

*X22 – EXchanging Worldviews, 22:
EXploring Prospects for Peace & Prosperity, 14:
EXtricating Humanity from EXcruciating Problems by, 8:
EXpediting Cultural Change via, 4:
EXiting the Vicious Circle of Child Abuse*

Dear: In this chapter, I want to begin suggesting possible ways to expedite exiting the vicious circle of child abuse, in which adults who were abused as children proceed to abuse their own children. Immediately I should add, however, that the suggestions that follow are proposed from the perspective of a novice, i.e., me – although I’ll also be showing you opinions expressed by those more competent. In any case, though, if you want to “get serious” about eliminating child abuse, then you’ll need to dig into the problem without my help. Yet, even from a novice’s perspective, it seems obvious – even sufficiently obvious that it could be called a general principle – that **a reasonable first step toward trying to solve any problem (even the huge problem of child abuse) is to try to understand it.** Consistent with that “general principle”, what I want to do, first, is “back up”, to try again to understand the cause of child abuse.

At the outset of trying to understand child abuse, one is confronted with the obvious complication that, indeed, the vicious circle known as child abuse seems to be a circle – seemingly without a beginning or end. Consistently, at the start of the previous chapter I stated: “To begin, let me acknowledge that there seems to be nothing simple about child abuse – save that it seems reasonable clear that its dominant cause is none other than child abuse.” But I would have you now consider the possibility that such a view is superficial, as a result of a superficial use of the word “cause”.

Child abuse does seem to teach the victim that child abuse is socially acceptable. And no doubt this lesson is taught most effectively, i.e., by example. Alternatively, it could be said, that their own experiences of being abused as a children seems to give adults “license” for abusing their own children. Thereby, adults commonly say something similar to “**If it was good enough for me, it’s good enough for the kids**”, or “**Spare the rod and spoil the child**”, or similar stupidity. In that sense, then, child abuse seems to be a “cause” of child abuse. But consider other perspectives.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON “CAUSES” OF CHILD ABUSE

Another perspective can be gained by looking at changes in brain chemistry. In the previous chapter, I quoted relevant material from deMause’s referenced book.¹ Similar information is available in a recent Reuters’ news report, some of which is quoted below and which apparently relies on an interview of Dario Maestriperi (and on a publication, in the journal *Behavioral Neuroscience*, in which he was the lead author).

Brain chemical linked to child-abuse perpetuation

By Will Dunham

Tue Nov 7 [2006], 12:28 AM ET

A study focusing on the role of an important brain chemical sheds new light on why victims of childhood abuse may themselves become abusers as adults, and points to a possible remedy, researchers said on Thursday.

They looked at levels of serotonin – a chemical that transmits impulses in the brain – in rhesus monkeys, but has implications for understanding child abuse in people because of biological similarities in humans and monkeys, they said.

When baby monkeys in the study experienced high amounts of abuse and rejection from their mother in the month after birth, their brains often produced less serotonin. Low levels of serotonin are linked to anxiety, depression and aggression in monkeys and people.

The researchers followed monkey infants from birth into adulthood. They found that female monkeys that had been abused by their mothers as infants and later became abusive mothers had about 10 to 20 percent less serotonin than females that had been abused as babies but did not become abusive parents.

Experts long have known that suffering childhood abuse raises the probability a person will become an abusive parent, and have tried to find the reason – for example, repeating behavior learned early in life or, alternatively, long-term changes in brain processes governing emotions.

“Our results suggest that the system [the brain] is affected by early trauma, early experience, and that these long-term changes in the brain might contribute to the occurrence of abusive parenting in adulthood,” University of Chicago researcher Dario Maestriperi said in an interview...

¹ DeMause’s book *Psychohistory* starts at http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/el00_preface.html.

Thereby, as deMause suggested in his referenced book, the “cause” of child abuse can be said to be changes in brain chemistry when the abuser was abused as a child.

But the angular momentum of the vicious circle of child abuse (if you permit me to use such a “neutral” term as “angular momentum” to describe such horrors) appears to be derived from much more than changes in brain chemistry (which, instead of a cause, can be described as a effect of child abuse – although it’s more appropriately seen as both cause and effect, within a vicious circle). To show you other contributions to the angular momentum of child abuse will take me some time – in fact, most of this and the next two chapters, which respectively deal with women’s liberation and more generally with violence. But – and as I’ve written before – since this book isn’t meant to be a mystery novel (believe it or not!), let me briefly list what appear to be the major components of the angular momentum whirling around the vicious circle of child abuse:

- Children are abused (physically, emotionally, sexually, mentally) by other children, by both mothers and fathers, and by other adults,
- Children abuse other children mostly because they have experienced abuse (from other children and/or from one or both of their parents and/or from other adults),
- Women abuse their children because they experienced abuse when they were children and/or they are abused by their husbands,
- Men abuse their wives and their children because they experienced abuse when they were children and/or they are abused by other adults in their community, especially in tribal communities – including the “tribes” known as corporations, and
- Other adults abuse children for similar reasons that mothers and fathers abuse their own children.

And returning to the reason why I feel compelled to comment on any of such horror: a certain troublesome grandchild asked why I didn’t believe in God, and as I’ll be showing you, most of the damnable clerics in the world (especially in Islam but also in the “Christian Reich” and in Mormonism) promote the *status quo* of male chauvinism and female submission, both of which keep pumping angular momentum into the vicious circle of child abuse, which in turn inhibits progress toward more peace and prosperity in the world.

* Go to other chapters *via*

1. Instinctive “Causes” of Child Abuse?

So, Dear, assuming that you now have at least a general impression of where the trail seems to lead, let’s get underway – even if you’re being led by an incompetent guide! To start, consider the problem of child abuse from an evolutionary perspective.

From such a perspective, “the cause” of child abuse may be some “instincts” of the human “animal”; in particular, perhaps, the instincts of male domination of females and maybe even a female instinct for submission to males (to protect themselves from other physical threats, e.g., from other males). I suggest the possibility that such traits are instinctive, based both on analogy with most other mammals and on the apparent fact that such traits seem to be widespread among many different human groups.

I expect that sources of the male’s instinct for domination are partly genetic (i.e., “hard-wired” into a male’s DNA, because it promoted the survival of the male’s genes) and partly the strong sexual drive of males (which of course is also genetic). If to those two possibilities is added the fact that males are usually physically stronger than females, it seems understandable that males adopted the law of the jungle: might makes right. I leave as an open question whether there was a resulting genetic selection for submissive females, possibly resulting in their usually being more “cooperative” than males (a “trait” that would promote their own survival in an environment of dominating and brutal males).

But whatever “the cause” of child abuse (or whatever is yet to be learned in “child abuse etiology” – or ‘aetiology’, from the Greek word *aitia* meaning “a cause” and *logia* meaning ‘study’), two facts seem obvious. One is that “socialization” means, in large measure, modifying instinctive behavior. For example, you may instinctively want to hit some dumb male (or spit on him or whatever) for something that he said or did, but it’s hoped that you are sufficiently “civilized” to express your displeasure in a different manner. Similarly, although a husband may instinctively want to beat his verbally abusive or otherwise misbehaving wife, yet it’s hoped that both husband and wife will have learned to constrain their instincts. And although a parent may instinctively want to “swat” a wayward child, again it’s hoped that the parent has learned sufficient about child rearing to discern a better way to guide the child’s “socialization”.

Thus, once again, education is key (a topic that I'll be returning to) – in this case, educating people how to constrain instincts that no longer promote their dual survival goals (of themselves and their families).

