

### ISLAM, WOMEN AND POLLUTION IN TURKEY

Concepts of pollution, i.e., ritual purity, relate both to gender construction and to gender hierarchy (Douglas 1966: 14). Much recent work on pollution refers to Southeast Asian, Melanesian and Polynesian societies (Krygier 1982; Kondos 1982; Lindenbaum 1979; Hanson 1982), but little has been written about pollution in the Islamic societies of the Middle East. The importance of pollution beliefs for the understanding of sex and gender in Turkish society has been noted (Tapper 1983: 81), but the relationship between pollution and gender has not been analysed. I shall attempt to analyse some of the implications of the belief and practice of Islamic purity law for Turkish women. I refer only to Turkish pollution law and practice, and while the analysis may have a wider generality, this remains to be determined.

The pioneer of anthropological studies of pollution, Mary Douglas (1966), cast her initial work in a fairly tight systems-functional framework, proposing a grid system in which societies could be placed according to the openness of their pollution beliefs. Social reality is both more complex and more fluid than her formal framework allows and I think that Turkish

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pollution concepts are a case in point. They show how fundamental and pervasive pollution concepts are, and how flexibly they can be applied under varying economic and political conditions.

Mary Douglas discusses pollution concepts as 'symbolic systems' (Douglas *ibid.*: 47) which work at two levels, the instrumental and the expressive (*ibid.*: 13), and she suggests that 'some pollutions are used as analogues for expressing a general view of the social order' (*ibid.*: 14). When applied to Turkish material, Douglas' views raise two questions: can Turkish pollution beliefs reveal a symbolic view or model of the 'social order'; and if they can, what can such symbolic models reveal about gender relationships?

The type of symbolic modelling that I discuss here differs from the symbolic classifications discussed by Needham (1973; 1979) in being not a classification but the organizing principle on which such classifications might rest. The difference between a 'symbolic classification' and a 'symbolic model' is that between a taxonomy and a theory; the one is descriptive, the other analytical. This distinction is important because it leads to a view of Islam and to a view of women in Turkey which varies from that usually presented in the literature.

In order to see how pollution concepts relate to 'the social order' (Douglas *ibid.*), that is to say, how symbolic models relate to social structure, an analysis of pollution law is necessary. Therefore, some mode of transfer from the symbolic to the structural must be suggested: in other words, what is the relationship between belief and action (Geertz 1968: 111)? From this point it will be possible to turn to the implications of the analysis for Turkish women, although there is difficulty in generalizing too widely, as the variety of Turkish social experience is very great.

### 1. *Islamic Pollution Law*

Western literature on Islamic law (e.g. Coulson 1964; Coulson 1971; Coulson and Hinchcliffe 1978) deals mainly with inheritance, family and commercial law, but usually omits the law of purity. But it is just this section of the law which concerns the five 'pillars' of Islam, the actual practice of the faith as it is understood by Turkish Muslims. It carried into daily life the full force of what it means to be a Muslim, of what it means to submit to Allah. Failure to understand the significance of pollution concepts in Islamic law can lead to difficulties in describing and analysing the relationship of the law to daily life, and in assessing its significance for social structure. I shall return to this point at the end of the paper.

Islamic law-books provide a rich mine of information on purity and pollution, but three things must be said about using them as a source. First, in Turkey there is not a large gap between canon law and daily practice, in so far as the law

concerns pollution. Secondly, I rely on two Sunni, Hanefi, codifications of the law (Brandel-Syrier 1960; Isik 1978-81), which are available in English translation. As far as can be determined these are similar in substance to the popular texts, freely and widely available in religious bookshops, which explain in Turkish how to be a good Muslim and how to be a dutiful, believing woman. And thirdly, the formulations, although old, are in current use.

