

The Importance of Hijâb in Islam

Hijâb – Respect and Protection for a Muslim Woman

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Introduction

Allāh ﷻ, through His grace and bounty has created us. We are His servants and bondsmen. He has sent us into this world for a very short time to prepare for the everlasting life of the hereafter. As a role model, He ﷻ has sent to us the greatest of His creation, Muhammad ﷺ, to guide us and show us the path to attaining His pleasure and the eternal success of the life in Jannah. This life of ours is a trial. Those who will follow the path and teachings of Rasûlullah ﷺ in totality will be successful in this world and the hereafter.

In this world, they will feel a sense of happiness; attain contentment, peace of mind, honour and respect. They will experience joy in the grave, will be under the shade of the divine throne on the day when there will be no other shade, will be granted water from the pond of Kauthar by which they will not experience thirst again, will be granted the intercession of Nabî ﷺ and will be directly entered into Jannah without any reckoning. On the other hand, those who go against the path divinely ordained by Allāh ﷻ will find themselves dejected, depressed, having no peace of mind, and void of respect and honour, even if they possess all worldly possessions and fulfil all their bestial desires. Their lives will be hell already in this worldly life. In the grave, they will be punished; they will not be granted any shade on the sweltering day of judgement and will remain thirsty on the plains of resurrection, will be deprived of Nabî's ﷺ intercession and will be sent into hell. Allāh ﷻ loves us.

For this reason, He desires that we must live happy lives. Accordingly, He has stipulated such laws by which our honour, respect and value is upheld. He is fully aware of that which will benefit and harm us. On the other hand, Shayṭān and his followers are destined for hell. Their desire is to take mankind with them. They thus beautify immoral, immodest and depraved actions, showing an evil life to be a garden of Jannah. Whoever will follow this lifestyle will find themselves in a pit of hell in this earthly life.

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Similarly, they portray obedience and compliance to Allāh's ﷻ laws to be boring, dull and dreary. However those who fling themselves into this lifestyle will find a life of Jannah already in this worldly life.

One such command is the law of hijāb or pardah. To protect and honour women, Allāh ﷻ has revealed these commands. These commands are not there to make life difficult for women or to oppress them. In this regard, Hadrat Mawlānā Sayyid Muhammad Rābi' Hasani Nadwi (Head of Nadwatul 'Ulema Lucknow) in the foreword of the book 'Islam me pardah ki ahmiyat' writes, "Many uninformed people have a huge misunderstanding regarding the law of hijāb in Islam. They regard hijāb to be a jail for women and feel that this is oppression of women, whereas this is only their ignorance. In reality, hijāb is a pure and reasonable manner of protecting a woman and her honour. If applied according to the laws laid down by Islam, then together with the honour of a woman being protected, she is also saved from the evil of people with wrong and evil intentions. She thus remains in an honourable and respectable position. By not donning hijāb, she becomes disgraced and cannot save herself from the evil and filthy intentions of men.

However, we must keep in front of us the command of the sharī'ah as and how it was given to us. This cannot be decided by oneself. Regarding hijāb, every woman has been commanded to conceal her body to a great extent i.e. she should cover herself with a chādar (outer covering) – before coming out of her house in the view of others – over her clothing in which there is beauty and which will attract the stares of men; as well as those portions of the body which attract men's gazes despite being concealed. The reason for this is so that she does not fall into any evil. The desire of the sharī'ah is that a woman should not move around unnecessarily. Only out of necessity, should she venture out of her house. When emerging or when coming into contact with men, she should observe hijāb i.e. the chādar or something similar to it which has been alluded to above.

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All of this is to save the respect and honour of women and to protect them from the evil of men with evil intentions. In her home and amongst mahram males, a lot of leeway has been granted. Therefore there is a need to understand the meaning of hijāb and pardah.”

Mawlānā Qārī Muftī Mas‘ūd ‘Azīzī Nadwī (Head of Markaz Ihyā ul fikr il islāmī, Muzaffar Ābad) states, “Pardah, which has been referred to as hijāb, in Qur’ānic terms, is a gift and great favour for the weaker sex. Its necessity, benefit, and importance can be understood by every intelligent person. Its original aim is to protect the female gender; who are a natural means for the continuation of human progeny; from the gaze and intermingling of men. However, today, so-called Muslims affected by the slogans of women’s freedom, western culture and the immodesty of the European nations refer to hijāb with such repugnant phrases as “a barrier to progress”, “oppression of women” and “old-fashioned”; whereas a person who is fair-minded will be compelled to describe the guidelines regarding hijāb in Islam a great favour on women. The normal principle is that whatever is kept concealed in a packet has more value (than a thing left outside). Then why do people prefer women, who are the stars of a pure human life and the cause for the preservation of society, to remain unveiled and opened, whereas they are supposed to be the most concealed and hidden?

A learned woman writes, “All people of knowledge are aware of the position Islam has granted to women, and how much of protection it has afforded this weaker sex from the traps of ignorance and barbarism. Where on one side, Islam has terminated trampling of her physical and monetary rights; it has also commanded women to observe hijāb thus protecting her honour and dignity. It has commanded her to lower her gaze, not to intermingle with strange men, not to speak to them without necessity and to remain within the confines of her four walls, which will be a means of closing the avenue to innumerable evils.

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However; today, under the title of “women’s liberation” or “modern culture”, the Muslim women and girls of noble families proceed to schools, colleges, offices and to the market-places completely unveiled, where they mix and mingle with men and young boys. The evil effects which emerge from this is spreading in the society like plague, and the incidents of its evil consequences continuously appear in the newspapers, etc.

Some fashion conscious women, who beautify themselves, apply perfume, make-up, etc, and then emerge, become an object of gaze for those looking with evil eyes. They excite the passions of these men. Some women wear a burqah before coming out, but their face remains exposed. Strange men stare at them and they stare at these men also whereas Allāh ﷻ has prohibited them from looking at each other and has commanded them to lower their gazes.

In short, due to not taking precaution and due to ignorance in the matters of pardah, as well as wrong impressions of some so-called “educated” Muslims and Muslims affected and impressed by western culture, there has been a destruction of Islamic culture and way of life.

The aim and purpose of this booklet is to highlight the importance, value, and rulings relating to hijāb, as well as its benefits and the harms of not adopting it. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to practise on His commandments as He has revealed them, and may He save us from the evil of our nafs, and from disobeying Him for even one moment! Āmin

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Islam and its Specialities

Islam is a complete religion, a comprehensive way of life and a mode of living. Its teachings are eternal, everlasting, natural and encompass every angle and branch of one's life. There is no portion of man's life in which Islam has not forwarded clear guidelines for the goodness and success of mankind. With regard to its teachings, Islam is a pure and simple religion, and with regards to its temperament, it is completely according to the nature of man. This speciality is the greatest proof of its truthfulness and veracity.

Another speciality of Islam is that it casts a light on the wisdoms of its laws. Regarding the laws found in Islam with regards to the relationship between men and women in society, Islam itself has shown us under which principles of wisdom and which realities of nature lies the foundation of this law.

Islam in itself is an embodiment of beauty and excellences. There is such attraction in it that people are drawn to it, just as iron is drawn and pulled towards a magnet. Its beauty and grace is natural and innate. It has no need for show and embroidery. Its outstanding feature is that it beautifies its obedient and subservient followers with the jewels of goodness and character. It increases ones honour and dignity. It guides man in the different spheres of his life like 'ibādat (worship), mu'āmalāt (business dealings), akhlāqiyāt (character), mu'āsharāt (social dealings), etc.

The limit of Hijāb Between Men and Women

Islam has subjected the relationship of men and women with different laws. First, Islamic law has made it harām (impermissible) for all those men and women to get married, who are compelled to live together or keep very close relations e.g. mother and son father and daughter, brother and sister, aunty and nephew, uncle and niece, step-father and step-daughter; step-mother and step-son, mother-in-law and son-in-law, father-in-law and daughter-in-law,

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brother-in-law and sister-in-law (as long as he is married to the sister) and foster relations. (*Sūrah Nisā, verse 23*)

By establishing this prohibition of marriage between these people, their sexual inclinations towards each other have been kept so pure that it cannot be envisioned that these members will have sexual feelings for each other. Besides these individuals, Islam has specified laws and boundaries of pardah so that in no way, there should be socializing of women with ghair mahram males (i.e. males whom they can marry).

Free-Thinking Muslims and Hijâb

Due to continuous un-Islamic upbringing and living an un-Islamic life, for a long time now, Muslims have not only pushed aside their culture, social life, Islamic principles and character, but in fact have placed the spectacles of others on their eyes and have become accustomed to looking through it. Not sufficing on philosophic proofs to show the permissibility of their actions, according to their free-thinking, they also present “Sharī proofs” and diverse interpretations of Islamic life. Now free-thinking and misguidance has progressed to this limit that those Muslims who are enamoured with western civilization and “Modern progress” have become independent of even hiding behind interpretations.

The same has been done with the laws of sharīah regarding pardah and hijāb with strange and ghair mahram women. They have completely overlooked those laws of Islam which attempts to create a pure society and environment by regarding the whole body of the women from head to toe as an object of concealment and which prohibits strangers looking at them, except out of dire necessity. They have regarded the laws of hijāb and pardah as absurd customs and not based on the Islamic way of life; whereas from the Qur’ān, ahādīth and ijmā’ (unanimity) of the ummah, it is entirely established that there is a large amount of prohibition in looking at a strange woman. Regarding the importance of pardah, the verse of the Qur’ān and the ahādīth of Nabī ﷺ clearly address the females of this ummah.

The Result of Following Western Civilization

Following the western system in our social and collective life and accepting their principles of life and manner of dealings has far reaching consequences in an Islamic society. At this time, the west is involved in moral leprosy by which their bodies are being continuously eaten and destroyed. Now its putrid smell has spread all over. The cause of this leprosy (which is almost incurable) is its sexual debauchery and moral decay which has reached the limits of bestiality and animalism. However, the actual and first cause of this condition is the freedom of women which has exceeded the bounds; the complete unveiling, the unlimited intermingling of men and women and excessive alcohol. In any Islamic country, if women are given such freedom, the veils are removed, men and women are granted the opportunity to mix freely and co-education is established, then this will result in moral decay, sexual anarchy, evil marriages, rebellion against all moral and religious principles and limits; in short, a moral leprosy, which has afflicted the west due to these same causes. Wherever the western civilization is being imitated fully, where pardah has been removed, and men and women have been granted the license to mix without restriction; and where the newspapers, cinema, television, literature and the lives of the leaders not only encourage but guide towards it, then there the effects and consequences of this leprosy will become completely open. This is the law of nature from which there is no escape. (*The clash of Islam and the West in Islamic countries, pp. 215,216*)

The Islamic System of Impeding Immorality - The Destruction of Immorality and Immodesty

Immorality, immodesty, fornication and those things leading to it are amongst those destructive evils whose evil effects do not only effect individuals, but families and tribes, and at times, they destroy even countries. At this time, if an investigation is made of all the incidents of murder and killing, then you will find that generally the cause of most of these incidents is some women or the web of some sexual desires. It is for this reason that from the beginning of time, there has been no nation, religion or land which has not been unanimous on the evil and destructiveness of evil and immorality.

Europe Has Also Been Forced to Regard Some Forms of Immorality as Punishable

In this last era, the Europeans have broken all religious bounds and all former and national traditions. Even though fornication and adultery is not regarded as a crime, and they have moulded their society and way of life into such a manner at every step, there is an open invitation to immorality and sexual anarchy, but they too could not take out its effects and final results from being regarded as a crime. They were forced to regard rape and open indecencies as a crime. The example of this is of that person who gathers firewood to light a fire. He then places oil over it and lights it up. When the flames come up, then he makes an effort to control and prevent it. It is like lighting a fire under a pot. Thereafter one attempts to prevent the boiling and steaming.

View Point of Islam on Evils and Those Things Leading to It

Contrary to this, whatever Islam has regarded as a crime and harmful to man and has regarded its perpetrators as worthy of punishment, it has also placed restrictions on those things leading to it, and has prohibited it. In this instance, the purpose and aim is to prevent fornication and adultery. Thus Islam has commenced with the law of lowering one's gaze. It has forbidden unrestricted intermingling of men and women. It has given guidance that women should remain confined to the four-corners of her home; and if, due to necessity she has to leave her home, then she should conceal her whole body with a burqah or long chādar (covering) and she should walk on the sides of the road. She has been forbidden from emerging after applying perfume or wearing tinkling jewellery. If any person crosses the bound and exceeds all limits, then such a severe exemplary punishment will be meted out to him that if executed only once, the whole nation will take complete lesson.

