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THE FAMILY IN TODAY'S WORLD AND IN THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

by

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The family is the bedrock institution or the basic unit of society. Since it provides for the reproduction of society through legitimate sexual relations and the material sustenance of its members, the family has been recognized as the cornerstone of society. It is admitted by all the sociologists that through its indispensable norms and values family helps to maintain the unity of the society. The family is like the cells inside the body. When these cells are healthy, the body functions normally. Again, if the cells do not function properly, the organism may fall sick and even die. In other words, the destruction of family system may ultimately cause the destruction of human race. All the great religions of the world shared a sense of reverence for the family. For example, "Church doctrine stresses that the family is the basic cell of society, the first place in which cultural, social and religious values are transmitted and assimilated. It is normally within a family that a person first experiences love and compassion, and learns to show them to others.

The family is the place in which each individual is helped to come to full maturity and so to build up a society of harmony, solidarity and peace."¹ But unfortunately, in today's world, particularly in the developed countries, family is facing a serious crisis. The increasing rate of pre-marital and extra-marital sex, group sex, illegitimate child birth, abortion, divorce, living together without marriage, homosexuality, carelessness about parents and children, etc. prove that the family as an institution has fallen victim of some chronic diseases and its condition is going from bad to worse.-- The present paper is an humble endeavour to show that in order to get rid of the crisis of the family we need Textual Revolution to counter the so-called Sexual Revolution. By Textual Revolution we mean going back to the sacred texts of different religious traditions of the world.

1. Problems of marriage and family in the present day world:

Problems connected with marriage and family have occupied a quite remarkable place in men's thinking down through the history. Sociologists are doubtful if greater attention has ever been paid to this problems than at present. In the twentieth century social change has occurred with a rapidity unparalleled to human history. As a result, keener insight has been gained regarding the impact of general social change. Family problems have become so serious and acute that a large part of social research is devoted to subjects like the changing functions of the family, the relationship between the personality development and marriage adjustment, the causes of maladjustment and disorganization in marriage and the problems arising out of broken families.² Before fifty years from now, Carle C. Zimmerman remarked that western civilization was disintegrating at its core, since modern man adopting practices which prevent the fulfilment of those very sexual and parental drives on which the family was established.³ During the same time it was observed that the crisis of family was more fearsome than the atom bomb.⁴ In late 70's Evelyn Millis Duvall observed that the problems of family have become so acute that

"It is much harder to raise a child according to the sound child development principles recommended

today than it used to be when anyone with any "common sense" knew what was good for a child. Being a warmly sympathetic and companionable spouse is more difficult than baking a light biscuit or mending a harness. The arts and skills of human interaction that are expected of family members today open new social and emotional frontiers for which few have been adequately prepared by previous experience. Today's family becomes a laboratory at work on the world's most challenging problem-- how to live in creative peace, build harmony out of differences, and make democracy work.⁵

The health of the family is undoubtedly an indication of any society in both physical and spiritual spheres. Families not only contribute to the stability of society, they also play an important role in handing down religious tradition. But about today's family crisis Card. Francis Arinze remarked: In several countries, especially in the so-called first world, the identity of the family as a society established by marriage between man and a woman, is being called into question by some. Single parent families are being accepted not just as an unfortunate fact but as a model to be approved as alternative families. Moreover, contraception, abortion, infanticide and euthanasia are actively promoted by some organizations and individuals. There are not wanting people who banalize marriage and the family by promoting indiscriminate sexual activity between people who are not husband and wife-- and they call this free love, or, sexual freedom, or reproductive health.⁶

There are more illegitimate child birth and marriage break up than ever before and this is increasing at a rate which is assuming frightening proportions for all of us. Between 1975 and 1985 the number of illegitimate child birth doubled in England and Wales, rising from 9% to 19%. There were 126,200 children born here who were illegitimate. Among teenage women illegitimate births have increased from 32% in 1975 to 61% in 1984.⁷ In the U.S.A. in 1804 one marriage in a hundred ended in divorce. At the end of 1920 it was one marriage in a six, and by 1980 one in two ended in divorce.⁸ In 1991 Britain had the highest divorce in Europe- one in three marriages. One in five of the families was headed by lone parent.⁹

Dr. Alfred Kinsey's Institute for Sex Research shocked many people in the late 1940's and early 1950's with the assertion that 50% of American men and at least 25% of American women engaged in extramarital relations. The foundation now believes that the post- Pill percentages are probably closer to 60% for men and 40% for women. socialologists John F. Cuber and Peggy B Harroff interviewed about 450 upper- income Americans aged 35 to 55 and came to the conclusion that our monogamous code was 'a colossal unreality' based upon common pretense.

A marriage counsellor and cofounder of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, remarked, "Almost every study of sexual practices of married people today reports that the myth is monogamy; the fact is frequent polygamy."

We are in an age witnessing moral decadence in all spheres of society. A society built on religious ethics is collapsing due to the change of our value system. Today sexual frustrations are seen more openly than ever before. It is often reported in the daily press with regard to the sexual harassment even among fathers and daughters.

2. Attacks on family as an institution:

Early feminists looked upon marriage as an instrument of the slavery and servitude of women.¹⁰ To them, it was a male institution, dominated by the male to serve his selfish interests. They argue that the relegation of the wife to house, where she spent her time in menial household tasks and the care of children, prevented the full development of her personality and deprived society of her contribution. Besides, they advocated greater sexual freedom, maintaining that the prevailing system bolstered up a

dual system of sexual morality where male was at liberty to indulge his passions outside the home while the wife was confined to strict chastity. The early Marxists used almost the same arguments but their motive was somewhat different.¹¹ To them, the traditional form of marriage was 'bourgeois' form which favours the upper classes who have money enough to buy sexual outlets at will and condemning the lower working classes to strict monogamy. An additional ground for the Marxists' attack on family is that it is the basis of social privilege and inheritance. It is quite clear that their attack on private property would necessarily entail an attack on the traditional form of family.

Those who advocate greater sexual freedom and loosening of the monogamous bond also vehemently attack the family as an institution. Most of them contend that all repression of sexual desire is very much unhealthy and will lead to psychic and nervous disorders. Some even go so far as to look upon the family as the breeding ground for every kind of neurosis. The restraints and a kind of forced living together which a stable family life demands cannot be tolerated and thus, without finding any solution in family system they want to do away with the family altogether.

A less radical but more subtle attack on the family comes from those who look upon it primarily as a means for the satisfaction of sexual desires. John J. Thomas explains this view in the following way:

"Marital happiness is equated with perfect sexual harmony. If this is not achieved in marriage, then the family should be broken up and a new mate sought out. They believe that mismatches would result less often if there were greater sexual freedom before marriage, and some advocate a kind of trial marriage which would enable the mates to find out if they were compatible sexually. Through modern birth control methods, they contend, such an arrangement would have no serious threat to the family, since there would be no family until both parties had decided the union of the ideal".¹²

This way of thinking has received strong support from the motion pictures and the popular magazines where love is portrayed as a mysterious visitation to be recognized by the sudden glow of passion aroused at the first sight of the new lover. But this kind of romantic cult, remarks John L. Thomas, falsifies the marital expectations of the unmarried by identifying physical attraction with love.

One of the most serious attacks on the family has come from those who contend that the traditional family is not able to prepare and educate the growth of the country for life in the modern world. The mother over protect, the fathers are too authoritarian, the brothers and sisters arouse jealousy and in general, in one way or the other, the poor child riches manhood ill prepared to mix with the larger society and to take his place as a balanced citizen. Either parents must be reeducated by the child psychologists or the training of the children should be turned over to the specialists in place of the family. Finally, there are some other who maintain that the present family system renders impossible a perfect democracy because all the children are trained differently, according to the material condition of the home and the social stratum in which the family is located.¹³ But it should be remembered that these critics falsely equate democracy with absolute equality in every phase of activity. But only by subjecting children to exactly the same living conditions and training they cannot be made neither equal nor democratic.

3. Common sense attitude towards unnatural sex:

The normal and natural avenue for the expression of sexual desire is marriage and any physical relation between two persons outside marriage is unnatural sex. There are many sociologists, psychologists and

anthropologists who do not condemn unnatural sex. For every kind of unnatural sex they put forward certain reasons in favour. For example, Anthropologists Margaret Mead and Ashley Montague and sociologist John Gagnon feel that living together, whatever its defects, is actually an apprentice marriage and not a true rebellion against marriage at all.¹⁴ About swinging or comarital sex sociologists Duane Denfeld and Michel Gordon of the University of Connecticut straghtfacedly write that marital swingers "favour monogamy and want to maintain it" and do their swinging "in order to support and improve their marriages."¹⁵

Let us start with the swinging. Experts maintain that some people swing out of neurotic needs. Some have sexual problems in their marriages that do not arise in casual sexual relationships. Some are quite bored and are in need of new stimuli and some need the ego lift of continual conquests. But what is most important here is: when the husband and wife have sex with others in their presence or absence is extramarital relation. Now since they have extra-marital relation, is it not self-contradictory to hold that they favour monogamy and want to maintain it? Moreover, none can hope to preserve the warmth and intimacy of marriage by performing the most private and personal sexual acts with other people in front of his/ her own mate or watching his/ her mate doing so with others. Again, if they do not hesitate or feel ashamed of having sex with other in the very presence of their spouse, they will not hesitate to do so in the absence. Initially they may have some kind of excitement, but in the long run they are bound to suffer from mistrust which may lead to miserable consequences.

Casual sex is the fleeting coming together of two unrelated persons in a relationship which is casual and often commercial. The important thing about casual sex is that there are no stings attached. In casual sex one does not get involved. Here there is no commitment beyond the fee or relevent expenses. In the case of true lovers there is an intensely personal relationship and in casual sex that is degraded to the level of commercial. Pysiological aspect of love cannot be seperated from the emotional aspect. But in casual sex or in swinging psychological commitment is entirely lacking and as such love is reduced to sheer meaninglessness. In the words of Stuart Bobbage:

"If promiscuity is poor preperation for the discipline and delights of marriage, casual sex is also incompatible with the institution of monogamous marrige, Kipling recognize this when he wrote: The more you have known of the many the less you will settle to one. Adultery to give casual sex its proper name makes nonesnse of the concept of marriage as "one flesh", and in the expressive language of the Eastern Orthodox Church, is the "death of marriage".¹⁶

Group marriage or group sex has captured the imagination of many thousands of college students in 70's through its idealistic and romantic portrayal in three novels widely read by the young_ Robert Heinlein's Stranger in Strange Land and Rober Rimmer's The Harrad Experiment and Proposition 31.

Quite a good number of U.S. population are presently involved in group marriage.¹⁷ Though some sociologists are of opinion that group marriage offers solutions to a number of the nagging problems and discontents of modern monogamy, yet one cannot but admit that it makes sex cheap and trivializes the nature of sexual experience. What should be private and holy has become commonplace and ordinary through group sex. It robs sex of its mystery and sanctity. Because, for the true lovers, the coital experience is something more than the experience of mutual organism, it is a vehicle for the expression of feelings, which, in their emotional intensity are too deep for words. Indeed, group sex has nothing to do with love, rather it converts what should be holy into an occasion for voyeurism and exhibitionism. It is worth mentioning that Shakespeare aptly described the life of promiscuity as "a waste of spirit in a desert of shame".

We have already stated that in the realm of sex there is difference between what is normal and

what is abnormal, what is natural and what is unnatural. It is quite unfortunate that some sociologists hold that in the interests of population control, homosexuality ought to be encouraged rather than discouraged. But any sane person will understand that homosexuality is not only an anomaly, but one of the best examples of abnormal human behaviour. It is one of the most abominable acts of human beings. The fact that a substantial minority of population is, by choice or conditioning, homosexual is an eloquent witness to the tragic disorder of social norms. Indeed, homosexuality is a miserable and pitiable travesty of normal sexuality. Stuart Bobbage rightly remarked: "Love finds its most perfect and classic expression, not in the twisted and tormented desires of the perverted and promiscuous, but in the deep and abiding love of a man for a woman."¹⁸

There are two kinds of pre-marital sex: There are boys and girls who, anticipating marriage participate in the act of intercourse; and those who being unmarried, practice promiscuity. Some sociologists have especial sympathy for the former kind, because, the relation though lacking the full sanction and support of society, is nevertheless an expression of a real and prior commitment of heart and mind. But all the theistic religions hold that sex is one of God's good gifts. Therefore, sex without the sanction of God and the society will be considered as adultery. If they are true lovers, they should get married or have patience. True lovers always use the language of eternity. True lovers' sex finds its proper fulfilment in marriage. By its very nature true love is exclusive and free love is a contradiction in terms. If it is free it is not love and if it is love it can never be free. Now even if the love between a man and a woman is genuinely true and hundred percent exclusive there is every possibility of mistrust among themselves if they go for pre-marital sex. In this connection Gerald J. Schnepf's remark is worth mentioning:

If he has engaged in premarital sex experience there are certain consequences: he has yielded to selfishness, he has put the physical above the spiritual, and he has perhaps destroyed the possibility of ever attaining true love. If the relationship was with the girl he eventually married, the stage is set for mutual accusations, recriminations, and suspicions throughout their married life. From these and other considerations, it is not surprising that marriage predictors find that marriages are happiest if no premarital intercourse has taken place."¹⁹

Indeed, any religious ethics would demand continence before marriage and fidelity within the marriage.

4. Romantic love vs Conjugal love

We have stated above that true love is, by its very nature, exclusive and true lovers always use the language of eternity. These can be better understood if romantic love and conjugal are compared. Romantic love is the kind of love feeling which centres around the physical or sensual. It is characterised by an intense emotional state stimulated, to a great degree physiologically, by the presence of the object of love. It feeds on real or imaginary external attraction. This attraction leads to its natural culmination in the sexual act. But several difficulties present themselves. In the first place, in most cases the bases of the attraction are evidently superficial. Secondly, the stimulation thus supplied does not always lead to marriage, but it may lead to sexual intimacy, and thereby become what is generally termed a perversion of love. Finally, the relationship thus built is largely on external qualifications, hardly with any consideration of the more fundamental characteristics on which sound married life must be built. Mainly for these reasons, all recognised authorities reject romantic love as the sole basis for marriage. In fact, some authorities go so far as to say that if a person indulges this tendency of romantic love at every opportunity he may eventually

become so warped emotionally as to be incapable of true conjugal love. Gerald J. Schnepf rightly remarked, "Romantic love is essentially a selfish and self-centred emotion whereas conjugal love is unselfish and other-regarding". He further observed that "if the relation has been built on nothing but veneer of romantic love, the marriage will have great difficulty in surviving the shocks of awakening".²⁰

Conjugal love, on the other hand, in the sympathetic relationship which is built up between husband and wife by mutual sharing of joys and sorrows, successes and failures. It is the relationship of mutual facing and solving all problems which arise in rearing a family. It helps to fulfil the second purpose of marriage i.e, mutual love and assistance. It differs from romantic love in several respects. In conjugal love the sex factor is not dominant but is subordinate to mental and spiritual factors. Again, conjugal love grows stronger as time goes on whereas romantic love reaches its peak in the early married period and then declines. Conjugal love is greatly concerned with the happiness and satisfaction of the other party, but the romantic love is essentially selfish and self-regarding, moreover, generally romantic love has an adolescent flavour, while conjugal love is more characteristic of the mature adult. In the words of Edgar Schmiedeler, conjugal love is "a complex thing in which one can distinguish qualities such as desire for companionship and exclusive possession, sympathy, devotion, constancy, chivalry and self-sacrifice".²¹ Conjugal love is not sensual desire but it does imply a respectful and chivalrous attitude toward the beloved. It serves as a bridge toward the sphere of sexuality and solely makes possible an organic union of the two. "The lover in the beloved, seeks the happiness of the beloved, and, in a supernaturally transfigured conjugal love, evidently seeks the highest happiness for the beloved- eternal happiness. ²²

5. Importance of Family: From Religious Perspective :

Family is truly fountain head of progress, richness and strength of human civilization. And all this owes its existence to a marriage ; without which there would be no family and no ties of kinship to unite the different members of humanity together and thereby make human civilization possible. According to all the religious traditions of the world, marriage is the right form of relationship between man and woman, for it establishes a family and enables them to undertake and fulfil their social responsibilities conscientiously with devotion and sincerity. The purity, goodness, and richness of human civilization depend on the goodness, piety and purity of the members of primary unit of the social order, which is the family thus, all religious lay especial stress on it and take various practical, legal and other measures to build family on a sound and proper footing. ²³

In India the institution of marriage has a recorded history of more than five thousand years. Descriptions of the marriage ceremony are to be found in the Rg Veda(x: 85) and the Atharvaveda (xiv. i. 2). For the vedic Hindu a man who did not marry was considered to be incomplete and was known as "one without sacrifice"(Taittiriya Brahman, II. 226). The Hindus believe in certain samskaras which mean a set of purificatory rites and ceremonies. Of all the samskaras of the Hindus, marriage is the most significant one. It is considered to be a necessary social and religious duty. Just as living beings depend on air, all other orders of life eg.' the Brahmachari, the Vanaprasthi and the Sanyasin exist by the support of the householders(Manu Smrti, 3:77).²⁴ Through marriage an individual was able to enter into the second stage of life i.e., the householdership. Marriage was important because, only a married man alongwith his wife could perform ritual and sacrifices_ to the creator, the ancestors, dieties, the elements and to fellow beings. To be mothers were women created, and to be fathers men. Religious rites therefore, are ordained in the Veda to be performed by the husband together with his

wife (Law of Manu, ix: 95)

The Buddha in course of his dealing with laity has on many occasions dealt with the family life. He has given them advice as to how one should lead a happy family life. He also spoke about the family as a social unit. These are concerning moral standards. The preachings of the Buddha on the life of the lay Buddhists are found in many suttas of Tripitaka. According to these preachings, family is a kind of school of human relationship and interdependency.

Japanese Risso Kosei-Kai is the lay Buddhist organization which has proposed that family can be the most essential and core place to cultivate human sympathy towards others for the better integrated social environment, and firstly dealing with the counselling with family members. In Buddhism family has often been compared with a hospital where patients come to be cured of the disease of limited and demanding ego. In this metaphore, remarks Keichi A Kagawa, the individuals learn a way to free themselves from their universal human sickness and egocentricism. The Buddhists call this " Bodhisattva way".

According to Judaism family is the anchor and foundation of our society. It represents all of our sense of security, permanence and immortality and paradoxically, all our vulnerability and dependency.²⁶ Marriage is so central to Judaism that not only is it regarded as the normal stall for adult, but it is also conceived of as the relationship between God and His people. The home is the arena in which much of every day life is lived and since every act must be raised to holiness, the home becomes a central position in the belief and ritual of Judaism. The family is the basic unit of Jewish society and the laws surrounding it protect its integrity- and sanctity. The family is the main vehicle through which the tradition is perpetuated. marriage is an institution which plays three central roles in achieving three important aims of Judaism: the hollowing of every act, the perpetuation of the Jewish tradition and the assurance of the physical survival of the Jewish people.

Families contribute to the stability of society. They also play an important role in handing down religious traditions. Card. Francis Aringe remarked, "The health of family is an indication of the health of any society both physical and spiritual.²⁷ In the words of Card Alfouso Lopeg Trujill, "When we enter the domain of the family, we enter a sanctuary, a holy place... It is here in this sanctuary of life that the gift of human life is transmitted, through the generosity of man and woman. It is here that faith in God is passed on and maintained, through prayer and shared beliefs and traditions.²⁸ For this reason the Catholic tradition often describe the family as the "domestic church". a miniature of the whole church. Christian marriage is based upon what has been called for the last two mellenia- Natural Law. According to St. Paul, this law is inscribed in the heart of man. (Romans 2.15). Thomas Aquinas express it as the law which is nothing other than the light of understanding infused in us by God, whereby we understand what must be avoided. God gave this light and this law to man at creation.

Islam recognizes the natural, physical and mental requirements of human beings to be fulfilled through approved rules and prescribed manners. Therefore, it makes marriage for adult males and females physically fit and financially sound. And any one who declines from marriage is regarded to be excluded from the community of prophet Muhammad. In Islam, the purposes of marriage are the establishment of legal union of two souls for love, protection of human beings from foulness and unchastity, and regulation of social life for the interest of the society.

The Qur'an says: "And out his signs there is that He creates mates for you from yourselves, that you may find peace of mind in them, and He puts between you love and compassion. Surely, there are signs in this for a people who reflect". (Q. 30:21). Once three men praying throughout the night and fasting all day long came to the prophet. He instructed them to marry and then to remain aloof from attachment. The prophet, on different occasions, said: "He who marries completes half of his religion,

it now rests with him to complete the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of God". Attaching topmost importance to marriage the Prophet said: Marriage is a path of mine; so whoever declines from my path does not belong to us.

Sikh faith is a family faith for the family. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith did not approve of individuals isolating themselves from life or from rest of the society, or removing oneself away from the day to day aspects of living and going into forests to find the divine and salvation.²⁹ The basis of love is family and through it humanity and the wider world. Family is the cornerstone of life, matrimony a preordained as one yearning for union with its beloved- God. In human existence the soul is parted from the supreme soul and the purpose of our life is for the soul to merge with the supreme soul. Sikhism holds that a harmonious family environment creates opportunities for contentment, collaboration, achievement and peace. It is stated in the Grantha Saheb: If there is peace at home, there is peace outside. Marriage is a partnership of two individuals. In this partnership husband and wife are a team, who build the first school to provide primary and continued education and guidance for life and particularly for religious practices. The Sikh code of conduct, known as Rehat Maryada, gives guidance on the way of life for a sikh.³⁰

According to Unification theology and philosophy marriage and family are the most significant factors in the historical creation of individuals, cultures and social systems. In the words of San Hun Lee, a great exponent of the teachings of Rev. Sun Myong Moon, the founder of Unificationism: "Harmonizing the relationship between husband and wife represents harmonizing and unifying to whole world. We can say, therefore, that the key to solving world, national, social and family problems lies in solving problems between husband and wife. ³¹ Sun Hun Lee also holds that family ethics is the basis of all ethics. He writes: "society, nation and world today are all in great chaos. The reason is that family ethics which is the basis of all ethics, has become weakened. Therefore, the way to save society is to establish a new kind of family ethics. By doing so, we can save families from collapse, and we can save the world.³² Thomas G. Walsh observed that these illustrate the Unificationsm's claim about the importance of family.³³

Unification thought is itself based on the Divine principle which is the religious vision of Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Within Divine Principle the family is described as a four position foundation consisting of God, husband, wife and children. This four position foundation of the family is described as "the base of the fulfilment of God's goodness and is the ultimate goal of creation.³⁴ Within the family there is a cosmic union in love of microcosm of all masculinity (yang forces), represented by the husband and the microcosm of all feminity (yin forces) represented by the wife. At the same time, in the family there is a cosmic union in love of the divine order and the human order, heaven and earth. According to the Divine Principle the purpose of great prophets, saints, religions and scriptures has been to reverse the devastating current of human history which has flowed away from God, and redeem or restore the ideal of the true love and the true families.