And the second “obvious fact” is that, at present in primitive human groups (e.g., throughout much of Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia, and in fact, throughout the world among poorly educated people), males commonly claim ownership of “their” females and “their” children, treating them as “their” property. In the past, such primitive, tribal behavior was then (of course) incorporated in religions such as Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism, because the common characteristic of all clerics is to promote the *status quo* – for their own benefit. In such “patriarchal religions” woman are considered inferior to men; in fact, it's implicit in the definition of ‘patriarch’: it's from the Greek word *patria* meaning ‘family’ plus *arkhes* meaning ‘ruling’, and ‘patriarch’ is explicitly defined to mean “the male head of a family or tribe.”

2. Roles of Patriarchal Religions in Abusing Women and Children

Ample evidence is available to support the claim that the principal patriarchal religions of our culture (and even minor religions, such as Mormonism) discriminate against women – even that they are misogynist (i.e., “women hating”, from the Greek word *misos* meaning ‘hate’ and *guné* meaning ‘woman’), which then commonly leads to or is associated with child abuse. I've shown you some of the evidence in the **P**-chapters and in the “excursion” **Qx**; here, I'll just list a few examples to remind you.

- In the Old Testament, remember that the male writers claimed that men didn't come from any woman's womb but that women came from a man's rib (in blatant contrast to reality), remember that the writers blamed Eve for disobeying God's order (even though the writers “goofed” by failing to have their God inform Adam and Eve that it was “evil” not to obey God's orders!) and that, as “punishment” for her “sin” of “disobedience”, the writers not only had their God allegedly increase women's labor pains but also had their God proclaim that “**your husband... shall be your master.**” Remember, also, how Abraham (the “father” of both Judaism and Islam) pimped his sister-wife Sarah for profit and raped his Egyptian slave girl Hagar, remember that the damnable (“righteous”) Lot offered his daughters to be raped by a crowd and that his wife was turned to a pillar of salt for disobeying him, and then remember all the horrible laws allegedly proscribed by the damnable Moses dealing with selling one's daughter into slavery, stoning to death brides who weren't virgins, forcing girls to marry their rapists, the relative “uncleanliness” of woman who give birth to girls, and so on, on and on (as you can find on the internet for yourself with search words such as “bible +misogyny”). A specific example is at *Ecclesiastes* 7, 26:

* Go to other chapters *via*

I find a woman more bitter than death; she is a snare, her heart a net, her arms are chains. No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman. May a sinner's lot be hers.

- In the New Testament, there's similar hideous stuff, e.g.,

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (*Ephesians 5, 21*)

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman [cough, cough], but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. (*1 Corinthians 11, 7*)

Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. (*1 Corinthians 14, 34*)

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (*1 Timothy 2, 11*)

Worse, though, is that the entire crazy concoction called Christianity is constructed on the bizarre idea that Eve caused the “downfall” of humanity, an “original sin” for which Christ's death is claimed to be an “atonement”, i.e., not just a sacrifice of some lamb to placate the jealous, petulant, giant Jabberwock in the sky, but his own sacrifice (!), of his own faultless son (!), for the “guilt” of others (!), to placate himself! Such bizarre nonsense led various Christian “fathers” to make some of the most misogynist statements ever recorded, e.g.,

Clement of Alexandria (150–215): “Every woman should be overwhelmed with shame at the thought that she is a woman.”

Tertullian [Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (c.150 – c. 230)]: “Woman is a temple built over a sewer, the gateway to the devil. Woman, you are the devil's doorway. You should always go in mourning and in rags... And do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway, you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree, you are the first deserter of the divine law, you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack.”²

“Saint” Ambrose, bishop of Milan (340? – 397): “Adam was led to sin by Eve and [not] Eve by Adam. It is just and right that woman accept as lord and master him whom she led to sin.”³

“Saint” Augustine (354–430): “Any woman who acts in such a way that she cannot give birth to as many children as she is capable of, makes herself guilty of that many murders...”

“Saint” Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274): “Woman is defective and accidental... and misbegotten... a male gone awry... the result of some weakness in the (father's) generative power.”

² From <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/tertullian27.html>.

³ This, and the subsequent three, from <http://www.workshop3.freeuk.com/MegBowmanQuotations.htm>.

Martin Luther (1483–1546): “God created Adam lord of all living creatures, but Eve spoiled it all... Women should remain at home, sit still, keep house and bear and bring up children...”

- In Islam, although Muhammad’s alleged statements contained in the Quran promote an advance of women’s liberation over the hideous practices that are promoted in the Bible (and that were practiced in Arabia during Muhammad’s time), yet still there is such ignorance as (*Sura 4, 34*):

Men are the managers of the affairs of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property. Righteous women are therefore obedient, guarding the secret for God’s guarding. And those [women] you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them... [until] they then obey you...

- In the Book of Mormon, too (as I showed you in **Qx**), the author (almost certainly Sidney Rigdon) clearly promoted the protection of women from abuses by men (e.g., prohibiting polygamy), but within about 10 years, Joseph Smith saw his way around Rigdon’s prohibition and began promoting (and practicing) polygamy (and adultery and pedophilia).

Subsequent to “sanctification” of such idiocies in the various “holy books”, most religions have changed their “official positions” on patriarchy and misogyny – some for the better and some for the worse (and differently even for different denominations of the “same” religions). You can find details about such changes for yourself; here, I’ll list just a few points.

- Judaism’s treatment of women is finally starting to change (especially since the 1970s, although many courageous women such as Ernestine Louise Rose spear-headed progress 100 years earlier), but the changes are different in “Orthodox” vs. “Modern Orthodox” vs. “Haredi” vs. “Conservative” vs. “Reform” Judaism.
- Women’s roles in the many (~20,000!) different Christian denominations are “all over the map”, from continued patriarchal, primitive domination of women in much of the Religious “Reich” (such as Fundamentalist Baptists, who consider “feminism” to be a sin!) to liberation in “liberal denominations” such as the Presbyterian Church (in which ~30% of the clergy are female).
- In Mormonism, as you know, polygamy is no longer allowed, but similar to the case for Catholics, Mormon women aren’t permitted to hold “the priesthood” and their primary “assigned role” is to be “baby-producing machines”. In addition, in the crazy, misogynist, Mormon scheme, women can’t enter their fictitious “celestial heaven” unless they’re called (by their “secret names”) by their dead husbands!
- In Islam, as I’ll show you in some detail below, the role of Muslim women has deteriorated – so much so that, if Muhammad could see his religion, now, I bet he would disown it. Yet, let me add that, although most Muslim woman are treated terribly, their treatment is still nowhere near so horrible as the Quran reports Muhammad, himself, treated non-Muslim women.

Below, I'll show you a few current Islamic examples – not because some horrible examples aren't available in other religions, but because Muslim examples are especially newsworthy of late, associated with the poorly named and more poorly executed “War on Terror”.

2.1 Some Examples in Islam

As you can find on the internet, there's a huge number of massively moving stories and statements dealing with attempts to liberate women from the madness of patriarchy. In later chapters I'll show you more; in the **Y**-chapters (dealing with You), I'll show you some Mormon examples. What follows are three Islamic examples – as if to select a few drops of water (or tears) from an ocean of insanity.

My first example was described by “Khaled”; it's one of many examples that you can find at the website of Faith Freedom Organization.⁴

A True Story on the Lives of Saudi Women

By Khaled [2006/01/30]

[After describing the plight of his sisters, Khaled writes the following.]

