

MODERNIST ISLAM,
1840-1940

A SOURCEBOOK

Edited by CHARLES KURZMAN

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sacred law, and the true and loyal believers? If it prohibits all abomination, whether evident or hidden, what is it we see among them, both secret and open, both physical and spiritual?

If Islam teaches that religion consists in sincerity before God, His Apostle, and fellow believers in both immediate and general relationships, if "man is the loser, save those who believe, do good works, and enjoy upon each other justice and patience" (Sura 103, Verses 1-3) and yet, not enjoining kindness or forbidding evil, they go altogether to the bad, and their honest folk call and get no response, and if this which they quite fail to fulfill is in fact their most bounden duty, why is it that they thus so totally fail to counsel each other and lay upon each other squarely what the divine will requires? Why do they not hold to it with fortitude and speak truth about right and wrong? Who do they in fact take each their own way, letting things go as they will in rabid individualism, ignoring each other's affairs as if they were totally unrelated the one to the other, having nothing in common? Why do sons murder fathers, and daughters prove refractory toward their mothers? Where are the bowels of mercy, of compassion for a neighbor? Where is the just dealing of the rich owe to the poor with their possessions? Rather the rich plunder even what remains in the hands of the wretched.

A glimmer of Islam, it is said, illuminated the west, but its full light is in the east. Yet precisely there its own people lie in the deepest gloom and cannot see. Does this seem intelligible? Is there any parallel in the annals of men? Does it not appear that the very Muslims who have known something of science are precisely those who, for the most part, instinctively regard Islam's doctrines as superstitious and its principles and precepts as a farce? They find pleasure in aping the free-thinking people who scoff and jeer and think themselves forward-looking. Do you not see Muslims whose only business with the scriptures is to finger their pages, while they preen themselves on being memorizers of their precepts and expert in their laws? How far they are from the rational study of the Qur'an which they despise and regard as worthless to religion and the world! Many of them simply pride themselves on ignorance, as if thereby they had evaded prohibited things and achieved some distinction. Those Muslims who stand on the threshold of

science see their faith as a kind of old garment in which it is embarrassing to appear among men, while those who deceive themselves that they have some pretension to be religious and orthodox believers in its doctrines regard reason as a devil and science as supposition. Can we not, in the light of all this, call God, His angels, and all men to witness that science and reason have no accord with this religion?

It may well be said that the foregoing has not exaggerated the plight of Muslims today, indeed, these several generations past. But is the objection the whole story? Parallels could be found in the descriptions of Islam in their day given by al-Ghazzali, [Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad] Ibn al-Hajj [died 1336], and other writers on religion, filling whole volumes, both about the general population and the intelligentsia. But the reading of the Qur'an suffices of itself to vindicate what I have said about the essential nature of Islamic religion, provided it is read with care to understand its real import, interpreted according to the understanding of those among whom it was sent down and to the way they put it into practice. To admit the validity of what I have said of its fine effects, it suffices to read the pages of history as indicated by those who truly knew Islam and the objective writers in other nations. Such Islam was—and is. We have earlier said that religion is guidance and reason. Whoever uses it well and takes its directives will gain the blessedness God has promised to those who follow it. As a medicine for human society its success when truly tried is so manifest that not even the blind and the deaf can deny or gainsay it. All that the objection just elaborated leads to is this: a physician treated a sick man with medicine and he recovered; then the doctor himself succumbed to the disease he had been treating. In dire straits from pain and with the medicine by him in the house, he has yet no will to use it. Many of those who come to visit him or seek his ministrations or even gloat over his illness could take up the medicine and be cured, while he himself despairs of life and waits either for death or some miraculous healing.

We have now set forth the religion of Islam and its true character. As for those Muslims who by their conduct have become an argument against it, these must be dealt with not here, but in another book, if God wills.

