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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

The Pardah System.

1. THE LIMITS OF THE TRUE ISLAMIC *PARDAH*.

THE question of *pardah*, or the seclusion of women, has become a vexed question, and the more so on account of the absence of an exhaustive treatment of the subject or a true theological exposition of the problem. As referred to in our last, there are Muhammadans in India who think that the cause of Muslim progress is inseparably bound with the utter dissolution of the *pardah* system, but who are yet unable to inform us of the premises on which this conclusion is based. There are others who think that the *pardah* as it prevails in India, is the true Islamic *pardah*, and that it does not stand in need of any modification to better the position of women physically or intellectually, and that a departure from this *pardah* is a departure from the religion of Islam itself. While the former are, therefore, desirous that the extreme freedom with which women in the West mix with strangers, should also be given to the Indian women, the latter lean to the position of practically shutting up women. As a matter of fact, the education and enlightenment of women is in no way connected with their freely mixing with strangers. It needs no demonstration to prove that women have never been in seclusion in England and many other European countries, while it is equally patent that notwithstanding this alleged freedom they remained steeped in ignorance for many centuries and their intellectual progress began at a very late date. Similarly, the seclusion of

women in the early days of Islam did in no way interfere with their advancement. Even in India, and among the Muhammadan communities, more than eighty per cent of the population do not observe the *pardah* system, and yet it cannot be denied that ignorance prevails to a far greater extent among them than among those who observe the *pardah* system. In fact, it is only in the higher grades of Muhammadan society, among the enlightened and educated, we should say, that *pardah* is strictly observed. The contention of the *anti-pardah* movement would have appeared plausible, had a contrary state of things prevailed. The present state of things in India should lead to the conclusion that if the Indian Muhammadan women in the middle and lower strata of society are placed under the strict *pardah* which prevails in the higher classes, then and only then will they rise to their level. But such a conclusion would be as absurd as the one which the leaders of the *anti-pardah* movement have assumed, viz., that the advancement and enlightenment of the Muhammadans can only be brought about by their women mixing with strangers with the freedom of European women. The former conclusion is at any rate more safe, because it takes the case of people living in the same country and under similar circumstances of growth, while the similarity of circumstances is utterly wanting in the case of the two classes considered in the latter conclusion. Consider again the case of communities living side by side with the Muhammadans in India, and it would be at once clear that the comparative backwardness of the Muhammadans in the matter of higher education is in no way due to the presence of the *pardah*. We do not of course support the Indian *pardah* in all its strictness, because in our opinion it is a departure on the side of severity from the *pardah* enjoined by Islam. All that we wish to say is that there are no premises for the unwarranted conclusion of the *anti-pardah* leaders. It is desirable, however, that the Muhammadans should know and act upon the principles taught by their religion, which are in fact the true principles of civilization.

Our first consideration with regard to the limits of the *pardah*, is based on the words of the Holy Quran containing this injunction. The verses on which the *pardah* system is based, occur in the chapter entitled the *Light*, and they run as follows: قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغْضُوا مِنْ

أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فَرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ إِتْقَانُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ بِمَا

يصنعون وقل للمؤمنات يغضضن من ابصارهن ويحفظن فروجهن ولا
يبدین زینتهن الا ما ظهر منها ولا یضر بن بخمرهن علی حیو بهن ولا
یبدین زینتهن الا لبعولتهن اوابائهن اواباء بعولتهن اوابناءهن اوانساءهن
بعولتهن اوابناءهن اوابناءهن اوابناءهن اوابناءهن اوابناءهن
اوما ملکت ایمانهن اوالثا بعیین غیرا ولی الذیة من الرجال اوالاطفل
الذین لم یظهروا علی عورات النساء ولا یضر بن بارجلهن لیعلم
ما یخفین من زینتهن وتوبوا الی الله جمیعاً یا المؤمنون لعلمکم تفلحون
(النور ٣٠، ٣١) Below is given a literal translation of these two verses.

"Say thou to the believers that they restrain their looks and observe continence. Thus will they be more pure. Of a truth God is well aware of what they do. And speak thou to the believing women that they restrain their looks, and observe continence; and that they display not their ornaments except what is external thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and display not their ornaments, except to their husbands or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male domestics who have no natural force, or to children who have not attained to puberty. And let them not (when walking in paths) strike their feet together so as to discover their hidden ornaments. And be you wholly turned to God, O believers! so that you may be happy."

These are the most important verses in connection with the *pardah*, and it is upon them that this institution is based. A distinction is here drawn as to the appearance of women before strangers and their appearance before the members of the family and near relations. Then there are two separate injunctions, the injunction of refraining the looks which is addressed to men as well as women, and the injunction prohibiting the displaying of *zeenat* except to a limited class, which is solely for women. In the first place then, we have to see the meaning of *zeenat*. *Zeenat* signifies a thing with which or by which one is adorned, ornamented, embellished, beautified or graced. Thus it includes all means of beautifying and embellishing. According to some it includes personal beauty while according to others it is properly applicable only to the means of beautifying by external means, of which three kinds are mentioned, viz., dyeing as hands with *kina* or blackening the edges of the lids of eyes with

kuhl, &c, ornaments of gold or silver or of jewels or gems, and apparel. Imam Razi and Tabri have both quoted authorities on these points in their commentaries on the Holy Quran. Now the injunction regarding the *pardah* does not go further than this لا يبدن زينتهن (لا ما ظهر منها) "Women should not display their *zeenat* except what is external thereof." Thus the Holy Quran speaks of two kinds of *zeenat* and the commentators are all agreed upon it, viz., ما خفى and ما ظهر, that which can be and should be hidden, and that which cannot be hidden, which we have rendered above by the word 'external.' The *pardah* which the Holy Quran enjoins upon women, therefore, consists in this that they should not display their *zeenat* in the public, the *zeenat* which can be hidden and which it is neither necessary, nor, we should say, desirable, to display to strangers under ordinary circumstances of life.

The question of *pardah*, therefore, assumes the limited form, what is the particular kind of *zeenat* which a woman is not forbidden to display when she is obliged to appear before strangers. The words ما ظهر منها which we have rendered by "what is external thereof," have been translated by reliable commentators as meaning in the words of *Qaffal* العادة الجارية وذلك ما يظهره الانسان فى العادة الجارية "What a person displays under ordinary circumstances of daily life, and this is in the case of women, their face and hands." The face and the hands are, therefore, the parts of the body which by the common agreement of almost all the commentators, a woman may display when she has to go out of her house, but she cannot display according to Muslim law any other part of the body or her ornaments whether consisting of gold, silver or jewellery or her apparel. Excepting the face and the hands every part of the body should be hidden under a plain costume. By the face, of course, is meant the part of the face which must necessarily be displayed under ordinary circumstances of life, and this includes the eyes, the nose and the mouth, without displaying which a person cannot freely see, breathe or talk. But further than this the Holy Quran does not go. It allows only the revealing of parts which ordinarily it becomes necessary for a person to disclose and without which a difficulty would be experienced in the transaction of ordinary affairs. The head-dress can be so arranged as to leave a part of the forehead, the eyes,

the nose and the mouth uncovered, while the remaining parts are hidden under the dress. Such would be the significance of the word *face* throughout this article. There is a difference as to the display of feet, but this would probably depend upon a person's means. As regards the voice, which by the Indian system of *purdah*, should never fall upon the ears of a stranger, there is again an agreement that it is not included among the things that are to be hidden. Such small ornaments as rings or the dyeing of hands with *hina* or the blackening of the edges of eye-lids with *kuhl*, cannot be concealed when the hands and the face are displayed, and accordingly such ornaments too fall within the words of the exception contained in (لما ظهر منها). The word عورت (*aurat*) itself bears testimony to the fact that the face and the hands of a woman are not the parts which she is required to conceal. Thus Lane translates the word *aurat* on the authority of the *Taj-ul-Aroos* in the following words: "عورت, the part, or parts, of the person which it is indecent to expose: in a man what is between the navel and the knee: and so in a woman, or, in a free woman, all the person, except the face and the hands as far as the wrists; and respecting the hollow of the sole of the foot, there is a difference of opinion: in a female slave, like as in a man; and what appears of her in service, as the head and the neck and the fore-arm, are not included in the term عورة." Imam Razi has also given the same explanation of the word *aurat*. He further gives the reason of *pardah* and its limits as follows: "They are commanded to conceal the parts which it is not necessary to display, and permission is given for the display of parts which are usually displayed and which it becomes necessary to display. The Islamic Law is easy and liberal, and as the displaying of the face and the hands was necessary, therefore there is an agreement as to the fact that they are not included among the parts which it is indecent to expose."