So, in my case what can I do?

The straightforward answer to this question would be: nothing, I can do virtually next to nothing to change the situation. If I file a case against my father [in an attempt to free his sisters], the religious judge will ask him, “Why don't you let your daughters get married?” My father's vague answer will be, “These girls are my responsibility (that is, under my safe custody), and Allah will punish me if I don't choose good husbands for them.” As a proof of his sincere effort he might even produce evidence that all the men he had sought were smokers and also will bring witnesses that they were also non-praying (in mosque) Muslims. This will completely silence the Islamic judge. He will find no ground to chastise my father; instead, he might impose punishment on me for not respecting my father and his decisions.

With such anguish and frustration in my heart, I am patiently waiting for the death of my father. Once he dies, the control of my sisters will automatically transfer to me. Their ownership will officially be in my name. I shall be their new possessor – just like cars, houses, goats, camels, etc. Then I shall be completely free to do with them whatever I wish – Islam gives me all the authority. I could take them to Hell or to Heaven – wherever I desire.

⁴ From <http://www.faithfreedom.org/Testimonials/Khaled60130p2.htm>; for more form this site, see <http://www.faithfreedom.org/index.htm>.

Readers: please do not feel sorry or pity for my sisters. Compared to many other Saudi women, they are quite lucky – they can visit shopping centers, once or twice a year. They can use make-up and they can even listen to music. The best freedom they have is that they can choose Television channels they like to watch. For many Saudi women, this is a great privilege, if you did not know. [Can you imagine it, Dear: the limits of your freedom being “to visit shopping centers once or twice a year”, to listen to music (no doubt, provided that it’s “approved” music), and to choose the TV channel – and be grateful for it!]

Information about my second example was recently outlined at the tremendously valuable website of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI).⁵ Notice the source and the dates on the following two reports; you may be able to obtain subsequent and additional information by searching on the internet.⁶



Yemen: 8-year-old girl asks for divorce in court

[Source: *Yemen Times* (Yemen), 10 April 2008]⁷

An eight-year-old girl decided last week to go the Sana’a West Court to prosecute her father, who forced her to marry a 30-year-old man.

Nojoud Muhammed Nasser [photo above] arrived at court by herself on Wednesday, April 2, looking for a judge to handle her case against her father, Muhammed Nasser, who forced her two months ago to marry Faez Ali Thamer, a man 22 years her senior. The child also asked for a divorce, accusing her husband of sexual and domestic abuse.



According to Yemeni law, Nojoud cannot prosecute, as she is underage. However, court judge Muhammed Al-Qathi heard her complaint and subsequently ordered the arrests of both her father and husband [photo at right].

⁵ At <http://www.memri.org/> and see the MEMRI blog at <http://www.thememriblog.org/>.

⁶ The original report is now online at <http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=1145&p=front&a=2;> the reporter is Hamed Thabet, who also took the photographs.

⁷ Copied from http://www.thememriblog.org/arabculture/blog_personal/en/6778.htm.

“My father beat me and told me that I must marry this man, and if I did not, I would be raped and no law and no sheikh in this country would help me. I refused but I couldn’t stop the marriage,” Nojoud Nasser told the *Yemen Times*. “I asked and begged my mother, father, and aunt to help me to get divorced. They answered, ‘We can do nothing. If you want you can go to court by yourself.’ So this is what I have done,” she said.

Nasser said that she was exposed to sexual abuse and domestic violence by her husband. “He used to do bad things to me, and I had no idea as to what a marriage is. I would run from one room to another in order to escape, but in the end he would catch me and beat me and then continued to do what he wanted. I cried so much but no one listened to me. One day I ran away from him and came to the court and talked to them.”

The following is a brief update on the above story.⁸

8-year-old girl’s divorce is finalized while a law to prevent early marriage stalls

[Source: *Yemen Times*, 17 April 2008]

Eight-year-old Nojoud is now safe after an anonymous donor paid her 30-year-old husband to divorce her. Although this chapter of her life has closed, there are many other Yemeni girls who still suffer from early marriage and its consequences. Feminist groups in Yemen are urging the Parliament to legally define a minimum marriage age. However, there is a long way to go before girls like Nojoud can be free from detrimental early marriages.



If you can get past the obvious horrors of the above story, Dear, notice how this heroic child, Nojoud, has been treated as just property, to be bought and sold – out to an including the “**anonymous donor**” who now bought her from her “**husband**”, who had bought her from her father. Also, recall that “the prophet” Muhammad (whom Muslims consider to be the “perfect human”) married Aisha when she was six and “consummated” the marriage (i.e., had sex with her) when she was nine.

⁸ Copied from http://www.thememriblog.org/blog_personal/en/6916.htm.

My third example is one recently reported by Nicholas Kristof, Op-Ed columnist of *The New York Times*. Below are portions of his original column.⁹

Sentenced to Be Raped

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF

September 29, 2004

MEERWALA, Pakistan... Usually we journalists write about rogues, but Mukhtaran Bibi could not be more altruistic or brave, as the men who gang-raped her discovered. I firmly believe that the central moral challenge of this century, equivalent to the struggles against slavery in the 19th century or against totalitarianism in the 20th, will be to address sex inequality in the third world – and it's the stories of women like Ms. Mukhtaran that convince me this is so.

The plight of women in developing countries isn't addressed much in the West, and it certainly isn't a hot topic in the presidential campaign. But it's a life-and-death matter in villages like Meerwala, a 12-hour drive southeast from Islamabad.

In June 2002, the police say, members of a high-status tribe sexually abused one of Ms. Mukhtaran's brothers and then covered up their crime by falsely accusing him of having an affair with a high-status woman. The village's tribal council determined that the suitable punishment for the supposed affair was for high-status men to rape one of the boy's sisters, so the council sentenced Ms. Mukhtaran to be gang-raped.

As members of the high-status tribe danced in joy, four men stripped her naked and took turns raping her. Then they forced her to walk home naked in front of 300 villagers.

In Pakistan's conservative Muslim society, Ms. Mukhtaran's duty was now clear: she was supposed to commit suicide. "Just like other women, I initially thought of killing myself," said Ms. Mukhtaran, now 30. Her older brother, Hezoor Bux, explained: "*A girl who has been raped has no honorable place in the village. Nobody respects the girl, or her parents. There's a stigma, and the only way out is suicide.*" [Italics added.]

A girl in the next village was gang-raped a week after Ms. Mukhtaran, and she took the traditional route: she swallowed a bottle of pesticide and dropped dead.

But instead of killing herself, Ms. Mukhtaran testified against her attackers and propounded the shocking idea that the shame lies in raping, rather than in being raped. The rapists are now on death row, and President Pervez Musharraf presented Ms. Mukhtaran with the equivalent of \$8,300 and ordered round-the-clock police protection for her.

⁹ I found it, reposted, at <http://tecfu.unige.ch/staf/staf-e/marquis/nyt2.html>.

Ms. Mukhtaran, who had never gone to school herself, used the money to build one school in the village for girls and another for boys – because, she said, education is the best way to achieve social change. The girls' school is named for her, and she is now studying in its fourth-grade class.

“Why should I have spent the money on myself?” she asked, adding, “This way the money is helping all the girls, all the children.”

I wish the story ended there. But the Pakistani government has neglected its pledge to pay the schools' operating expenses. “The government made lots of promises, but it hasn't done much,” Ms. Mukhtaran said bluntly.

She has had to buy food for the police who protect her, as well as pay some school expenses. So, she said, “I've run out of money.” Unless the schools can raise new funds, they may have to close.

