

The rise in Anorexia and eating disorders cannot be explained by genetics but by social conditioning

News:

14 March 2016, the *Telegraph* reported that British journalist and television presenter Joan Bakewell had caused a media debate regarding the causes of anorexia and eating disorders. She contradicted popular commentators who have labeled such behaviors as uncontrollable conditions linked to genetics or mental illness. In an interview for the *Sunday Times* she attributed the rise in eating disorders among young females to the 'overindulgence of our society, over-introspection and narcissism... She claimed eating disorders did not exist in places 'where there is not enough food' such as Syrian refugee camps.' The social media backlash has been immense with many saying that her opinions are irresponsible and insensitive – as a result she was pushed to make a public apology.

Comment:

Statistically there is a global rise in Anorexia and eating disorders. Dr Colin Michie, a leading pediatrician in the United Kingdom and Chairman of the Nutrition Committee at the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health, blamed this on the increase on children's use of mobile phones and exposure to advertising, citing their ability to constantly look at images of celebrity bodies as a factor in eating disorder cases. This opinion is supported by many other highly qualified researchers and medical practitioners. In the largest UK study ever on eating disorders (July 2015) 6,000 youngsters up to the age of 14 were studied and it was found that self-esteem in eight-year-olds is one of the critical predictive factors for problems in the teenage years. Currently, China, USA and India are the top 3 nations with the highest numbers of anorexia sufferers, all of which are nations that heavily objectify women and promote ridged and unrealistic female body types. One study published in *MedGenMed* 2004 showed that "The prevalence of eating disorders in non-Western countries is lower than that of the Western countries but appears to be increasing." With this trend in motion one can understand that globalization and the promotions of liberal secular culture will certainly exacerbate the increase in women feeling the need to hate their own bodies and seek to conform to the standards imposed by a misogynistic, capitalistic and often racist media. The solution to liberate the world from the mental confusion of right and wrong body types and low self-image is to embrace the truth that a persons appearance is irrelevant in life. Allah (swt) the Creator of the Worlds has placed beauty in all of His creation; this is expressed in the noble verses of Quran in Surah 40 verse 64;

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوْرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

"It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape- and made your shapes beautiful,- and has provided for you Sustenance, of things pure and good;- such is Allah your Lord. So Glory to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"

In Islam the vital issue that distinguished a human is their good actions and belief in the truth over lies and deception. In this regard Islam has liberated both males and females from false values that are destructive and dehumanizing and all humans regardless of race, wealth or gender have the same opportunity to gain the greatest success and rewards of Allah (swt) pleasure in the highest levels of Jannat (paradise). With the return of the Khilafah Political System there would be an end to the dominance of superficial values and a return of the positive influences that truly elevate people and allow them to progress in life.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Imrana Mohammad
Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir**