe caused him. They treated him as a stranger. On the one hand, he was alone, a suffering spirit, bearer of the revelation and on the other, he was a storm of love and fiery faith. Tribal enmity, the blindness of the people, the loneliness of not having anyone and the heavy weight of the load of the 'trust' he had brought caused him anguish. God had offered the burden of bearing this weight to the heavens and the earth, but they had rejected it. Only mankind was willing to accept the responsibility. In following this, the Prophet, everyday from morning until night, cried out a warning (to whomever passed by the Safa hill) of danger to people who were asleep and passive. He did this under the rain of problems that sought him out each day. He announced the message in the sacred precinct of the Masjid al-Haram beside the dar al-madweh, the meeting place of the wealthy Quraysh aristocrats and before the eyes of 330 dumb, senseless, spiritless idols who were the gods of the people. He called the people to awaken. He cried for freedom. At the end of the day, tired and exhausted, wounded internally, his heart overflowing with pain, he returned to a silent home empty-handed, followed by mockery. Within his home there was a woman broken by the sufferings of life, her body and her whole existence full of love, her two eyes waiting in anticipation, watching the door. -Fatima, a young girl, weak, moved step by step with her father through the streets of hatred to the Masjid al-haram under the taunts of curses, mockery, and contempt. Whenever he fell he became like a bird that had fallen out of the nest. When a bird falls from its nest, the possibility arises that it will fall into the claws and beaks of wild animals or birds. Fatima threw herself upon her father. With all of her strength, she protected him. With her small, fine hands, she took her hero into her arms. With the edge of her small, fine fingers, alive with kindness, she cleaned the blood from her father's head and hands. She healed his wounds with her soft words. She encouraged the man who carried the Word of God. She returned him to their home. She was a link of kindness, attraction and love between a suffering mother and a suffering father. When her bloodied father returned from Taif, she alone came forward to greet him and with her child-like, endearing efforts, attracted him to herself, despite of all of his worries and troubles. She attracted his heart towards her warm reception. In the valley of the confine she lived three years beside her sad, bed-ridden, elderly mother and her suffering father covered with difficulties. She bore hunger, sorrow and loneliness. After the death of her mother and the death of the uncle of the great Prophet, she filled the sudden emptiness his life with her kindness and endless understanding. The Prophet was now alone both inside the home and outside of it. She acted as a mother to her father who was now very much alone. She devoted love, faith and all the moments of her life to her father. Through her kindness, the feelings of her father were satisfied. Through her devotion and faith in the mission of her father, she gave him energy and honor. By going to Ali's house and by accepting his noble poverty, she gave him hope. Through Hasan, Husayn and Zaynab she offered her father the sweetest and dearest fruits of her life. Her children compensated the Prophet for his terrible losses: the deaths of his three infant sons and the deaths of his three grown daughters. The roots of Fatima's lifelong love were deeper than the feelings of a child of eighteen or twenty-eight years. She was stronger than life, purer than will and faith. All the golden webs of the

beyond were created in the soul, depth and conscience of Fatima. They joined her with the spirit of her father. And now this delicate web was torn by the thorn of the death of her father. Fatima must 'remain' without him and 'live'. How terrifying and heavy was this blow to the frail heart and weak body of Fatima, this girl who lived only through love of her father, faith in her father. She lived because of her father. It is no accident that the Prophet, upon his deathbed, consoled her and gave her the strength, the strength to bear her father's death. This strength was the only gift from the death of her dear one. The special news was that she would join him sooner than any of the others.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HER FINAL STRUGGLE SHE SEEKS