The commentators have further supported their opinions by quoting various earlier authorities. In the voluminous commentaries of Ibn-i-Jarir and Razi, it is established by the testimony of witnesses whose authority cannot be questioned that the *zeenat-i-zahir* which women are allowed to display to strangers includes the hands and the face. Thus Ibn-i-Abbas, Sai'id Ibn-i-Jubair, Ata, Auza'i, Zihak, Hasan and others are reported to have explained (لما ظهر منها) as

meaning the hands and the face, and thus to have held it permissible for women to go out when necessary with the hands and the face open. Qatada also reports a saying of the Holy Prophet which means that "it is not proper for a woman who has attained to the age of puberty that any part of her body should be seen except her hands and her face." It is also universally admitted that women said their prayers in mosques with their faces and hands uncovered in the time of the Holy Prophet, and it was in this form that they were required to appear in public prayers attended also by men. The upholders of the stricter *pardah* indeed contend that their appearance in the public prayers in this form was by special ordinance, but this is a mere assertion. It is hard to conceive that women should have been allowed to appear in public prayers with their hands and faces uncovered and forbidden to appear in this form for the transaction of their affairs where such liberty was more needed than in prayers. In both cases they had to appear before strangers, and why any distinction should have been made is not clear. Moreover, the contention that the uncovering of the hands and the face was a special privilege enjoyed in the course of the prayers and was not allowed before and after, is untenable on the simple ground that the uncovering of the face and the hands was not particularly needed in prayers, and that it would be unjust to tell women that they should come from their homes to the mosque and go back all wrapped, but that when they entered the sacred precincts then they might display their faces. No sensible person can stick to such an absurd position.

So far we have considered the meaning of the words *لا ما ظهر منها* which state the limits of the *pardah*. No one has ever seriously contended that the face was not included among the parts contemplated by this exception, the only allegation of the adherents of the stricter *pardah* being that this exception was limited to prayers. But of this there is no proof, and we have shown above the absurdity of such a supposition from other considerations. If we reflect upon the words of the Holy Quran, they lead us to the same conclusion. Along with the injunction that women should not display certain forms of *zeenat*, the Holy Quran orders the members of the male as well as the female sex to refrain their looks. This injunction for both sexes is contained in identical terms, and in the matter of casting down their looks men

and women are placed on an equality. The order to men that they should refrain their looks did not of course mean that they should not look at other men or that they should cast down their eyes when transacting their affairs. There must have been some other scene before their eyes from casting looks at which they were prohibited. If, therefore, we take *pardah* to mean that women were not allowed to go out of their homes or that in the rare cases when they were allowed, they were wrapped from head to foot in mantles, the injunction to men that they should refrain their looks would be quite meaningless, because there was no object at which they could cast their looks. They would have been as guilty in casting their looks in paths where no woman walked or at women shrouded from head to foot in mantles under which no form could be discovered, as at white clothes or trees or members of their own sex. Why were men asked not to cast their looks at walking mantles, as women are alleged to have appeared to a gazer. Surely there was something revealed besides the clothes by looking at which men stood the chance of temptation, and hence they were prohibited from casting their looks at it. It was in fact the woman, the face of the woman, to be more correct which could be seen and from casting looks at which men were prohibited so that they might not fall into temptation.

The extreme *pardah* party has made some attempts to explain away this point, which do not deserve the sympathy of an impartial critic. By some the injunction to men to refrain their looks and the injunction to women not to display their ornaments are hopelessly mixed together so that they are unable to see that the latter injunction left some opening, to guard against which the former injunction was required. Had woman disappeared from society altogether after the injunction relating to *pardah*, either by being totally absent from it, or by being totally hidden in a mantle, the injunction to men to refrain their looks was superfluous, and, we should say, absurd. Others have contended that this injunction to men was meant to be kept in view when under some serious necessity they were obliged to look at the faces of women. The absurdity of such a contention is clear on the face of it. If under any circumstances a man actually stood in need of looking at the face of a woman, as, for instance, when he intended to marry her or when she was under medical treatment, why

should he then refrain his looks, and how could the object be fulfilled if at such a time he should cast down his looks or close his eyes. Moreover, we learn from various traditions that the Holy Prophet commanded men not to from assemblies by the side of a public path, or if they were obliged to do so, then they should fulfil "the obligations of the way." When asked what was meant by "the obligations of the way," he said it meant the reply to *Salam*, the casting down of looks, the removal of thorns, &c. From this it is clear that women passed in ways with their faces uncovered, and that it was for this reason that men were commanded to refrain their looks when sitting by the side of a road.

The injunction to men to refrain their looks is thus clear evidence of the fact that women went out of their homes whenever there was any necessity, and that their faces and hands only were uncovered on such occasions, but that men were prohibited from casting their looks at their faces. We do not think any sensible person living under any circumstances can question the reasonableness and desirability of this commandment. While women were at perfect liberty to go out for the transaction of their affairs, hiding their whole body as well as their ornaments with the only exception of the face and the hands under a plain costume, men were forbidden to cast their looks at them unnecessarily. There is further evidence to the same effect which we gather from other traditions. More traditions than one give us to understand that some of the companions of the Holy Prophet, Ali among them, questioned him as to *نظر الفجاءة*, a look cast without any intention as when a woman suddenly appeared before a man's eyes. Such a question could never arise unless women were accustomed to go out with bare faces, and this after the injunction relating to *pardah* as appears plainly from the connection of the two verses. The form of the question moreover shows that this was not a rare occurrence, for the question is put by different men in a general form and is not related as a particular occurrence. This question reveals to us a state of society in which women had often to go out for the transaction of their affairs or some other necessity and where they stood the chance of being seen by men. Thus there arose the difficulty that the observance of the ordinance to men to refrain their looks could not be observed in practice in all its strictness, and therefore the matter was

referred to the Holy Prophet. And mark his decision. He did not say that women should not go out with bare faces and that they should be wrapped in a mantle from head to foot. The reply he gave was that when a man's sight fell accidentally upon a woman, there was no fault on his part, but that he was forbidden to look at her a second time, because then he would be casting looks at her intentionally.

The manner in which women are to conceal their ornaments is also indicated in the verses quoted above. Thus after they are enjoined not to display their *zeenat*, they are told to draw their head-coverings over their breasts, *و ليضربن بخمرهن على جيورهن* as the Holy Quran says. It would be well to consider the circumstances which necessitated this direction. Razi says: "The commentators say that women in the days of ignorance used to throw back their head-coverings behind them, and the openings of their shirts were in front, *i e.*, at the bosoms, and thus (as they wore nothing over their shirts) the upper part of their breasts and their necklaces remained exposed to the view." The Holy Quran, therefore, directed women not to appear in public in this costume which did not wholly conceal their bodies and their breasts. In the words of the same commentator, "they were, therefore, commanded to draw their head-veils over their breasts, so that with it may be covered their necks and their breasts and their hair, and the ornaments which they wore in their ears and at their breasts, and the place where the knot of the opening of the shirt was fastened." Tabri also gives the same explanation in his commentary of the Holy Quran. He says that women were commanded to draw their head-coverings over their breasts, "so that the hair of their heads and their necks and ear-rings should be covered thereby." This settles the meaning of this part of the verse, and throws further light upon the limits of the *pardah* required for women according to the tenets of Islam. Of course, the opinion of this or that commentator is not conclusive, but the words of the Holy Quran do not bear any other interpretation, especially when the previous portion of the same verser elating to the injunction of refraining looks, made obligatory upon men as well as women, gives us clearly to understand that women did not completely cover their faces in the presence of strangers. *Khimdr* of which *Khumur* is the plural, means a woman's covering for the head, and this covering women are commanded to draw over their

woman to be so wrapped up as to leave nothing of her observable. In fact, this verse expresses the same object as is indicated by the words *وليضربن بخمرهن على جيوبهن* "And they should draw their head-coverings over their breasts." Some theologians have, no doubt, thought that the outer garment was to be so worn as to leave nothing uncovered with the exception of a single eye, but this is against the plain import of the words of the Holy Quran as stated above. The Islamic law while aiming at the extirpation of all evils from society, does not lay upon humanity a burden which it can hardly bear. The exception is plainly stated in the *Nur* that a woman is permitted to expose certain parts, and any sensible person can see that the parts the disclosure of which she most needs are her hands and face without which she cannot do any thing. It cannot be conceived that the wives of the companions of the Holy Prophet who assisted their husbands in their affairs and went out for other needs, could do all these things while they were wrapped up from head to foot in garments out of which they could not take out either their hands or faces. Thus every consideration leads us to the conclusion that the *pardah* enjoined by Islam did not go so far as to require that even the face should be wholly covered.