Pollution and purity are the two sides of the same coin; pollution must be removed for an individual to be sufficiently pure for prayer and for other religious duties. But unlike many Melanesian societies, in Turkey pollution is an everyday state that cannot be avoided, and does not imply moral failure or sin. Pollutions fall into two classes, minor and major, each of which can be removed by the techniques of purification. As is indicated in Figure 1, major pollution results from a limited number of actions (sexual intercourse and menstruation being the most common), while minor pollutions result from a range of ordinary actions. It would be difficult to maintain the body in a pure state from one set of prayers to another, and indeed Turks say that even if you thought you were pure, you probably would not be, and that therefore a purification must precede prayer, just in case. How then, is purity achieved?

## 2. Purification

There are two types of legal purification, the total and the partial. For the total purification the entire surface of the body must be touched by the purifying agent, which is usually but not always, water. The purpose of wetting head and facial hair is to ensure that water comes into contact with the surface of the head and face; teeth and finger and toe nails must be cleaned prior to purification to permit water to flow around and under them, and, for the same reason, toes and fingers must be spread apart. No nook or cranny may be forgotten or ignored, and instructions are detailed and complex, both on the various parts of the body, and in the discussion of what to do if water is not available.

The order of the actions of purification is specified. Purification of the hands precedes that of the head, the head that of the feet, and in each case the purification of the right side of the body precedes that of the left. The partial purification, necessary to remove minor pollutions, follows the same principles but is applied to the head, forearms and feet only. In both, however, the water must flow over the entire surface of the part of the body to be purified.

The essence of purification, then, whether total or partial, is that the *entire surface* of the specified parts of the body should be touched by the purifier; that the purifier should *flow*; and that on no account may the purifying agent enter into the

Figure 1: Causes of pollution

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major impurities	sexual intercourse post-partum discharge menstrual blood touching a cold corpse
minor impurities	excretion bowel gas vomiting tears <sup>1</sup> fainting madness and intoxication deep sleep strong emotions (laughter, <sup>2</sup> grief)
forbidden foods	pork blood alcohol animals sacrificed to other gods
unclean places	abattoirs
the body	nudity discouraged 'private parts' must never be exposed hair requires special control male circumcision
inoperative prohibitions	silk clothing and gold jewellery for men gambling and prophesying blowing on knots usury

<sup>1</sup> For Rumi's answer to a question about weeping and the validity of prayer, see Arberry (1961: 156).

<sup>2</sup> See Lane (1836: 12) for an illustration of self-control and laughter. I first learned of these aspects of pollution from informants and only later found them in the law-books.

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body. The last point is illustrated by the careful instructions concerning organs like the ears, nose, mouth and anus; they must be rinsed without water being allowed to pass from them into the body. The inside and outside of the body must be kept *totally* apart and distinct.

Islamic purifications are often referred to in English as ablutions, a ritual washing. This can be misleading. Purification is in no sense a 'washing' and, of course, washing to remove dirt is a totally different procedure. All substances, including dirty ones, must be removed from the body surface before purification, so that water can flow across the body surface (Isik 1981 [4]:22-23). Purification would only incidentally remove substances considered dirty, and its purpose is not to clean but to reassert the integrity of the body surface, to make what has been breached by daily life whole again, and to make sure that the boundary between inner and outer is intact. In Turkey the body is cleaned in the steam-bath or its equivalent, and while cleanliness is next to godliness, it is quite separate from it. For legally valid prayer the body must be both clean and purified.