Meanwhile, villagers say that relatives of the rapists are waiting for the police to leave and then will put Ms. Mukhtaran in her place by slaughtering her and her entire family. I walked to the area where the high-status tribesmen live. They denied planning to kill Ms. Mukhtaran, but were unapologetic about her rape.

“Mukhtaran is totally disgraced,” Taj Bibi, a matriarch in a high-status family, said with satisfaction. “She has no respect in society...” [And notice, Dear, that this was a brainwashed woman who made that claim.]

If you'll search on the internet (use “Mukhtaran Bibi” and also try “Mukhtar Mai”), you'll find that she's had to suffer through many more difficulties. In fact, let me mention one particular point of the story about Ms. Mukhtaran that Kristof didn't emphasize, just in case you don't find it on your own (in your internet search), namely:¹⁰

Mukhtaran's family proposed to settle the matter [the original dispute between the two tribes] with the Mastoi [tribe] by marrying Shakoor to Salma [i.e., a marriage between Mukhtaran's brother and the girl with whom her brother had been accused of having an affair] and marrying Mukhtaran to one of the Mastoi men, and – if Shakoor was found to be at fault – to give some land to Salma's family. This proposal was conveyed to Faizan, the Mastoi elder. According to some of the prosecution witnesses, Faizan was initially agreeable, but two men of Salma's family – defendants Ramzan Pachar and G.F. Mastoi – refused and enragedly demanded revenge of zina for zina [i.e., a form of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”, in the form of “fornication for fornication”]. Some other Mastoi men joined them in this demand.

¹⁰ From http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/M/Mu/Mukhtaran_Bibi.htm.

And I wanted to add that, Dear, so you'd consider the primitive brutality of such Pakistani tribal life (which is comparable to what's described in the Bible and the Quran, similar to what was practiced during the first ~50 years of Mormonism, and similar to what still exists in much of the Muslim world): not only that Mukhtaran's family (or better, her father) proposed to settle the dispute by treating his daughter as he would "just so much property" but also the primitive, family-against-family revenge, in which rights of individuals are ignored, so long as "family honor" is preserved.

3. Tribalism as a Cause of Misogyny & Child Abuse

Perhaps it would be useful if I tried to help you gain more appreciation for what is actually a huge aspect of the total problem of child abuse in Islam (as well as terrorism), namely, tribalism and what tribalists perceive to be their "honor". To that end, consider the following article, written by another *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist, John Tierney. He wrote this column during the time that the Islamic militant group Hezbollah was shooting rockets into Israel from Lebanon.

Another Man's Honor

By JOHN TIERNEY

July 25, 2006

To Hezbollah, there is no such thing as "collateral damage" from its missiles. Israel keeps telling the world that its army aims only at military targets, but Hezbollah doesn't even pretend to. Its soldiers proudly fire away at civilians.

These terrorists consider themselves men of honor, and unfortunately they are – by their own definition. We in the West can call them barbaric, which they also are, but they're following an ancient social code, even if we can't recognize it anymore.

The best guide to this code is James Bowman's new book, *Honor: A History*, which is not a quaint collection of stories about dueling noblemen in Heidelberg. If the obsession with defending one's honor seems remote now, it's not because the urge has disappeared. We've just forgotten how powerful it is.

In the West we've redefined "honorable" as being virtuous, fair, truthful and sincere, but that's not the traditional meaning. Honor meant simply the respect of the local "honor group" – the family, the extended clan, the tribe, the religious sect. It meant maintaining a reputation for courage and loyalty, not being charitable to enemy civilians. Telling the truth was secondary to saving face...

The problem today, as Bowman sees it, is that the whole concept of defending one's honor has been devalued in the West – mocked as an archaic bit of male vanity or

childish macho chest-thumping. But if you don't create a civilized honor culture, you risk ending up with the primitive variety.

"The honor system in Arab culture is the default honor system, the one you see in street gangs in America – you dis me, I shoot you," says Bowman, a scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. "We need a better system that makes it honorable to be protective of those who are weaker instead of lording it over them."

When you're confronted with an honor culture like the one in the Middle East, there are two rules to keep in mind. One is that you are not going to placate the enemy with the kind of concessions that appeal to Western diplomats. "Hezbollah is fighting for honor, to humiliate the enemy, not for any particular objective," Bowman says. "Israel has no choice in what it's doing. Nothing short of victory by either side will change anything."

The other rule is that you're not going to quickly transform an honor culture. The Iraq war was predicated on the assumption that democracy would turn Iraqis into loyal citizens with new civic virtues. But for now the old loyalties to tribes and sects still matter more than any universal concept of justice. The men would rather have honor than peace.

Maybe I can add further to your understanding of "honor", Dear, by mentioning: even you have at least two perspectives of "honor", namely, yours and the perspective of those people with whom you interact. Similar is true for others; thus, there is "honor [even] among thieves". In general, we all consider ourselves "honorable" if we do what we consider to be "right", but meanwhile, others consider us to be "honorable" if we do what they consider to be "right". The critical step in developing your sense of "honor", then, is how you gain your perception of "honor": Do you accept your society's (or group's or family's) idea of "honor" or do you develop your own?

Asked differently, the fundamental question is: Do you consider yourself, foremost, to be an independent individual, able and even expected to define your own sense of honor, or do you consider yourself, foremost, a member of some "collective", whose ideas of "honor" you accept?

As I'll return to below (and in subsequent chapters), the distinction between these two perceptions of "honor" is the fundamental difference between "the secular West" and "the Islamic East" – and quite possibly for the rest of your life, you will be experiencing resulting confrontations (and wars) between the two views.

* Go to other chapters *via*

For example, as I'll detail later, that's what the current "war on terror" is really "all about". During my lifetime, I suffered through similar confrontations, but in my case, the challenge to "individualism" was not "the collectivism" known as Islam, but the collectivisms known as fascism and then communism.

Psychologically stunted people (e.g., as pointed out by deMause in his book that I quoted extensively in the previous chapter, those who were subjected to severe child abuse) are typically unable to think independently from "group thought", because independence means growth and, to such people, growth seems dangerous. Consequently, such people cling firmly, for example, to their family's (or group's or society's) idea of honor.

Psychologically, such people can't stand on their own and say something similar to (what we might have hoped the father of Mukhtaran Bibi would have said): "To hell with what you people think; you can take you precious family honor and blow it out your ear; my daughter is precious to me; I'll kill any bastard who tries to harm her." Instead, such people cling to their family's (or group's or society's) idea of honor (and other rules), like frightened children clinging to whatever seems to give them comfort, safety, and what seems to them to be a better chance for their own survival.

Now, Dear, if it's unclear to you how such ideas of "honor" are related to misogyny and child abuse, then to gain another glimpse at the problem, consider the following quotation from Chapter 14 entitled "Religious Extremism: A Parenting Style" of the 2005 book entitled *Parenting for a Peaceful World* by Robin Grille.¹¹

Child rearing and Islamic extremism

Fundamentalist religious societies in general are patriarchal, and Islamic fundamentalism is no exception. In July 2002, the United Nations Development Program and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development jointly issued the *Arab Human Development Report (AHDR 2003)* in order to assess blocks to development in the Arab world, where Islamic extremism has been enjoying an extensive revival. The report was compiled by a team of specialists from across the Arab region headed by Nader Fergany, director of the Cairo-based Almishkat Center for Research and Training. This report concluded that Arab women's economic and political participation is the lowest in the world. It also underscored cultural blocks to development such as:

¹¹ Published by Longueville Media; available at www.naturalchild.org/ppw; I've omitted her references.