The Emancipation of Woman and The New Woman

Qasim Amin (Egypt, 1863-1908) was renowned for his support of women's liberation in the Islamic world. Amin was born in Alexandria to an Egyptian mother and a Turkish father, a former Ottoman governor of Kurdistan who had retired to Egypt following a major revolt in that province. After finishing his primary education at the aristocratic Ras al-Tin School and the Khedival School, Qasim Amin obtained a bachelor's degree in law in 1881 from the School of Law and Administration and was sent to France in an educational mission for five years to study law. There, he joined Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (chapter 1) and Muhammad 'Abduh (chapter 3) and participated in their publication of the journal *al-Unwa al-wuthqa* (*The Strongest Link*). After his return to Egypt, he joined the judicial system and worked as attorney general and judge. Amin's major works include *Les Egyptiens* (*The Egyptians*, 1894), in which he defended Islam's treatment of women, and *Tahrir al-mar'a* (*The Liberation of Woman*, 1899), to which 'Abduh secretly contributed sections. The latter book, whose introduction is presented here, called for an end to the seclusion of women, an improvement in their status, and widespread education of girls. The book generated heated controversy in Egyptian intellectual circles, to which Amin responded in *al-Mar'a al-jadida* (*The New Woman*, 1900)—whose conclusion is also presented here—adopting further liberal views, such as the need for women's participation alongside men in public life.¹

The Emancipation of Woman

I call on every lover of truth to examine with me the status of women in Egyptian society. I am confident that such individuals will arrive independently at the same conclusion I have, namely the necessity of improving the status of Egyptian women. The truth I am presenting today has preoccupied me for a long time; I have considered it, examined it, and analyzed it. When it was eventually stripped of all confounding errors, it occupied an important place in my think-

ing, rivaled other ideas, overcame them, and finally reached the point where it became my dominant thought, alerting me to its advantages and reminding me of its necessity. I became aware of the absence of a platform from which this truth could be elevated from reflection to the unlimited space of appeal at attention.

A profound factor that influences human development and ensures its positive future is the strength that compels a human being to communicate every scientific or literary idea once it crystallizes the mind, and once it is accompanied by the belief that it will benefit the progress of future generations.

Qasim Amin, *The Liberation of Woman and The New Woman: Two Documents in the History of Egyptian Feminism*, translated from Arabic by Samiha Sidhom Peterson (Cairo, Egypt: © American University in Cairo Press, 2000), pp. 3-10; *al-Mar'a al-jadida* (*The New Woman*), in Muhammad 'Imara, ed., *Qasim Amin: al-'Amal al-kamil* (Qasim Amin, *The Complete Works*) (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Shuruq, 1989), pp. 511-518. Translation of second piece from Arabic by Lisa Pollard and Raghda El Essawi. First published in 1899 and 1900, respectively. Introduction by Emad Eldin Shabibi.

1. Muhammad 'Imara, *Qasim Amin: Tahrir al-mar'a al-tamaddun al-islami* (*Qasim Amin: The Liberation of Woman and Islamic Civilization*) (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Shur and 1988); Samir Abu Hamdan, *Qasim Amin: Tadaiyat al-ak bayn al-mar'a wa al-nahda* (*Qasim Amin: The Dialectical Relationship Between Woman and Renaissance*) (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Sharika al-'Alamiyya li al-Kitab, 1993); Leila Alunnon: *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Mod Debate* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 19;

Communicating these findings supersedes concern over any negative consequences that may be incurred by the individual in presenting his knowledge. The impact of this power is recognized by anyone who has experienced a trace of it. Such an individual feels that if he fails to use this power toward the goal it is aiming to achieve, and if he does not use whatever strength he has to assist it in reaching that goal, it will eventually overcome him in the struggle, resisting him if he opposes it, coercing him if he tries to force it, and appearing in an unfamiliar form, like a gas that could not be contained through pressure. In fact, the pressure may cause an explosion that would destroy its container.

History offers numerous proofs of this phenomenon. The history of nations is saturated with disputes, arguments, sufferings, and wars that originated with the purpose of establishing the superiority of one idea or ideology over another. During these encounters victory was sometimes for truth and at other times for falsehood. This characterized Islamic countries during the early days and the middle ages, and continues to characterize Western countries. It is reasonable to state that the life of Western countries is a continuous struggle between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong: it is an internal struggle in all branches of education, the arts, and industry, and an external struggle among the various countries. This is especially obvious in this century when dis- tance and isolation have been eliminated by modern inventions, and when the separating borders and fort- bidding walls have been torn down. These changes are reflected in the increasing number of individuals who have toured the whole world and who presently can be counted by the thousands. Likewise, the ideas of any Western scholar, when formulated in a book, are translated and published simultaneously in five or six languages.