The following verse occurring in the *Ahzab* is sometimes brought forward as requiring a stricter kind of *pardah* than what we have stated above: *وقرن في بيوتكن ولا تبرجن تبرج الجاهلية الاولى* (الاحزاب ٣٣) "And abide, O wives of the Prophet, in your houses, and go not in public decked as in the days of your ignorance." (xxxiii: 33). This is a commandment addressed in the first place to the wives of the Holy Prophet, but it is not, so far as we think, limited to them. There are many other commandments in the Holy Quran which are addressed to the Holy Prophet in particular, but they are meant for all the faithful. Similarly here a commandment is given to the wives of the Holy Prophet who should serve as exemplars to all Muhammadan women, and therefore, it is, we think, meant for all women who believe in Islam. But the verse does not enjoin a stricter *pardah* than that enjoined in the *Noor*. By abiding in the house it is not meant, and it could never be meant, that they should remain enclosed within the four walls of their houses and should never go beyond them. The Holy Quran explains itself and after giving

the order for abiding in their houses, it tells them "not to go out in public decked as in the days of ignorance." Here exactly the same meaning is expressed as in the words of the *Noor*: "And they should not display their ornaments." The object of the Holy Quran in enjoining the *pardah* is, not that women should not go out, but that they should not go out decked or with their ornaments exposed to public view. Had the object of the commandment that women should abide in their houses, been that they should never go out of the four walls of their houses, the following words that they should not go out decked would have been meaningless. If they could not go out of their houses at all, how could they appear in the public decked with their ornaments and what need there was to make provision against what could not happen according to the ordinances of the law. The fact is, as already suggested, that the commandment not to go out decked explains the previous word as to abiding in the houses. In the days of ignorance, women used to go out without any business and simply to display their apparel and ornaments, and they unnecessarily mixed with the members of the male sex. This state of things had done lasting harm to modesty and chastity, and it was at the extirpation of this evil that the injunction of Islam aimed. There is not a single verse in the Holy Quran forbidding women to do any work at all or to go out of the four walls of their houses. The prohibition simply relates to going out in public decked and with their ornaments exposed to view or to unnecessarily mixing with strangers. Had the commandment to abide within their houses signified a total prohibition from going out, it should have been acted upon at least by the wives of the Holy Prophet, to whom it was directly addressed, in his life-time and after his death. History, however, tells us that the Holy Prophet took his wives with him in battles and for pilgrimage, and it is clear, therefore, that he never thought that the injunction meant that his wives should remain pent up within the enclosures of their houses. More than this, Ayesha after his death went so far as to take part in several civil dissensions and herself fought in battles. Was she unaware of the Divine commandment? Or can the lips of any faithful man move to utter that she was going against the plain injunction of the Holy Quran?

Thus no verse of the Holy Quran which relates to *pardah*, goes

beyond the injunctions contained in the *Noor*. The whole subject of the *pardah* is fully dealt with in the verses which we have quoted in the beginning of this article, and which contain two separate injunctions as we remarked at the very commencement. The first injunction which relates to the refraining of looks comprehends both men and women, and the second which requires a hiding of the ornaments is addressed only to the female sex. The complete *pardah* requires obedience to both these injunctions *and not to one of them only*. This is an important point which should never be lost sight of in considering this subject. The aim of the Holy Quran was to remove an evil, and, as in all matters with which it deals, it supplies a two-fold remedy. To the woman it says that she should not display her ornaments which can serve as chief attractions for men, except in so far as is necessary for the transaction of affairs or other needs; and to the man it says that he should refrain from looking at women. It would have been quite unjust to put the whole burden upon woman and to tell her that she should never appear before men at all. The Holy Quran does not do it. It says in plain words that the woman should not appear before men with her ornaments exposed to view, but that when she does appear, as appear she must in every society, men should refrain their looks and not cast them upon her. Thus both sexes are required to contribute towards the extinction of the greatest evil which can affect a society. Let the woman present no attractions to man and let her appear in plain and simple garments covering all her ornaments and all parts of the body with the exception of the face and the hands. When she has done this, she has done all that she can do for the welfare of society. Then comes man's duty, and it consists in this that when a woman appears before him, he should abridge his looks. What a plain and reasonable law and how easy to act upon under all circumstances of life. Let both sexes be treated equally: tell the woman to hide her attractions, ornaments and decorations, and tell the man to restrain his looks when he sees the figure of a woman. This is the two-fold remedy which the Holy Quran suggests, and those who clamour for a *pardah* in which the woman should not disclose even her face, are neglecting, if not rejecting, the injunction of the Holy Quran as to the refraining of looks which they themselves are required to observe. What can we do but reject the words of those who tell us that the woman should not disclose more than a single eye,

when the Holy Quran tells us plainly that men are forbidden to look at women, indicating clearly that their faces could be seen. Just as women are asked to lower down their eyes when they see men, because they can look at their faces, men are asked to lower down their eyes when they see a women, indicating that her features could be seen like those of a man. In fact, the *pardah* would have been an unjust and unphilosophical system, if the Holy Quran had not kept both these points in view. The *pardah* in Islam does not prohibit men or women from working, which cannot possibly be done without having the hands and the face uncovered. Therefore it makes allowance for the circumstances of human life, and does not place the woman under any disability.

So far as to the going out of women for their needs. The next question is how they should behave themselves within their houses. The Holy Quran mentions certain classes of persons including the members of the family and some near relatives, before whom the woman may appear in her ornaments. Then comes the large majority of people outside the inner circle. Before them she should appear in the same form as when going out. There is no difference when she has to appear before a stranger whether it be in her own house or outside it. She must not display her ornaments, but need not cover her face and hands. There is a saying of Ibn-i-Abbas on this point which says: الزينة (الظاهرة) الوجه وكحل العين وخضاب الكف والخاتم فهذا الزينة (الظاهرة) الوجه وكحل العين وخضاب الكف والخاتم فهذا External ornaments include the face, and the blackening of the edge of the eyelids and the dyeing of hands and the ring: these the woman may display in her house to any person who comes to her." As regards children who have not attained to the age of puberty and old men who have lost their force, as well as those who have no need for women, a woman is at liberty to appear before them in her ornaments. Then there are the attendants for whom she has constant need, slaves, male or female, who are treated in a like manner, and before whom a woman may appear in any costume she likes. In all these cases there is however the condition that no part of the body with the exception of her face and hands, and perhaps feet, should be naked.

We have now to see whether according to the Islamic *pardah*, a woman can speak to strangers. Unfortunately the *pardah* in India

as Ibn-i-Hisham and others, that they looked to the wounded in the field of battle, poured water into the mouths of the thirsty from the water-bags which they carried and dressed their wounds. Can it be conceived that they successfully performed these duties with a *pardah* like that which prevails among well-to-do Indian Muhammadans? Again, it is clear to any body who reads the early history of Islam that women assisted their husbands in the cultivation of lands and in other duties. They had their duties in the battlefield which they never hesitated to perform with their best attention. When men went out for battles, a few were left to guard the women and it cannot be supposed that under these circumstances, the strict *pardah* of India could possibly prevail in the early Muhammadan society. Women went to the Holy Prophet when he was sitting with hundreds of men around him and put him question on religious matters or lodged their complaints which were sometimes against their own husbands and fathers, as any one can easily see who takes the trouble to read the history of that people. They were not ignorant of reading and writing and knew both like men. And all these circumstances prevailed as much after the injunction relating to the *pardah* system as before it. And the fact has already been noted how freely men reported traditions from women, and *vice versa*, in the early Muslim society, and this is quite inconsistent with the supposition of the woman's exclusion from society. Thus there is not a single circumstance from which it can be inferred that the *pardah* which prevailed in the early Muslim society disabled women from the performance of their duties.