Discussion on the Benefits of the Non-Observance of Pardah by the Europeans

The Europeans and their followers, in trying to justify their immodesty, have had huge discussions trying to prove the benefits of not observing pardah and the harms which pardah causes to

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women's health as well as to the society with regards to economics. Many scholars of Egypt have written detailed books with detailed answers to this. Regarding this, here, so much is sufficient to understand that no sin and evil is free from benefit. Stealing, robbing, and deception is, in one aspect, a very lucrative trade. However, when as a result of it, destructive harms come to the fore, then no person will be bold enough to claim it to be a lucrative trade. In non-observance of pardah, even if there are some special benefits but when the whole nation and country becomes involved in a multitude of evils and corruption due to it, then to refer to it as beneficial can never be the work of any intelligent person.

The Golden Principle of Closing the Avenues to Evil and Crime

Just as the principles, beliefs, tawhîd, risâlah and âkhirah are found in the law of all the ambiyâ', similarly, general sins, immorality and evil have been prohibited in every sharī'ah and religion. However in the past sharī'ahs, the avenues leading to these sins were not made *harām* (impermissible) completely, as long as no evil is committed by means of it. Since the sharī'ah of Nabī ﷺ will remain until Qiyāmah, a special precaution has been accorded by Allāh ﷻ that never mind the sins and evils themselves being regarded as *harām*, even the means and causes which generally lead to these evils have been declared *harām*. For example, alcohol has been forbidden. Thus making, buying, selling and giving any-one alcohol has also been forbidden. Interest is forbidden, thus all transactions incorporating any interest dealings profits attained from corrupt (fāsid) dealings are filthy (evil) money just like interest. Shirk (polytheism) and idol worship has been declared forbidden and strict restrictions have been placed on all its causes and those things leading to it. Since the polytheists worship the sun at sunrise, midday and sunset; if one performs salāh at these times, then to an extent he will be imitating these sun-worshippers. This time being the same can lead one to becoming involved in shirk (polytheism). Thus, the sharī'ah has prohibited salāh and sajdah at these times. Since idol images and pictures are a direct means to idol worship, therefore the making of idols and pictures as well as using them has been prohibited. In a similar manner, when the

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sharī'ah has prohibited adultery and fornication, then it has made impermissible all means and avenues leading to it. Looking at any strange woman or at a beardless youth with lust has been regarded as fornication of the eyes; listening to their speech as fornication of the ears, touching them as fornication of the hands and walking towards them as fornication of the feet as has been mentioned in a *sahīh* hadīth. The command of *pardah* has been revealed for women to save themselves from these evils. However, there is a long chain of direct and indirect causes. If there is a prohibition for even indirect causes, then life would become difficult. There would be difficulty in implementing and practicing, which is contrary to the temperament of the sharī'ah. The Noble Qur'ān openly declares "And He has not placed over you in dīn (religion) any difficulty." Thus, regarding causes, a prudent judgment has been passed that those actions which are direct causes to the sin that generally the one involved in them will easily plunge into the sin, are coupled to the actual sin and have been declared impermissible. The causes which are indirect - that by doing them, then generally it is not necessary that one will fall into the sin, but these causes definitely have some intrusion in the sin - then these causes have been regarded as *makrūh* (reprehensible). Those causes which are even more indirect - that by committing them one will very rarely fall into sin - have been overlooked and regarded as *mubāh* (permissible).

The example of the first type is of a person selling alcohol, since this is a direct cause to drinking alcohol. Therefore the sharī'ah has also made this impermissible (*harām*). Touching a strange woman with lust, even though it is not adultery and fornication itself, but since it is a direct means to these actions, thus it has been declared impermissible (*harām*).

The example of the second type is to sell grapes to a person regarding whom you know that he will make wine with it, either because this is his occupation or he has clearly stated the reason for buying the grapes. Even though this is not *harām* like the selling of alcohol, it definitely is *makrūh* (reprehensible) and impermissible.

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This same law applies to renting out one's land or house for running a cinema-house or operating an interest-based bank. If one is aware that this house will be used for such prohibited actions, then to rent it out is *makrûh tahrīmī* and impermissible.

The example of the third is selling grapes to the general public. It is possible that some-one uses it to make alcohol, but he neither makes this apparent nor is it in our knowledge that he manufactures alcohol. Then, according to the *sharī'ah*, this transaction is permissible.

Here, it should be remembered that whatever direct causes Islam has regarded as a sin and *harām* (impermissible), then unconditionally this cause remains *harām*, whether it leads to the sin or not. Now this becomes a *sharī'* injunction, opposing which is *harām*.

After this introduction, now understand that *pardah* of women is based on this same principle of closing the avenue to evil i.e. non-observance of *pardah* is a cause of falling into sin. Thus the same laws of the above-mentioned causes will apply here e.g. a young woman exposing her body in front of a young man is such a direct cause that will normally cause a person to sin. Thus, it has been made *harām* like fornication. This action in the *sharī'ah* has been given the injunction of immorality. Now it is completely *harām*, even though one is in front of a sinless (*ma'sūm*) person or a person who due to having complete control of his desires, is convinced that he will abstain from the sin itself. Places of necessity like treatment etc. are excluded from this command. This however has no effect on the original prohibition. This law is also not affected by times and conditions. The same law which was found in the first century is the same as in this era of immorality and immodesty. The second level is emerging from the house concealing the body with a *burqah* or long *chādar* (sheet). This is an indirect cause for evil. The law for this is that if by doing so, it will be a cause for *fitnah* (evil), then it will not be permissible. Where there is no fear of evil, it will be permissible. Thus, this law will change according to the changing of

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times and conditions. During the era of Nabī ﷺ, women emerging in this way were not a cause of evil. Thus Nabī ﷺ allowed women to come to the Masjid, their whole body concealed with a burqah, etc. together with a few other conditions.

Preventing them from the Masjid was prohibited, even though encouragement was given to them to perform salâh at their homes, since more reward is attained by women in their homes than in the Masjid. However, due to the fear of evil not being found, they were not prohibited. After the demise of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, the sahâbah ؓ saw that the women coming to the Masjid was not void of evil, even if they came wrapped in a burqah or sheet etc. These noble personalities unanimously prevented the women from coming to the Masjid. Hadrat Ayesha Siddîqa radiyallâhu anha said, “If Rasûlullâh ﷺ saw the condition today, then he (ﷺ) would definitely have prevented them from coming to the Masjid.” The decision of the Sahâbah was no different from the decision of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, since those conditions upon which Rasûlullâh ﷺ gave permission were no more found. This, by the decision of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, the law changed. (*Ma’ârif ul Qur’ân*, vol. 7 pg. 208)

The History of the Revelation of Hijāb

Unrestricted intermingling of men and women was never regarded as correct

In the history of man, from the era of Hadrat Ādam ﷺ till the era of Nabī ﷺ, men and women intermingling freely was never regarded as correct. This was not only for those who followed any sharī'ah, but even the ordinary noble families never regarded this as correct.

Historical Examples of hijāb

In Tafsīr Madārik, it is narrated that Nūh ﷺ built the ark in three levels. On the uppermost level resided the humans. Ādam ﷺ's body was also taken on board. It was used as a separation between the men and woman. (*Sūrah Hūd, verse 38*)

In the story of Hadrat Mūsā ﷺ on his journey to Madyan, we find mention of the two women who were standing aside, waiting to give water to their goats. The reason mentioned for this is that those women did not like to plunge into the crowds of men. They would rather suffice and be content with the left over water.

Even before Islam, honourable women of all nations would remain segregated from men. Even amongst the Arabs, despite their evil lifestyles and way of life, some women would conceal their faces from the gaze of strange men. A proof of this is the famous battle which took place during the era of ignorance called 'Harb ul Fijār'. Abul Farj Asbahānī in his book 'Aghani' writes, "The cause leading to this battle was that two passionate youngsters, one from the Quraysh and the other from the Banū Kinānah saw a charming woman from the Banū Amir tribe sitting in the market of Ukāz, covered by a burqa, conversing with some Arab youngsters. These two youngsters walked up to her, ambled around her, and asked her to expose her face. She refused to comply. One of them went behind her, untied the lower portion of her dress and attached it to her waist by means of a thorn. She was completely unaware of this. When she stood up, her behind became exposed. These youngsters

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laughed at her and sneered, “You did not allow us to see your face, but you now give us the opportunity to gaze at your behind.”

Incensed, she shouted, “O Banū Amir!” At once, they came to her aid armed. The Banu Kinānah also raised their weapons due to which there was bloodshed. Eventually Harb Ibn Umayyah arbitrated, took the responsibility to pay the blood money and sought forgiveness for the evil action of those youngsters.” (*Albudūr fī Ahwālī Rabbatil Khudur of Shaykh Muḥammad Abul Yusar Ābidīn*)

In a narration of Jāmi‘ Tirmidhī, the manner of Ḥadrat Zaynab radiyallāhu anha’s sitting is mentioned, during whose nikāh (marriage) the first verses of hijāb were revealed. However, even before these verses were revealed, she sat in the following manner, ‘And she sat facing towards the wall’. This was so that no man would stare at her, since this is natural shame found within women even without the laws of hijāb.

Even before Islam, in noble Arab families, there was no informal intermingling and talking between men and women

From the above, we see that even before the revelation of the command of hijāb, there was no custom of honourable and pious men and women intermingling and speaking informally and unrestrictedly. When reference is made to the first era of ignorance and the emergence of women in the Qur’ān, this does not refer to noble Arab women, but to slave women and women of low character. The noble Arab families regarded this as blameworthy. The history of the Arabs testifies to this.

The Way of the Polytheistic Followers of India

In India also, the Hindus, Buddhists and followers of other polytheistic creeds could not bear unrestricted association between men and women. This claim of women working side-by-side with men, parading in shopping areas and streets, informal association of men and women in every facet of life beginning from education; and meeting unrestrictedly in clubs and banquets is the creation of

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the immoral and immodest European nation, which they have become involved in after turning away from their past. Even in past eras, this evil was not prevalent.

The Jewel of Natural Shame of a Woman

Just as Allāh ﷻ has differentiated women in their physical structures from men, similarly He has placed the jewel of inborn shame in their very nature which naturally leads them to staying away and concealing themselves from other men. This pardah of basic and natural shame has been from the beginning of creation. This form of pardah was found in the beginning era of Islam.

When did the Law of Pardah come into Effect?

This special form of pardah that the woman's original place is the four walls of her home and when she has to emerge for any sharī necessity, then she should conceal her whole body, was commanded after migration (hijrah) to Madinah Munawwarah in 5 A.H.

The First Verse Regarding Pardah

The first verse regarding pardah, according to the consensus of the scholars is this:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ

This verse was revealed at the time of the marriage of Hadrat Zaynab bint Jahsh radiyallāhu anha to Nabī ﷺ. In this first verse which was revealed women are commanded to remain behind pardah and men are commanded that if they wish to ask for anything, then they should do so from behind the pardah. Here special emphasis has been laid on pardah that without necessity men and women should be segregated. If due to necessity they have to speak, then it should be done behind a screen or veil.

The Difference Between Hijâb and Satr

Aurat in the Arabic language and satr in the Urdu and Persian language refers to those portions of the body which are compulsory to conceal according to the sharīah, nature and intelligence. This is the first compulsion which has to be practised upon after īmān. This compulsion has been from the beginning of time. This has

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remained the compulsion of every ummah. In fact, before the establishment of any sharī'ah, in Jannah, when due to eating of the forbidden fruit, the heavenly garments of Hadrat Ādam and Hawwā (peace be upon them) were removed and their satr was exposed, then too Hadrat Ādam ﷺ did not regard the exposing of the satr as permissible. Therefore, both Hadrat Ādam ﷺ and Hadrat Hawwā ﷺ covered their satr with the leaves of Jannah. This is what is meant by this verse,

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

After coming into the world, from the time of Hadrat Ādam ﷺ till the seal of ambiya, Nabi ﷺ, in every Nabī's sharī'ah, concealing of the satr was compulsory. There may have been difference in the specification and limits of the satr that from where to where it is, but the compulsion of concealing the satr has been accepted in all the sharī'ahs. This compulsion falls upon every man and woman, whether any-one is seeing them or not. Thus, if any person performs salāh naked, whereas he has such clothing which can conceal him, then unanimously his salāh will not be accepted, even though no-one has seen him naked. (*Al-Bahr ur Rā'iq*)

Similarly, if salāh is performed in such a place where no-one else can see, and a person's satr becomes exposed, then the salāh will be nullified (as is found in all the fiqh books).

Out of salāh, in front of people, there is no difference of opinion on the compulsion of the concealment of the satr. However, even in solitude where no-one else is present, there too the correct view is that without a shar'ī or natural need and necessity, it is not permissible to expose the satr (expose parts) and sit around naked. (*As mentioned in Bahr, the commentary of Munyah*)

This is the decree of concealing the satr which has remained compulsory from the beginning of creation in all the sharī'ahs of the ambiyā' ﷺ.

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The second ruling is of hijâb and pardah that women should conceal themselves from strange men. In this ruling also, it has always been the habit of the ambiyâ', pious and noble people that women would not intermingle with strange men.

From here, we can understand that satr of a woman and hijâb are two completely different matters. Concealing the satr has always been compulsory. Hijâb became compulsory only in the 5th year after migration. Concealing of the satr is compulsory on men and women whereas hijâb is only for women. Concealing of the satr is compulsory in front of people and in solitude also, whereas hijâb is only in the presence of strange men.

This explanation has been mentioned because, due to confusion of these two rulings, many doubts arise in understanding the rulings and laws of the Qur'ân e.g. the face and hands of women are excluded unanimously from the satr of a woman. Therefore if a woman's hands and face are exposed during salâh, then this salâh is correct according to all jurists. The face and hands are excluded due to nass (clear prohibition). The jurists have excluded the feet by analogy. (*Pardah ke shar'î ahkâm*, p. 123)

SATR (PRIVATE PARTS)	HIJAB
1) Compulsory in all religions	1) Compulsory on the women of this ummah in 5 A.H
2) Necessary to conceal in public and in solitude	2) Necessary in front of strange men
3) Compulsory for men and women	3) Compulsory for women only
4) Commencement of shame and modesty	4) Perfection of shame and modesty ¹

¹ Haya aur Pâkdâmani - Hadrat Maulânâ Zulfîqâr Ahmad Naqshbandî

The Importance of Hijāb in the Noble Qur'ān

Seven verses have been revealed in the Noble Qur'ān regarding the hijāb of women and its details. Four are in Sūrah Ahzāb and three are in Sūrah Nūr. All commentators are unanimous that the first verse revealed was the following:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ

'O you who believe! Do not enter the houses of Nabī ﷺ (without being called) except when permission has been granted to you (to come) for food - then there is no harm. However after you have eaten, then get up and leave and do not sit (enjoying yourself) in speech. Verily this causes distress to the nabī, but he takes you into consideration. Allāh ﷻ takes none into consideration in saying the truth. In future when you ask them (the pure wives) for any goods, then ask them from behind a screen. This is purer for your hearts and their hearts. It is not permissible for you to cause difficulty to Nabī ﷺ and to get married to his wives after him. Verily this is in the sight of Allāh ﷻ is a very great sin.'

In this verse of Sūrah Ahzāb, hijāb and pardah has been determined as compulsory for women. Before the revelation of this verse, hijāb for women was not compulsory. The commentators are unanimous that even though this verse is specifically addressing the noble wives, the law is general.

At this juncture, worthy of mention is that the first people addressed are those women and pure wives of Nabī ﷺ regarding whom Allāh ﷻ has taken the responsibility to purify their hearts. On the other side are those Sahābah ﷺ, many of whose status have exceeded that of the angels. When these pure beings of the first century of Islam were given these injunctions, then the people of latter times are more in need of them, since close to Qiyāmah, sin, immorality, following of desires and self-worship will continue to increase. Today, which person can claim that his nafs is more purer than that of the Sahābah ﷺ, and which woman can claim that her nafs is more purer than that of the pure wives of Nabī ﷺ; and who

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can allege that his intermingling with women will not lead to any evil or vice? (*Abridged from Pardah ke shar'ī ahkām, p.16*)

Caution in Speaking With Strange Men

The second verse is of Sūrah Ahzāb in which Allāh ﷻ states,

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لَسْتَنْ كَاٰحِدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ اِنْ اَتَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِيْ
قَلْبِهٖ مَّرَضٌ وَّقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا

“O wives of Nabī ﷺ, you are not like other women (on condition) that you choose taqwā, thus do not be soft in speech (with strange men, when there is a need to speak), otherwise the one in whose heart there is corruption (and evil) will (naturally) get (evil) thoughts, and speak in a befitting manner.”

From this verse, we learn that women should exercise caution when speaking to strange men. She should not create softness and sweetness in her tone and she should not speak to men without necessity so that any evil-minded person does not even get the courage to bring any evil-thoughts.

Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafī رحمة الله عليه has written under this verse فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ, “If any women due to necessity has to speak to any strange man, then she should purposely abstain from softness and sweetness which is inherent in the voices of women. The meaning of this softness and sweetness is that which will create an inclination in the heart of the addressed one. Thus Allāh ﷻ states thereafter فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِيْ قَلْبِهٖ مَّرَضٌ i.e. do not speak in such alluring tones by which desire and inclination is created in the hearts of such men in whose hearts there is a disease. By disease, hypocrisy or a branch of it is meant. From a pure hypocrite, such desire coming forth is apparent. However the person who despite being a sincere believer becomes inclined towards harām (impermissible actions) has in him a branch of hypocrisy. When a person has pure īmān in which there is no trace of hypocrisy, then he cannot become inclined towards any harām. (*Mazhari*)

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The crux of this guidance is that women should stay away from strange men and they should attain that high stage of hijâb by which the heart of any stranger of weak īmān will not be inclined towards her.

After hearing these guidelines given regarding speech, some of the noble wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ would place their hands on their mouths, if they had to converse with any strange man, so that their voices would sound different. In a hadīth of Hadrat Amr Ibn ‘Ās ؓ it is mentioned that definitely Nabī ﷺ prohibited women from speaking (to any strange man) without the permission of their husbands. *(due to necessity – translator) (Mazhari, Tabrānī) (Pardah ke sharīʾah kām, p. 21)*

On the basis of this Qur’ānic verse as well as clear other indications of the Sunnah, the jurists of Islam have declared that the female voice should be concealed. Just as she is obliged to conceal her face and body from strange men, so similarly she should conceal her voice from them too. Therefore it is unlawful for a woman to stand as a presenter on a radio station, to read Qur’ān, Ahādīth or Nazms aloud whereby strange men can hear her voice, take part in radio competitions or speak on-line when the voice is broadcast to all and sundry. The restrictions placed by the sharīʾah on the female voice is clear from the following examples:

- ✓ Women are not permitted to read qirā’ah audibly in salāh.
- ✓ Women are not permitted to rectify the imām’s error by calling out ‘subhānallāh’ as men do.
- ✓ It is not permissible for women to even make salām to strange men, to answer their salām or to even answer when they sneeze.
- ✓ Neither adhān nor iqāmah has been ordained for them.
- ✓ They are not allowed to recite talbiyah aloud during hajj.

The Command for Women to Remain In Their Homes

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The third verse is in Sūrah Ahzāb in which the noble wives of Nabī ﷺ are commanded to remain in the confines on their homes. Allāh ﷻ states,

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى (احزاب ٣٣)

“Stay in your homes and do not expose yourselves as the people of the first age of ignorance.” (This means that you should not suffice on only wearing and covering yourself with an outer sheet, but observe hijāb in this manner that no-one sees your body as well as clothing, as is the habit of the hijāb of noble people even today that they do not emerge from their homes. However, occasions of necessity are excluded from this due to other proofs).

From this verse, we learn that the best form of hijāb for a woman is that she remains within her home, and she does not emerge from there except with a sharī necessity. This form of concealment is termed hijāb bil buyūt.

From this verse, we also learn that women have been created in this manner that only by staying within the four walls of her home, being involved in her household work can she live a life of true contentment and serenity. True success of any society is also based on this. Her natural physique prevents her from emerging like a man from her home for economical and business efforts and from bearing all those difficulties which can be shouldered by man due to his physique.

Thereafter the verse continues, *“And do not expose yourselves like the exposure of the women of the first era of ignorance.”* From here, we learn that before Islam, during the era of ignorance, women used to move about freely, not covering themselves, without shame and immodestly dressed. The commentators of the first era wrote these explanations of what was common in the first century. Read it and judge it on the scale of this era of ignorance. You will realize that people today have become more ignorant than those times of true ignorance. Hadrat Mujāhid رحمته اللہ علیہ and Qatādah رحمته اللہ علیہ have mentioned that ‘tabarruj’ refers to women walking proudly, coquettishly and flirting. Muqātil رحمته اللہ علیہ states that ‘tabarruj’

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means that a woman places her scarf merely on her head and she does not conceal by means of it her neck and the shape of her breasts. Abū ‘Ubaydah ؓ states that ‘tabarruj’ means that a woman beautifies her body and beauty in this way that the passions of men are aroused. (*Rūh al Ma‘ānī*, p. 87 vol. 23)

The Law of Burqah or Jilbāb - The Fourth Verse is in Sūrah Ahzāb,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ۚ أَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّكَ اللَّهُ بِخَبَرٍ

(سورة احزاب : ٥٩)

“O Nabī ؐ, say to your wives, your daughters and the believing women to suspend their chādars (outer-sheet) over them.”

In this verse, the command of pardah for free women has been given i.e. يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ. In this يُدْنِينَ has been extracted from أَدْنَاءُ, which literally means “to make close.” “عَلَيْهِنَّ” means “over them”. جلابيب is the plural of جلباب which is a special long chādar (sheet). Regarding the form of this chādar, Hadrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ said, “It is that chādar (sheet) worn over the dupatta (scarf).” (*Ibn Kathīr*) Hadrat Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ has mentioned its form, in this way, “Allāh ؐ has commanded the Muslim women that when they leave their houses for any necessity, then they should suspend this chādar above their heads, concealing their faces. She should only keep one eye open (to see the road).” (*Ibn Kathīr*)

This verse holds great significance amongst the verses revealed regarding hijāb. In this verse, it is clearly seen that concealing the face is included in the command of hijāb. Thus, the scholars and commentators have especially discussed the concealing of the face under this verse. Also in this verse since the address is not only addressed to the noble wives of Rasūlullāh ؐ or his daughters, but clearly addresses all Muslim women, there remains no possibility for any interpretation or specification excluding the general women from this law. (*Hijāb pardah ke shar‘ī ahkām*, p.28)

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At this juncture, bear in mind that the burqah which is common today is the substitute for the jilbâb, and it is this hijâb which has been common from the beginning era of Islam till today, which present-day western-minded people desire to abolish. Thus, they make fanciful interpretations of the Qur'ân and Ahādīth of Nabī ﷺ. They are astray and desire to make others astray. May Allāh ﷻ protect all of us!

The Command of Lowering the Gaze and Concealing Zīnat (One's Beauty) - The Fifth Verse Regarding Pardah is a Verse of Sūrah Nūr,

وقل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم ويحفظوا فروجهم ذلك اركي لهم ان الله خبير
بما يصنعون وقل للمؤمنات يغضضن من ابصارهن ويحفظن فروجهن ولا يبدین
زینتهن الا ما ظهر منها (سورة النور آية ٣١/٣٠)

And say to the believers, "Lower your gazes (i.e. Do not gaze at those limbs which one is prohibited from looking at generally and do not gaze with desire and lust at those limbs which can be gazed at without lust) and protect your private parts (i.e. do not fulfil your desires in prohibited places.) This is purer for them. Verily Allāh ﷻ is All Aware of that which they do. (Thus those who go contrary to these commands are worthy of punishment). (In this manner) say to the believing woman, "Lower your gazes, protect your private parts and do not make apparent (the places of) beauty (i.e. cover your whole body from head to toe with two exceptions i.e.) except those (places of beauty) which generally remain open. Take extra precaution to conceal the head and breast) and cast your dupatta (scarf) (which is used to cover the head) over your chest (even though it is covered by one's dress and the form of the breast remains apparent, thus there is extra care needed). (Thereafter the second exception is mentioned in which mahram males, etc. are excluded). And do not expose (to anyone the places of) your beauty except to your husbands, (to your mahrams e.g.) your fathers and fathers-in-law, your sons, the sons of your husband (from another marriage), your brothers, your nephews (your brother's and sister's sons), your women (of the same religion) (i.e. Muslim women), your slave girls (even if they are disbelievers), those men who remain

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(only for food and drink) behind you and who have no desire for women (due to their senses not bring right), or those children who are not yet aware of the matters of the women (by this is meant those children who are not yet close to maturity and have no inkling of desire in them). Do not stamp your feet, else your hidden jewellery will be known (i.e. the sounds of the jewellery will reach the ears of strange men). And O Muslims (in those matters in which you has erred) turn to Allāh ﷻ in repentance all of you so that you may be successful.

These verses of Sūrah Nūr were revealed during the incident of Ifk which took place whilst returning from the battle of Banu Mustaliq or Muraysi', which was in 6 A.H. Thus these verses of Sūrah Nūr were revealed after those verses of hijāb which are in Sūrah Ahzāb. The laws of Sharī' pardah had begun when the verses of Sūrah Ahzāb were revealed.

In this verse, a few commands have been mentioned

(1) **غَضُ بَصَرٍ** – In the above-mentioned verse, the word **غَضُ** has been derived from **يَغْضُو** which means to lower and keep down. (*Mufrādat ul Qur'ān*). The meaning of lowering the gazes is to turn the gazes away from those things which have been prohibited by the sharī'ah. (*Ibn Kathīr*)

(2) Protection of the private parts – This means that one should protect ones private parts from fulfilling the desires of one's nafs in any impermissible manner. Included in these impermissible acts are adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism and masturbation.

(3) Concealing the zīnat (one's beauty) – zīnat means beauty and adornment whether it be natural and innate e.g. face, hands and palms, or artificial and voluntary e.g. clothing, jewellery etc. All of these are included in one's outward beauty i.e. **أَلَا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا**. These cannot be exposed to any-one besides one's mahrams. In this verse, the word **ضَرْبُ** is used instead of **الْقَاءُ** (to place) i.e. **وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ** **جُيُوبِهِنَّ**. The purpose of this is emphasis (مبالغة) i.e. cover yourselves very well so that no portion remains exposed. Thereafter a second exception is mentioned of those men from whom hijāb is not

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compulsory. This exception is based on two reasons. The first reason is that those men who are excluded are mahram and no fear of evil exists regarding them. The second reason is that the necessity of staying at all times in one place demands laxity and ease. This should also be kept in mind that all those mahrams excluded in this verse, besides the husband, are only excluded from having to observe hijāb with them. The rest of the body has not been excluded.

In this verse, 8 groups of mahram males and four other groups have been excluded from this command of pardah. In Sūrah Alḥzāb, which was revealed before this Sūrah, only 7 groups have been mentioned. Five more groups have thus been added in this verse of Sūrah Nūr, which was revealed later. Here, the word mahram is used generally thus including the husband. The technical definition used by the fuqahā' (i.e. a man with whom a woman cannot get married to), is not meant here. Details of the twelve groups excluded in Sūrah Nūr as follows:

- (1) The husband. There is no hijāb of any part of his wife. However, for the husband to look at the private of his wife is contrary to the more virtuous.
- (2) The father – Included in here is the grandfather, great-grandfather, etc.
- (3) The father in law – Here also, the grand father-in-law, great grand-father-in-law, etc are included.
- (4) One's children.
- (5) The husband's children from another marriage.
- (6) One's brothers. Here, one's real brothers as well as half brothers are also included. However, one's cousins (i.e. uncle's and aunt's children), who are also called brothers commonly are not included. Thus, they are non-mahram (strangers).
- (7) Brother's children – Here, only real brothers and half-brother's children are meant. Cousin's children are not included.
- (8) Sister's children – Here also, only real sister and half sister's children are meant. Cousin's children are not included.

These eight groups are one's mahrams.

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- (9) نساءهن i.e. Our women which refers to Muslim women. In front of them all those limbs can be exposed which can be exposed to one's father and children.

As mentioned above, the *satr* has not been excluded in this command. Therefore, those limbs which cannot be shown to one's mahram males cannot be exposed to Muslim women as well (Full details will be mentioned later.) The necessities of treatment etc. are excluded. By Muslim women being mentioned, we learn that *hijāb* is *wājib* in front of *kāfir* (disbelieving) women and *mushrik* (polytheist) women.

They are also included in the law of non-mahrams. However, in this ruling there is difference of opinion amongst the *mujtahidīn*. Some have regarded the *kāfir* women the same as non-mahram males whereas others have mentioned that the law for them as well as Muslim women are the same i.e. there is no *pardah*. According to the *Hanafī* scholars, the whole body, excluding the hands, feet and face must be concealed in front of non-Muslim women.

- (10) ما ملكت ايماهن - Those women who are slaves. The generality of these words include both slave women as well as slave-men. However, according to many jurists, only slave-women are meant. Slave-men are not included. *Hijāb* for them is compulsory just as for other non-mahrams.
- (11) التابعين غير اولي الاربة من الرجال - Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has stated that by it are meant those indifferent and senseless men who have no inclination and desire for women.
- (12) او الطفل الذين لم يظهروا علي عورات النساء - This refers to those immature children who are not even close to maturity and are completely unaware of the special qualities, conditions and movements of women. It is *wājib* (compulsory) to make *hijāb* from those boys who take an interest in these matters who are called *murāhiq* (close to maturity). (*Pardah ke shar'ī ahkām (crux with editions)* p. 50)

- (4) Concealing the voice.

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After mentioning lowering of the gaze, protection of the private parts, concealment of one's beauty and one's mahrams; the fourth important ruling mentioned here is of the voice of the woman. Women are commanded not to place their feet on the ground with such force whilst walking by which the tinkling of their jewellery can be heard and their hidden beauty can be made apparent to men. Here this question arises whether the voice of the women is included in the satr or not and is it permissible for women to allow non-mahrams to hear their voice or not? In this matter, there is difference of opinion amongst the imāms. However, it is proven from the ahādīth that after the revelation of the verses of hijāb, the noble wives of Nabī ﷺ used to speak to non-mahrams behind a screen or veil. Thus the more accepted and correct view is that in the place where the woman's voice will be a source of fitnah (evil), there it is prohibited, otherwise not (Jassās). Precaution is however in this that without necessity, women should not speak to non-mahram even behind pardah or a screen.

The Command of Seeking Permission - The Sixth Verse is in Sūrah Nūr :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا
ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (سورة نور آية ٤٧)

“O believers, do not enter any houses besides your houses until you seek permission and greet the inmates. This is better for you so that you remember.”

A major reason for seeking permission before entering is so that the women of the house can conceal themselves properly before any stranger enters the house.

The Law for Elderly Women - The Seventh Verse is in Sūrah Nūr,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيْسَ أَذْنُكُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ
ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ (سورة نور آية ٥٨-٦٠)

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O believers! Your slaves and those who have not as yet reached the age of maturity should seek permission (before coming to you) at three times (One is) before Fajr salāh (the second is when) you remove your (outer) clothing in the afternoon (for resting) and (the third time is) after 'Eshā' salāh.

These three times are times of concealment for you. Besides these times, there is no blame upon you (in allowing them to enter without permission and in not preventing them) and upon them (in entering without permission) (because) they continue coming to you.

(In seeking permission all the time, there is difficulty. And since these are not times of concealment, therefore it is not difficult to keep one's private parts concealed). In this way Allāh ﷻ mentions to you His commands very clearly. And Allāh ﷻ is All-knowing, All-wise. And when those children (who have been mentioned above) reach the level of puberty (i.e. they become mature or are close to maturity), then they should seek permission just as those before them (i.e. those who are elder than them) seek permission. In this way Allāh ﷻ mentions to you His commands very clearly. And Allāh ﷻ is All-knowing, All-wise. (This should also be known that the laws of pardah are based on the fear of evil (fitnah). Where generally the possibility of this evil is not found for example) those (old) women who do not have hope of (coming into the) marriage (of any-one) (i.e. there is no attraction in them), then there is no sin upon them that they remove their outer clothing (which conceals their face, etc. even in front of non-mahrams), on condition that they do not expose (the places of their) beauty, and (even though there is permission for very old women to expose their faces to non-mahram males, but) if they abstain from even this it is much better for them. And Allāh ﷻ is All-hearing, All-knowing."

In the verses mentioned before this, the laws of hijāb and pardah had been mentioned in great detail. Two exceptions were mentioned there.

One was regarding those who could see a woman and the second was regarding those places which could be seen. In the first instance, mahram males, slave girls and immature were excluded.

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In the second case, the outward beauty was excluded, by which is meant the outer covering, the burqah or huge sheet unanimously. Here in this verse, a third exception is made regarding the personal condition of a woman i.e. those women who become so old that no inclination remains towards them and they are not capable of getting married, then a concession has been granted to them in the matter of pardah that strangers fall in the same command as mahram males. However, for such old women also there is this condition that those limbs which can be exposed in front of mahrams can be exposed in front of non-mahrams on condition that she does not beautify herself up. Another point mentioned is *وَإِنْ يَسْتَغْفِنَنَّ خَيْرَ لَهُنَّ* i.e. if they completely abstain from coming in front of non-mahrams, then this is better for them.

Hadrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ narrates that for such (old) women there is permission to remove the burqah or chādar (outer sheet). She can remain with her dupatta (scarf), kurta (dress) and pants.

Note: It is still necessary for old women to conceal and make pardah of her hair in front of non-mahrams.

The crux of the above-mentioned Qur’ānic verses :

- (1) Women should not, without severe necessity, emerge from their homes.
- (2) If they are forced to emerge due to some necessity, then they should cover their whole body with a big and thick shawl or burqah.
- (3) Men should not look at women and women should not look, without necessity, at men.
- (4) If a man has to ask a woman for something or there is a need to talk, then this should be done behind hijāb (screen or veil).
- (5) When a woman, out of necessity is compelled to speak to a non-mahram male, then he should speak behind hijāb (screen or veil), and she should coarsen and harden her voice. She should not speak in soft and alluring tones.

The First Women Addressed

This point is worthy of mention that the verse of hijāb commanded to men and women were first revealed (especially) to the noble wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, whose hearts Allāh ﷻ had taken

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responsibility to keep pure. This has been mentioned in detail in the verse *ليذهب عنكم الرجس اهل البيت* (*Sūrah Ahzāb, verse 33*).

The First Men Addressed

On the other side, the first men addressed were the companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, many of them whose rank exceeded that of the angels. When these pure souls of the first era of Islam have been given these commands of pardah, then the people of latter generations are to a greater extent in need of adhering to them, since being close to Qiyāmah, there will continuously be an increase in sin, immorality, following of one's desires and worship of one's self. Today, which man can claim that his nafs is purer than that of the Sahābah ؓ and which woman can claim that her nafs is purer than that of the noble and pure wives of Nabī ﷺ, and who can feel that his intermingling with women will not lead to evil? (*Ma'ārif ul Qur'ān, vol.7 p. 200*)

It is obvious that when Allāh ﷻ has commanded these pure and blessed personalities with such directives, then how much more won't we be in need of them?

Hijāb in the Light of the Ahādīth

Over 70 ahādīth mention the laws of hijāb, either verbally or practically. Here, a few ahādīth will be mentioned as an example

The Best for a Woman

Hadrat ‘Alī ؓ narrates, “Once we were in the company of Nabī ؐ when he asked, “What is best for women?” All the Sahābah remained silent. When I returned to Fātimah radiyallāhu anha, I said to her, “What is best for a woman?” She replied, “They should not look at men nor should men look at them.”

I mentioned this to Nabī ؐ who then exclaimed, “Fātimah radiyallāhu anha is part of me.” (*Ad Dār Qutnī*)

Women do not Have a Right to Leave their Homes

Nabī ؐ has mentioned, “Women do not have a right to leave their homes, except at the time when they are compelled.” (*Tabrānī in Kabīr*)

Women Are an Object of Concealment

Nabī ؐ has mentioned, “A woman is an object of concealment (i.e. hijāb is necessary for women) because when she emerges, then Shaytān stares at her. (*Tirmidhī, vol. p. 14*)

This means that those men who are evil-natured and who stare at women are all Shayātīn. Since there is no shortage of such Shayātīn in the streets and in the market places, therefore women should not emerge from their homes without a severe need, so much so that she should not even go to the Masjid for Salāh.

For a Women to Perform Salāh in her Home is Better than Going to the Masjid

Definitely, in the blessed era of Nabī ؐ, there was permission for women to go to the Masjid for Salāh. However, the following guidance was also given, “Their houses are better for them (than going to the Masjid). (*Mishkāṭ, p. 96*)

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From the Ahādīth, we learn that Nabī ﷺ during the last portion of his life preferred that women should not attend the Masjid (some high ranking Sahābah ؓ had already begun preventing their wives from going to the Masjid).

Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ Preventing Women from Going to the Masjid

During the era of Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ, a change had already occurred in the condition of women. (The usage of beautiful clothes, jewellery and perfume had become common). Thus Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ prohibited the women from coming to the Masjid. All the Sahābah ؓ were pleased with this verdict. Nobody differed with him. However some women complained to Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha. Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha agreeing the verdict of Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ said,

لو ادرك رسول الله ﷺ ما أحدث النساء لمنعهن المسجد كما منعت نساء بني اسرائيل

“If Rasūlullāh ﷺ had witnessed this condition of the women (i.e. usage of beautiful clothes, jewellery, perfume etc), then he would have prevented them just as the women of the Banī Isrā’īl were prevented.” (Sahīh Bukhārī, vol.20, Sahīh Muslim, vol. 1 p. 183)

In ‘Ainī, the commentary of Bukhārī, it is mentioned that on the day of Jumuah, Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ would stand, throw stones and remove the women from the Masjid. (*‘Ainī – commentary of Bukhārī*)

The Fatwā of the Fuqahā’ (Jurists)

Therefore, the jurists have given the fatwā that it is makrūh and reprehensible for women to go to the Masjid:

ويكره حضورهن الجماعة ولو بجمعة وعيد ووعظ مطلقاً ولو عجزوا ليلاً علي المذهب المفتي به

لفساد زمان

Women’s presence for jamā’ah salāh, even if it be jumu’ah, eid or for lectures is makrūh, and even if it be an old lady at night, according to the fatwā of the madh hab, due to corruption in these times.