Countries like ours have preferred a less ruffled existence. This is because we have neglected the nurturing of our minds to such an extent that they have become like barren soil, unfit for any growth. Our laziness has caused us to be hostile to every unfamiliar idea, whether a product of the sound prin- cipal traditions or of current events.

An intellectually lazy person whose arguments are weak is often satisfied, in refuting an apparent truth, to hurl a false remark and declare it a heresy in Islam. He only makes this false remark to avoid the effort of understanding the truth, or to disengage from the

labor of research, or to avoid its application. It is as if God created the Muslims from clay especially set aside for them and freed them from obeying natural law, whose power dominates human beings and the rest of living creation.

Some people will say that today I am publishing heresy. To these people I will respond: Yes, I have come up with a heresy, but the heresy is not against Islam. It is against our traditions and social dealings, which ought to be brought to perfection. Why should a Muslim believe that traditions cannot be changed or replaced by new ones, and that it is his duty to preserve them forever? Why does he drag this belief along to his work, even though he and his traditions are a part of the universe, falling at all times under the laws of change? Can the Muslim contradict God's laws of creation—God who has made change a pre- requisite for life and progress, rather than immobility and inflexibility, which are characteristic of set and backwardness? Is not tradition merely the set of conventions of a country defining the special customs appropriate to its life and behavior at a specific time and place? How can people believe that traditions never change, and at the same time maintain the understanding that traditions are one of the intellec- tual products of humans, and that human intellect differs according to historical era or geographical location? Does the presence of Muslims in various parts of the world imply a uniformity of traditions or ways of life? Who can pretend that Sudanese pref- erences are similar to those of the Turks, the Chinese, or the Indians; or believe that the Bedouin tradition is appropriate for an urbanite; or claim that the tra- ditions of any country have remained the same since the creation of that country?

In truth, during a specific historical era every country has peculiar traditions and mores that match its intellectual state. These traditions and mores change continuously in an unobtrusive way, so that people living during that era are unaware of the changes. However, the changes are influenced by regional factors, heredity, intercultural exchanges, scientific inventions, ethical ideologies, religious beliefs, political structures, and other factors. Every intellectual movement toward progress is inevitably followed by an appropriate change in the traditions and mores of a society. Therefore, there should be examples of differences between the Sudanese and the Turks comparable to the differences in their in- tellectual status. This is a well-known, established

fact. The differences between Egyptians and Euro- peans also need to be considered in this context.

We cannot consider traditions (which are merely a way of life for an individual, family, compatriots, and children of the race) to be the same in a civilized nation as in an ignorant, barbaric one, because the behavior of every individual in a society is appropri- ate to the intellectual abilities of that society and to the method by which its children are brought up.

This total interdependence between the traditions of a nation and its level of civilization and knowl- edge suggests that the power of tradition controls a country more than any other power, and that tradi- tion is one of the most influential permanent com- ponents of a nation, and is least likely to change. Therefore, citizens of a nation cannot but comply with the existing traditions, unless they change, or unless their intellectual level increases or decreases. Thus I believe that traditions always overcome other factors in a society, and that they even influence the laws of that society. This belief is confirmed through daily observation of the laws and programs of our nation, which are usually intended to improve the state of affairs but are immediately turned around to become new instruments for corruption. It is not dif- ficult to understand this phenomenon, because at- times tradition may even supersede the existing reli- gion, destroying or transforming it so that those who are most knowledgeable about religion eventually disown its existing form.

This is the basis of our observations. This evi- dence of history confirms and demonstrates that the status of women is inseparably tied to the status of a nation. When the status of a nation is low, reflecting an uncivilized condition for that nation, the status of women is also low, and when the status of a nation is elevated, reflecting the progress and civilization of that nation, the status of women in that country is also elevated. We have learned that women in the first human societies were treated as slaves. The ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, considered a woman to be under the power of her father, then her husband, and after him his eldest son. The head of the family had the absolute right of ownership over her life. He could dispose of her through trade, do- nation, or death, whenever and in whatever way he wished. His heirs eventually inherited her and with her all the rights that were given to the owner. Prior to Islam, it was acceptable for Arab fathers to kill their daughters, and for men to gratify themselves

with women with no legal bonds or numerical li- mits. This authority still prevails among uncivilized tribes and American tribes. Some Asians even beli- eved that a woman has no immortal soul, and that she should not live after her husband dies. Other Asi- ans would present a guest with the best of the possessions.

