

Fruits for the Week

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Women and the challenges of the modern world

(continued from last week)

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2. Civilizational threat

The second major challenge we face today in the so-called modern world is also serious in nature. Our human history of the past five million years of existence on this planet tells us that, whenever the sense of belonging to a family becomes weak, no civilization can sustain itself. Romans and Greeks enriched the human civilization with valuable ideas in philosophy, literature, art and architecture. Yet when their family values were diluted, they could not survive any more, not to say retain their glory.

The West, in the name of personal liberty, has introduced individualism as a lifestyle. The family is diminished. Consequently many youths feel no importance of the family. Considering family life a burden, they prefer to live together as friends. This lifestyle, perhaps, can meet some of their bodily needs, but it is an anti-civilizational approach to human existence. The family is not only a social unit; it is the most important social and cultural institution. The nurturing of human character and personality is greatly indebted to the family. It is the institution by which cultural values, moral standards and social norms are transferred to the younger generation. The disintegration of the family and the emergence of cohabitation -- an arrangement between two persons to live together with no deep sense of moral and legal responsibilities -- will lead to the breakdown of civilization.

Family is the basic unit on which any civilization is built. If family is lost, and people just live together as an economic unit, it is bound to bring the human civilization to an end.

Women, not only Muslims but all women of the

world, have to realize the seriousness of this challenge and uphold family values in order to save the human civilization. If we allow the family to be dissolved in the name of personal liberty, if we allow cohabitation -- some cases even witness partners of the same gender, it is bound to bring a total collapse of civilization. With no moral or legal bounds, with no continuity of family traditions through children, within two generations we might see the total decline and breakdown of our present civilization.

3. Consumerism

The third major challenge we face today is a result of the capitalist economy, namely, consumerism. In our race for material gains we have become victims of consumerism. Our dietary habits, dress, home design and even education are prone to the influence of advertisements. We are charmed by TV commercials, online shopping, and our impulse buying is facilitated by easy credit facilities. The market is flooded with so many varieties of products that we are confused, thus making misjudgements. We are captured by the brilliant salesmanship of multi-nationals. As a result, for example, we consume less nutritious food in fast food outlets at the expense of our health.

We are under the pervasive influence of advertisements. In face of this challenge, we have to exercise good judgement.

(to be continued)