6. Husband-wife relation: as depicted in different religions :

The basic unity of every society is the family, the family having its foundation in the union of man and woman is marriage. But what actually is the relationship between man and woman? what happens when a man takes a woman for a bride in marriage, or when a woman takes a man for groom? what is the goal of this union and what is the relation between husband and wife? Different religions have given answers to these questions and have given especial emphasis on the ideal and harmonious husband-wife relationship. Religion played a very important part in Hindu marriage which was not considered to be a

mere social contract or a physical relationship, but there was a very important divine and spiritual element which held this bond together. The physical bodies are subject to change and deterioration, but the nuptial knot tied in the presence of the sacred sacrificial fire is eternal. Marriage ceremonies which are performed with the sacrificial fire as witness, make marriage a religious institution and sacrament. This adds a third spiritual or divine element to the two humans who are wedded as husband and wife, enhancing the durability and charm of the conjugal life.

They realize that the married life is that of responsibilities, sacrifices and responsible parenthood. The husband and the wife can make the marriage meaningful, only by making voluntary sacrifices for the welfare of the partner, the children and the society so that love and harmony prevail among the family member and they can be part of the peaceful society. Husband and wife are united according to the divine order to effectuate one harmonious whole Paraskar Grha sutra (1: 11.5) states that marriage unites the two in spirit, in bone, in flesh and skin which is necessary for performing one's religious duties. According to Manu: "To be mothers were women created, and to be fathers men; religious rites, therefore are ordained in the veda to be performed by the husband together with the wife.³⁵ Mahabharata states that a man's half is his wife; the wife is the husband's best friend; the wife is the source of dharma (religious duties), artha (wealth), kama (desire); wife is the soul of salvation (Adi Parva, 159).

Buddhism advises any couple about their duties towards each other as husband wife.³⁶ Speaking about the duties of the wife the Buddha tells Singals: In five ways, young householder, the wife performs her duties to her husband: by doing her work well, by showing hospitality to both her husband's and her relations, and other associates-by faithfulness, by protecting what he earns and by skill and diligence in all her duties:³⁷ The relationship was reciprocal whether it was husband and wife or child and parents or master and servant. The Buddha holds that in married life there is no question of either man or woman being superior. As to the question: what are the duties of the husband? the Buddha said: Young householder, the five ways a husband minister to his wife: by honour_ sammananaya, by respect- anavamananaya, by faithfulness- anaticariyaya, by handing over- authority to her- issariya vossaggena, by giving her ornaments- alankara nuppadanena.³⁸ While commenting on the above, the venerable vajiranana says: The first two duties mentioned here are entirely contrary to what has been accepted in India before the advent of Buddhism. The term anantacariya or faithfulness means the non-violation and fulfilment of marital obligations and confidence in every sense of the term. The compound word issariya vossagga means handing over of authority in the management of domestic affairs of the wife. By this she is given a part of responsibility of conducting economic activities in family life. The other duty of the husband, providing befitting ornaments which are beautiful is probably prescribed here with the intention of intensifying mutual love between husband and wife. Thus, the moral, economic social stability and well-being of a society are all shown as rooted in, these life long disciplines of family and marriage relationship, the habitual training to use reason, to balance varied needs, to act for others, welfare, to rejoice in others good.³⁹

Marriage is so central in Judaism that not only is it regarded as the normal state for adults, but it is also conceived of as the relation between God and his people. Israel's infidelity to the covenant was seen as unfaithfulness to the covenant bond. Just as the wife is expected to dedicate herself exclusively to her husband in the covenant of marriage, so the people of Israel is expected to remain faithful to God. It may be mentioned here that in Judaism everything is seen to be God's. The ideal relationship between the husband and wife is one of respect and mutual obligation the ideal wife is described in Proverbs 31; 10-31. she is woman of worth whose price is beyond rubies. Conjugal life