These traits are present among emerging soc- ieties, which are based on familial and tribal bo- nities rather than on formal structures. Force is the only way with which such societies are familiar. The only force is also the medium of control for govern- ment by autocratic structures.

On the other hand, we find that women in na- tions with a more advanced civilization have gradu- ally advanced from the low status to which they had been relegated, and have started to overcome the barrier that has separated them from men. One woman crawling while the other is taking steps; one is w- ing while the other is running. These discrepan- cies reflect the different societies to which these wo- men belong and the level of civilization of these so- cieties. The American woman is in the forefront, followed by the British, the German, the French, the Austrian, the Italian, and the Russian woman, an- on. Women in all these societies have felt that they deserve their independence, and are searching for means to achieve it. These women believe that they are human beings and that they deserve freedom, and they are therefore striving for freedom and dem- anding every human right.

Westerners, who like to associate all good thi- ngs with their religion, believe that the Western wor- ld has advanced because her Christian religion hel- ps her achieve freedom. This belief, however, is in- accurate. Christianity did not set up a system w- hich guarantees the freedom of women; it does not g- rant her rights through either specific or gen- eral rules; and it does not prescribe any guiding p- rinciples on this topic. In every country where Ch- ristianity has been introduced and spread, it has no tangible impact on the normative structure aff- ecting women's status. On the contrary, Christia- nity has been molded by the traditions and manner- s of the specific nations in which it was introduced there were a religion which could have had po- wer and influence over local traditions, then the M-uslim women today should have been at the forefr- ont of free women on earth.

The Islamic legal system, the *shari'a*, stipulated the equality of women and men before any other legal system. Islam declared women's freedom and emancipation, and granted women all human rights during a time when women occupied the lowest status in all societies. According to Islamic law, women are considered to possess the same legal capabilities in all civil cases pertaining to buying, donating, trusteeship, and disposal of goods, unhindered by requirements of permission from either their father or their husband. These advantages have not yet been attained by some contemporary Western women, yet they demonstrate that respect for women and for their equality with men were basic to the principles of the liberal *shari'a*. In fact, our legal system went so far in its kindness to women that it rid them of the burden of earning a living and freed them from the obligation of participating in household and child-rearing expenses. This is unlike some Western laws, which equate men and women only with regard to their duties, giving preference to men with regard to societal rights.

Within the *shari'a*, the tendency to equate men's and women's rights is obvious, even in the context of divorce. Islam has created for women mechanisms worthy of consideration and contrary to what Westerners and some Muslims imagine or believe. These will be discussed later.

Islamic law favors men in one area only—polygamy. The reason is obvious and is related to the issue of lineage, without which marriage is meaningless. This topic too will be addressed later. In summary, nothing in the laws of Islam or in its intentions can account for the low status of Muslim women. The existing situation is contrary to the law, because originally women in Islam were granted an equal place in human society.

What a pity! Unacceptable customs, traditions, and superstitions inherited from the countries in which Islam spread have been allowed to permeate this beautiful religion. Knowledge in these countries had not developed to the point of giving women the status already given them by the *shari'a*.

The most significant factor that accounts for the perpetuation of these traditions, however, is the succession over us of despotic governments. At various times and places, Islamic societies have been stripped of the political structures that delineated the rights of the ruler and the ruled, and that granted to the ruled the right to demand that the rulers stop at the limits established for them by the *shari'a*. In fact, their

only by fear. When women were weak, men crushed their rights, despised them, treated them with contempt, and stomped on their personality. A woman had a very low status, regardless of her position in the family as wife, mother, or daughter. She was of no importance, was ignored, and had no legitimate opinions. She was submissive to a man because he was a man and she a woman. She obliterated herself in the person of the man. She was allowed nothing in the universe except that which she concealed in the corners of her home. She specialized in ignorance and secluded herself with the curtains of darkness. A man used her as an object of delight and pleasure, amused himself with her whenever he wished, and threw her into the road whenever he wished. He had freedom and she had bondage; he had knowledge and she had ignorance; he had a mind and she had simple-mindedness; he had light and space and she had darkness and prison; he had absolute authority and she had only obedience and patience. Everything in existence belonged to him, and she was part of that totality of which he took possession.