...authoritarian and over-protective child rearing... curricula in schools that encourage submission, obedience, subordination, and compliance rather than free critical thinking.

The suppression of children increases in direct proportion to the degree of patriarchy and misogyny. [Italics added.] In fact, punitive attitudes towards children seem to be a salient feature of fundamentalist communities. In Egypt, where fundamentalism is prominent, a report by the Department of Public Health in Alexandria stated that one in four Egyptian children had suffered injuries such as fractures, concussion, or permanent disability as a result of parental ‘discipline’. Radical Islam has embraced and propagated the African custom of female genital mutilation. Around the world, 130 million women have suffered this fate, dooming them to a life of sex without pleasure, or worse: making sex with their future husbands an excruciating ordeal.

Throughout the Islamic world modernization, liberalization, and moderate forces are at work. Fundamentalist politicians were soundly rejected by Malaysian voters in 2004. Reformists such as Iranian Jamaluddin Afghani and Egyptian Muhammad Abduh were agitating for a liberalization of Islam as far back as the late 19th Century. Perhaps the advent of Islamic feminism constitutes one of the strongest contemporary bulwarks against archaic traditions. A growing number of voices from within the Muslim world are speaking out against oppression of women and children.

One such voice is that of Moroccan scholar, Fatna A Sabbah, who says that fundamentalists expect women to be silent and immobile, to act meek and remain with eyes downcast, and to lead a life of near-total seclusion. Women in fundamentalist families, as depicted by Sabbah, are possessed as property, shunned as temptresses, and blamed as the inspirers of lust – an evil and destructive emotion. When a mother is crushed underfoot, and when she lives under threat of violence, how can she be the kind of mother she wants to be, the mother her children need her to be? Children are the ultimate victims when their mothers live in bondage.

Palestinian researchers Haj-Yahia and Tamishvii echo Sabbah’s assertion that women are given a low status, because traditionally, they are seen as the source of evil and anarchy. They demonstrate how this attitude to women has had disastrous ramifications in traditional communities. Female victims of sexual abuse are often accused of bringing the abuse upon themselves. A family’s honor is based on the sexual purity of its girls and women. Since a girl’s “loss of honor” reflects on her whole family, even if she has been raped, she risks severe punishment for being found out. This makes girls easy targets for sexual abuse. Meanwhile boys, from a very young age, are pressured to be overly aggressive and dominant. The genders thus become polarized to extremes of hyper-masculinity and ultra-submission...

The imprint of Islamic fundamentalism on parenting and family dynamics has been closely studied in Saudi Arabia. Two extensive and independent surveys of Saudi Arabian families were conducted by Arab academics Soraya Altorkiviii and Mona AlMunajjed. Both reported a kind of sexual apartheid, where women were

segregated from men at home, in most public buildings, and in public transport. Even at university, male teachers were viewed by female students through closed circuit TV. At the time of conducting her survey in the 1970s, Altorki was not even able to move around on her own, unchaperoned. As an anthropologist, she considered Saudi Arabia one of the most closed cultures in the world.

As in other fundamentalist havens, a Saudi family's honor is tied to its women's sexual conduct, and to the males' capacity to control their women. Strict codes of honor are the prime responsibility of women, and the slightest infractions – which include talking or flirting with unrelated males – bring shame upon their family. Women are severely punished by their own male relatives, and the penalty for adultery is death. Male infidelity, on the other hand, is tolerated, though it is preferred that philandering is done with non-Saudi women. If sex occurs outside the rigidly prescribed boundaries, the woman is invariably blamed for leading the man astray. In marriage, her duty is to be sexually available to her husband – whether or not she chooses, through love, to be his betrothed.

The suspicion and disgust with which feminine sexuality is viewed by fundamentalists is unfathomable. Only recently, religious police in Saudi Arabia forced 15 girls back into a burning building. Their crime? Trying to escape with their lives, uncovered by traditional dress. For this infraction they were burnt to death.

In Saudi homes, obedience to the father or husband is usually the overriding principle. Most children and women do not leave their homes without permission – a privilege that is infrequently granted by the male heads of the household. From both women and children, total obedience is expected, and children are obligated to their parents for life. They are told that they are doomed to hell, after judgment day, if they displease their parents. At the time of Altorki's survey in the 1970s, children were still expected to stand when adults entered the room, and to kiss their hands in the morning, and not to laugh “excessively”. The Saudi father loomed as a distant and aloof disciplinarian. His children always stood in his presence, and they were never observed by the researcher to defy him. Such authoritarian and repressive child-rearing customs are reminiscent of the most traditional parts of rural Yugoslavia in the 1930s. Interestingly, AlMunajjed found that as modernization chips away at patriarchal oppression, children are gradually treated with more kindness and patience.

Though there are signs of change toward liberalization, until recently Saudi marriages were arranged, based on commercial or status-related considerations. A “dowry” was paid for the bride by the groom's father, and partners did not see each other until their wedding day. Obedience, instead of love, was the glue that kept the family together...

Elsewhere, in Afghanistan, a survey of women recently conducted by Physicians for Human Rights found that under the yoke of the extremist Taliban regime, 78%

suffered symptoms of a major depression. More than one in every three women admitted having suffered at least one incident of serious physical abuse, such as beating, rape, or detention. Even in parts of Afghanistan not controlled by the Taliban, over half of all women suffered from symptoms of major depression.

In recognition that violence in the family home is endemic in many Islamic nations, a manual for combating this problem was recently developed. This manual was compiled by a largely Muslim group of women campaigning against the high incidence of violence in radical Muslim families. It highlights the existence of stoning for adulterous women, polygamy, child marriage, and grossly unequal grounds for divorce, across a range of countries where fundamentalist Islam is powerful. The manual also exposes the loathsome custom of “honor killing” which, it states, is common in Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, the Gulf countries and in Palestinian territories. (“Honor killing” of women and girls is rare in the non-Islamic world, but exists to a lesser degree in Ecuador, Brazil, and Uganda.) As an example of honor killing in Jordan, a father stabbed his daughter in the groin because she had gone unaccompanied to talk to a boy. She was left to bleed to death. This kind of incident is not unusual, according to this manual, and honor killings are actually on the increase in the Middle East.

A girl’s own father, brother or uncle can kill her if she is perceived to have brought shame upon her family. The dishonorable acts which merit her murder range from chatting to a neighbor, holding hands with a man other than her husband, flirting, indulging in illicit or pre-marital affairs, committing adultery, and in some places being the victim of rape. In the community’s eyes, the family’s name and reputation will not be cleansed until the offending girl is brutally killed. The more brutal the killing, the more complete the restoration of the family’s honor, and so victims tend to be strangled, knifed, or hacked to death. Only those whose hearts are already brutalized through years of abuse could possibly accept this kind of atrocity in their community...

If you will dig up additional information about such tribal systems (“sanctified” by the clerics and the “holy books” of their patriarchal religions), Dear, I expect you’ll be shocked by what is surely the most devastating “vicious circle” that the world has even known.