### 3. Pollution and Prayer

Prayer is one of the five 'pillars' or obligations of Islam, and while relatively few Turks pray five times a day, many pray daily. In order to pray the person must be ritually pure. The legal requirements for valid prayer are, therefore, spelled out very clearly in the law-books and in the manuals based upon them. Every action, every movement, every detail of the process is described and circumscribed so that the believer can have no possible doubt as to the acceptability of the prayer or the correctness of the process. In addition to purity, valid prayer requires the complete concentration of the body and mind on God. This requirement does not vary greatly from region to region (cf. Siegal 1969: 109 for Aceh) and is, as will be seen shortly, an important aspect of pollution. Prayer and pollution concepts go together in a particular way, and because of this, pollution law is, for many pious Turks, a matter not only of legal texts but of daily practice. It is often asserted that women are more religious than men, and while it is impossible to verify such a proposition, I am aware from my field experience in Izmir that many urban women try to take ten or twenty minutes from a busy day to devote themselves to prayer. The point is not whether women are more pious than men, but that Turkish women of all classes, regions and situations are often very interested in their religion and pray regularly. For many women, then, pollution law is daily practice.

There are three ways in which prayer makes a strong statement about the community of believers. First, while prayer can take place anywhere, the Friday midday prayer, which draws large crowds, *must* take place in the mosque and is obligatory for men. Similarly, the dawn prayers in the mosque which precede the great festival days (the Feast of Sacrifice and the Festival of Sweets) are obligatory. In Turkey each of these prayers attracts an enormous crowd of worshippers, even in inclement weather. Women

do not attend any of the obligatory mosque prayers. The weekly Friday prayer and the two annual festival prayers are public affirmations of the structural, visible community of Islam, and assert that that community is male. Each of these important prayers must be preceded by a total purification, whereas the other, daily prayers require only the partial purification, unless major pollution has occurred.

The second way in which prayer makes a statement about the community of believers is that women are regularly excluded from prayer by pollution. While menstruating and during the period after birth a woman cannot purify herself or make formal valid prayers, and is placed outside the community of believers.

Thirdly, communal prayer is valued over solitary prayer (Kamal 1964: 11; Doganbey 1963: 209). While it is perfectly legal and acceptable to pray alone, praying in a mosque is better. Women usually pray at home, alone, and do not attend the highly-valued, regular, communal prayers in the mosque. The practice of prayer is connected to the gender structures of the community, and pollution laws are framed in such a way that the participation of women in the daily practice of their religion is limited.

For practical purposes it is prayer which makes both a Muslim and the Islamic community. Prayer, politics and gender are bound together in the daily practice of Islam, and the relationship of women to prayer and to their community is governed by concepts of pollution set out in the ritual purification which precedes it. Because of the centrality of prayer in law and in practice, and because of the rules of purification, the model of society presented through prayer gives women secondary status. Therefore, through concepts of pollution established in the process of purification and prayer which affect men and women differently, a male model of society is established for *all* believers.

Through the law governing the regular practice of prayer, women learn pollution categories which define them as secondary and, as will be shown, in need of control. Prayer is the way in which the individual is drawn into the community of believers, all of whom are equal before God; but prayer is also the means by which women are given secondary status in the world of men and are regularly excluded from the male community through pollution. The degree of 'outsideness' caused by the important, specifically female pollutions is indicated by the law which forbids divorce during the period of menstruation and after childbirth.

#### 4. *Pollution and Women*

In the analysis of purification and prayer, the use of the categories of inner and outer, and their relationship to the body surface was noted. This relationship can be seen more clearly in the situations which are considered to be polluting.

Figure 1 shows the major and minor pollutions. They fall into two groups: those caused by a substance crossing the margins of the body; and those caused by a loss of control of the body or mind. Polluting substances are semen, menstrual blood, urine and tears - in other words, all substances which cross the surface of the body, except for breast milk, which is not mentioned at all. (This exception will be discussed in a forthcoming essay.) Saliva is not polluting in this context, but it becomes important in the legal discussions of fasting for Ramazan.

Menstruation is in itself polluting. While menstruating, a woman is unable to achieve the state of purity necessary for valid prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca and reading the Koran; that is, a woman is unable to participate in the symbolic construction and expression of Islamic society. Ritual purity cannot be restored until the flow of blood stops. The categories set out in purificatory ritual suggest that menstruation is polluting because the boundary of the body is transgressed, an inner substance flowing to the outside. Sexual intercourse is forbidden during menstruation (Brandel-Syrier 1960: 32; Isik 1980: 28-9, 31), but no danger to men results from it, nor is any special purification necessary to remove menstrual blood from men; it is not dangerous. Menstrual blood is just as polluting as semen, although it differs from semen in that it continues to flow across the body boundary; its flow cannot be controlled.