the opinion of the wife is so important that even sexual intercourse can only take place after wife's consent is given and this consent must be renewed on every occasion. Love appears throughout Jewish literature. It includes sensual feeling but is inseparable from obligation to the person loved. Love denotes a desire to serve to cherish, to protect and bestow benefits on the object loved. Love is not merely an emotion, but involves distinct and clearly articulated duties.⁴⁰ Judaism permits divorce while recognising its tragic implications. The ritual divorce procedure is time consuming and detailed in order to make divorce difficult to achieve and thereby discourage it. So tragic is divorce that the holy writings state: "If a man divorces the bride of his youth, the altar of God sheds tears on his behalf" (Gittin 90b). Every thing possible is done to repair the relationship and reconcile the couple. Marriage is an enduring and exclusive covenant of love between a man and a woman. It is a spiritual mystery, a sacrament, a covenant between two people who are to become as one person in the union of their minds and hearts and their bodies. True marriage rests upon the command of living God upon this loving kindness. The Biblical witness to marriage as an ethical act is perhaps best summed up in the command for husband and wife to "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Mutual subject also involves the honest and frank acknowledgment of the otherness of the other. Jesus speaks of man and woman becoming 'one flesh' and says that they are no longer two but one flesh.⁴² This union is of all embracing nature. But even in this new-found unity man and woman do not cease to be individual persons. Marriage is a life long discovery of the mystery of the partner. There is a fundamental mutuality involved in Christian marriage. Both husband and the wife are to honour, respect, care for, nurture and desire the other. Each is to submit to the other to renounce his or her self-centredness and to enter into true mutuality, not only external matters but inwardly as well. Jesus teaching on the two becoming one flesh' continues with these words: Therefore, what God has joined together let no one separate (Matthew 19:6). Anything less than life long commitment to what God has joined together, is not real love but only a playing at love. To enter into the marriage relationship means also to give up the possibility to walk away from it.

The Muslim jurists regard the institution of marriage as partaking both of the nature of Ibadat or devotional acts and mu'amalat or dealings among men. Islam demands from wives to be scrupulously faithful to their husband and to remain their best friends. From husbands it requires that they should give of their love ungrudgingly to their wives, maintain them as best as they can and leave nothing to be desired of their emotional contentment. In keeping with the teachings of the Quran, Prophet Muhammad used to attach profound importance on the harmony of married life. He urged upon the husbands and wives to keep each other happy and to attend to each other's needs and interests with loving care. About woman's responsibility towards her husband he repeatedly said that no woman can fulfil the right of God who does not fulfil the rights of her husband. And about man's responsibility towards the wife said: "Good among you are those who are good to their wives". "He is the most perfect believer (in God) who is perfect in his manners and most affectionate towards his wife and children."⁴³

About the relation between the husband and wife it is stated in the Quran that they are each other's garments. As garments give warmth, protection and decency, so a husband and wife offer each other intimacy, comfort and protection from committing adultery and other offences. It is also stated in the Quran (30:21) that God has planted love and mercy between the husband and wife. They are expected to obtain tranquility in each other's company and be bound together by love and respect. In respect of mutual rights of the husband and wife the Quran states: And they (women) have rights similar to those against them (men) in the like manner. (Q. 2: 228). Though the institution of divorce has been kept as a sort of reservation in abnormal circumstances, yet the scriptures condemned its free use in the most emphatic terms. The prophet said: with God the most detestable of all lawful things is

divorce.

Besides the above mentioned religions all other living religions of the world gave especial importance on husband wife relation. For example, according to Sikhism, marriage is a partnership of the two individuals. It is a sacrament and is given the name Anand Karaj (Ceremony of Bliss). Its symbolic meaning is not only the bonding of two bodies but the fusion of two souls. The third Guru said: Those are not wife and husband who stay together they are like one spirit in two bodies.⁴⁴ Explaining the teachings of Rev. Sun Myong Moon about the importance of husband-wife relation, San Hun Lee observed: Harmonising the relationship between husband and wife represents harmonizing and unifying the whole world.

7. Religious attitude towards sexual morality :

There is no religion worth naming which does not teach about sexual morality. There are various types of sexual immorality, eg, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, comarital sex, living together without marriage homosexuality, etc. Every society does not equally condemn all these as immoral activities or abnormality. But all religious sacred texts are very serious about sexual morality.

Hinduism, for example, gives especial emphasis on sexual morality of both men and women. The chastity of woman was carefully protected and respected. Adultery is a serious offence as well as a sin on the part of the both. In the vedic age both were severely punished and had also to expiate their sins by appropriate penances.⁴⁵ Apastamba Dharma Sutra states ; If a man approaches an women who has been married before was or not legally married to him, they both commit sin, (11:10,27) high standard of sexual morality of both male and female. Mana is very much emphatic about this : Many thousand Brahmanas who were chaste from their youth, have gone to heaven without continuing their race.⁴⁶ If a virtuous wife after death of her husband constantly remains chaste, reaches heaven, though she has no son, just like those chaste men. ⁴⁷

For human happiness Buddhism prescribes abstention of pre-marital and extra-marital relationship. Permissive experimentation before marriage exposes men and women to take pleasure in variety. Once this habit is formed it becomes almost impossible to find happiness with emphasis on the restraint of sense faculties as an important requirement for marital harmony. Advising a young householder Sigala, the Buddha says to eradicate (10 for vices in conduct namely: killing, stealing, lying and adultery.