Despising the woman, a man filled his home with slaves, white or black, or with numerous wives, satisfying himself with any of them whenever his passion and lust drove him. He ignored the prescribed religious obligations, which required good intentions for his actions and justice in his dealings.

Despising the woman, a man divorced her without reason.

Despising the woman, a man sat alone at the dining table, while his mother, sisters, and wife gathered after he was done to eat what was left over.

Despising the woman, a man appointed a guardian to protect her chastity. Thus a eunuch, a legal guardian, or a servant supervised, observed, and accompanied her wherever she went.

Despising the woman, a man imprisoned her in the house and boasted about her permanent restriction, which was lifted only when she was to be carried in her coffin to the grave.

Despising the woman, a man announced that she was unworthy of trust and honesty.

Despising the woman, a man secluded her from public life and kept her from involvement in anything except female or personal issues. A woman had no opinions on business, political movements, the arts, public affairs, or doctrinal issues, and she had no patriotic pride or religious feelings.

I do not exaggerate when I say that this has been the status of women in Egypt until the past few years when we have witnessed a decrease in the power of men. This change is a consequence of the intellectual development of men, and the moderation of their rulers. We have observed that women present have more freedom to look after their affairs, that they quite often go to public parks in order to take the fresh air and to see the works of the Sublime Creator, displayed for the eyes of all men, whether male or female. In fact, many women now accompany their husbands during their business trips to other countries. Likewise, many men have given women a special status within the family structure. This has occurred among men who are content in their women and have no worries regarding their trustworthiness. This is a new kind of respect for women.

Yet we cannot claim that this change removes the need for criticism. In reality, the causes of criticism are not change but the conditions surrounding it. Among the most important of these are the firm established tradition of veiling among the major of the population, and the inadequate socialization of women. Were women's socialization effected in accordance with religious and moral principles, a were the use of the veil terminated at limits familiar in most Islamic schools of belief, then these critics would be dropped and our country would benefit from the active participation of all its citizens, men and women alike.

The Current State of Thinking about the Situation of Women in Egypt

Egyptians have, over the last few years, become aware of the poor state of their social order. They have begun to show signs of dissatisfaction with it, and felt the need to improve it. They have heard about the West: have intermingled with Westerners, spent time with many of them, and learned about the West's progress. When Egyptians saw the good life that Westerners enjoyed, their widespread influence and their indispensible word, as well as certain other advantages from which they themselves were forbidden—but without which life has no value—a desire spread among them to keep up with the West and its blessings. Leaders arose among them who competed with each other to disseminate new thoughts—thoughts which they believed

lieved would guide the community down the road to success. One would call for work and action, and another for harmony and unity, and for the rejection of any possible sources of discord. A third would call for love of the country and self-sacrifice in its service. A fourth, nothing less than increased adherence to the precepts of religion, and so on.

But one factor escaped the attention of these leaders: these ideas, and those similar to them, won't have any influence worth mentioning upon the community if they do not reach women, and if women do not understand their meanings. They will not have any influence if women are not favorably disposed to them, or are not filled with love for them, such that their children embody the perfect picture that represents human perfection.

This is because no social condition can be changed unless it is made the target of education. It is not enough for a reform program, no matter what its target, to consist merely of a government order issued to spur the masses to action, or of a speech designed to encourage its listeners to want to change. Nor can it consist merely of books and articles written about the benefits of change. These will merely inform a nation about the state of its deteriorating conditions; they are not the means by which people will change, nor are they the things that will transform a people from one state to another. Any and all change must be the result of a confluence of virtues, characteristics, morals, and customs which are not innate to the individual upon his birth. They cannot be had except through training, or, in other words, they cannot be had without women.

Hence, if Egyptians want to reform their current situation, they must begin with the roots of reform. They must believe that there is no hope that they will become a vibrant community, one that can play an important role alongside the developed countries, with a place in the world of human civilization, until their homes and their families become a proper environment for providing men with the characteristics upon which success in the world depends. And there is no hope that Egyptian homes and families will become that proper environment unless women are educated and unless they participate alongside men in their thoughts, hopes and pains, even if they do not participate in all of their activities.