Thus (and adding to the outline that I provided earlier in this chapter), to maintain “angular momentum” of the vicious circle of child abuse, people are pushed around the circle by the following forces (or torques):

- Children are born into the system totally innocent, of course, but with basic physiological and psychological needs; such needs of the children are more-or-less satisfied by parents – provided that the children do as their parents demand,

- Already corrupted when they were children by their own parents and by their societies, the children’s parents judge that female children are worth less than males, sometimes leading parents to abandon baby girls or even murder them (“female infanticide”), but if reared, then forcing their girls to be submissive and to prepare for motherhood,
- Simultaneously, the parents force their male children (commonly with physical abuse) to be aggressive and dominating, preparing them for their future patriarchal roles and to defend the “family honor”, and then
- When the children become parents, the aggressive, dominating husband and his submissive wife then (and once again, for another generation), continue to pump angular momentum into the same vicious circle, training their own boys to be aggressive and their girls to be submissive.

SUMMARY SPECULATIONS ABOUT “CAUSES”

All of which leads me to some speculations about patriarchy, patriarchal religions, women’s liberation, and child abuse that I’ll list below and then use to suggest how humanity might be able to expedite exiting the vicious circle of child abuse. Before starting my list, however, let me again caution you that the following are suggestions of a novice (me!) and let me remind you, also, of what Aristotle wrote in his *Nichomachean Ethics*:

Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all the products of the crafts. Now fine and just actions, which political science investigates, admit of much variety and fluctuation of opinion, so that they may be thought to exist only by convention, and not by nature... *We must be content, then, in speaking of such subjects and with such premisses to indicate the truth roughly and in outline, and in speaking about things which are only for the most part true and with premisses of the same kind to reach conclusions that are no better.* [Italics added] In the same spirit, therefore, should each type of statement be received; for it is the mark of an educated [person] to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits...

That is, Dear, please appreciate: I realize that, at best, what follows “are only for the most part true... to reach conclusions that are no better.”

With those caveats, my speculations follow.

* Go to other chapters via

- The original “cause” of child abuse seems to have been animal instincts of human males to propagate their own genes by controlling the reproductive capabilities of “their” females. Males accomplish this “control” by force, according to the law of the jungle – which is the fundamental law of tribalism. Thereby, men claim that upholding their “family honor” or “tribal honor” requires that their women (and their children) obey them – and they abuse them if they don’t.
- Family and tribal brutality then forms a vicious circle, in that it contains a positive-feedback loop: both boys and girls abused as children are “programmed” (both socially and *via* brain chemistry) to be abusive when they become adults, perpetuating the brutalization of children and women. Thus, experiencing child abuse as children leads adults to “think” that they have “license” to abuse children. Furthermore, insofar as child abuse stunts psychological growth (inhibiting the formation of independent, caring adults who are able to explore), then the ruts of child abuse, submissiveness, and patriarchy are entrenched.
- Whereas 1) all humans are “gene producing machines”, 2) sex yields children that consume resources, 3) any human’s genes have a “survival advantage” if the parents of a child provide it with resources to grow, and 4) mothers but not fathers know who the parents of a child are, then unless any society has ample resources (e.g., during the start of the agricultural revolution) or sufficient resources that are willingly shared (e.g., in communes), there’ll be a “survival advantage” to a male’s genetic code if he controls his wife’s (or wives’) sexual life. That is, controlling women’s sexuality has a biological and therefore evolutionary basis, which historically was then adopted in tribal and religious customs.
- Currently in tribal societies (throughout much of the Muslim world and even among poorly educated groups in America, such as most of the “Christian Reich” and most Mormons), men continue to control “their women” by the law of the jungle, embedding it in what they are pleased to identify as part of their personal and their family’s “honor”. The biological basis for this “honor” seems to be that most men are averse to working to support another man’s child – even his daughter’s child, if the child’s father refuses to support the child (or is in some way judged to be an undesirable father).
- Linking a custom’s biological base with the law of the jungle leads to excesses – which continue today. For example, when in the past males of any tribe accrued resources beyond their needs, women (and girls) became another “commodity”, which could be bought and sold – or obtained in other ways (trickery, thievery, war booty, etc.). For example, King Solomon reportedly had ~700 wives and ~300 concubines (which was “**evil in the sight of the Lord**” – not because of the number, but because they weren’t all Hebrews!), a “feat” that was “surpassed” by the Persian emperor Khosrau II (or Chosroes II), who ruled from 590–628 BCE, who reportedly had 3,000 wives and 12,000 female slaves, both of which makes Muhammad’s dozen wives and Joseph Smith’s few-dozen wives seem rather pathetic!

- Sex is central in all religions, because 1) sex is central in the lives of essentially everyone, 2) essentially no society has yet found a way to continue in peace without constraining sexual impulses (save, perhaps, during the start of some communes and during the start of the agricultural revolution, more than 5,000 years ago, when fertility goddess were worshiped), and 3) religion is fundamentally a method used for those in power to control people's behavior.
- Although it's common to blame "the gods" and their clerics for discrimination against women, realize that 1) people have never served the gods; instead, always the gods have served the people in power, i.e., ideas about gods are used by power mongers to control foolish people, and 2) all clerics are primarily interested in themselves: clerics support the *status quo* for their own benefit. When societies demand liberation for women, therefore, clerics will eventually follow the people – and their money.
- Also, although it's common to blame patriarchal religions for discriminating against and for demeaning women (and girls), realize not only that male domination of females and maybe even female subservience to males seem to be a mammalian characteristics but also that male domination of women is primarily a characteristic of tribal and warring societies (in which the dominant rule is might-makes-right); therefore, a deeper source of the discrimination against women in the dominant patriarchal religions of the world is the original tribal and warring characteristics of the primitive (e.g., Hebrew and Arab) tribes, characteristics that were then "sanctified" in their "holy books", the Bible and the Quran.
- Tribalism was the original way that all human groups were governed – and it persists today in much of the Islamic world (and in any dictatorship); in tribalism, individualism is suppressed (save for the individualism of the tribal leader, which has frequently been enhanced to a horrible degree – such as in the cases of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Sadam Hussein, etc.).
- In tribalism, rights of any individual (save for the tribal leader) are secondary (or even lower rank) to the rights, honor, security, whatever... of the tribe; in fact, rights of individuals are usually considered an anathema ("a cursed thing"), since tribal leaders expect that such rights would tend to cause the tribe's disintegration (leading to the leader's loss of power).
- Tribal leaders, therefore, are normally strongly opposed to any type of "individualization", including any type of government that incorporates protection of "the rights" of individuals – which was and still is the great accomplishment of Western civilization.

Assuming that the above list of speculations at least partially describes the reality of patriarchal religions and tribalism (and their resulting abuse of women and children), what I want to start on, now, is to try to use such "knowledge" to help identify ways to exit the vicious circle of child abuse.

POSSIBLE WAYS TO EXIT THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

To try to exit any vicious circle, advantage should be taken of the fact that it's a circle (!); therefore, it can be exited anywhere – at least in principle. In the case of the vicious circle of child abuse, three obvious exits include:

1. Promulgate and enforce laws to prohibit child abuse, promoting “children’s rights”,
2. Support “women’s rights” *via* promoting the liberation of women from men, and
3. Convince patriarchs that it's in their own interest to liberate women (and their children).

In addition, there's a more general (or diffuse) “fourth method” for exiting the vicious circle of child abuse, an exit available anywhere on the circle, namely:

4. Infuse any culture based on extreme versions of any type of collectivism (e.g., tribalism, fascism, communism, and essentially all versions of religious fundamentalism, including Mormonism and Islam) with the spirit of individualism.

