

## Andalusian Love Poems by Women

**Mariam Bint Abu Ya'qub**  
(d 1010)

What does one expect from a woman  
Of seventy seven made of cobwebs?  
She crawls like a baby to her stick,  
And stumbles, a convict in shackles.

**Hafsa Bint al-Haj**  
(d 1190)

I send my poems to call you,  
As they sing they'll please your ear.  
A garden waiting to be seen  
Floats its perfume on the air.

If you were not a star  
The world would be dark  
As I praise your beauty  
I look for your light.

The garden didn't smile when we walked in its lanes  
But displayed green envy and yellow bile.  
The river didn't ripple with pleasure when we stood  
On its bank; and the dove cooed with dislike  
You mustn't think the world is lovely and kind  
Just because you are good. Look how the sky  
Switched on the stars to spy on our embrace

**Wallada**  
(d 1091)

Will this separation end so we can  
Share our love? Last winter when I waited for you  
To call, the coals of desire burned my skin.  
You've been away so long. How do I feel?  
I endure my worst fear: the night has passed  
But the absence stays. Patience hasn't untied  
The thongs of need. I hope rain blesses your land.

Translated by GBH Wightman and Abdullah al-Udhari,  
Associate Editor and Editor of *TR, Poetry Journal*, Vol.2,  
No. 1, 1979, London.

### STUDY

## Factors Affecting the Education and Employment of Women in the Arab World <sup>(1)</sup>

"Factors Affecting the Education and Employment of Women in the Arab World" is the title of a study written by Dr. Hassan Hammoud <sup>(2)</sup> under the auspices of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World. The study is divided into two parts: The descriptive part aims at evaluating the extent to which Arab Women participate in the development process of their countries, whereas the field study aims at identifying the factors that affect the employment and education of these women. The countries reviewed are: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and Tunis.

According to Dr. Hammoud the major obstacle impeding women's participation in development is illiteracy which ranges from 50% to 76.6% in the countries studied. Moreover, what discourages Arab woman from participating in the work force

is the fact that her society in general wants her to be a "mother and a wife"; but if she has to work, it should be a "feminine" occupation.

Based on a sample of 300 taken from Kuwait, Jordan and Tunis, which included an equal number of working, non-working, single and married women, Dr. Hammoud found that age was a significant factor in women's decision to work or not. The younger a woman started work the more

(1) Funding for this study came to the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World from the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in Tunis. The study published in 1982 by ALECSO, was also abridged in *Al-Majallatul Arabiyya lil-Buhuth at-Tarbawiyya* (Arab Journal of Educational Research), Vol. 3, No.1.

(2) Professor at Kuwait University, Social Science Division.

probable it was that she would continue to do so after marriage. On the other hand, there was no relationship between woman's work and the number of years she had been married, nor the number of children she had. However, there was a negative correlation between a woman's work and the social status of her parents. The higher the parents' position in society, the lower was the probability of the daughter being employed. The researcher explains this result by saying that a woman whose parents are rich is not encouraged to work.

Briefly, the factors impeding women's work were:

- **Personal factors** such as inadequate training, incapability of coping with both outside work and housework, and the high income of the husband.

- **Family factors** such as the need of children for their mothers, having children below 6 years of age; and the husband and parents' refusal to allow her to work.

- **Social cultural factors** such as the condemnation of women who mix with the opposite sex in the workplace, or the belief in men's dominance over women, and the unavailability of child care centers or help at home.

**By contrast the factors encouraging women to work were:**

The husband's help with housework and raising children; the women's work experience before marriage; the availability of part-time work; financial need and worry about the future; and the desire to raise the family's standard of living.

**As for the factors affecting women's education,** the study revealed the existence of a significant relationship between the educational level of the parents and those reached by the daughter. Only 13.2% of women who had fathers with low education were university educated contrasted to 79.6% of those with university educated fathers. Only 18.6% of daughters who had low educated mothers were at university by comparison with 90% of those whose mothers had been to university. The author explains these figures by saying that Arab women tend to identify with their parents, especially their mothers. Thus if the mother was highly educated, the daughter would tend to do the same.

Another significant correlation was between the level of the woman's education and the number of children she had. The more children a

woman has the less likely she is to be a university graduate, and the more educated a woman is, the less likely she is to marry early. Only 11.5% of women with more than four children had reached university level by comparison with 50.9% who had less. Moreover, the longer a woman was married the less likely it was for her to be university educated.

**Listing briefly the factors preventing women from continuing their education we find out:**

- The tendency among parents to encourage the education of their sons more than their daughters.

- The unavailability of secondary schools and universities in the region where their family lived.

- The "modesty code" that does not allow women to mix with men at secondary schools and universities or public places.

- The lack of motivation on the part of the woman herself.

As for the relation between personal aspirations and the educational level reached by women, the study reveals that only 11.3% of women with traditional aspirations (who wish to marry and have children) reach university level by comparison with 40.7% of women with variable aspirations and 48.8% of those with liberal attitudes.

In conclusion, Dr. Hammoud remarks that although the results of his study cannot be generalized, they are **useful tools** for identifying the major factors influencing women's participation in the work force and education in the Arab World.

**Wafa' Stephan**

#### Note from the Editors

Al-Raida would like to hear from you, have your comments and listen to your suggestions. Please write to us on the following address:

**Al-Raida IWSAW  
P.O.Box 13-5053  
BUC, Beirut  
Lebanon**

We are looking forward to a new year full of information exchange. Happy Year 1984!