

Importance of Hijab

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When one marries a woman for her beauty only, Allah makes her beauty destruction for him. •

- When one marries a woman for her wealth, Allah makes her wealth destruction for him.
- When one marries a woman for her social status, Allah makes her status destruction for him.
- When one marries a woman for her religion, then Allah given him all three encompasses in her beauty, wealth and social status.

A woman who adheres to the principles of Islam is required to follow the dress code called "hijaab". its other definitions are veil, pardah (cover, barrier) or just covering. it is an act of faith and establishes a Muslim's life with honour, respect and dignity. The hijaab is regarded as liberation for woman, in that the covering brings about as aura of respect and woman are recognised as individuals who are admired for their mind and personality. They are not judged by their beauty or its lack of and they are not treated as sex objects. The hijaab acts as a "barrier" between a woman and the opposite sex, although she retains her femininity, she does not display or exposes her sexuality.

When a woman follows the true Islam, she is free to be who she wants to be from within and express herself in her environment, whilst guaranteed to be immune from being portrayed as a sex symbol and lusted after. Islam exalts the status of a woman by commanding that she enjoys equal rights to those of a man in everything. She stands on an equal footing with man and both share mutual rights and obligations in all aspects of life.

- Islam believes that a woman is to be judged by her character and actions rather than by her looks or physical features.

The holy Qur'an teaches us that the only thing that makes one person better than the other is his or her character. In western world, the hijaab has come to symbolise either forced silence or unconscionable militancy. Actually, it is neither! It is simply a woman's assertion that judgement on her physical appearance is to play no role whatsoever in social interaction. When she covers herself, she puts herself on a higher level as her hijaab symbolises a religion and as a result men will tread cautiously in their approach and look upon her with respect. Instead of her physique and sexuality, she is being noticed for her intellect, faith and personality.

- A Muslim woman may wear whatsoever she pleases in the presence of her husband and family - parents, aunts & uncles, grandparents, brothers & sisters, nephews & nieces, mother-in-law, sons & daughters - and amongst other females. But when she goes out, or

when foreign men (other than those mentioned above) are present, she should practice her hijaab by covering her hair and all parts of the body and not reveal her figure.

We cannot elaborate on this subject without mentioning the effects of western trends on today's young Muslim woman. Youngsters living in the west are alarmingly being influenced by their surroundings, peer pressure and ironically, by some ulamas who pretend to be shi'ah but distort its true teachings by confirming that such outfits comply with the Islamic dress code.

- Please be advised that jeans, pants and other tight revealing outfits are not the Islamic hijaab and neither are Nike or Tommy Hilfiger trendy Hijabs, body-tight outfits or bright and attractive colours.

They are, in fact, a bad excuse and misrepresentation of hijaab. The idea of an Islamic dress code is to refrain from displaying anything that is beautifying - wearing make - up and dressing inappropriately defies the objective of hijaab. You cannot change, modify or improve upon the Islamic hijaab unless it is for a better and a stricter one. Islam has clear guidelines for the minimum requirement of a woman's hijaab:

- You may only show your face, hands up to the wrist, and the bottom of your feet. If a woman's face is seductively beautiful, she cannot show her face to strange men. This is it! You either agree and do your best to follow or disagree and lag behind in this world and more so in the next one - as the word "Islam" clearly states, "surrender" to your Creator and all the rules of Islam.

The practice of an Islamic dress code is a big contrast compared to the western fashion which evolves year to intentionally produce more seductive and revealing outfits that expose yet newer part of the body for the public gaze! The intention of every western dress is to expose the figure and display its owner whilst the intention of the Muslim dress is to dignify its owner and conceal and cover her flesh, at least from the public. A woman in Islam, is considered as valuable and precious as a jewel and should therefore be kept like one - safe.

A Muslim woman does not feel the pressure to be beautiful or attractive. She does not have to live up to the expectation of what is desirable and what is not. Superficial beauty for the public is not her concern. Her main goal is her inner beauty - she does not have to use her charms and vital statistics to progress or gain recognition within society

Another benefit of the hijaab is protection.

- Muslims believe that when a woman displays her beauty, she degrades herself by becoming an object of sexual desire and consequently vulnerable to men who would look upon her as "gratification for their sexual desires."

The hijab makes her out as a lady belonging to the class of modest chaste women and whilst she behaves accordingly, transgressors and sensual men recognise them as such and dare not tease out of mischief.

When a man receives mixed signals from the way a woman reveals her body, he may be misled to believe that she desires his advances. Hijab solves the problems of sexual harassment and uninvited sexual advances which are greatly demeaning for women.

According to the Qur'an, the same high standards of moral conduct are required from men as they are required from women. Islam also commands proper behaviour and dress code for men. They too must dress modestly and their special commandment is to lower their eyes and not to brazenly stare at women.

In Surat An-Noor of the holy Qur'an, it says:

- "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; That will make for greater purity for them, and God is well acquainted with what they do.

If both sexes adhere to their individual Islamic dress codes, corruption would gradually diminish within society.