On the other hand, there is reason to believe that the strictness in the *pardah* was introduced with the increase of power in Islam. As the rough conditions of life prevailing among the early Muslims when both sexes had to work, changed into luxurious habits introduced by the increase of wealth and power, the whole fabric of society underwent a revolution. The *pardah* furnished, among other objects, a distinction between free women and slaves, and consequently it was necessary that the wealthier members of the community should aspire to a higher form of *pardah* and should introduce new distinctions in the simpler *pardah* of early days. Moreover, with the increase of wealth it became less necessary for women to work, and accordingly

they had less occasion to go out. Thus gradually the *pardah* became more and more strict as the conditions of life favored such a change. The higher the position which a woman occupied in society, the less she appeared in public because she had not many occasions to do so. And as the *pardah* became more and more identified with wealth and position, it assumed a stricter form which took root in the Muhammadan society. In India where the Muhammadans appeared as aliens and only as conquerors, it was necessary that the *pardah* should have assumed a stricter form.

We are now in a position to say what the true Islamic *pardah* is. The seclusion of women means that they should not unnecessarily mix with strangers, and that they should not go out of their homes for the mere purpose of showing their attractions, and that with the exception of their faces and hands they should cover their whole body including their garments and ornaments and their hair, with a large outer garment, which is worn in the form of a mantle in Eastern countries, but which in a society living under different conditions may take a different form, an overcoat of simple cloth in the case of European women, for instance, which combined with a suitable head-dress would effect the same purpose. The *pardah* does not forbid women to go out for the transaction of their affairs or to make progress in learning and knowledge or to perform their domestic duties or any other duty which it may be necessary for them to perform. It does not disable them to acquire wealth and property or any rights or obligations with respect to it which men can acquire. In short, without interfering with the liberty which it is necessary for women to enjoy, it points out a way for the mitigation of many evils.

We know that our investigation with regard to the *pardah* cannot satisfy either of the contending parties, but it would certainly help those who want to know the truth. We have considered both sides of the question and we find that the Holy Quran does not support the over strict *pardah* prevailing in the higher grades of Muhammadan society in India, nor can the state of society in general bear such a *pardah*. A man under easy circumstances may not think it necessary to allow his wife to go out of her house, if he does not care for her health, but the majority of people do not belong to this

class. More than three-fourths of the population have to live on their own hard toil and require the assistance of their wives in the performance of many duties. For this vast majority it would be impossible to observe the strict rules which do not allow a woman to go out from her house, or to cover her face and hands if at all allowed. If such rules were generally enforced, they would reduce to poverty the vast majority of people. And as for the women whose resources do not necessitate any work, domestic or of any other nature, it appears to be necessary that they should now and then have walk and breathe the fresh and healthy air of fields and gardens, which would be impossible if they are wrapped up in garments. In order that they may be able to breathe fresh air, it would be necessary to allow them to walk with faces uncovered. As Islam does not promulgate its laws for the chosen few, for those only who enjoy wealth and rank, it is necessary that any institution laid down by it should not be above the power of the vast majority. It is a religion which keeps in view the interests of the poor alike with those of the rich.

2. Some objections against the Pardah system refuted.

Having assigned the limits of the true Islamic *pardah*, it becomes necessary to consider some of the objections against the *pardah* system. The first objection is against its leniency and the evils that are likely to proceed from the freedom allowed to woman to go out with her face partly uncovered. As already stated, the Holy Quran supplies a double remedy. Where it enjoins the *pardah* for the woman, it also makes the provision that when mixing with each other in society, both sexes should observe the rule of abridging their looks, and this, we think, is a far more potent guard of chastity in the two sexes than any other remedy. Such an objection arises, therefore, only from an ignorance of the wise laws introduced by the Holy Quran for the betterment of the world. It would be urged that the injunction relating to the refraining of looks is easy to break and that, therefore, it would have been a more effective check to enjoin the women not to go out altogether, or, if sometimes necessary, to go out wholly covered. But these are simply pleasing suggestions which

cannot be carried into practice in the case of the vast majority of the population in any society. Islam looks to the needs of the masses and does not promulgate its laws for the chosen few. If the latter think themselves above the masses and the laws made for their comfort, they are at liberty to make their own laws for themselves, but this does not entitle them to question the desirability of the laws which are made for the general body of mankind. Is it not true that 80 per cent of the population in any society or even more than that, cannot afford to adhere to the strict rules of the prevalent *pardah*? Are they not human beings? Are they not Muslims, and in some cases more conscientious Muslims than the chosen few, who look down upon them from the artificially raised platform of rank and dignity? We may be great men and may think this or that rule to be necessary for us, because our jealousy is not satisfied with the laws governing the generality of mankind, but the question is, was Islam made for the rich men only? Are its ordinances to suit the comforts of the chosen few or the generality of mankind? Let not the vanity of being wealthier than our brethren take us so far as to hate the principles upon which humanity can work. The principles of Islam being based upon a consideration for the welfare of the generality of mankind, its injunction of the *pardah* has not disregarded the needs of that generality.

Many men who would turn away in disgust from this exposition of the doctrine of *pardah*, would find it hard to make their own lives conformable to the stricter rules of the *pardah* which they think to be necessary. The Holy Quran does not allow any of the husband's relatives except his father and sons to come within the inner family circle where a woman is at liberty to display her ornaments. But, with rare exceptions if any, there is not a single family which practically does not admit into the inner circle many male members of the family, related either to the woman or her husband, besides those named in the Holy Quran. And the result is that while strictness is sought to be introduced into the *pardah*, women are allowed to appear in their ornaments before many men whom the Holy Quran considers strangers in the matter of *pardah*. A woman is as much forbidden to display her ornaments to her uncle's or aunt's sons or to her husband's brothers or nephews as to any other stranger, but

the question is if these relatives are treated in any Indian household which sticks to the strict *pardah*, as being on a par with strangers. How do all these difficulties arise? Simply on account of devising rules for our guidance not set down in the Muslim law. Had moderation in the *pardah* system not been departed from, the rules laid down in the Holy Quran would not have been thus infringed. In short, the chosen few who consider it a disgrace for them that their women, if they ever go out, should have any part of their faces uncovered, and who accordingly look upon the vast majority as mere beasts and brutes, are compelled to introduce into the inner circle of their families, many male members whom the Holy Quran regards as strangers in the matter of *pardah*. All these facts lead to but one conclusion, *viz.*, that the varied circumstances of human life make it necessary very often that the face of a woman should remain uncovered when she has to appear before those to whom she is not allowed to display her ornaments.

There is another aspect of this question. It cannot be denied that the eyes of a woman shall have to be left open if nothing else. She has, therefore, every chance to look at men, and contract improper relations if that is a necessary result of such liberty. For women are as much liable to fall into temptation by looking at the faces of men, as men by looking at the faces of women. Thus it would be seen that no rule adopted by men can bring about the desired good. It is only the wise rule laid down by the Holy Quran, *viz.*, that men and women should both refrain their looks, that would ultimately be seen to be an effective remedy against any evil which is likely to proceed from the necessary mixing of the two sexes, for the mixing of the two sexes can never be avoided so long as the world exists.

The second objection against the *pardah* system is that it fosters ignorance and impedes the growth of knowledge and learning. This objection is based really upon an ignorance of the true Islamic *pardah*, and we are bound to vindicate Islam from this charge by saying that the *pardah* system does not in any way interfere with the education of women. To draw such an inference from the existing conditions of Muslim society, is to draw the most unnatural conclusion. As already

~~explained, where was the very *pardah* in England, yet as the *Review*~~
 Volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica tell us, "before the acces-

sion of Queen Victoria, there was no systematic education for English women." And among the Muslim, there have been many educated and highly learned women. Ayesha, the wife of the Holy Prophet, was well-versed in Arabic poetry and knew thousands of Arabic verses by heart which she could quote when occasion required. Hafsa, also a wife of the Holy Prophet, also knew both reading and writing, as appears from reliable traditions. There were many other women among the companions of the Holy Prophet highly reputed for learning and wisdom. The *Isaba*, a history of the companions of the Holy Prophet, thus speaks of a woman named *Shafa* who taught the art of writing to Hafsa, وكان عمر يقدّمها في الرأي "And the caliph Omar used to give her opinion a preference over the opinions of many others, and gave her great consideration and regarded her with distinction and sometimes gave her charge of the affairs of the market." The later history of Islam reveals to us many illustrious women, poetesses and literary and learned women. In short, it is the most unfounded charge that the *pardah* system keeps the woman in ignorance. On the other hand, it allows her greater opportunities of making intellectual progress if her means allow of it. The time that is wasted in flirting and making unnecessary show in a society which does not observe the *pardah* system, may be turned to excellent use by a woman who keeps modestly to her own house except when it is necessary for her to go out. The present condition of the backwardness of the Muslims does not affect the women in particular, so that it may be necessary to ascribe it to the *pardah*.