The essence of this formulation of pollution is that of movement or 'flow'. For example, 'Ablutions [must be free] from all flowing blood' (Brandel-Syrier 1960: 9). Flow also explains the nature of pollution caused by sexual intercourse, which is equally polluting to women and men. For both, fluid's flow, and in doing so body boundaries are crossed. The pollution which results can be removed only by a total purification, which can then be seen to be the process by which the wholeness, integrity and control of the body is reasserted.

The importance of the movement of fluids across the boundary of the body is shown by the detailed legal discussions of what does and does not constitute intercourse, and what does or does not constitute a loss of purity during prayer. By analysing the detail of the legal arguments and the possibilities being discussed, it is possible to see that it is ejaculation rather than coition which is polluting. It is neither intercourse with women, nor women as such, which pollute. Any act which results in ejaculation, whether anal, animal or homosexual is similarly polluting (Isik 1981 [4]:32). Masturbation and nocturnal emissions (male or female) are, legally, just as polluting as sexual intercourse (Brandel-Syrier 1960: 13; Isik 1981 [4]:31). There is a special technique, described in the law-books, for discharging any semen that might remain inside the body and which might otherwise trickle out inadvertently during prayer. Although intercourse is considered to be polluting, analysis indicates that it is the flow of sexual fluids across the boundary of the body which is crucial.

While the process of purification utilizes distinctions between left and right and between upper and lower, these are not the bases of pollution. The basis of pollution is the separation of inner and outer into discrete, mutually exclusive categories, and the need to keep them apart. The symbolic separation is achieved during the purification which precedes prayer and other major rites. Once the body is established as separated into inner and outer, it is correctly oriented towards God, so that the right:left categories become more significant. However, as will be shown shortly, bodily control and concentration of the mind are much more important than left and right; loss of control during prayer leads to pollution. The concern with control carries through from structure (inner:outer) to process (left:right and upper:lower).

(a) Women and the Left

Before proceeding further with these polarizations it is interesting to note that, unlike the situation in many Mediterranean societies, there is no link between women and the left hand in the law-books and in Turkish practice. Female impurity is described and defined in quite other ways. In the mosque, for example, women pray behind the men or in a separate gallery, which can be on either side of the mosque, or upstairs. This contrasts with the practice of the Greek community in Izmir of placing women in church to the left. It is possible that societies which are formally gender-segregated do not organize ground-space on a left-right principle. The use of this dichotomy may be for quite other purposes, of which one suggested by evidence from Turkey is to mark the crossing of spatial or conceptual thresholds. One moves into a household right foot forward, into a mosque right foot forward and out of a mosque left foot forward. One begins an action with the right and ends with the left. In other words, left and right are associated with symbolic boundaries and with how to move safely across them, but not with gender or with the organization of ground-space. These boundaries are recognized by men and women and affect both identically.

In the literature dealing with the Turkishness of Turkish Islam the veneration of thresholds by the pre-Islamic Turks is often mentioned. In Turkish epics, the expression 'of the left and of the right' is used as a term of inclusion rather than as one of polarization (Sumer *et.al.* 1972: xiv, 63, 192 n.40). While it is possible that the symbolic use of a left:right dichotomy in Turkey is a specifically Turkish or Altaic contribution to Islam, it is a usage which is also Semitic (Chelhod 1973). What really needs to be accounted for is not the origin of the use of left and right as a principle of symbolic or spatial organization, but the Christian association between women, the left hand, and impurity.