In what follows (in this and subsequent chapters), I'll comment on apparent possibilities for utilizing all of the above four “exits”. But whereas a certain grandchild asked me why I don't believe in god (not how to solve all the problems in the world!), my plan is to try to keep my comments brief for all (important) methods for exiting the vicious circle of child abuse, only emphasizing instances in which the damnable “god idea” is a major part of the problem. In subsequent chapters, I'll emphasize the methods numbered above as 2 through 4. In the remainder of this chapter, I'll include a few comments on #1, i.e.,

1. Promulgating and Enforcing Laws to Protect Children's Rights

Exiting child abuse by promoting “children's rights” has, unfortunately, not yet made much reliably measured progress, even in Western societies. As you can find on the internet, it's true that legal progress has been made in many countries (including Australia, Britain, Canada, etc., and of course including Sweden and the US), and as you can also find on the internet, certainly many groups of concerned citizens (in the best of democratic traditions) are working hard to make more progress. But as you can additionally find (and as I showed you a little in the previous chapter) statistics on even just the worst cases of child abuse show that it's still rampant.

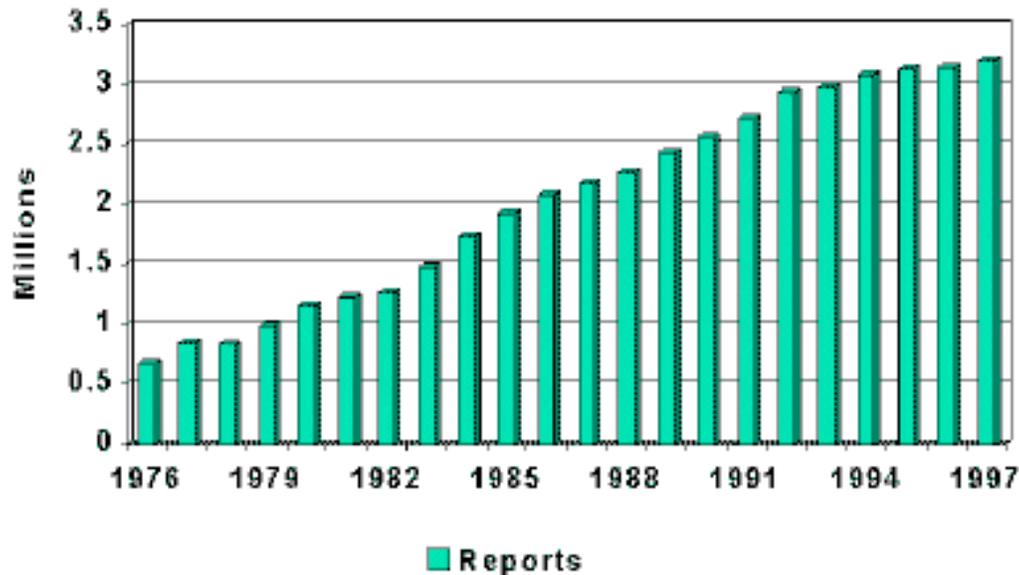
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Some Data for the US

In fact, it's easy to gain the first impression that child abuse is increasing. For example, consider the following chart of relevant US data.¹²

Brief Overview of Statistics

1976-1997 National Estimates Child Abuse & Neglect Reports



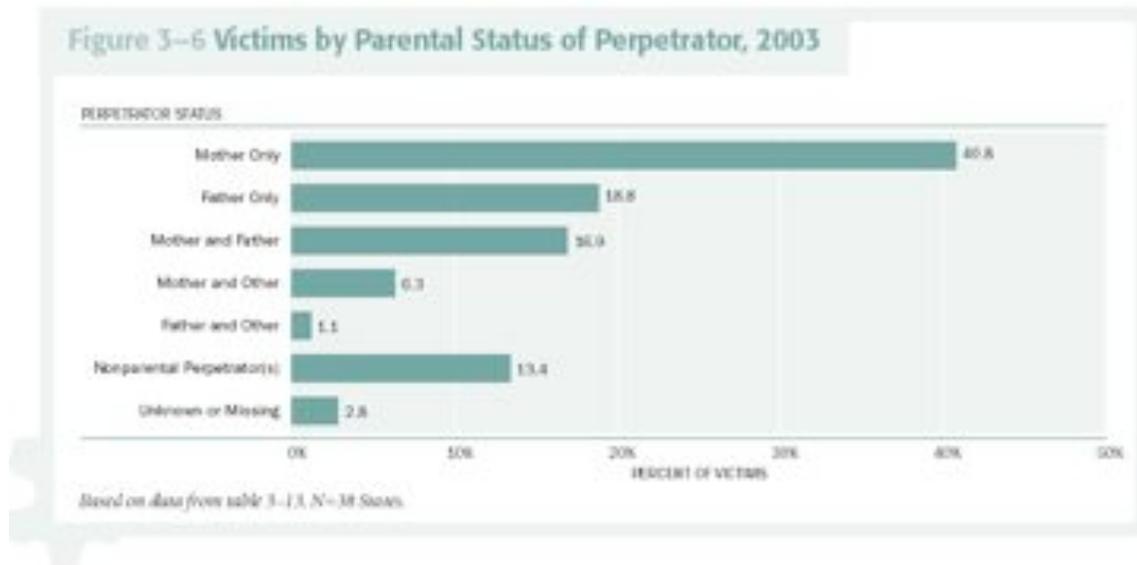
In the referenced article, the authors state:

From 1972–1997, 25 years, over 46 million child maltreatment allegations have been made. Of these allegations 30–40% have been substantiated. The number of allegations have increased over 500%... while the population of the USA has increased only 27.5%...

But rather than conclude that child abuse in the US has dramatically increased during the past quarter century, surely a more realistic conclusion is that the *reports* of child abuse have dramatically increased. For example, reports of sexual abuse of children by clerics (especially Catholic clerics, but including Mormon and other clerics) has certainly increased, but thanks to those news reports, incidents may now be decreasing.

¹² Copied from the article “Allegations Of Abuse Prevention & Survival” by Jodee Kulp and Judy Howell; available at <http://www.betterendings.org/justice/Stats.htm>.

The following shows some data for the distribution of child abuse by perpetrator status in the US.¹³



The above data (published by the US Department of Health & Human Services) shows that “approximately two fifths (40.8%) of child victims were maltreated by their mothers acting alone... victims abused by a nonparental perpetrator accounted for 13.4% of the total.” For me, it’s shocking to learn that mothers are the prime abusers of children; yet, women are usually the prime care-givers, and I expect that additional data would show that those abusing mothers are currently being abused by their husbands and/or, when they were children, they were abused by their own fathers and mothers.

In any case, child abuse in the US certainly isn’t reduced by pronouncements of ignorant, fundamentalist Christians. A case in point is Dr. James Dobson, head of the Focus on The Family cult, who has his Ph.D. in education with a major in “child development” – which apparently didn’t include studies of critical thinking! Dobson “made a name for himself” by publishing the book *Dare to Discipline*, which apparently soothed the guilt of many parents who wanted to continue to abuse their children. Criticizing Dobson’s “research”, Martin and Deidre Bobgan wrote:¹⁴

¹³ Copied from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm03/figure3_6.htm.

¹⁴ Copied from an article entitled “Psychological Savior: An Examination of the Teachings of Dr. James Dobson”, available at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/psychosavior.htm>, in turn from their book *Prophets of Psychoheresy II*, available from Eastgate Publishers, 4137 Primavera Road, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93110.

Dobson uses the story-telling mode, which not only keeps his readers interested but gives a seeming reality to everything he says. Rather than relying on research, which may actually prove just the opposite of some of his conclusions, he uses case histories which emphasize and especially dramatize the points he wants to make.

