Today's sex education is "one of the most devastating things that can possibly happen to any society and it certainly has overwhelmed our society. For over one hundred years, established psychological precepts, which have repeatedly been substantiated by clinical observations, reveal two important facts concerning human sexuality. The first is that life-sustaining human sexual needs can only be fulfilled in an affectionate, monogamous, heterosexual relationship. Sex educators do not stress this fact enough. The second salient psychoanalytic fact is that, in humans, unlike in any other creatures, three phases of sexual development occur before mature adult sexuality is reached. The public school courses given during each of these phases cause great harm to student and society in general."

Melvin Anchell,
The New American,
May 11, 1987

Sex education is only one facet of the multitude of social changes in Western societies that successfully transformed societal attitudes towards previously strongly accepted and adhered to basic assumptions and principles. Capital punishment, mercy killing, abortion, homosexuality and legalization of cannabis are further examples where ethical issues and moral judgments seem to lack consistency with time in Western societies. The rationalization of such perpetual attitudinal changes can partly be found in the Freudian concept of the pleasure principle and his interpretation of human behavior as a function of aggression and sexuality. It can partly be explained by a decline in spirituality and a tendency to embrace materialism.

Islam defines the essence of life and rationalizes the creation of the universe simply and explicitly, "I have created jinn and humankind only that they might worship me" (51:56). "Life here is a vehicle to the hereafter." Thus Muslim life is to be based on submission and adherence to the will of God and His instructions. These two contradictory approaches to the perception of life are applicable to any major issue in existence concerning the Muslim and non-Muslim. The choice is left to the individual which way to decide, bearing in mind the implications of his decision and accepting liability for his actions.

WHAT IS SEX EDUCATION?

Schofield writes in his book on promiscuity, "Intercourse and other sexual activities are for pleasure and ought to be encouraged as such ... The purpose of sexual intercourse is sexual enjoyment." He continues, "Sex education, if it is to be any good, must help the pupil to adapt to new conditions, new ideas, different ethics, different values ...... Thus ethics and values should change to serve the pleasure principle and should do so early in life. The physical, biological, social and psychological aspects of sexual life are taught to children and they are encouraged to practice and experience them at an early age and even before adolescence. It is then only logical to add the subjects of contraception, abortion and pornography to the syllabus in an
attempt to avert undesirable consequences. As one child put it, "How do we know we are not to be trapped in a marriage that she wants, but we don't?"

**IS THERE SEX EDUCATION IN ISLAM?**

Islam comprises a total way of life. Each part of it needs to be seen in the total context. Thus it is hard to take any major issue in life in isolation. Thus sexual life cannot be conceived of without marital and family life and these are all to be considered in relation to other Islamic teachings which regulate and control Muslim behavior.

Ibn al-Quyem in his book, *Prophetic Medicine*, assigned a full chapter to discussing the Islamic attitude to sexual and marital life, the interaction between the spouses, and the permissions and prohibitions concerning sexual intercourse between spouses. Muhammad Qutb in his book, *Islam the Misunderstood Religion*, discussed the subject in two chapters, one On Islam and Woman and the other, On Islam and Sexual Repression. Reading through the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet there are many verses and Traditions about the creation of human life, cleanliness and purity, interaction between the spouses, and mention of sexual intercourse between the spouses. In the explanation of these verses and Traditions, issues did arise, questions were asked and both sexes were involved jointly or separately. The following important points can be made:

1. In Islam sex has always been taken seriously and it should remain so. It is not a subject for fun or mere absolute pleasure. It is never discussed obscenely or subjected to scrutiny. Decency and due respect always characterize the subject.

2. Sex is never discussed in isolation for its sake or mere pleasure. It is always related to marital life and family life. It is is viewed as a superior human relationship subject to strict regulations. Thus sex within a marital relationship is a worship that is rewarded. Outside a marital relationship sex is a punishable sin.

3. Sex is a privacy between the spouses. What goes on is confidential and should not be divulged to outside parties. The human factor in marital and sexual relationship is superior to mere pleasure.

4. Legislation concerning sex is not subject to change by pressure groups or change in social attitudes.

5. Like the rest of Islamic teaching, knowledge about those verses and Traditions on the subject is not age-specific and is not meant to start at a certain age. As the Muslim is learning the Quran and Sunnah he or she will come across these teachings.
The Role of the Muslim Physician in Sex Education

Written by EL TIGANI ADAM HAMMAD

The Role of the Muslim Physician

Here we have to consider several issues. Why should we concern ourselves with sex education? Why is the question asked at this time? Is sex education such an important issue in Muslim life and Muslim society? Furthermore, who needs sex education? How and when should it be made available? Who should face the problem and provide the service? What are the sources and means of information?

More specific questions are what are the bases of the theoretical principles that apply? What are the problems and dangers of practical application? This multitude of questions reflects my anxieties as a Muslim psychiatrist who puts his faith and fear of God before his career and profession. My fear of committing a sin predates my enthusiasm of doing a successful job.

However, it would be more positive and productive if the answers to these questions were authenticated and qualified so as to stand criticism and confront challenge. The question arises because sex education is part of a package being delivered to Muslims by the Western civilization in an attempt to dismantle them from their basic roots of Islamic life. This package comprises abortion, insurance, contraception, liberal attitudes to alcohol, dress and other anti-Islamic behavior. Unfortunately part of the package has already been delivered, received and well digested. If we are not careful there is worse to come. Nowadays such anti-Islamic behaviors and concepts are not necessarily delivered by missionaries and foreign anti-Islamic agents. Muslims professing to be liberalists, reformists or saviours are doing the job.

How Can a Muslim Physician Handle the Problem?

Do we really have a role in sex education? What are our theoretical principles and means of application? What are the ethical and moral issues? The chances are there that once in lifetime a consultation may involve a sexual problem. What can we do? The first requirement is a combination of medical knowledge and Islamic orientation. One should know where he stands. The second requirement is setting limits on moral and ethical principles. And the third requirement is a knowledge of the patient and his or her religious and moral orientation. If these requirements are satisfied then one may be facing one of three situations:

1. Sex education
2. Sexual deviation
3. Sexual dysfunction
If any of these situations arise outside a marital relationship, I can hardly see myself helping somebody to continue such a relationship. It is a sin to help abominations. If there is any education for non-marital relationships that would then be to stop them or suppress the desire. One cannot help these people at the expense of religious convictions and legislature. We cannot sacrifice Islam for those who move towards moral degradation or try to avoid the legal responsibility for their non-islamic sexual behavior. Within a marital relationship how much can we indulge in sex education? One can consider situations where spouses come for help but one cannot go out of his or her way to preach sex education. Of course people need to know the dangers of venereal disease, rape, illegitimacy and criminal abortion but this should not by necessity be exclusively for the medical profession to preach.

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO TEACH?

The Muslim doctor needs to understand thoroughly all that the Quran has mentioned pertaining to sex and all that the Traditions of the Prophet included concerning conjugal rights and how spouses should treat each other concerning those conjugal rights. The Quran says, "So let man consider fools what he is created." "He is created from a gushing fluid that issues from between the loins and ribs."
It goes on to say, "Did We not create you from a base fluid which We laid up in a safe abode for a known term. Thus We arranged. How excellent is Our arranging."

This theme keeps recurring in the Quran and is always related to other teachings. "Verily We created the human being from a product of wet earth, then placed him as a drop in a safe lodging, then fashioned We the drop a clot, then fashioned We the clot a little lump, then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation-so blessed be God, the best of Creators."

In other chapters the Quran says, "Then lo! On the Day of Resurrection you are raised." And, "There is enough here for Muslims to reflect on-creation, death, resurrection."
And, "They question you concerning menstruation. Say it is an illness so refrain from women during menstruation and do not approach them until they are purified. Once they purify themselves then enjoy them from where God has instructed you. Truly God loves the repenters and those who care for purity" (4:222-223).
"Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate) so enjoy your tilth the way you wish and make an introduction for yourselves..."
What more details do we need to know to fulfill this human instinct. The closest you can come to details is what happened between Joseph and Zulayka. "And she approached him, she in whose house he was and she bolted the doors and said I am ready for you. He said I seek refuge in God-Lo! He is my Lord Who perfected my resort. Wrongdoers never prosper She verily desired him and he desired her but he saw the sign of his Lord. Thus it was that We might ward offfrom him evil and lewdness. Lo! He was of Our chosen slaves and they raced to the door and she tore his shirt from behind."

The Prophet (PBUH), says, "The best of you is the one who is best to his family." He also said, "Beloved to me of your world are pleasant scents and women." He once told the Companions, "And there is a reward for what you deposit in the womb of your wife." They said, "Oh Messenger of God, the one of us satisfies his desire and gets a reward for that." He answered, "What if he deposits it in a prohibited womb? Isn't he going to sin?" So if he deposits it in a permitted womb there is a reward for him.

But at the same time he instructed his Companions not to divulge what goes on between them in private as husband and wife. He simulated that happening to a devil making love to a she-devil. He also instructed women not to describe the particulars of their female friends to their husbands as if they can see the woman described. This is to avoid masturbation in fantasy and abominations.

The physician may have more to offer in cases of sexual dysfunction within a marital relationship. He may find physical or organic pathology that needs correction. He may detect psychological factors having an impact on the sexual relationship. The physician has still to set limits to how deep and far he can go. The decency and virtue of marital bondage and privacy of such a relationship need not be obscenely dissected and divulged to a third party, particularly if he or she be of the opposite sex. and here the need for same sex therapists becomes important. Do we really need to worry that much about sexual problems? Do we have so many of them as to warrant explicit discussions? A more general answer is that in a practicing Muslim society we should not expect to face the same problems as Western societies. Female Muslim physicians in a Muslim society need not worry about handling overt and obscene sexual problems. One main reason to believe this assumption is that the Quran and the Sunnah should be the framework for Muslim life and thus shape and fashion the behavior and attitudes of Muslims. As the children are brought up they will have an Islamic orientation to marital life and sex education is then part of that education rather than a separate and major issue in isolation. We do not need to take sex as an issue and introduce it into the education of children. We need to introduce to them the Quran and Sunnah in toto. If they can care for their Islamic character other issues will take care of themselves. Virtue breeds virtue and vice breeds vice. Those who enjoy life as a whole should hope to enjoy their marital life both emotionally and physically and should not lack the means to do so.

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