The same question may be considered from another point of view. If Islam deals severely with woman in other matters too, then indeed the *pardah* may be considered to have been intended as a check upon her natural freedom, a bar to her activity and a hinderance to her acquirement of knowledge. But if Islam deals with woman leniently, so leniently indeed as to give her rights which the civilised Europe has granted only imperfectly after centuries of pressing demands, then the *pardah* system too must be considered as a benefit conferred upon woman and upon society in general, a beneficial and healthy step calculated to uproot evils against which human efforts are powerless

In the first place then, Islam does not place the barrier of sex in the way of woman to progress. It does not say that such and such a labour or such and such a profession is not open to woman. We do not mean to say that it is consistent with the position of woman as woman, with her position in the family which is the unit of society, to take to any profession at her will, but only that if circumstances allow her and if she possesses the capability for it, the Islamic law does not say that she is debarred from it. Thus has Islam removed from the woman's way the greatest obstacle which could hinder her progress. The immense value of the removal of this great obstacle would be better appreciated by the reader if he has studied the slow progress of the woman's movement in the West. For many centuries has the woman in Europe been placed under disabilities unknown to her in Islam. Under Islam a woman can sue or be sued personally, either in civil or criminal law. There are many such cases narrated in the traditions in which women went personally to the Holy Prophet and sued even their husbands and fathers. So under the earlier caliphs too. Fatima, the daughter of the Holy Prophet, personally brought a suit for her share in certain lands before Abu Bakar, the first caliph, in spite of her high dignity and position, and the fact that her husband Ali was living at the time, and the dismissal of that suit formed an important schism in Islam which continues to this day. Similarly, there was no hinderance to a woman occupying any position of responsibility, and the case of Omar, the second caliph, who used to consult a woman on important matters and gave her charge of the affairs of the market, has already been cited. Perhaps, a military position is farthest away from woman's sphere and capability, but Islam affords instances of this also, and no less a revered personage than Ayesha personally fought in battles. What have the detractors of Islam got to say against these facts? Islam further conferred upon woman the same rights of the acquirement of property as upon man. Whether married or unmarried she can hold movable or immovable property on her own account, can acquire rights and incur liabilities with respect to it, can contract debts and arrange for their payment, can dispose of her property by testament or otherwise to the same extent as men can do, can share along with the male heirs, and occupies the same position in all these matters as men do. We wonder at the ignorance of men who dare to set all these advantages at naught only because Islam enjoins the *pardah*. The man must be a dunce indeed who regards

the *pardah* to be so great an evil as to overbalance all these advantages. The detractors of the *pardah* system do not even consider that when Islam granted a woman all rights of the acquirement of property, it could never have meant that she should do nothing to improve it. The acquirement of knowledge is another great advantage which Islam conferred upon woman. Not only it does not place any barrier in the way of woman to acquire knowledge, but along with men it exhorts women for this purpose. Nor is it consistent with reason to suppose that a religion which conferred upon woman so many rights, could debar her from the acquirement of knowledge, and the facts of Muslim history give the lie to such a conclusion. The *pardah* system is not in the least a hinderance to the education of woman, nor is the absence of *pardah* an incentive to her education.

In dealing with the above question, *viz.*, that the *pardah* is far from being an obstacle in the education of woman, we have also shown that it is not a bar to the activity of woman in any sphere of action which she may choose for herself. We have now to consider another objection against the *pardah*, lately advanced by the Bishop of Lahore. It is asserted that the *pardah* system signifies a want of trust, and that women are kept in seclusion because it is feared that if they go out they would deviate from the right course of conduct. There is some misconception and some misstatement in this objection. Islam does not prohibit women from going out: it only prohibits them from flirting and showing their decorations for the purpose of attracting attention. But the question would be, why does Islam place any limitation at all upon the going out of women? Why does it prohibit them from displaying their ornaments to men? Is it because of any want of trust in the strength of woman? It is a little difficult to define that term, "trust," in the first place. Does confidence in a woman's chastity imply that she should be allowed to place herself in every sort of temptation? Or is there no confidence unless every possible temptation is cast into her way? We do not know in what sense Christianity understands "trust": its doctrine of atonement would lead one to think that trust and action are opposed to each other, for its own trust in the forgiveness of God amounts to doing nothing for deserving His forgiveness. To a man who was going to let loose his camel while he thought that he was trusting on God for his return, the Holy Prophet

said: "Bind the fore-shank of thy camel to his arm and then trust in God." Such is the plain and common-sense teaching of Islam. It teaches a man to do every thing that lies in his power for the attainment of an object and then trust to God. This illustrates the sense in which Islam takes "trust." It makes every provision that it can to guard the chastity of men and women and then trusts in their chastity. We cannot understand the kind of confidence which our Christian friends desire us to place in our fellow-beings. It would be as correct to say that the enjoining of the *pardah* upon woman denotes a want of confidence as to say that to place a guard upon one's property indicates a want of confidence in all others. This is perfectly absurd. When a man locks his cash-box, he never thinks that by so doing he is guilty of having no confidence in the honesty of his wife and friends. Nor would any Christian Missionary object to such a step on his part. For, if he leaves his box open and asserts as his reason for doing so that he confides in the honesty of those who come to him, he is taking a step which would ultimately lead him to suspect the honesty of those who are really honest. Why do Governments place watches upon their treasures? Not because they think that there is no honest man among their subjects, but because it is better to guard against those who are dishonest, no society being free from the existence of such men. And what is the boasted confidence of Christians? How often have outward friends proved to be the source of mischief. It was with a painful heart that the judges had to remark in divorce cases brought by husbands who had been abroad fighting for their countrymen in Transvaal, how ostensible friends had betrayed the confidence which was placed in them and contracted illegal connections with their friends' wives. Was it due to the fact that there were more depraved men in English society than anywhere else? Not at all. The whole mischief was brought about by placing too great a confidence, and not placing any check upon the too free intercourse of men and women. Would any conscientious man call it a confidence in the chastity of two young persons who are under the control of their passions that they should be allowed to go where they like? Is it not "flinging temptation broadcast in the way of youth and inexperience" in the words of a Christian dignitary? But when Islam proposes a remedy for this evil, we are told that it shows a want of confidence.

The object of Islam is the purification of hearts, and it cannot be seriously doubted that the too free mixing of women with strangers makes a way for the entrance of evil ideas into the heart. Education has not done all and cannot do all that can be desired in this respect. Intellectually great men and women are not necessarily free from moral drawbacks and they are as liable to stumble before temptation as the ignorant. Something must be done to make the occasions of temptation fewer, and this Islam has done by enjoining the woman to conceal her attractions and ornaments when going out for necessary business, and by putting a stop to the too free mixing of women with strangers, and by further ordering both men and women to restrain their looks when coming into the presence of each other. It should also be noted that the injunction to woman not to display her ornaments does not show a want of confidence in her, but in those with whom she must come into contact. For she can become the cause of exciting lust in a man's heart without the least knowledge that she is or has been the occasion of such temptation. But a confidence in her chastity and strength of character does not mean a confidence in the chastity of every person whom she chances to meet. She is, therefore, enjoined to appear, when it is necessary for her to appear, in the society of men with as few attractions as possible so that there may be no temptation to the weak of heart and to those in whom the passions and desires are not yet perfectly subdued.

(It would perhaps be asserted that though the *pardah* system did not directly interfere with the education and progress of women, yet the paucity of women of high attainments in the circle of Islam is sufficient evidence that the *pardah* system indirectly contributed to the ignorance and backwardness of Muhammadan women. Now in the first place, if the condition of Muhammadan women in the early days of Islam is compared with the condition of the women of any other nation of that time or of an earlier civilisation, it would be seen that the Muhammadan women far excelled all other women.) (And then there is the further fact that a woman under the *pardah* system has more of modesty than the love of admiration and of being noticed by every body, and so as she does not seek prominence, she has fewer chances of obtaining a fame in a wider circle, unless she is a woman of literary attainments in which case her fame must necessarily reach other ears. Thirdly, the mean

of the vast spread of education which we have at our disposal, did not exist in those days, and consequently it is a mistake to institute a comparison between two societies placed under totally different circumstances.) Fourthly, the numerous domestic duties of women at an earlier period can hardly be conceived by Western women of the present generation, who are disencumbered of some of their domestic duties by machinery and of others by neglect. In fact there are many minor duties in home life by attending to which a woman can make a happy home, though she would not be talked of in the society of great men and women for their performance. The question is, in what does the practical usefulness of woman lie? It is within the home and in the performance of domestic duties, whose importance in the home can hardly be exaggerated, but to which much importance would not be attached in society unless it is recognised that the family is the unit of society and that the happiness of the former constitutes the real happiness of the latter.)