(*Durr e Mukhtār with Shāmī, vol.1 p.529*)

Pardah From a Blind Man

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Nabī ﷺ commanded his noble wives to even observe hijāb from a blind Sahābī. Hadrat Umme Salmah radiyallāhu anha states that once she and Hadrat Maymūnah radiyallāhu anha were with Nabī ﷺ when Hadrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm (a blind Sahābī) came there. Nabī ﷺ commanded us to observe hijāb from him. I said, “Is he not blind that he cannot see us?” i.e. when he cannot see, then why should we observe hijāb? Nabī ﷺ asked, “Are you also blind? Can you not see him?” (*Mishkāṭ*, p. 269)

Observing Pardah from the Son of the Father’s Slave

Nabī ﷺ commanded his noble wife Hadrat Sawdā radiyallāhu anha to make pardah from her half-brother who was born from her father’s slave-girl, since he resembled Utbah. Thus for the remainder of their lives, they did not meet each other. (*Bukhārī*, p. 283)

My Shame and Modesty Has Not Been Lost

Hadrat Qays Ibn Shammās mentions that one Sahābīah, whose name was Umm Khallād radiyallāhu anha came to Nabī ﷺ to ascertain information regarding her son who had been martyred in a certain battle. She came in the presence of Nabī ﷺ donning a burqah.

Those present were amazed and said, “In such worry and concern also, you did not leave your niqāb (face-covering). This Sahābīah said, “My son has been lost, my shame and modesty has not been lost.” (*Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 1, p. 326)

Sahābiyāt Observing Hijāb from Rasūlullāh ﷺ

Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha narrates that a woman had a piece of paper in her hand. She stretched out her hand towards Nabī ﷺ from behind a screen to hand it over to him. Nabī ﷺ held back his hand and said, “I do not know whether it is the hand of a man or woman.” She said, “It is a hand of a woman.” Nabī ﷺ then said, “If it is that of a woman, then she should apply mendhi (henna) on her nails.”

Care of Hijāb at the Time of Taking Bay‘ah

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Ḥadīrat Umaymah radiyallāhu anha states that she, together with a few other women went to Nabī ﷺ to take bay'ah (pledge of allegiance). The women said, "O Rasūlullāh, we take bay'ah to you on these conditions that we will not make any partners with Allāh ﷻ, we will not steal, we will not commit adultery, we will not kill our children, we will not come forth with slander which we fabricate before our hands and legs (by claiming another man's child is our husbands) and we will not disobey you in any good deed." On hearing this, Nabī ﷺ said, "And say, 'We will act fully on this according to our ability.'" The women remarked on this, "Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ are kinder to us than ourselves." Thereafter the women said, "O Rasūlullāh ﷺ we have verbally agreed. Let us pledge allegiance to you (by placing our hands in your hands)."

Nabī ﷺ said, "I do not make musāfaha (shake hands) with females. Whatever I have said verbally is binding upon all. And there is no need to take bay'ah for each separately because my statement to one hundred women is the same as to one woman. (*Muatta Imām Mālik – Chapter of those Ahādīth regarding bay'ah p. 730/731*)

Regarding women taking bay'ah, Ḥadīrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha explains with great clarity. She mentions, "Whichever believing women accepted these conditions (which were mentioned in the above-mentioned hadīth and in Sūrah Mumtahina) then Nabī ﷺ said to them verbally, 'I have accepted your bay'ah' (because Nabī ﷺ would not take their bay'ah by placing their hands into his). By Allāh, the hand of Rasūlullāh ﷺ never touched the hand of any woman (even) at the time of taking bay'ah. He would only take bay'ah verbally by saying 'I have accepted your bay'ah.'" (*Bukhārī, Kitāb ut Tafsīr*)

The Noble Wives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ Observing Hijāb from Other Sahābah

The story of Ifk (slander) is found in a detailed hadīth in which, very briefly, Ḥadīrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha states that she accompanied Nabī ﷺ in a battle after the revelation of the laws of hijāb ... When they had already made the camel stand up and took it

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away, then only did I return to the camp. At this time, there was no caller and no answer (i.e. nobody was there). All the people had gone with the army. I covered myself with my chādar (outer sheet) and lay down. After a short while, Hadrat Safwān Ibn Muattal ؓ passed by there. He had remained behind the army due to some necessity. Thus he had not passed the night with the rest of the people. When he saw my form, he drew closer. As soon as he saw me, he recognized me, since before the revelation of the laws of hijāb, he had seen me. He recited *انا لله وانا اليه راجعون* in a loud voice. On hearing his voice, I woke up and immediately covered my face with my chādar. (*Muslim – Kitāb ut Tawbah, Hadīth of Ifk*)

Care Of Hijāb During Medical Treatment

Hadrat Jābir ؓ narrates that Umm ul Mu'minīn Hadrat Umm Salmah radiyallāhu anha asked Nabī ﷺ for permission to get cupped. Nabī ﷺ commanded Abū Tībah to cup her.

After mentioning this incident, Hadrat Jābir ؓ states that he thinks that the reason why Hadrat Abū Tībah ؓ was commanded to cup was either because he was the foster brother of Hadrat Umm Salmah radiyallāhu anha or because he was not as yet mature. (*Muslim*)

Note: From this Hadīth we learn that even while taking medical treatment it is necessary to be particular about hijāb. If there was no harm in appearing in front of the doctor or physician without hijāb, then there was no need for Hadrat Jābir ؓ to state that Abū Tībah ؓ was either Hadrat Umm Salmah radiyallāhu anha's father's brother or that he was not mature.

Hijāb During Ihrām

Umm ul Mu'minīn Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha mentions that (during hajj when we were with Nabī ﷺ in the condition of ihrām) men used to pass us. When any-one used to pass us, then we used to suspend our chādars from our heads over our faces and when they would pass then we would lift our chādars up. (*Abū Dāwūd vol.1 p. 254*)

Severe Emphasis on Observance of Hijāb with Male In-Laws

Hadrat Uqbah Ibn Āmir ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Do not go to (strange) women.” One person asked, “O Rasūlullāh, what are the rulings for a women’s brother-in-laws?” Nabī ﷺ said, “The brother-in-laws are death.”

Note: In this Hadīth, the most important point to take into consideration is that Nabī ﷺ likened the brother-in-laws to death. This means that a woman should make well-observed hijāb from all her brother-in-laws (her husband’s brother, her husband’s sister’s husband, her sister’s husband and all other male family members of her husband besides her father-in-law and son-in-law).

With all non-mahrams it is compulsory to observe hijāb, but with regards to these family members, one should abstain from coming in front of them just as one regards it necessary to abstain from things leading to death. From here, we can understand that the custom of all the men of the husband’s family looking at the new bride’s face is not permissible. (*Behishti Zewar part 3 p.75*)

Sometimes, a woman, due to the command of her husband, observes hijāb from his elder brother. However his mother tells him to command his wife not to observe it from his brother, otherwise she will be displeased with him. In this case, if the mother is not pleased, this will not cause harm to one on the Day of Qiyāmah since the Hadīth interprets the husband’s brother as death for a woman. (*Kifāyat ul Muftī, vol. 5 p. 390*)

The Etiquettes for Women Leaving the House Due to Necessity

At times, women are forced to emerge from their homes due to either basic needs (like going to relieve oneself, etc.) or shar’ī necessities (e.g. hajj etc.). It is then compulsory for her to keep in mind the Qur’ānic teachings and the guidance of Nabī ﷺ like lowering the gaze, emerging with the niqāb (face-covering), not donning oneself, emerging with soiled garments and a simple burqah, not applying perfume, make-up etc, travelling on a journey with one’s husband or a mahram, not walking in the middle of the

street; and not standing in places where she will be exposed to all and sundry. Regarding these matters, we will narrate a few Ahādīth here.

To Emerge Without Perfume and Without Beautifying Oneself

Hadrat Maymūnah bint Sa'd radiyallāhu anha narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “That woman who (beautifies herself and) applies perfume, then emerges from her house and men thus look at her, Allāh ﷻ continuously remains angry with her until she returns home.” (*Tabrānī*)

In one Hadīth, Hadrat Abū Mūsā ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “When any woman applies perfume and passes by a gathering (of men), then she is so-and-so i.e. an adulteress.” (*Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī*)

Emerging From the House Without the Permission of the Husband is Not Permissible

Hadrat Abū Mūsā ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “It is not permissible for that woman who believes in Allāh ﷻ and the Day of Qiyāmah to give permission to any person to enter her husband's house except with his permission, and it is not permissible to emerge from her house without her husband's consent. In this matter she should not obey any-one.” (*Mustadrak Hākim, Tabrānī*)

Hadrat Anas ؓ narrates that a man went out for jihād. He commanded his wife not to emerge from her house which was on the upper floor. Her father resided on the ground level. Whilst her husband was away, her father fell ill. She sent a message to Rasūlullāh ﷺ asking permission to serve him. Nabī ﷺ replied, “Fear Allāh and obey your husband.” Thereafter, her father passed away. Again she sent a message requesting permission to emerge and the same reply as before was given. Thereafter Nabī ﷺ sent someone with the following message, “Verily Allāh ﷻ has forgiven your father because of your obedience to your husband.”

A Woman Should Not Undertake a Journey Without a Mahram

Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “That woman who believes in Allāh ﷻ and the Day of Qiyāmah, should not travel (a distance of) three days or more unless her father, brother,

husband, son, or any other mahram accompanies her.” (*Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah*). A journey of three days in the shar‘ah means that amount with which Salāh becomes Qasr i.e. 48 miles or 77 kilometres.

Women Should Not Walk in the Middle of the Road

Hadrat Abū Usayd Ansārī ؓ states that once Rasūlullāh ﷺ came out of the Masjid. There men and women were passing. Men and women were walking in such a way that (in spite of the women wearing pardah) they were walking amongst one another. (i.e. instead of the women walking on one side of the road, they were walking along side the men). On seeing this, Rasūlullāh ﷺ remarked, “O women! Move back. You have no permission to walk in the centre of the road. Walk on the sides of the road.” The narrator states that after this command, the women would pass by on the sides of the road in such a way that if there was any wall on the right or left side, they would walk so close to it that at times their clothing would become entangled in the wall. (*Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī*)

Emerging With a Simple Burqah and Grimy Clothing

Nabī ﷺ had mentioned, i.e. “Women should emerge with grimy clothing. (*Abū Dāwūd*)

Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ states, “Do not give women beautiful clothing, they will remain sitting in their houses.” The reason for saying this is that women are not inclined to emerge in a shabby condition. (*Ithā ul ‘Ulūm vol.2 p. 48*)

Prohibition of Ghusl for Women in Public Baths

Hadrat Jābir ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “For that person who believes in Allāh ﷻ and the Day of Qiyāmah, it is compulsory for him not to enter public baths except with a lungi (sheet used to cover lower body from below navel). That person who believes in Allāh ﷻ and the Day of Qiyāmah should not let his wife enter those public baths; and whoever believes in Allāh ﷻ and the Day of Qiyāmah should not sit at such a table in which alcohol is being served.” (*Tirmidhī, Nasa’ī*)

Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Tayyib Sâhib رَحِمَهُ اللهُ writes, “Is today’s restaurants any inferior to those public baths, wherein bringing

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women there in solitude has taken the form of an independent trade? Are the parks and general clubs any less evil than these public baths, in which specific times are stipulated for meeting, and wherein according to the promised times, such actions occur?

Are the schools of today any less immoral than those public baths, in which girls are removed from the protection of their guardians out of their houses into the mercy of strangers? Then what incidents occur there? And is all this not an exact replica of the era of ignorance which the Noble Qur'ân has expended its full energy in prohibiting and changing this." (*Shar'ī Pardah*, p. 16)

How Should a Woman's Clothing be?

Islam has taught Muslim women shame and modesty. It has prevented her from intermingling with non-mahrams. It has also prohibited wearing such clothing in which there is no difference if worn or not, and by which the object of pardah is defeated. Women should cover their heads with such a dupatta (scarf) which will conceal all the hair, the neck and the nape.

When there is a fear of non-mahrams coming, then she should also cover her face with a thick dupatta. She should wear such a qamīs (kurta; long dress), jumper and frock by which her body cannot be seen. Her sleeves should be full. At the front and back opening of the dress by the neck and nape, one should be particular that no portions remain exposed. The cloth of the shalwar (trousers) should be such that no portion of the thigh or the shin can be seen. (*Tuhfā Khawātīn* p. 666)

Islam Has Presented Some Etiquettes With Regards To Clothing

- (1) The clothing should be such that it conceals completely.
- (2) The clothing should not be of such thin material by which the body can be seen.
- (3) The clothing should not be so tight by which the curves and shape of the body can be visibly seen. Tight clothing, instead of shame and concealment, becomes a means of arousing desires and leads to evil.

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(4) Men should not wear silken clothing. The buoyancy of silken clothing is contrary to the temperament of man, but is completely in conformity to the nature and temperament of women.