The difference in approach to women and the left in

Christianity and Islam can be seen in the different versions of the story of Adam and Eve that are found in the biblical and Koranic texts. In the biblical version, woman is created from the left side of man and causes the expulsion of humans from Paradise. The connection between woman and man's fall is made explicit in Spain by giving the serpent a female face (Brandes 1980), and the relationship between Eve, weakness and sin is 'deeply rooted...at the popular level' in contemporary Greece (Hirschon 1978: 68). In the Koran (Sura 2) it is not Eve, but Satan, who causes the Fall.

The Christian story of Eve being formed from the left side of Adam is recorded in some extra-Koranic traditions, but in others Eve's leftness is not mentioned. The Koranic origin myth lacks the strong association between leftness, woman and sinful sexuality that characterizes Christian belief (Reuther 1979: 42). The evidence suggests that the polarization of left and right which is made in Islamic ritual and in symbolic space is secondary, and while relatively widespread, is weak.

The practice of orienting prayer toward Mecca rather than to the east weakens the connection between east and the right hand which is found in Christianity, and further severs the ritual links between Islam and the solar cults which preceded it at Mecca. The primacy of the inner:outer distinction and the emphasis on bodily control undermines the impact of left:right. Rather than being associated with other categories in a classification, in Turkey leftness and rightness are associated with margins and boundaries, with changes of state. Most importantly though, a left:right dichotomy is not the basis of pollution and does not appear to be linked to the construction of gender.

#### (b) Pollution and 'Flow'

That pollution results from the movement or flow of substances across body boundaries is supported by the legal discussions concerning illnesses which prevent the achievement of ritual purity. These are bleeding from the nose or from a wound, incontinence, constant vomiting, and so on. The approach to these varies, and lawyers seem unwilling to exclude someone from prayer who is stricken in these ways, so that there is much discussion and definition as scholars try to escape the logical decision. But a man who suffers from a dripping penis which cannot be staunched is polluted, and this is recognized (Isik 1981 [4]:49), if evaded. Hence the lengthy discussions concerning when a nose can be declared to be not bleeding, how much vomiting constitutes vomiting and whether it matters whether you swallow it or spit it out.

The process of purification and the concepts of pollution to which they refer together constitute a logical system, the most significant components of which are the body, its integrity, its surface and its control. Once pollution is understood in these terms, a further observation can be made. This is that 'flow' is

important in defining water. Earlier in this essay, the importance of the flow of water over the body surface was mentioned. During the partial purification (*abdest*), the hands are held up and water is allowed to trickle down the forearms. This gesture is characteristic and necessary, and all mosques make provision for flowing water for purification. Similarly, washing requires running water. Turks do not regard sitting in a tub of hot soapy water as cleansing, and hand-basins rarely have plugs. Water from fast-flowing streams and springs is greatly valued and sought after. Wherever water is used, it must flow (Isik 1981 [4]:53). Stagnant water is unclean and thus cannot render other things either legally or hygienically pure. Against this background it may seem more comprehensible to non-Muslims that sand or dry soil can be used as a purifying agent if water is unavailable. The property it shares with water is its ability to 'flow' over the body surface in the way which is necessary for purification.

To summarize the argument so far, the first and most important distinction is that between inner and outer. This is the basis of pollution and, as we shall see, of the definition of the community which is built upon it. Then comes the spatial organization of the body into left:right and upper:lower distinctions. This organization is not important in defining pollution or in structuring the symbolic community built upon it. The requirement for control, however, is constant and crucial. Pollution law rests on three concepts: on the primary distinction between inner and outer, on the need for control to maintain the division, and on the threat posed by flowing substances. The result is a systematic logic of pollution, a logic which is in no sense a 'grammar' but which, like the grammar of a language, can be used without it being consciously formulated.

##### 5. *Pollution and Women*

How does this concept of pollution affect Turkish women?