In dealing with the woman's domestic duties, we may consider another objection against the *pardah* system, upon which Mr. Dilawar Husain Ahmad has recently laid much stress. To this gentleman "the word *pardah* does not adequately convey the significance of female seclusion," but the real curse of the system according to him is that it "deprives both sexes of a large share of happiness; and deprives the female sex of the interchange of thoughts and of participation in the knowledge of the male sex." These are the words of a passionate lover, we should say, a blind admirer, of Western civilization, and he sees two vital objections against the *pardah* system, viz., that it deprives the male sex of the happiness of freely mixing with and enjoying the conversation of the female sex, and that it deprives the female sex of participation in the knowledge of the male sex. Mr. Dilawar Husain has a curious way of putting every statement in an exaggerated form. To the strictest adherent of the *pardah*, Mr. Dilawar Husain would appear to be speaking of an imaginary society. Is it that nothing but exaggerated misstatements as to the condition of the Muhammadan society can support his cause? (His objections are against a society in which no male member of the society has ever any access to any female member, not even the husband to his wife, the father to his daughter, the son to his mother or the brother to his sister.) He says: "In every

Indian household the male sex and the female sex live apart, sit apart, converse apart, work apart, eat apart and visit apart." This is absolutely false. In the household the male and the female members live together, sit together, converse together and eat together : of course, they work apart. The *pardah* or exclusion extends to those who are not in the household, to strangers and to men distantly related to the woman. With all its strictness the Indian *pardah* is severely misrepresented by this Muhammadan detractor of Islam. The *pardah* does not deprive the male sex of the company of the females or *vice versa* : it only limits the sphere. What Mr. Dilawar Husain wants is really nothing but that when a man is not pleased with the company or conversation of his own wife, he should be allowed to enjoy the company of other women and the pleasure of their conversation. To what extent he wants this liberty to be extended may be known to himself. In like manner he wants the woman to have full liberty to enjoy the company of other young and brilliant people. That is not allowed in a Muhammadan household or in Islamic law. Pleasure may be drawn from many sources, but the question in every case would be, whether the enjoyment of such pleasure is legal or illegal. The question of happiness is not, therefore, so important as the question of its legality. Has not an adulterer nor a seducer the same excuse, *viz.*, that the deed is a source of pleasure to him. A thief or a dacoit can also plead that he draws pleasure from the possession of wealth which he has done nothing to earn. Has Mr. Dilawar Husain considered if all these are valid excuses ? If not, does not the whole question turn upon this that it is not lawful for us to advance pleasure as an excuse when the same deed would bring pain and misery to others ? We have a right to enjoy that which belongs to us and to draw a pleasure from it. Where does Mr. Dilawar Husain draw the line ? His answer would be easy. He thinks the limits which Islam has placed to be too narrow, and he wants to extend these limits to those recognised in the Western society, not that there is any particular reason for doing so, but because his love for the manners of the West requires it. But as a matter of fact the West is beginning to see the harms of this extreme freedom. (At a meeting at the Caxton Hall on the subject of the *pardah*, Major-General Dickson is reported to have remarked the other day that "with certain modifications he was in favor of the *pardah* in the

East," while Mrs. Theodore Beck contended "that the extreme freedom with which women in the West could mix with strangers was undesirable.")

Our friends in India who are decrying the evils of the *pardah* do not seem to have given a moment's serious reflection to the harms of the extreme freedom with which men and women mix in the European society. The happiness which is aimed at by the extension of intimate relations between men and women belonging to different families, may or may not have been achieved, but it cannot be denied that it has deprived many families of their true happiness. (What is it that has wrecked the happiness of many families, and brought about a tragic end of happy married life in many cases? We are bound to say that all these evils flow from one source, the free mixing of women with strangers.) The destruction of happiness brought about within one family by the husband or wife contracting improper relations with a third person, more than counterbalances the alleged happiness which a thousand persons may draw from the company of such a traitor to pure and sacred love. (The love of the husband is the property of the wife and the love of the wife is the husband's property, and sad is the lot of the people who do not care to guard this property with the same jealous eye as they would guard their pecuniary interests.) (We do not say that every love so contracted would be impure, but the difficulty is where to draw the line once that the limit is broken.) Would it not be the natural result of such license that when a wife is no longer capable of giving pleasure to her husband or the husband to her wife, other and illegal connections would be sought. That this is a fact and not a mere supposition would be apparent to any one who cares to read the reports of divorce cases. The *pardah* system is a remedy for this evil inasmuch as by limiting the sphere of these connections it takes away temptation.

We again press upon the detractors of the *pardah* the necessity of drawing the line where such connections should be stopped, for, we suppose, Mr. Dilawar Husain does not mean to propose that any man may have any connection that he likes with another woman, not his own wife. Adultery, though it has ceased to be a crimi-

nal offence, an offence against the peace of society, in many European countries, is still looked upon, we understand, as a moral offence. Unacquainted as we are with the circumstances of Western life, it may not be quite clear to us why one who picks a man's pocket and takes away one shilling should be regarded as a criminal, though the taking away of that shilling may not have diminished the man's happiness, and why another who brings ruin and misery upon a whole family and destroys all its happiness by committing adultery with a man's wife or by seducing his daughter, should not be looked upon with the same, if not greater, disfavour by law, it is unquestionable that adultery is not looked upon as allowable according to the moral feelings of any civilised nation, Eastern or Western, as yet. The next question would then be, is every connection besides adultery allowable? Here there may be a difference of opinion. According to the notions of morality and chastity prevailing among the Muhammadan nations, many of the deeds arising from the connections of a man and a woman who do not stand to each other in the legal relation of husband and wife which are permissible in the Western society, are looked upon as preliminaries of adultery and to be as horrible as adultery itself. It is to the prevention of such deeds that the *pardah* in the Muhammadan law is directed, and if to guard against these does not appear to be profitable to Mr. Dilawar Husain, it would be difficult to convince him. Among a people who do not look upon adultery and seduction as crimes at all, or at least not as crimes of a serious nature, the preliminaries to adultery or seduction would not be regarded with serious disfavour, but to a Muslim they are the blackest deeds. If then adultery and seduction are to be hated or feared, it would be necessary to put a stop to acts of illegal connection, by which we mean any connection between two persons who are not related to each other as husband and wife, acts which though not amounting to adultery and seduction actually, prepare the way to these evils which are the greatest enemies of human happiness. Now so long as women are allowed to mix freely with strangers, so long as two young persons of the two sexes have every chance to be alone, nothing can be done to check this evil. The holy religion of Islam is not satisfied with the imperfect morality which does not look upon seduction and adultery and their preliminaries as horrible things, but teaches a perfect morality, and requires a purity of the heart which

is not disturbed by any evil idea. The extreme freedom of the West is inconsistent with such purity of mind, and Mr. Dilawar Husain is at liberty to take the one or the other as his model.

In short, Mr. Dilawar Husain's first objection against the *pardah* turns out to be a mere delusion when considered closely. He thinks that the *pardah* system deprives society of a large share of happiness by shutting out the company of women from strangers. The *pardah* system is a guard of true and legal happiness and makes provision against its disturbance. True happiness to a man does not flow from the company of strange women, but from that of his own wife, and it is this happiness, the happiness of the home, which the *pardah* system guards against every attack. The false happiness which Mr. Dilawar Husain hankers after, is an enemy to the happiness of the family, and the source of misery and pain to society. Those who put themselves into the position of reformers, ought to reflect over both sides of a question and should not be so carried away by an apparent attraction of a measure as to lose sight of the evil and harm which it produces, especially when the evil is of a far greater consequence than any advantage which it is likely to produce. It is wonderful to find a man who considers the possession of "a second wife as having the effect of too prominently directing men's minds to the sensual passions," advocating that men should freely mix with women and draw pleasure from their conversation and company. Sensuality must be a strange thing indeed if it does arise from the legal connection of man and woman, but not from their illegal connection. The real question is not a very complicated one. If the *pardah* system does not interfere with the education of woman and her liberty to work, and we have shown that it does not, its removal would bring about nothing but misery and loss of happiness. It is sometimes asserted that the *pardah* should be replaced by education, but it is not considered that education alone has not been able to bring about the desired end. The results which education has hitherto attained, do not justify us in taking it to be a sufficient safeguard. Let education contribute its share of developing the human character, let it produce the strength of understanding and the strength of character which it can, and then let these effects combined with the *pardah* uproot one of the greatest evils which affects human society.