(5) Men and women should not wear clothing resembling that of the opposite sex. (*Pardah ke shar'ī Ahkām*, p. 104)

Prohibition of Thin and Tight Clothing

Hadrat Usāmah ؓ narrates that Nabī ﷺ once gave me a (proportionality) thick Qibti piece of material, which Hadrat Dihyā Kalbī ؓ had given to Nabī ﷺ as a gift. I gave it to my wife to make clothing for herself. Nabī ﷺ once asked me, “Why is it that you do not wear the Qibti clothing?” I said, “O Rasūlullāh, I gave it to my wife so that she could make clothing for herself with it?” Nabī ﷺ said, “Tell your wife to put another piece of cloth beneath it. I fear that (due to its being thin), it will not conceal the shape of her bosom”

In another Hadīth, Hadrat Ibn ‘Umar ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “In the last era of my ummah, there will be such women who, despite wearing clothing, will be naked. On their heads (their hair) will be like the humps of thin Bukhti camels. (If you see them then) curse them, because they are deprived of the mercy of Allāh ﷻ. If there had to be an ummah after you, then these women of yours would have served them like the women of the past ummahs are serving you.” (*Musnad Ahmad*)

Women Should Not Don Tinkling Jewellery

Hadrat Banānah radiyallāhu anha narrates that she one went to visit Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha. During that time, a woman brought her daughter to Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha. This girl was wearing tinkling anklets. Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha said, “As long as you don’t cut off these tinkling anklets, don’t ever bring her to me. I have heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying, “The angels of mercy do not enter such a house in which there are bells.”

The Evil of Today’s Clothing

Today, such clothing has become fashionable which are see-through. Many men and women wear trousers which are made of such thin material that their legs can be seen through it. Wearing

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such clothing is akin to not wearing anything. Salāh will not take place in it. Generally, women don thin dupattas (scarves) which are of a small size. Firstly, this dupatta does not encompass the whole head, and even if it does, the aim of pardah is not fulfilled with it. By wearing it and performing salāh, one's Salāh will not even be correct. When the Qur'ānic law *وليضرن بخمرهن علي جيوبهن* was revealed then the Sahābiyāt would cut thick chādars to make dupattas. However the women of today "feel very hot."

The plague of such evil habits have spread so much that even those woman who are regarded as pious are not prepared to leave those thin dupattas. They even perform their Salāh with such dupattas. When they go for hajj, then in the plane or ship, they remove their burqahs, and wearing these thin dupattas they roam around in the plane or ship, in the market-places and in the Noble Haram. In a crowd of thousands of men, they prance around and move freely, their hair revealed, their faces exposed, without any chādar or any burqah; as if all these people are their brothers. Before, sorrow was expressed due to the fact that women would expose their faces to their brother-in-laws and cousins, which is a sin in the sharīah. However, today, never mind the face, by wearing such thin clothing, the whole or at least half the body is exposed to all. Such niqābs are chosen which are made with a very fine net. The whole face can be seen by those walking on the road. All of these things are severe sins in the eyes of the sharīah.

A condition for women's Salāh to be correct is that her whole body, excluding her face, hands till the wrists and her feet, should be covered. However, the reality is that many women's Salāh is not acceptable since they wear such thin dupattas, by which the hair can be seen. Some women's Salāh does not take place because their fore-arms remain opened. If it is covered, then it is covered with this fine dupattta through which everything can be seen. Some women wear sārīs. The blouse is so small that it ends by the navel. Half the stomach can be seen. Salāh does not take place with such garments. Understand this well. Do not look at the customs of this world, but look at the sharīah. If there is a bit of difficulty of a little heat in this world, and the fashionable people even pass their

remarks, then what harm is there in this? In Jannah, you will be rewarded with the most beautiful garments, where-in everything will be according to the desires of the nafs. (*Tuhfa-e-Khawâtîn*, p. 667)

Naked, Even While Wearing Clothing

In one hadîth, Nabî ﷺ prophesized that one such group of women will arise who will be wearing clothing, but will still be naked i.e. the clothing will be so thin and fine that the purpose of concealing the body will not be attained, and if not so see-through then it will be so tight and fitted on the body that wearing and not wearing clothing will be equivalent. Another manner of clothing, whilst still being naked, is that very little clothing will be worn on the body as is the fashion of the people of Europe (and some cities in Asia e.g. Bombay, Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, etc). The dress or frock is only worn till the knees. There are no sleeves on it, or if there are any sleeves, they are so short that only four to five inches of the hand from the shoulder is concealed. The calves are completely bare, and the head is void of any scarf. The front and back portion of the frock is so wide and open that half the back and half the breast can be seen.

Nabî ﷺ also prophesized that women will attract strange men towards themselves, and they also will be attracted to them i.e. this custom of being naked will not be due to poverty, but will be to show men their bodies and to captivate their hearts. Another way of captivating their hearts will be by raising their heads (which will be void of any dupatta) and moving around just as the hump of the camels leans to the ground when moving fast. By likening them to the hump of the camel, it is shown that women will raise their hair in a style over their heads.

The Evil Plague of Fashion

The plague of fashion has induced the women of honourable and respectable families to imitate and follow Christian (English) ladies, Jewish women, and actresses working in film companies. In going to the cinema (and in today's times, even in the comfort of one's home with the satellite dish - translator) where there are many other sins

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and harms, one sin and harm is that young girls and women are enamoured by modern culture, wear the clothing of those immoral and immodest women who appear on the cinema screens and they also learn their actions and movements. They then regard it as a means of honour to imitate and ape these women. Today so many women scheme and plan to entice men to themselves e.g. they wear burqahs and emerge but expose their arms, the niqāb worn is so short that the cheeks can clearly be seen, or such a fine and thin niqāb is donned on the burqah, which makes more conspicuous one's beauty that the burqah instead of being a means of concealment has now become an object of attraction. On burqahs, flowers are designed and the cloth is made of thin and shining material. Evil-minded people turn their attention to those wearing burqahs. Instead of being a means of pardah, it has become a means of captivating the eyes towards one. It has become such that even those who do not see, will also want to see. (May Allāh protect us!)

Today, dancing is regarded as very honourable. In schools and colleges, formal training is being given. In clubs and big restaurants, naked dancing takes place. The European slaves of their passions have prescribed that every woman must dance with other men besides her husband. Whichever women oppose this, it is regarded as evil in society.

How lamentable is it that Muslims regard following these immoral ways of the west as success and progress. Dancing is the most effective and successful way of enticing a man towards a woman. By it, sexual passions are aroused and it is a means of crossing all the stages of immorality and shamelessness. (*Tuhfa e Khawātīn*, p. 669)

The Poison of Mixed Education

Today girls are sent to schools and colleges to study. They are encouraged to earn high degrees. Firstly, this is in opposition to Allāh ﷻ's command that they should remain within their homes, and if they have to emerge due to necessity, then there are many restrictions placed on them. However, these girls emerge without any care whatsoever of pardah. They don themselves and apply

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perfume. Whatever modesty remains is then destroyed by co-education. In one class, boys and girls, mature men and women sit, without any concealment. The surprising thing is that those attaining degrees in Islamic studies (in fact, those male and female students studying tafsîr and ahādīth) trample Islamic laws at the same time they are learning it. Whoever shows any disapproval or prevents it and says that this is a way against the sharīah and no matter which verses and ahādīth he presents, his speech is regarded as old-fashioned and put aside. May Allāh ﷻ grant them understanding and grant them the ability to understand the correct demands of dīn!

Islam is a Religion of Purity and Chastity

Islam is a religion of shame and modesty, purity and chastity, and honour and sacredness. It has granted man a high status. The distinguishing factors between man and animal can be seen by studying the laws of Islam. Islam cannot and can never condone animalism coming into man; that they pass their lives as animals do. (Islam has placed certain restrictions and bounds to control and regulate) the natural desire and inclination found between men and women. It has taken into consideration the rights of the nafs as well as the enjoyment of the nafs. However, it has not left man unrestricted that whatever he wishes, he can eat; whatever he wishes, he can wear; wherever he wants to, he can see; and with whomsoever he wants to, he can fulfil his desires. Many so-called Muslims (even though they are experts in modern-day knowledge, and know worldly matters thoroughly) desire to make Muslims also flow away in the current and flood of bestiality and animalism, after seeing the Jews and Christians of Europe and America and the irreligious infidels, and after becoming affected by their encouragement and writings. When the laws and rulings of pardah are presented to these people, then despite seeing this, they say with great impudence, “These are all the statements and fabrications of molvis.” These people regard their women running around unveiled, and in fact, dancing in clubs, as progress.

Which Progress is Commendable?

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Women are the weaker sex. Simultaneously, her understanding is less. When she is hoodwinked and deluded that veiling herself is a barrier towards progress and it is a fabrication of the mullahs, then due to her ignorance, she believes such speech. She thus moves about in front of men, with no regard for veiling and concealing herself in gatherings, jalsahs, parks, market-places, and recreation parks. She regards these as actions of progress. The enemies of Islam have only taught the word 'progress', but do not even know the progress of which things are commendable and the progress of which things are deplorable. If the wives and daughters of the nation come out of their homes without pardah, and move around in the bazaars and parks (intermingling with men), then what progress is this? Does humanity progress to a higher level, or is there any increase in honour and sacredness? Never, never! By it, the roads and paths of destroying honour and shame has been prepared. The schemes of destroying the honour and respect of humanity have been laid. Is progress in evil any form of progress? Shaytân and his cohorts love such progress. Allâh ﷻ, His Rasûl ﷺ, the sincere believing males and females do not like such progress in evil. (*Tuhfa e Khawâtîn*, p. 631)

Rulings Regarding Clothing And Pardah

1. There is no difference in remaining naked and wearing very flimsy clothing such as muslin, lace, and other similar fabrics with which lingerie is made. It is mentioned in the Hadîth that women who wear such flimsy clothing will be regarded as naked on the day of judgement. It will be more deplorable if the dress and head gear are both made of such flimsy fabric.
2. It is not permissible for women to adopt the dress and appearance of men, nor is it permissible for men to adopt the dress and appearance of women. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has cursed such men and women.
3. It is permissible for women to wear jewellery. However, it is preferable not to wear too much of jewellery. A woman who wears very little jewellery in this world will be given a lot of jewellery in the hereafter. It is not permissible to wear tinkling jewellery such as those that are worn around the ankles. It is not permissible for little girls to wear such jewellery as well. It is also permissible to wear jewellery that is made with anything other than gold or silver. For example, it is permissible to wear jewellery that is made with brass, gilt, tin, etc. However, rings that are made of anything other than gold or silver are not permissible.²
4. Women are ordered to cover their bodies from head to toe. It is not permissible for them to expose their bodies to non mahrams. However, it is permissible for an old woman to expose her face, palms, and feet below the ankles. It is not permissible for her to expose the rest of her body. At times the head covering falls off slightly and she goes in the presence of non mahrams in this way. This is not permissible. Not a single strand of hair should be exposed in the presence of non mahrams. In fact, the hair that falls off her head while combing her hair, and the nails which she has clipped should be left in such a place where non mahrams will not be able to see them. If a woman is not cautious in this regard, she will be sinful. Similarly, it is not permissible for a woman to allow

² It is not permissible for men to wear rings unless they are made of silver. Rings made of anything other than silver are not permissible for men.

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any part of her body to touch any part of a man's body. This rule applies to men as well.

5. It is not permissible for a young woman to expose her face in the presence of non mahrams, nor should she stand in a place where she could be observed. We learn from this, that the custom of exposing the bride's face in public where all the men can observe her is also not permissible. To do so is a major sin.

6. If a woman's face, head, chest, arm or calf gets exposed in front of her mahram, there will be no sin³ on her. However, her stomach, back, and thighs cannot be exposed in front of her mahram as well.

7. It is not permissible for a woman to expose her body from her navel till below her knees even before another woman. Some women bath naked in the presence of other women. This is a very shameless and forbidden act. It is also forbidden to force a woman to expose her body and to bathe her on the ceremonies that are held on the sixth day after child birth, and the fortieth day after child birth. Under no condition should she expose her body from her navel till below the knees.

8. If there is a dire need, it will be permissible to expose that part of the body which is necessary to expose. For example, if a woman has a boil on her thigh, it will be permissible for her to expose just that area where the boil is situated. Under no condition should she expose more than that area. This could be done by wearing a very old pants or sheet and cutting that area of the pants where the boil is situated. The doctor can then inspect that area. However, it is not permissible to show that area to anyone other than the doctor. This is irrespective of whether the person is a male or a female. But if this boil or wound is not in the area between the navel and below the knees, it will be permissible to expose it to another woman. In the same way, at the time of some inspection, it will only be permissible to expose that part which is necessary. The same rule applies to a mid-wife. That is, at the time of need it will be permissible to expose the body to her, but it will not be permissible to expose more than what is necessary. During child birth or at the

³ This rule applies if these parts become exposed unintentionally. If the woman feels that she is not safe from the desires of her mahram as well, it will not be permissible to expose even these.

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time of taking some medicine, it will not be permissible to expose more than what is necessary. It is not permissible for a woman to be completely naked. The method of doing this is to wrap a sheet around the body and whenever the need arises, the woman could open the sheet for the mid-wife. The thighs and private parts should not be exposed. Apart from the mid-wife, it is not permissible for anyone else to see her body. To be completely naked and to sit or lie down in the presence of all the other women is absolutely *harâm*. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Allah's curse is on the one who looks at the *satr* (private parts) of another person, and the one who exposes her *satr* to others." One has to be very cautious with regard to rulings of this nature.