Out the Soil of Her Father's Grave

Now the only meaning she found in life was the kind soil of her father's grave and the hopeful news he gave her when he said, 'Fatima, you will be the first person to join me from among my family.' But when? What an exciting prospect! Her suffering spirit, like a wounded bird whose wings have been broken, was further wounded by three inescapable sights: the silent and sorrowful face of her husband, the saddened faces of her children and the sight of the silent, cold earth upon her father's grave in the corner of Ayisha's house. Whenever the pain in her heart increased and she lost her breath from crying, she sensed that she was in need of the kindness and condolences of her father. She sought him out. She fell upon the silent earth of his grave. She stared at his grave and suddenly it was as if she had just heard of the death of her father for the first time. She cried out. She pushed her fingers into the earth. She filled her empty hands with it. She tried to see him behind the curtain of her tears. She put the earth upon her face and smelt it. For a moment she was at peace. She had found condolence, but, suddenly, in a voice which broke with tears she said, "Anyone who smells the earth of Ahmad (Muhammad) has lost nothing if he never again smells any other musk. O father, what miseries have fallen upon me after you. If they had fallen upon a bright day, they would turn it into night." Gradually she would grow silent. The earth of her father's grave poured through her senseless fingers. She looked at it with painful amazement. Then she became motionless and silent. She put all of her sorrows in the death of her father. Each day was like the first day of his death. Her impatience grew everyday, and her cries became more painful. The wives of the Helpers gathered round her and cried with her. The waves of sorrows pressed upon her heart and caused her eyes to bleed. Her sorrow was more disturbing than anyone could conceive. No one could console her or ask her to be patient. Nights and days passed like this. The Companions were warmed by their power, riches and conquests. Ali was lost in sorrow and Fatima in thoughts of death. She became impatient to receive the gift her father had promised her.

THE DEATH OF FATIMA

Each day that passed she became more impatient for death. The only way she could bear to remain alive was to seek refuge in her father, to draw near him when her faith and spirit overflowed with complaints and pain. How great was her need for such a refuge, for such a peace? But time passed slowly. Ninety-five days had passed since her father promised her death, and death would not come. It came. On Monday, the 3rd of Jamadi al-thani, in the 11th year of the migration, in the year of the death of her father, it came. She kissed each one of

her children. Now was the moment to bid farewell to Ali. How difficult it was! And Ali had to remain alone in the world for thirty more years. She sent for Umm Rafia to come. Umm Rafia had arranged the Prophet's funeral. She said, "O servant of God. Pour water on me so that I may wash myself." With patience and peace, she performed the ablution. Then she put on the clothes which she had not worn since the death of her father, the clothes she had put away. It was as if she had put aside the memory of her mourning and now was going to see a dear friend. She said to Umm Rafia, "Put my bed in the middle of the room." Softly and quietly she stepped into the bed. She faced the Kabah and she waited. A moment passed, moments. Suddenly cries were heard within the house. She closed her eyes to the world and opened her eyes upon her beloved awaiting her. A candle of fire and sorrow was extinguished in Ali's house. And Ali remained alone, with his children. She had asked Ali to bury her at night so that no one would recognize her grave or follow her corpse. Ali did as she had asked. But no one knew how. And they still do not know where. In her home? Or in Baqia'? It is not clear. And where in Baqia? It is not clear. That which is clear is the pain of Ali, that night, next to the grave of Fatima. Madinah was silent in the night. All Muslims were asleep. The night was only broken by the quiet whisperings of Ali. Ali was very much alone both in the city and in his home-without the Prophet and without Fatima. Like a mountain of pain, he sat upon the earth of the grave of Fatima. Hours passed. Night, quiet and silent, listened to the pain of his whispering. Baqia was peaceful, fortunate. Madinah was without loyalty. All remained in silence. The awakened graves and sleeping city listened! The wind of the night took the words flowing with difficulty from the spirit of Ali (as he sat beside Fatima's grave) towards the house of the Prophet: "To you from me and from your daughter, who followed you in such haste, greetings O Prophet of God." "My patience and my ability have weakened from the fate of your dearest, O Prophet of God. But how can I seek patience with such terrible misfortune and loss? "I placed you in the grave, but you still exist in my heart. We are all from God and unto God we shall return. But my sorrow is eternal, and my nights sleepless until God takes me to the home in which you are now. "Right now your daughter will tell you how your tribe joined each other against her and took away her rights. Insist that she tell you everything that happened. All these things happened even though not much time has passed since your death, and people have not forgotten you . "Greetings to both of you, greetings from a man who has neither anger nor sorrow." He remained silent for a moment. He suddenly sensed the exhaustion of a whole lifetime. It was as if with every word pulled from the depths of his being, he gave up a part of his existence. He was alone. He did not know what to do. Stay? Return home? How could he leave Fatima here alone? How could he return alone to his home? The city looked like a devil in the darkness of the night. Schemes, treacheries and shamelessness awaited him. How could he stay? His children, the people, truth, responsibilities and a heavy mission awaited him. His pain was so heavy that it destroyed his strong spirit. He could not decide. Hesitation gripped his soul. Go? Stay? He sensed that he was unable to do either. He did not know what he would do. He explained to Fatima: "If I leave you it is not because I do not want to stay near you. If I stay here [die] have I not renounced the fate that God promises those who bear patiently?" Then he arose, stood and faced the Prophet's house, with a passion which overflowed into words. He wanted to say that he, Ali, was returning that which had been entrusted to him. 'Listen to what she says. Ask her to tell you everything precisely. Have her recount all the things that she saw after you, one by one!'