Having shown that the pleasure which can be obtained from the company of strange women, can only be obtained at the sacrifice of the happiness of home, the true happiness of man, we now proceed to consider Mr. Dilawar Husain's second objection to the *pardah* system, viz., that it interferes with the interchange of thoughts between the two sexes and thus deprives the female sex of participation in the knowledge of the male sex. In fact, the detractors of the *pardah* system and the upholders of the stricter form of *pardah*, are both guilty of the same mistake. They do not consider the needs of the generality, and ignoring the vast majority of humanity limit their observation to the elect few or to cases which must really be considered as exceptions and which do not entitle us to make general rules on their basis. The question to be considered is, what is the proper sphere of woman's action, not the intellectual woman for she is a rarity and her case must be considered as an exception but the working woman to which class the vast majority of women in the world belongs. In what does the practical usefulness of woman lie? That is the question which settles the point. If we can conceive of a state of society in which intellectual pursuits should be the only, or at least the most important, occupation of woman, the point raised by Mr. Dilawar Husain would then deserve a deep consideration indeed. But is such a state of things possible? Can it be hoped that the vast majority of men and women living in the world, would ever get rid of all sorts of work and labour? There is nothing which can warrant such a supposition. Civilization, if it has done any thing, has given greater impetus to work and opened new fields of labour, though it has no doubt introduced many facilities at the same time. So far as our present means of knowledge can entitle us to draw any inference, the only conclusion we reach is that the vast majority of men and women must continue to work, and that intellectual pursuits must remain limited to a very small circle. The real mistake made by both the extreme parties in reference to the *pardah* system, consists in their consideration, from two opposite points of view, of the needs, not of the generality, but of the elect few, and accordingly the conclusions of both of them are based on unsafe premises.

Many men would, no doubt, be disgusted when they are

told that the proper sphere of woman's action is her fireside. Place woman in her true position, her position in the family as wife or mother, which she must continue to occupy so long as the world exists, and it will be at once clear that it is the faithful and untiring performance of domestic duties which gives rise to woman's importance in society. It is easy to talk, in the words of Mr. Dilawar Husain, of woman's "heavenly and angelic nature born of love which she so often displays upon earth," but how, when and where is this heavenly and angelic nature displayed? Is it displayed in attending scientific lectures, or making political disturbances or holding discussions in public assemblies, or is the true manifestation of this heavenly nature observed in the little acts, little in the eyes of strangers but great in worth, of kindness done to husbands, brothers and sons, in the patience and perseverance shown in the doing of kind offices for the sick, the aged and the feeble and in the deeds of charity done to humanity at large? Mr. Dilawar Husain would seem to take the former view, but not so the rest of the world. It is the home which brings the highest attributes of woman's character into action, and it is in work that her noblest qualities are displayed. Now the mere increase of intellectual attainments does not in any way assist in bringing the higher qualities of woman into exercise, and accordingly the one thing needed for woman in general—we do not consider here exceptional cases—is not a wide sphere of conversation with the male members of society. She has her own sphere of conversation in the family and it is her congenial conversation there that can sweeten human life and bring comfort to those who depend upon her.

There is another misunderstanding in this objection which requires to be removed. For participation in a person's knowledge, we do not depend solely upon conversation with that person. Had it been so, the whole world besides the few who had opportunities of such conversation would have been deprived of the knowledge of great men. Happily we can enjoy the conversation and company of great men and women while sitting in the corner of solitude, and with a good taste it is possible for us to choose the best men. As to the mania for conversation, it is a thing to be hated and not a thing to be desired. It is the result of this mania that every body tries to become somebody in society, and conversation is indulged in to produce

a temporary effect upon the hearers and thus to become notable men and women in society. Conversation has thus ceased to be natural because it does not flow as a matter of fact as conversation between friends or conversation in a family. Every body tries to say something so that he may be a prominent figure in society. Such conversation should be discouraged even among men, to say nothing of its being introduced into the circle of women.

To be continued.

Notes and Comments.

The doctrine of *Niyoga*, as taught by the Arya Samaj, has been
THE NIYOGA. commented upon in these pages on more occasions than one. Sometime ago, the attention of the Samaj was drawn to the fact that if the performance of the *Niyoga* was really a deed of great merit, and if it was not opposed to the coarsest idea of morality, a list may be published containing the names of the men and women who had formed such connections among themselves, so that the public may be convinced that the Samaj itself acted up to the principles taught by its founder and that it saw nothing wrong in a custom which was regarded as a horrible evil throughout the whole world. This demand the Arya Samajists have not had the moral courage to comply with. But the subject of *Niyoga* has been recently taken up for discussion by the Samaj, and we may hope that the Samaj organs will give the public some satisfactory exposition of this doctrine and will also satisfy it as to the statistics demanded so often. We are glad to notice that the Brahmo Samaj is also pressing that demand upon the Arya Samaj, as appears from the following remarks of the *Unity and Minister* :—

“*The Arya Samaj idea of morality.*—It only proves the existence of a great anomaly in human nature when we find that the Arya Samajists, in spite of their enlightenment in other respects and philanthropic endeavour to raise the condition of the country, should fail to understand one of the first principles of morality. We have been surprised to find the zeal and complacency with which they advocate

and evidently practise, what is called "*Neo-Yoga*" or the practice of knowing a woman other than one's own wife for the purpose of raising the seed. One of the Arya leaders in course of an address which he had delivered in one of their meetings, has advocated the defenceless immoral system with a relish and defended it; one of the Arya organs held the horrible custom as a panacea of all evil, and avows that those whose moral sense revolts against this infamous custom were but pitiable human beings destined to perish in ignorance. Can human blindness go further? When a man is led astray by dogmatic or theological blindness, it is a hopeless task to convince him of his errors. But the simple truth told in politer language would be that the practice is nothing less than the breaking of the seventh commandment. Will our Arya friends publish statistics of persons—men and women (mentioning their names and addresses in detail) who have actually formed such connections among themselves."

We have omitted the concluding words of these remarks as the *Arya Patrika* complains of their severity. But we are sorry to note that it has been made an excuse for not attempting an answer. If there is any severity in the remarks it has been justly called forth by the repugnance of this doctrine to the moral feelings of man. Ordinarily when an erroneous doctrine or injurious institution is to be attacked, it becomes necessary to use words somewhat harsh in their nature, but so repulsive is the doctrine of *Niyoga* that decent controversial literature would not bear its description in the mildest words, not even in the words which are used in the sacred book of the Arya Samaj, but this unpleasant task must sometimes be undertaken by a critic and no sensible person would censure him for doing it. So long as the principles of a religion are discussed and personalities are not indulged in, the critic is excusable, for it is not his fault that indecent doctrines are given a place in the code of the religious beliefs of a people. It is for this reason that we hold Mr. Har Dayal, M.A., to be perfectly right in moving the resolution that "this meeting of the citizens of Lahore resolves that the effects of *Niyog* on the moral tone of our society are pernicious and dangerous." If the Arya Samaj is desirous that the doctrine of *Niyoga* should be treated like ordinary religious beliefs, it is its duty to satisfy the public that there is nothing indecent about this custom or that such announcements in the

Arya papers as that women desirous of subjecting themselves to the *Niyoga* should communicate with such and such a person, are really edifying and ennobling.