9. During pregnancy, if the mid-wife wishes to inspect the stomach, it will not be permissible for the woman to expose her body below her navel. She should cover herself with a sheet or any other covering. It is not permissible to unnecessarily expose the area below the navel even to a mid-wife. The custom of exposing this area to the mid-wife when she is carrying out her inspection and exposing it to one's house members is not permissible.

10. It is not permissible to touch those parts of the body which one cannot even look at. The parts of a woman's body which cannot be looked at, cannot be touched by others as well. Therefore, it is not permissible for a masseuse (female who massages) to massage the thighs, etc. even if she inserts her hands beneath the clothing whilst massaging. However, if she wears a glove and massages the thighs by inserting her hand beneath the clothing, it will be permissible.

11. It is *wājib* to make *pardah* with the *kāfir* women who come into one's home. This also applies to maids and domestic servants who are not Muslims. The *pardah* that has to be made with them is the same as that which has to be made with *ghayr mahram* males. The exception is that the face, wrists, and feet can be exposed to them. The head should also be covered. Remember this rule very well because the majority of women do not act according to the rules laid down by the *sharī'ah* in this regard. In other words, do not expose the head, the entire hands and the calves in front of them. It should also be remembered that if the mid-wife is a *kāfir*, then at

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the time of delivery, it will be permissible to expose the private parts. However, it will not be permissible for her to look at the other parts of the body. (Because there is no need for her to do so)

12. It is permissible for a woman to expose her entire body to her husband. It is also permissible for the husband to expose his entire body to his wife. However, it is not good to do so unnecessarily.

13. Just as it is not permissible for a woman to appear in the presence of a man or to expose her body in front of him, it is also not permissible for a woman to look at a man. Some women are under the misconception that although it is not permissible for men to look at them, it is permissible for them to look at men. This is absolutely wrong. To stand at the door way and look at men, to look at them from an elevated place, to come in the presence of the bride-groom, etc. are all not permissible.

14. It is not permissible to sit or lie down with a non mahram in solitude or in private. Even if both man and woman are sitting separately at a distance, it will not be permissible to do so in private.

15. Just as it is not permissible to expose oneself in the presence of a non mahram male, it is also not permissible to expose oneself in the presence of one's spiritual guide. Similarly, an adopted son is regarded as a non mahram. By adopting him, he does not become one's real son. Pardah will have to be made with him just as pardah is made with a non mahram male. Pardah will also have to be observed with all one's non mahram relatives. These include the husband's younger and elder brothers, sister's husband, husband of the husband's sister, and also one's cousins irrespective of whether they are the children of one's maternal or paternal uncles and aunts.

16. It is not permissible for women to come in the presence of hermaphrodites, castrated persons, and even blind persons.

17. Some women offer their hands to bangle-vendors (and jewellers) so that they may pass the bangles through their hands. This is a shameless and prohibited act. (*Behishti Zewar*)

The Benefits Of Hijāb

1. The Jihād of a Woman

Allāh ﷻ whilst mentioning the punishment of adultery and fornication has stated (The fornicating woman and the fornicating man). Here women have been mentioned before men. The commentators have mentioned that one wisdom of this is that fornication and adultery commences from the side of the woman e.g. a woman is not cautious in observing hijāb. A man sees her and the matter goes further. A woman speaks to a man in alluring tones, due to which he takes the opportunity to lead matters further. A woman emerges from her home without her mahram at the wrong time, which ultimately leads to her being raped.

In spite of perceiving evil intentions from a man, a woman does not inform her family members. The man thus takes advantage of the situation. A woman, after receiving a letter or message from a man, does not portray a harsh attitude towards him, which advertently leads to evil. A man cannot be successful in fulfilling his lustful desires as long as a woman is not game. For this reason, the Qur’ān has first placed the blame on the woman in the matter of sexual misdemeanour. A woman should ensure that she does not display any shortcoming in protecting her honour and dignity.

Just as the sharī‘ah has granted man fighting in jihād the virtue of a mujāhid, so too is a chaste woman living within the confines of her four walls regarded as a mujāhidah (female warrior). Therefore, on the fearful day of Judgement, she will be granted shade under the Throne. Hereunder, a comparison is being drawn of a man and woman’s jihad.

1) The pledge of allegiance of fighting in the battlefield was taken from men.	1) The pledge of allegiance of protecting chastity was taken from women.
2) The jihād of a man is out of his home.	2) The jihād of a woman is inside her home.
3) The jihād of a man is against	3) The jihād of a woman is with

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disbelievers.	strange men.
4) The enemy fires bullets at a mujāhid.	4) Strange men fire poisonous arrows of lustful glances at a woman.
5) The enemy desires to capture the land of the mujāhid.	5) Strange men desire to capture the heart of a woman.
6) The enemy desires to take benefit from the monetary possessions of the mujāhid.	6) Strange men want to take enjoyment from the body of the woman.
7) The mujāhid keeps the enemy far from the capital city.	7) A woman keeps a strange man far from herself.
8) The mujāhid does not allow the enemy to enter one inch of his land.	8) A woman does not allow a strange man to touch one inch of her body.
9) The mujāhid does not trust his enemy.	9) A woman does not trust a strange man.
10) A mujāhid defends himself by staying within his fort.	10) A woman protects herself by staying within her four walls.
11) A mujāhid knows that if the enemy sees him, then his life is in danger.	11) A woman knows that if a strange man sees her, then her honour is at stake.
12) The enemy loots the mujāhid's land.	12) The strange man loots the woman's honour.
13) A mujāhid keeps the enemy at bay and thus gains the rank of a mujāhid.	13) A woman keeps strange men at bay and thus gains the rank of a mujāhidah.
14) A mujāhid works hidden from the enemy.	14) A woman works hidden from strange men.
15) A mujāhid wears armour to protect himself from the attacks of the enemy.	15) A woman wears her veil to protect herself from the gazes of strange men.
16) A mujāhid attains success by showing stead-fastness in front of the enemy.	16) A woman attains success by showing stead-fastness in front of the strange men.
17) The enemy uses discussions as a ploy to trap the mujāhid.	17) The strange man uses discussions as a ploy to trap a woman.

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18) The enemy sends a spy to the mujāhid's camp.	18) The strange man sends a phone call to the woman.
19) The enemy lays traps in the path of the mujāhid and hopes to overcome him	19) The strange man sends gifts to the woman and hopes to win her over.
20) The mujāhid protects his frontiers day and night, and attains reward.	20) The woman is cautious and protects herself day and night, and attains reward.
21) The mujāhid, by his marching, does not allow the enemy to see his weakness.	21) The woman, by concealing herself, does not allow any strange man to witness her beauty.
22) The internal enemy forces the mujāhid to lay down his weapons.	22) The nafs (carnal self) forces the woman to become lax and show softness to strange men.
23) Jihād grants a mujāhid divine proximity.	23) Chastity grants a woman divine proximity.
24) If a mujāhid fears his enemy, then a believing friend will assist him.	24) If a woman fears a strange man, then her male relatives will assist her.
25) The mujāhid loves to protect his country.	25) The woman loves to protect her chastity.
26) The mujāhid repels severely the attack of the enemy by a counter-attack.	26) The woman repels severely the sweet talk of a strange man by her firm tone.
27) The mujāhid's du'ā' is accepted by Allāh ﷻ.	27) The chaste woman's du'ā' is accepted by Allāh ﷻ.
28) A mujāhid faces graver danger from internal enemies.	28) A woman faces graver danger from relatives who are not mahram.
29) If a mujāhid dies protecting his country, he is a martyr.	29) If a woman dies protecting her chastity, she is a martyr.
30) A mujāhid should make du'ā' to Allāh ﷻ for success against the enemy.	30) A woman should make du'ā' to Allāh ﷻ for the protection of her honour and chasity. ⁴

⁴ Haya aur Pākdamani - Hadrat Maulānā Zulfiqār Naqshbandī (Mudda Zilluhu)

2. Reward of 100 Martyrs

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Whoever holds firm onto my Sunnah at the time of the corruption of my ummah, then for him is the reward of one hundred martyrs.”
(*Mishkāt*)

3. Safety From Evil

Although women who adopt the proper Islamic dress are portrayed as oppressed, by studying stats we find that these women enjoy the most peaceful life in the world. According to a pamphlet written by the Dean of Women’s office at Queen’s University in Canada, a woman is sexually assaulted every 6 minutes, 1 in 3 women in Canada will be sexually assaulted at some time in their lives, 1 in 4 are at risk of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime, 1 in 8 women will be sexually assaulted while attending college or university. A study found that 60% of Canadian university-aged males said that they would commit sexual assault if they were certain they would not get caught. 1 in 20 women in the U.K. has been raped.

Over the last 6 years there has been an 82% increase in the amount of rape in the U.K. The conviction for rape is only 5.6%. If this is the definition of freedom then something is fundamentally wrong with the society we live in. In order to save women from having such traumatic experiences, Allāh ﷻ has instructed our women to adopt these measures known as ‘the rules of hijāb’. By studying the above stats we can clearly see that in society men are the victimizers and women are the victims. Therefore Allāh ﷻ has given certain orders to Muslim women while indoors and outdoors in order to safeguard them from being victimized.

165000 people have eating disorders in the U.K. such as anorexic nervosa and bulimia nervosa - 5% of young girls have anorexia - the exploitation of women by the fashion industry that promotes super-thin supermodels has caused hundreds of thousands of women to be preoccupied with their appearance and weight to the point of death.

4. Virtues of Remaining Chaste

1. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “When a woman offers her five times salâh, keeps the fasts of Ramadân, safeguards her honour, and obeys her husband; she can enter Jannah from whichever door she wishes.”
2. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “The best possession is a pious wife: when the husband looks at her he is pleased with her, when he orders her to do something she obeys, when the husband goes out, she protects her honour and chastity and remains in her home.”
3. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “Allah loves the woman who has love and affection for her husband and safeguards herself from other men.”
4. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “The immorality of one woman is equal to the immorality of 1000 men. The piety of one pious woman is equal to the ʾibādah of 70 auliya’.”
5. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “The best woman among you is the one who is untainted with regard to her honour and chastity, and who loves her husband.”
6. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “The woman whose husband is not at home, and she safeguards her honour, abandons beautifying herself, remains at home, abandons everything that is considered to be a form of beautification, and offers salâh with steadfastness will rise on the day of judgement as a virgin. If her husband was a true believer, she will be his wife in Jannah. If he was not a true believer, e.g. if he passed away without ʾimān, Allāh will perform her nikāh with a martyr.” (*Behishti Zewar*)

5. Duʾā of Nabī ﷺ

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, “May Allāh have mercy on women who wear izār.” On account of pardah, wearing the izār is something that is natural to women. Despite this, Rasûlullâh ﷺ has made duʾā for such women. This is a great form of compassion towards women. (*Behishti Zewar*)

On the other hand Nabī ﷺ cursed the man who looks at women as well as the women who expose themselves. (Mishkāt) Being cursed means that one remains far from the mercy of Allāh ﷻ. When one is in this condition, then how can one expect any happiness, contentment, and peace of mind? The glamorous film actresses of

the west due to their exposure of their bodies are earning millions of dollars and so much of acclaim and fame. However there are no people more depressed and suicidal than them. If one has to study their lives, one will realize how empty their lives are.

6. In the Company of Those you Imitate

Nabī ﷺ said, “Whoever imitates a nation, will be from amongst them.” (*Mishkāt*). If we will imitate the truly successful women, the women of Jannah, then Inshā Allāh, tomorrow on the day of Judgement, we will be resurrected with them. We will be resurrected with the queen of Jannah, Hadrat Fātimah radiyallāhu anha, Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha and Hadrat Khadija radiyallāhu anha. On the other hand those who exposed their bodies to all and sundry will be made to arise with prostitutes, adulterers and immoral women.

7. Acceptance of Du‘ā’s

Once in Delhi there was a severe drought. Due to no rain there was no food. People desired even slices of bread. The scholars decided that all the people should gather in an open field, taking with them the women, children and animals. Due to the intense heat, the faces of all were scorched. After performing *salāt ul istisqā’*, they sought forgiveness from their sins and supplicated for rain. However, still no trace of any cloud could be seen. From Fajr till Asr time, the people continued supplicating. At this time, a traveller passed by this field holding onto the reins of his camel, upon which a woman in hijāb was mounted. On seeing the people in this condition he stopped the camel at a distance from them and went closer to them to enquire about their condition. After being informed he returned to his camel, raised his hands and made du‘ā’. Before completing his du‘ā’, torrents of rain began descending. A scholar remarked, “What a fortunate person you are! Your du‘ā’s are readily accepted.” He answered, “The reality of the matter is that my mother is mounted on this camel. I held onto one corner of her shawl and supplicated, “O Allāh ﷻ! This is my chaste and pure mother. I ask you, through the blessings of her purity to send down rain. Immediately it began to rain.” From here we can see the value of modesty in the sight of

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Allāh ﷻ. (*Hayā aur Pākdāmanī - Hadrat Maulānā Zulfiqār Naqshbandī (Mudda Zilluhu)*)

8. Reward of Worship for 24 Hours

A woman following the commands of Allāh ﷻ with regards to her dressing and hair will be in the obedience of Allāh ﷻ 24 hours. On the contrary, the woman whose clothing and hairstyle is against the law of Allāh ﷻ, is 24 hours in the disobedience of Allāh ﷻ even though she may be in salāh, fasting or performing hajj and ‘umrah. By correcting one’s dress-code, a woman earns easy rewards without exerting any strain.