Some quotations from Dobson's book(s), along with refutations, are the following:¹⁵

James Dobson: “Contrary to what it might seem, [a child] is more likely to be a violent person if his parent fails to [spank him], because he learns too late about the painful consequences of acting selfishly, rebelliously, and aggressively.”

Psychologists Ronald Slaby and Wendy Roedell: “[O]ne of the most reliable predictors of children's level of aggression is the heavy use by parents of harsh, punitive discipline and physical punishment... Parental punitiveness has been found to be positively correlated with children's aggression in over 25 studies... [P]arental punishment is one important aspect of a general pattern of intercorrelated parental behaviors that influence the child's aggression.”

James Dobson: “A spanking is to be reserved for use in response to willful defiance, *whenever it occurs*. Period!”

Protect Your Child by Laura Hutton: “Every child should be taught that he has personal rights that should be respected by all adults... ‘I have the right to say no if someone touches or wants to touch the private parts of my body’.”

James Dobson: “Two or three stinging strokes on the legs or buttocks with a switch are usually sufficient to emphasize the point, ‘You must obey me’.”

Protect Your Child: “I have a right to scream for help even if I am told by a molester to be quiet and obey... I don't have to obey someone who hurts me or wants to hurt me.”

James Dobson: “By learning to yield to the loving authority... of his parents, a child learns to submit to other forms of authority which will confront him later in his life – his teachers, school principal, police, neighbors and employers.”

The Safe Child Book by Sherryl Kerns Kraizer: “We need to look at the ways in which we teach our children to be blindly obedient to adults and authority figures. Most children do not know they can say no to a police officer, a teacher, a principal, a counselor, a minister, a baby-sitter, or a parent when an inappropriate request is made.”

James Dobson: “Minor pain can... provide excellent motivation for the child... There is a muscle, lying snugly against the base of the neck... When firmly squeezed,

¹⁵ Quoted from a more extensive list at <http://www.nospank.net/perlin2.htm>, “compiled by Eric Perlin” and where you can find references to the sources of the quotations.

it sends little messengers to the brain saying, ‘This hurts; avoid recurrence at all costs’.”

The Safe Child Book: “Young children tell me that some of the ways they don’t like to be touched are: kisses on the mouth, getting their shirts tucked in by grown-ups, being picked up, having their hair stroked, having to kiss Grandma and Grandpa or Mom and Dad’s friends... They can be unwanted touch, just as sexual abuse is unwanted touch... It is important to respect children’s preferences. By learning to say no to one type of touching, children learn to say no to the other.”

James Dobson: “An appropriate spanking from a loving parent in a moment of defiance provides [a] service. It tells [the child]... he must steer clear of certain social traps... selfishness, dishonesty, unprovoked aggression, etc.”

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Tips to Parents: “Other behavioral signals [that indicate a child may have been sexually molested include]... aggressive or disruptive behavior...”

And let me add, Dear, what is probably the sole praise from me that you’ll find in this book for Gordon B. Hinckley, President of the Mormon Church. At the 1994 “General Conference” he stated:

I have never accepted the principle of “spare the rod and spoil the child”... I am persuaded that violent fathers produce violent sons... Children don’t need beating. They need love and encouragement. They need fathers to whom they can look with respect rather than fear. Above all, they need example.

If only he had added that kids need examples of adults who demonstrate skills in evaluative thinking, then...!!

Some Additional Problems in the Muslim World

As I’ll describe in more detail in later chapters, promulgating laws to protect children’s (and women’s) rights in the Muslim world is horribly thwarted by Islamic religious law (called *Sharia*). Thus, whereas the Quran “sanctified” seventh century Arab tribal, patriarchal, misogynist customs (including polygamy, wife beating, selling child brides, etc.), and whereas the Quran is used as the foundational legal document in all Muslim countries, then introducing more enlightened laws (and customs) into Muslim societies has been found to be extremely difficult (if not impossible), since Muslim clerics claim that such laws are “against Allah’s laws”. I’ll provide specific illustrations in later chapters. From those illustrations (and, should you be interested, from your own explorations), you may become as depressed as I about the outlook for children and women in Muslim societies, until the idiocy known as Islam implodes (similar to how the craziness known as Christianity is collapsing in the West).

* Go to other chapters via

Meanwhile, though, it's easy to gain the impression from "official" Islamic reports that child abuse in "the Islamic World" is dramatically decreasing! For example, if you'll read the full version of the *Draft Rabat Declaration on Child's Issues in the Islamic World*,¹⁶ then I expect your first impression will be that the participants successfully pursued the goal of eliminating child abuse in Islamic countries. But then, Dear, please not only realize that the entire "exercise" was just another "proclamation of intent" (although, such proclamations are certainly welcome!) but also consider specific statement in their proclamation, such as the following:

We the Ministers in charge of child affairs in the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Heads of Arab, Islamic and International Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations taking part in the First Islamic Ministerial Conference on the Child, held in Rabat, in the Kingdom of Morocco, from 7 to 9 November 2005, in cooperation and coordination between the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), UNICEF and the OIC:

Guided by the teachings of Islam which stress the need for taking due care of children and granting them full rights...

DECLARE our Commitment:

1. To respect and ensure the rights of each child in our societies without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion or social status;
2. To adhere to the general principles of child rights, *inter alia*, the best interests of the child, non discrimination, participation, survival and development, which provide the framework for all action concerning children and adolescents alike;
3. To preserve and enhance our common Islamic heritage to increase the awareness of the Muslim Youth of the values of Islam, and *instill into them a sense of pride in the achievements of the glorious Islamic civilization* [italics added]...

That is, even in this declaration of intent to eliminate child abuse, they include a "commitment" to continue to abuse their children mentally with unsubstantiated ideas about some giant Jabberwock in the sky ruling the world – and not advertising the fact that if kids don't buy into such nonsense, then they'll be murdered as "apostates"!

¹⁶ Available at <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/declarationeng.pdf>

But more to the point, although it may be the “**intent**” of these “**Ministers**” to “**respect and ensure the rights of each child**”, yet as I’ll show you in later chapters, the reality is that most children in Islamic countries are being horribly abused – mentally, physically, emotionally, and sexually (which is a combination of physical and emotional abuse). Agreeing with deMause’s analysis (some of which I showed you in the previous chapter and more of which I’ll show you in later chapters), I’m convinced that abuse of children (and women) indoctrinated in Islamic idiocy is the prime reason why Muslims are today the most backward, brutal, barbaric people in the world: they brutalize their children for the slightest infraction of their seventh century customs; they murder their children to protect the primitive “honor” of the family (e.g., if a child should apply some common sense and proclaim that Islam is a crock, then almost certainly, the parents or other relatives will kill the child).

Nonetheless, progress is being attempted, throughout the world, to exit the vicious circle of child abuse by stopping the abuse of today’s children, just as progress is being made, liberating women – mostly courtesy the sustained effort of courageous women. And actually, I wouldn’t be surprised if the most efficacious way to exit the vicious circle of child abuse is found to be expediting women’s liberation from male domination and (if relevant) weaning women from any female instinct for submission to males. The idea is simply that, as deMause emphasizes, happy mothers are more likely to rear both happy, hopeful daughters (who abhor brutality) and sons who have learned how to love and how to control their aggressive instincts.

In the next chapter, I’ll explore ways to promote women’s liberation. Again, my explorations will be from the perspective of a novice – but I’m not so much a novice as to fail to notice that it’s time to get some exercise! How about you?