In a lecture delivered at the Church Congress at Bristol, on "Christianity and other religions," the Rev. H. G. Grey, late Missionary of the C. M. S. in the Punjab, and now Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, remarked, while comparing Islam with Christianity, that the sacred book of Islam, the Holy Quran "brings in nothing new, beyond the ordinary light of nature, either to expose sin or deliver from its power. There is nothing like the crucified Christ or the risen Christ in his system." This is a fact which no Muhammadan is ashamed to admit that the holy religion of Islam is free from the absurdities of Atonement and Trinity. As surely as there is a God who created the world, and as surely as He revealed to men the method by which they could be delivered from the power of sin, as surely is atonement the innovation of man and an evil instead of a panacea. Does it never strike the Christians who pose to be believers in the old Testament Revelation, that God should have continued to reveal a false remedy for deliverance from sin for thousands of years and should thus have Himself led men into error and falsehood. If the remedy suggested by Islam is not the true remedy, then the Christians must admit that God misled numerous generations by granting them a false revelation, which is no other than the revelation which is admitted by the Christians to be a Divine revelation to this day. And wonder of wonders, that the remedy which occurred to God after thousands of years, could not hold its own against the world for more than seventeen or eighteen centuries, as the Christian world with the exception of a few blind zealots has to admit that the doctrine of atonement is not a remedy for sin and that the risen Christ is a fable. The greatest dignitaries of the Christian Church believe and teach, and to this the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* bears witness, that the accounts of the crucifixion "exhibit contradictions of the most glaring kind." And as it is only upon these contradictory accounts that the belief in a "crucified Christ" is based, it is certain that no single unimpeachable witness of the event can be had. Thus th

"Crucified Christ or the risen Christ" vanishes into nothing in the eyes of the greatest Christians of to-day, and hence the atonement and the supposed deliverance from sin are nothing but delusions of which all thinking Christians are undeceived after eighteen centuries. If there is any positive proof that Christ died upon the cross or that he rose from the dead, and that the Gospels are reliable, then indeed the Christians would have some reason to assert that they miss something desirable in Islam, although even then the thing missed would turn out to be the sheerest absurdity, for what greater absurdity can there be than the assertion that one man died and with him died the spirit of disobedience to God in all men. But, if they cannot afford any proof of the events on which this supposed deliverance from sin is based, then they must try to get rid of this delusion. Islam, no doubt, points out a method for deliverance from the power of evil which is in consonance with reason and in accordance with the laws of nature, and which according to the admission of Christians was revealed to hundreds of generations by Almighty God. It is a wonder that rational beings should object to such a reasonable and natural method.

No people have held with greater tenacity to their religion and religious customs than the Jews, and yet so strong is the current of atheism that 10,000 East Side (New York) Jews have openly declared themselves to be atheists, while it is stated that many more disbelieve in secret and are afraid to avow the fact openly because of the fear of "family displeasure or loss of business." Never was a Divine Messenger more needed than at the present time, and yet the Christian Missionaries tell us that Divine revelation and heavenly signs were not needed after the time of the apostles. This is the time at which one is needed who by the powerful manifestation of signs beyond the power of man, should bring back to the world an assurance in the existence of God. And such a one Almighty God has raised in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. Let those who entertain any doubt as to the existence of God, come to him and have their faith strengthened. Stories of the past which contain more of fiction than fact, cannot satisfy the world: it is only the living water of heavenly revelation that can bring back faith and assurance.

TEMPORARY MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

It is strange to find Christendom recognising one by one the principles taught by Islam and yet giving out that Islam is not suited for the civilized nations of the West. Marriage has always been considered by the Christian Church to be a union which can never be broken. But this has practically proved to be the greatest failure. "The fact is," says the *Truth Seeker*, "that thousands of couples who reject the theory, and view marriage as a wholly human arrangement, dissoluble at will, live together until death parts them, while just as many thousands who assent to the spiritual view are separate in all but bed and board—sometimes in these also—and lead lives like those of the brute orders of creation." What a miserable failure have the wrong principles of Christianity proved to be! Human nature cannot bear any thing against its requirements.

Mr. George Meredith, the famous novelist, proposes a reform in marriage, and is desirous of introducing the terminable system of marriage, that is the marriage-tie coming to dissolution of itself after a certain period, say ten years. Such extreme proposals are the result of a general dissatisfaction with the institutions laid down by Christianity. At the root of this proposal lies the idea that the marriage-tie should be easily dissoluble, and if the intervention of Courts of Justice in matters of divorce, which is an unbearable burden, is taken away, the same result would be achieved without the mischief which a temporary marriage system must work. Had Christendom adopted the principle of Islam with regard to divorce, its difficulties would have been easily solved. But adopt it, it will, sooner or later, and the present re-action against the impracticable principles of Christianity is a clear sign of the recognition of the truth of Islamic principles in the near future.

Review.

M. Abdul Rahman, a convert to Islam, has written a book called the *Ikhtiar-ul-Islam* (the adoption of Islam) in three parts, in which he has discussed the principles of the Arya Samaj at full length, and has also shown that Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was a Muslim. The work does credit

to its author. It can be had from the author who is a teacher in the Talim-ul-Islam High School at Qadian, for Re. 1-2-0.

"The Islamia College Monthly" is a magazine started in the interests of the Islamia College, Lahore, and edited by its able Principal, M. A. Ghani, B.A. It is hoped that the Magazine will prove itself of use to students if it undertakes to throw light on some of the questions which are vexing the minds of the educated Muhammadans. It is printed on 18 large pages. Annual subscription is Rs. 2; for students Re. 1-8.

The Zia-ul-Islam is a weekly religious paper, issued in the interests of Islam from Amritsar. It seems to be free from sectarian discussions. Annual subscription is moderate, being only Re. 1-12-0.

Though the Bible has lost all interest at Home, it is yet making some noise in the world. "The Bible in the World" has been started by the Bible Society to report month by month "the operations of the Bible Society as it seeks to spread God's book without note or comment among all the nations and in all the languages of the world." The Bible Society has, of course, the means and may do what it likes, but there are two questions which we would like to have answered by any member of the Society. In the first place, is the Bible recognised to be God's book by the leading Christians and Churchmen? If on a critical examination, the Bible has proved to be the work of men, not of the inspired men to whom it is attributed, but of others coming long after them, and if it contains more of myth than history, as the writers of the Encyclopaedia Biblica tell us, is it not cheating to tell foreigners that it is God's book. What has the Bible Society done to establish its Divine origin? If the Bible Society believes, as all Christian thinkers of to-day believe, that the Bible is full of errors, why does it spread these errors in other countries which are free from them? And if it must spread it, it should first sift the truth from error, and then spread the truth only leaving error to perish. Secondly, there is no use giving us the Bible without note or comment, because all that the Bible Society can give is translations, and translations are the ideas of men and not the Word of God. They always stand in need of revision and every now and then errors are found to exist in the texts. Does the Bible Society know that there is not a single Bible in its possession which can be called the Word of God?

End of the Cases

AGAINST THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

The pronouncing of the judgment by the Sessions Judge of Amritsar in the appeals of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Hakim Fazl Din, has brought the defamation case instituted by Karm Din, against the Promised Messiah to an end, and thus fulfilled the prophecy which was published in these pages in the number for July 1903. We are sorry that we cannot fully deal with this subject in this issue, as the judgment was delivered after we had gone into press. We would, however, draw the reader's attention to the prophecy referred to above which was given a wide circulation more than eighteen months before its fulfilment, and at a time when the cases were yet in a very early stage. The prophecy was to the following effect as our readers can see by a reference to the Volume of 1903.

In accordance with this prophecy the case has been decided in favour of the Promised Messiah. As regards the cases instituted by the followers of the Promised Messiah against Karm Din, the latter was punished with fine in the defamation case brought against him by S. Yaqoob Ali. The result of these cases is, no doubt, a clear proof of the existence of God and of His mighty power and knowledge. All praise is to Him who has thus brought His Word to fulfilment.

We have not been able to send with this number the index to the last year's volume. We hope to send it with the next issue.

A PROPHECY WITH REGARD TO THE END OF THE CASES.

BY THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

On Monday night, *i.e.*, the night between 28th and 29th June 1903, a heavenly magnetism took possession of my ideas, and my

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attention was drawn to the question: 'What will be the end of the criminal cases instituted by Maulvi Karm Din of Bhin (Jhelum district), against me or those instituted by some of my followers against the said Karm Din?' Under the influence of this magnetism my condition was changed to one in which the Divine revelation is granted, and the Word of God came to me: *ان الله مع الذين اتقوا والذين هم محسنون فيه آيات للسائلين* The following interpretation of these words was also infused into my mind: "Of the two parties to these cases, Almighty God will be with those, and will grant assistance and victory to them, who are righteous, do not tell lies, are not unjust, do not bring forward false charges, do not unjustly oppress others by deception, fraud and dishonestly and shun every evil, and who, on account of the fear of God, are true sympathisers and well-wishers of their fellow-beings and do good to them, and who are not led by their passions to bestiality, iniquity and evil, but who are ever ready to do good to every one. These are the people to whom the decisions of these cases will be favourable. Then will not only one sign but many signs appear for those who inquire as to the party which is in the right," and peace be on those who follow truth and guidance.

QADIAN:

29th June, 1903.