EPILOGUE

Fatima lived like this and died like this. After her death, she began a new life in history. Fatima appeared as a halo around the faces of all of the oppressed who later became the multitudes of Islam. All of the sufferers, all of those whose rights had been destroyed, all who had been deceived, all took the name of Fatima as their emblem. The memory of Fatima grew with the love and wonderful faith of the men and women, who throughout the history of Islam, fought for freedom and justice. Throughout the centuries they were punished under the merciless and bloody lash of the caliphates. Their cries and anger grew and overflowed from their wounded hearts. This is why in the history of all Muslim nations and among the deprived masses of the Islamic community, Fatima has been the source of inspiration for those who desire their rights, for those who seek justice, for those who resist oppression, cruelty, crime and discrimination. It is most difficult to speak about the personality of Fatima. Fatima was the ideal that Islam wanted a woman to be. The form of her face was fashioned by the Prophet himself. He melted her and made her pure in the fires of difficulties, poverty, revolution, deep understanding and the wonder of humanity. She was a symbol for all the various dimensions of woman-hood. She was the perfect model of a daughter when dealing with her father. She was the perfect model of a wife when dealing with her husband. She was the perfect model of a mother when raising her children. She was the perfect model of a responsible, fighting woman when confronting her time and the fate of her society. She herself was a guide-that is, an outstanding example of someone to follow, an ideal type of woman, one whose life bore witness for any woman who wishes to 'become herself'-through her own choice. She answered the question of how to be a woman with her wonderful childhood and adulthood, her constant struggle and resistance on two fronts (inside and out) in the home of her father, in the home of her husband, in her society, in her thoughts and behavior and in her life as a whole. I do not know what to say. I have said a great deal. Still much remains unsaid. In the symphony of all the amazing aspects of the great spirit of Fatima, that which causes the most wonder in me, is this: that Fatima was the traveling companion, was the one who stepped in the same steps of her father was the one who flew together with the great spirit of Ali through the heights of humanity towards perfection and completion was the one who passed through all the stages of the ascent of the spirit and the psyche. She was not just a wife to Ali. Ali looked upon her as a friend, a friend who was familiar with his pains and his great aspirations. She was his endless refuge, the one who listened to his secrets. She was the only companion of his loneliness. This is why Ali looked at her with a special look and also at her children. After Fatima, Ali took other wives and he had children from them. But from the beginning, he separated the children who were from Fatima from his other children. The latter are called 'Bani Ali', [that is, sons of Ali] and the former, 'Bani Fatima' [the children of Fatima]. Isn't it strange! The children of Ali derived their names from Fatima. And we saw that the Prophet also saw her with different eyes. Among all of his daughters, he would only discipline Fatima. He relied only upon her. From an early age, she accepted the great invitation. *I do not know what to say about her or how to say it? I wanted to imitate the French writer who was speaking one day in a conference about the Virgin Mary. He said, "For 1700 years all of the speakers have spoken of Mary. For 1700 years, all philosophers and thinkers of various nations of the East and West have spoken of the value of Mary. For 1700 years, the poets of the world have spent all of their creative efforts and power in their praise of Mary. For 1700 years, all of the painters and artists have created wonderful works of art showing the face and form of Mary. But the totality of all that has been said and the efforts of all the artists and thinkers throughout these many centuries have not been able to better describe the greatness of Mary than the simple words, 'Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ.'" And I wanted to begin in this manner with Fatima. I got stuck. I wished to say, 'Fatima was the daughter of the great Khadija,' but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima was the daughter of Muhammad,' but I sensed this would not*

fully describe Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima was the wife of Ali,' but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima was the mother of Hasan and Husayn,' but I sensed this would not fully describe Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima is the mother of Zaynab,' but I still sensed this would not fully describe Fatima. No, these are all true, and none of them is Fatima

Fatemeh is Fatemeh