According to Judaism the only sexual relationship that is permitted is that between husband and wife. Adultery by a wife is viewed very seriously, sufficiently seriously to demands that husband divorces her. Judaism is seriously against any kind of unnatural sexual relation. The prohibition against homosexuality is based on the commandment "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with woman kind; it is and abomination.⁴⁸ Homosexuality is regarded as a criminal offence which threatens the perpetrators with capital punishment. The word; "Sodomy" was derived from the description in the sinful city of Sodom.⁴⁹

The Old Testament contains the roots of Christian prohibition of unnatural sex and it is affirmed in the New Testament namely that all any sexual relation outside marriage is seriously wrong. Christian tradition has always condemned pre-marital sex for it is against the Natural Law. The Churches teaching on the immorality of extra-marital relation is based on the conviction that God's revelation as expressed in the scripture and tradition unequivocally condemn it. For example, "Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you since you

received him from God." (1 Cor. 6:18-19). The body is not for fornication but for the Lord" (1 Cor. b: 13-14). Pope John Paul II emphasizes that the human meaning of sexual activity is not merely biological, nor is it aimed at mere pursuit of pleasure. It concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. Sexual intercourse is realized in a truly human way "only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death." 50

Islamic law forbids pre-marital, extra-marital and any other kind of abnormal sexual relations. The Quran enjoins : 'Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is an indecent (deed) and an evil way.' (Q 17:32). Adultery is not only shameful in itself and inconsistent with any self-respect or respect for others, but it opens the road to many evils. It destroys the basis of the family. Not only should it be avoided as a sin, but any approach or temptation to it should be avoided: Regarding Homo-sexuality there is a clear condemnation in the Quran and in the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed. It is stated in the Quran :

We also (sent) Lut :51 He said to his people :

"Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you?" "For ye practise your lusts one menin preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds." And his people gave no answer but this : They said, drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure. But we saved him and his family, except his wife: she was of those who were lagged behind. And we rained down on them a shower (of brimstone) : Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime!" (Q. 7 : 80-82)

Prophet Muhammad said, God will not look to a man who comes to a man (with lust). Regarding intercourse of a man with animal, the Prophet said: Whoso comes to an animal with lust, kill him. According to Islam, chastity is a great virtue in a man or a woman. A chaste woman is a great asset to a husband and a chaste husband to a woman. Unchastity in any form has been made unlawful by the Quran : Say: The things that are my Lord hath indeed forbidden are ; Indecent deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reasons; (Q. 7 : 33)8.

We have seen so far that in today's world the family is not only facing a serious crisis but also its very existence is at a stake. We cannot just ignore this crisis, rather we should find out ways as to how to get rid of this crisis in order to establish a better family for the world of tomorrow. We are aware of the fact that the family is the seedbed where the parents cultivate virtues in the hearts of their children. means and ways how the children have been reared will make an impression in the future, long after the children have left their parental home to be members of a bigger family called the society. Whatever the individual has learned in his parental family, he will bring to the mankind. If we hope for a better family for the world of tomorrow the today's marriage and family life should ensure mutual commitment, fidelity, honesty, trust, equality, openness, co-operation and humility. All this in turn, will definitely inculcate in each partner and in all members of the family across the generations solidarity, self-esteem, interdependence, acceptance and harmony.

Different researches on family prove beyond doubt that under the spell of materialistic creeds, morals dwindle, manners deteriorate, corruption increases and vulgarity become the order of the day. Thus the present world is immensely in need of moral values and never before that need has been so important as it is today. A family with a genuine religious background can provide with these moral values. Indeed , family is the institution on which the society and moral civilization is built. If it is allowed to crumble then the world will face worse degeneration than it is already suffering. Therefore, a civilized world should be modeled and built on a moral order with religious inspiration

rather than on a technological order with materialistic temptation. If all the families can be built on this order, then and only then the world would be a better place to live in. We are convinced that the strict observance of the ethical teachings of different religious texts can save the world from sure disaster. If the members of any society are true followers of their own religious traditions, they are bound to be relieved of all the symptoms of the chronic disease the family in today's world has been suffering from, and that will create a better future for the world of tomorrow.

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16. Stuart Babbage, 'Against Sextual Latintude",
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