Pollution keeps a woman from daily prayer, prevents her from completing the annual fast (Ramazan) or any other fast she may wish to undertake, and from carrying out the rites of pilgrimage (*hac*; Arabic *hajj*) in Mecca. While polluted, she may not read or touch the Koran. These restrictions apply equally to polluted males, but while male pollution is controllable, female pollution is not. No man is prevented from fasting; all that is required is a total purification. No man risks the invalidation of his pilgrimage, except through his own, controllable, failure to observe the restrictions of the pilgrim state. Pollution does not absolve a woman of her religious duties, it merely defers them. Although women do not make up missed prayers, fast-days lost must be observed later. Pollution does not alter a woman's religious obligations, but it alters the way in which she carries them out.

Pollution concepts have the effect of preventing women from regular contact with God and of regularly pushing women outside

the community of believers. They do this in two ways. First, women are polluted by the movement of substances across the body boundary, from inner to outer, and secondly, women are polluted because they lack the ability to control these movements. A man can control his risk of major pollution through celibacy; a celibate woman would still be uncontrollably polluted through menstruation. Pollution categories not only establish the structure of the Islamic community, they also define women as uncontrolled. Women cannot control themselves, and lack of control threatens the internal social and moral structure of the community; women must, therefore, be controlled if the community is to retain its order. This is crucial to understanding female-male relationships in Turkey. Such a view of women has nothing to do with distinctions between society and nature, with a left:right dichotomy, with sacred or profane, or with morality. It results logically and unavoidably from the primacy of the inner:outer dichotomy, a definition of pollution based on the concepts of movement across a boundary, and on control.

In contrast to Greek Christianity (Hirschon 1978), Islamic pollution law does not define sex as evil or dangerous. Pollution concepts are not related to notions of sin. Actions which result in pollution may or may not be sinful - for example heterosexual intercourse is not a sin, but homosexual intercourse is.

Attitudes to hair, the need to control hair, and the way in which hair is the concern of fundamentalist preachers, indicate that hair, particularly women's hair, is dangerous. If sexuality is not in itself polluting, and if women are not in themselves polluting, how does the danger from hair arise?

Body hair must be strictly controlled by both men and women in Turkish society. Women who uncover the face often find it much more difficult to uncover the hair. But women wear the head-hair long, while men wear theirs short. Against the background of pollution law, women's hair can be seen as doubly polluting; it flows across a body boundary, and it is uncontrolled. Women, as was shown earlier, are also defined as uncontrolled, and they are further identified as such through wearing the head-hair long. Pollution concepts do not deny but acknowledge female sexuality, so that women are also defined as sexual. The two attributes suggest that women's sexuality is uncontrolled, a threat to male society and to male control of it - hence the fundamentalist concern with women's hair. However, hair is being used to state a lack of control which has already been defined. It reinforces pollution categories but it does not determine them.

What, then, is the relationship of the structuring of the body to the structure of society? If the body is divided so firmly into inner and outer, is this dichotomy also at the base of social structure? The analysis suggests that there is no simple translation of this dichotomy from its symbolic and conceptual role in prayer, into a means of organizing social structure or topographical space. The inner:outer dichotomy is

used to organize social structure in a less direct, but very effective, way. It is used to organize society into two sections, not into inner and outer, but into male and female. The distinction between inner and outer is fundamental to social structure, but is not organized according to an inner:outer principle. The inner:outer body translates into a male:female society. This is to say that inner:outer is the basis for gender construction, and that gender is the basis for social organization. This has some interesting implications for the seclusion of women, a subject that is dealt with in a forthcoming essay.

Pollution law as preached and practised from the mosque presents a model of society through which gender is defined and in which the relationship between men and women is hierarchical. Not only are gender relationships hierarchical, but the community is defined in terms of gender relationships. When purification ritual refers to the community, it refers to a community structured into two genders, with men in control of women. I suggest that this is a male model of society; it is strongly bounded, or closed, as Ardener (1972; 1975) suggests that such male models generally are; this model is identified with the 'pole' of society that the Turners (1978) refer to as 'structural' and 'exclusive'. But because the model is presented and expressed through the regular practice of purification and prayer, the male model is also held by women. The process of prayer, then, is the mechanism or mode of transfer by which a symbolic model of society moves through praxis to social structure.