This truth, despite its simplicity and its self-evident nature, was considered by certain people, upon

most worthy of mention is the *mufti's* statement about polygamy:

I am hereby raising my voice in complaint over the number of wives that poor men are marrying. Indeed, many of them take four wives; some have three, others two, without being able to support them. These men continuously fight with their wives over expenses and over their marital rights. Moreover, they will not divorce a single one of their wives and, thus, depravity continues to affect them and their children. [In this state] it becomes impossible for men and women to respect the limits that God has placed on mankind's freedom of action. [This condition] damages Islam and the Islamic community in ways too clear to explain.

This year, it happened that the wives of men who had been sentenced to life in prison, hard labor, or long prison terms, complained to the Ministry of Justice about their unhappy condition, with no means available for them to divorce their husbands and no family member who could support them or their children. The Ministry found itself in need of consulting the *mufti* about the legal recourses that could be adopted in response to such complaints. He studied the issue and others similar to it, and in response to them he produced eleven stipulations, in line with the Maliki *madhhab* [school of law], which we present below for the reader's benefit.

Stipulation One: If the husband refuses to provide for his wife despite the fact that he has a clear source of income, he is sentenced to pay alimony. If he has no clear source of income and continues to refuse to provide for his wife, the judge grants the wife a divorce from him on the spot. If the man claims financial incapability but cannot prove it, the judge takes the same action. But, if he can prove incapability, he is given a one-month grace period—no more—at the end of which he is considered divorced if he does not provide for his wife.

Stipulation Two: If the husband is ill or imprisoned and he refuses to provide for his wife, the judge grants him a period of time after which it is assumed that he will be cured or released from prison. If the period of illness or imprisonment is so long that harm or *fitna* [dissension] is feared, the judge grants the wife a divorce.

Stipulation Three: If the husband is absent for a short period of time, but before his departure he did not leave means of provision for his wife, the judge

fixes a date by which he must send provisions. If he does not, the judge grants the wife a divorce after a fixed period elapses. In the case that he is absent a long period or his destination is unknown, and proven that he has no means of providing for his v wife, the judge grants the wife a divorce.

Stipulation Four: If someone owed the husband money, or if he left money in someone's trust, wife has the right to ask to be provided for from money. She also has the right to make a refuta of anyone who claims that she has no right to trust, after swearing that she deserves to be provided for by the absentee, and after swearing that he left nothing behind for her provision, and he left no guardian to provide for her.

Stipulation Five: The judge's prerogative in divorcing a man from his wife for not providing for is refutable. The husband has the right to remarry, wife if he proves his sources of provision and willingness to support her through them. If he does not both, any return to his wife is unaccept

Stipulation Six: If a man is lost in an Islamic and there is no news of him, his wife has the right to raise the issue at the Ministry of Justice. She can front of the court, proclaim what she believes to be his fate, or his whereabouts. Then, the Ministry of Justice should search for him in the areas where he believes him to be, either through the courts or means of the police. If the Minister fails to find lost husband, he sets for the wife a period of years. If those four years pass, the woman must wait out the time of her *'idda* [Qur'anic term of waiting before remarriage, apparently to clarify pregnancy]. Without then needing to return to the court, she is allowed to remarry.

Stipulation Seven: If the absentee return proves to be alive, and if he does so before his v new husband consummates the marriage, not knowing that the absentee is alive, then the wife is returned to her original husband. If, in fact, the second band knew all along that the original husband alive, the wife is also returned to her original band. If the death of the original husband is discovered during the wife's period of *'idda* or after it before the new marriage contract is drawn or after the wife inherits her original husband's proper the second husband was ignorant of the husband's death. However, if in fact the first husband and the second husband knew of his death

fore consummating the marriage, then the wife inherits nothing.

Stipulation Eight: If a man dies in a conflict between Muslims, and it is proved that he indeed fought in said conflict, his wife is permitted to raise the issue before the Ministry of Justice. If after the Minister of Justice searches for the man, and after the period of *'idda* has passed, then the woman can remarry if she wishes, and his money goes to her heirs. If all that can be proven is that the man went along with the fighting armies, then the case is reverted to stipulations six and seven.