## 6. *Women and the Law*

I now want to turn to the problem of the relationship between Islamic law and Turkish social structure that was raised at the beginning of this essay, and to indicate the importance of pollution law for our understanding of this relationship.

The relationship of law to custom and to social structure is discussed by Keddie and Beck (1978) in the introduction to their influential book on Muslim women. They approach the status of Muslim women by first suggesting that:

The embedding of the position of women in Islamic texts and law may largely account for the conservatism of Islam regarding women's position as compared with other parts of the Third World, where such religious embedding is less deep.

They go on to ask why it is that

...the family and personal status aspects of Islamic law and custom have been held onto most tenaciously. Whereas Islamic civil and commercial codes have often been swept

away with a virtual stroke of the pen, the same has been true of family law only in Turkey.

Following from this line of thought their question then becomes

...not why traditional Islamic culture has been more discriminatory toward women than other major cultures [but] why Islamic society has been more conservative in its maintenance of old laws and traditions in this area [i.e., family and women] than have other societies - although the others have not lacked conservatism.

They suggest that the political subservience of most Islamic males 'may encourage men to keep control of the only area they can - that of women and children' (ibid.: 28). While this last point is important, it is insufficient in itself to account for the dimensions and nature of the relationship between Islam, the family and women. Here I consider just one aspect of their argument, that of the connection they posit between legal texts, legal change and the status of women.

The question I would ask is this: is the status of women indeed embedded in the way that Keddie and Beck propose, and if so, why is it that the texts should be so influential? To the last part of the question the traditional answer is that the sacred texts were written into law. This is at best a partial answer. There are injunctions in the Koran which are not re-expressed in law and which have been totally ignored; there are injunctions which are written into law but which require constant vigilance to enforce or which are widely ignored; and there are customs which are not in the Koran or written into law, but which are nevertheless widely observed (e.g. circumcision). There is also the need for the interpretation of the law, of its intent and meaning, a need which is often solved through resort to the Hadith (traditions regarding the sayings and actions of the Prophet). The Hadith are classified into categories of reliable, unreliable and false, but even so are a flexible body of aphorisms and statements which could just as easily be used to promote change as to support the status quo. While textual law may at first seem to encourage conservatism, this cannot be assumed.

The analysis of pollution law suggests that some important concepts regarding women and their place in society are indeed embedded in Islamic law, but not in quite the way that Keddie and Beck propose. It suggests that these are to be found in the laws of purity and pollution, and not in family law. Unlike family law, which is constantly subverted in practice and which has the capacity to improve the economic status of many Muslim women, pollution law has been relatively unchanging and is incorporated into the daily life of Turkish men and women very much as it is written. Pollution law is rarely written into legal codes, and breaches attract no legal sanctions. It is nevertheless widely accepted and followed. Family law is usually written into legal

codes, but this guarantees neither its application, nor its enforcement, nor its consistency.

Until the significance of pollution is more clearly understood, its response to economic and political factors cannot be known. As a corollary to this, the effects of economic and political factors on the status of Turkish women will not be understood until rigorous theoretical models of pollution can be established.

As Keddie and Beck noted, Islamic family law has been discarded only in Turkey. Atatürk's new constitution affected Islamic family law radically, while leaving the practice of mosque religion denigrated but relatively untouched. It left Turks reasonably free to practise their religion through prayer and purification. This is to say that the new legislation did not touch pollution concepts, the concepts which form the basis for gender construction and gender hierarchy. The legislation which so altered Turkish 'society' thus left the basis of the symbolic Islamic community intact, and left men and women in basically the same relationship to each other as before.

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