Stipulation Nine: The wife of a man missing as the result of a war between Muslims has the right to take her case before the Minister of Justice. After the minister has the man searched for, a period of one year is set. If that year passes and the man is not found, the woman then begins her period of *'idda*. She then has the right to remarry, and his money is inherited at the end of the year.

This process of setting a grace period is valid only in cases in which the absentee had, before disappearing, an income with which to provide for his wife, or in cases in which the wife does not fear seduction. Otherwise, the judge grants the wife a divorce once the woman's claim is proven to be true.

Stipulation Ten: If a dispute between a husband and wife becomes quite severe, and it cannot be solved through one of the means provided for in the Book of God, the case is brought to the provincial judge. He must then appoint two trustworthy arbitrators, one of them from the husband's family and the other from the wife's. It is best if they are neighbors. If it is difficult to find such arbitrators from among the members of their family, then they are chosen from among people outside of the family.

The arbitrators are then sent to the couple. If they are able to settle the dispute between the couple, so be it. Otherwise, they recommend divorce and bring the matter before the judge. He is required to rule according to what his appointed arbitrators have recommended. In this case, the divorce is revocable, and the arbitrators have no right to make it irrevocable.

Stipulation Eleven: The wife has the right to ask the judge to grant her a divorce if she is harmed by her husband. The *shari'a* does not permit a man to harm his wife, just as it does not permit desertion or beating or abuse without legitimate reason. It is in-

no need for the freedom and the education that have been granted to Egyptian women up till now. If it makes no difference, then let men have a number of women, and marry a new woman every day, only to divorce her the next, and imprison their wives and daughters and sisters and grandmothers if they wish!! In Africa and Asia there are a number of countries in which women live entombed in their homes, from which they see no one and encounter no one. And amongst these nations there are those that have decided to the extent that when a woman's husband dies she must kill herself, so that she may not enjoy life without him! What else can we do but direct our attention to these countries and ask them what the secret to the progress of their women is, in ignorance and isolation. Perhaps we will learn from them how to isolate our women and hold them back even further!!!!

But if what we hear and read about every day is true, that Egyptians want to create a living, advanced, civil nation, then we have the following to say to them:

There is a means of getting yourselves out of the poor condition that you complain about. There is a way of raising yourselves up to the highest level of civilization—the kind of civilization you aspire to, and then some. It consists of liberating your women from the bondage of ignorance and *hijab* [here, isolation]. This means was not our brainchild; we deserve no credit for its invention. Nations have used it before us, tested it, and put it to their advantage. Take a look at the Western nations; you will find amongst their women great differences. You'll find that the way American women are raised, and their morals and habits and manners, are not those of French women. And you'll find French women to be entirely different from Russian women. And you'll find that the Italian woman has nothing in common with the Swedish or the German woman. But all of these women, despite differences in their regions, nationalities, languages, and religions, share a com-

mon ground in one matter: they enjoy freedom and independence.

It is this freedom that has delivered Western women from their former state of decline. And once they were granted an education, women began to direct their energies, working alongside of men, to the establishment of and participation in charitable societies. This took place when women were given useful work—different, no doubt, from that of men. But just because this work is different does not mean that it lacks importance: women's work is like that of the merchant who spends his day bent over his goods in order to sell them, or the scribe who spends long hours in some governmental bureau writing an inter-departmental report. It is like that of the engineer who builds a bridge in order to make transportation easier, or the doctor who amputates a patient's limb in order to preserve life in other limbs. It is like that of the judge who mediates in the disputes that arise between people. But none of these has the right to call his work more useful to the social order than the woman who gives to society the gift of a well-raised man, useful to himself, his family, and his country.

We aren't saying the same things to you that others say, things like "Unite and be of help to one another," or "Cleanse yourselves of the faults that have crept into your morals." Nor are we saying, "Serve your family and your country," or any such slogans that get lost in the wind. We are teaching that the changing of the self requires more than a leader's advice, or a sultan's order, or a magician's magic, or a saint's miracles. Rather, it takes place, as we've said, through the preparation of young people ready to meet the requirements of a changing society.

This is the natural, long-term secret—one which is surrounded in difficulties. But the easiest of all difficulties is the one that ends in victory and success. And the shortest path is the one that delivers you to your goal.