9. Medical Benefit

Certain doctor’s research has shown that those women who don the hijāb are less likely to suffer from mouth and throat cancer. According to a report in the Saudi Arabian newspapers, the experts in the oncology department in the Saudi National Guard hospital have carried out a research showing that the incidence of different portions of mouth and throat cancer in women who wear the hijāb are minimal. Senior management doctor Kamāl Mullakar has explained that after three years of research they have noticed that in Jeddah, Riyadh and Asir, very few cases of mouth and throat cancer has been reported. The underlying cause of this is the usage of hijāb. (*Daily newspaper Nawaae’ waqt Lahore 28 Muharram 1425 A.H, 20 March 2004 - Jawahir Pare - Maulānā Naimuddin*). According to Doctor Leadbetter, from whichever clothing the woman’s body can be seen, thick and harmful rays can be seen emerging.

In severe heat the ultraviolet rays found in the sun is very harmful to the skin and body. If the clothing is thick, then these rays do not penetrate it reaching the body. If however the clothing is transparent, then these rays cause harm very quickly. (*Khawātīn ki Islāmī Zindagī ke science Haqā’iq*)

10. Safety from Punishment - The Punishment of Jahannum for Non-Observance of Pardah

Hāfiz Shams ud Dīn Dhahabī رحمه الله has in his famous book “Alkabā’ir” narrated a Hadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the crux of which is that once

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Hadrat ‘Alī ؑ and Hadrat Fātimah radiyallāhu anha went to visit Rasūlullāh ؑ at his home. Hadrat ‘Alī ؑ states, “When we arrived there, we saw Rasūlullāh ؑ crying and weeping incessantly. When I saw Nabī ؑ’ condition, I said, “O Rasūlullāh, may my parents be sacrificed for you, what has made you cry and due to which reason are you sobbing so much?” Nabī ؑ replied, ‘On the light of Mi‘rāj, I saw the women of my ummah being punished in different forms of punishment, and some of the punishment being meted out was so severe and terrifying that just thinking about it has caused me to cry.’

Thereafter, Rasūlullāh ؑ explained how the women were being punished in Jahannum. He ؑ said, “I saw one woman who was suspended by her hair in Jahannum and her brains were boiling just like a pot.” Thereafter Nabī ؑ mentioned further details of the punishment of five other types of women.

After this, Hadrat Fātimah radiyallāhu anha asked, “O my beloved father, due to which action was this punishment being meted out to those women? What action was such that you saw them being punished in such a severe and terrifying manner?”

Nabī ؑ replied, “That woman who I saw with her hair suspended in Jahannum and whose brains were boiling like a pot was being punished due to leaving her home with her hair uncovered. These women never used to cover their hair from na-mahram (strange men).

An Exemplary Incident of the Punishment of the Grave

An incident regarding the punishment of the grave occurred in Galgat (place in Pakistan). A man passed by a graveyard. From one grave he heard a voice, “Take me out. I am alive.” After hearing this call once or twice, he thought, “This is my imagination. No sound is coming from here.” However after hearing it continuously, he became convinced. There was a village close-by to this graveyard. This man went there and informed the people of the sound he had heard. He called them to come and listen to this call also. Some

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people accompanied him. They also heard this same call. They were all convinced that this call emanated from the grave. After being convinced, they decided to consult with the scholars first to find out whether it was permissible or not to open the grave. They went to the imām of the local Masjid and explained to him that a voice is coming out of the grave in this manner, and the buried person is saying, “Take me out of the grave, I am alive.” The imām said, “If you are convinced that the person is alive, then open the grave and take the person out.” Plucking up courage, they proceeded to the graveyard, and opened the grave. On removing the planks, they saw a woman sitting naked, her shroud (kafan) having been burnt up. This woman was saying, “Quickly bring me clothing from my house. I will cover myself and then emerge.”

Some people ran to her house immediately. They informed her household members of what has transpired. They took clothing, a chādar etc. to her. She covered herself with the clothes, placed the chādar over herself and then as quick as lightning, came out of the grave and ran to her house. She went into one room of the house and locked herself inside. By now, those people who had been by the graveyard, reached the house and were informed that she had locked herself in the room. They knocked on the door and asked her to open the lock. This woman said, “I will open the lock, but only that person should enter who has the ability to see me, because at this time, my condition is such that not every person can bear to see me. Therefore, only a person with a strong heart should come inside and witness my condition.” Now fear overcame them. Eventually a few strong-hearted men said, “Open the lock. We will come inside.” She opened the lock and they entered.

The Severe Punishment for Not Observing Pardah

Inside, this woman sat covered by her chādar (sheet). When these people entered, she firstly exposed her head. They saw that not one hair remained on her head. Never mind hair, even the skin has been removed. Only the bones of her skull could be seen. They asked her, “What has happened to your hair?” She replied, “When I was alive, I used to emerge from my house with my hair exposed. After I passed away, when I was brought to the grave, then the angels pulled out

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my hair, one by one. Due to this, my skin also was pulled out with my hair. Now, no hair or skin remains on my head.”

The Punishment for Applying Lipstick

Thereafter, she exposed her face. When the people saw her face, it looked so horrendous since they could see nothing but her teeth. Neither her upper lip nor her lower lip was present. Only 32 teeth next to each other could be seen. Just think, if you see some-one else's teeth only, how much of fear will pass through you. They asked this woman, “Where are your lips?” She answered, “I used to apply lipstick and go in front of non-mahram (strange) males. My lips were thus cut off as a punishment. Therefore, no lips remain on my face.

Punishment for Nail Polish

Thereafter, she exposed her hands and feet. The people saw that no fingers, nails and toe-nails remained. All the nails had disappeared. She was asked, “Where are your nails?” She answered, “Due to applying nail polish, my every nail was pulled out. Since I used to do all of these things out of my house, therefore, as soon as I passed away and reached the grave, this treatment was meted out to me. I was given this punishment that my hair was pulled out, my lips were cut out, and my nails were extracted.”

She then fell unconscious, and became a lifeless corpse. The people took her back to the graveyard. Allāh ﷻ wanted to show a lesson to these people. See! What was the result of this woman? What a severe punishment she was given. Those women who do not observe pardah should take a lesson and repent for this sin.

Life After Death

This doubt may crop up in some-one's mind that no-one can come to life after death, so how did this woman get life again? The answer to this is that Allāh ﷻ's general law is that after death, no-one can come back to life again, and cannot return to this world. However, sometimes Allāh ﷻ does this for us to take lesson. This is not only today, but from the time the world has been created, this has occurred. In every era, such types of incidents have occurred that

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some have been given life after death, they have narrated their conditions and thereafter they passed away again. Hāfiz Ibn Abid Dunyā رحمہ اللہ has written a booklet in Arabic entitled “من عاش بعد الموت” (Those who lived after death) where-in he has mentioned with proof many such incidents where a person passed away, came back to life and spoke, informed the people of the conditions after death and then passed away again. Similarly Hāfiz Ibn Rajab Hambalī رحمہ اللہ has written a book on the same subject entitled “أحوال القبور” (Conditions in the grave). In short, Allāh ﷻ, at times, shows such incidents. This is not contrary to the Qur’ān and Sunnah. However, the normal system of Allāh ﷻ is that after death, one is not granted this worldly life again.

The Punishment of Jahannum For Not Observing Pardah

Hadrat Nabī ﷺ has mentioned many other such ahādīth regarding seeing women being punished in Jahannum. Regarding women who emerge without observing pardah for strange men, Nabī ﷺ stated in one hadīth, “I have seen most of the inhabitants of Jahannum to be women.”

Thereafter he ﷺ said, “There are four reasons why women will go to Jahannum in such large numbers

- 1- One reason is that the essence of the obedience of Allāh ﷻ is less in them.
- 2- The second reason is that their desire to follow Rasūlullāh ﷺ is less.
- 3- The third reason is that obedience to their husbands is found to a lesser degree in them.
- 4- The fourth reason is that the desire to adorn themselves and emerge unveiled from their houses is found to a great extent in them.

It is the fourth reason that we see with our eyes. Today most women when emerging from their houses emerge unveiled, having applied make-up and lipstick, completely beautified and adorned in the highest quality of clothing. If a woman emerges from her house observing complete shar’ī pardah and not applying such perfume

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which can be smelled by strange men, or if she beautifies herself and comes in front of her husband or her father, brother or son, then this is permissible. There is no harm in this, because to beautify oneself for one's husband is not only permissible, but in fact, preferable. This punishment is not for these women, but for those women who beautify themselves and appear in front of non-mahram (strange) males, whether these men are in the house or outside. At this juncture this action (of beautification) is a sin, *harâm* and impermissible, staying away from which is compulsory. (*Che ghunaygâr awraten*, pp. 17-20)

Hijâb From In-Laws, Cousins and Other Family Members

In every command of Allâh ﷻ are immense wisdoms. Man's intelligence is short-sighted and weak. He cannot fathom the deep secrets and wisdoms underlying Divine commands. The aim of the servant should only be to adhere to the commands of Allâh ﷻ since He knows what is most beneficial for us. At times, certain commands go completely against our bestial desires and the norms of society. One will thus have to go against the custom of society and fulfil this command of Allâh ﷻ since this is an immense trial for which we will be recompensed in the hereafter. Nabî ﷺ said, "Whoever holds firmly onto my path at the time of the corruption of my ummah will receive the reward of 100 martyrs." (*Mishkât*)

The reason for this great reward is that when a person will practise on these actions, he will be criticized, rebuked and mocked. He will have to bear these remarks and insults with tolerance and patience.

One such command is observing *hijâb* from one's brother-in-laws, cousins, husband's uncles, husband's nephews, and other such male relatives which Islam regards to be strangers to a woman. Rasûlullâh ﷺ was asked regarding the brother-in-law. He ﷺ replied that the brother-in-law is death. In other words, such harm can be caused in the family due to intermingling with them, that the sorrow experienced thereafter will be equivalent to a death in the house. Generally, women are simple-minded and chaste. Men, on the other hand, love to flirt and strike up relations with women.

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The Qur'ân refers to this as a sickness in man's heart. Women generally feel that men have innocent intentions. If the woman exhibits a bit of her beauty and gives a man the slightest opportunity, he will easily become inclined towards her. Shaytân, at such a juncture, makes them completely oblivious of their honour, decency, shame, responsibilities, status in society and the resultant harms of a small bit of enjoyment. For a few moments of pleasure, they destroy themselves and their families.

Even some intelligent non-Muslims have understood this reality. Doctor Steven Klark, a psychologist of Sicily has published his observations, "The intermingling of males and females, unrestricted visiting of cousins, family members staying and dining at each other's homes - are according to me very harmful and its effects' lasts for generations. By this socializing, I have seen women inclined to other men. Due to this intermingling, I have witnessed divorces and an increase in immodesty and adultery. I have observed breaking up of homes, suicide and people ending up in jail. The underlying cause is this free access into one another's homes." (*Sunnat e Nabawî aur Jadîd science - Hakîm Muhammad Tariq Mahmûd Chughtai*)

Here-under a few true heart-rending incidents will be mentioned to show the gravity of non-observance of hijâb within family circles which had lead to such grief, loss and sorrow not only in the hereafter but in this worldly life also. The first incident has been narrated in an Arabic booklet entitled قصص مؤثرة للشباب (Effective incidents for the youth). The remaining incidents have been extracted from an Urdu booklet 'Khawâtîn Ke Aslî Zewar' (The true adornment of women).

1) Khalid sat at his desk with great concern and worry. His friend, Salih, noticed signs of grief on his face. He arose from his desk, walked over and addressed Khalid, "We have been friends for a long time. For over a week now, I have been noticing that you are in deep contemplation and seem very distracted. The signs of grief and worry are apparent on you. It seems as though you are carrying

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the problems of the entire world. Don't you know that all matters lie in Allah's control?"

Khalid kept quiet for a while and then said, "Salih, I commend you on your excellent perception. At the moment, I am in need of some-one to communicate my problems and worries. Perhaps you can assist me in solving them."

Khalid straightened up in his chair, poured a cup of tea for his friend Salih and then said, "The problem, O Salih, is that, as you know, I have been married for approximately eight months. My wife and I are living alone in our house. My younger brother, Hamd, who is twenty years of age, has just completed high school and he has been accepted in the university here. He will be arriving in a week or two to commence his lessons. My parents are persistently commanding me to allow him to live with me in my house, instead of living with friends in some bachelor flat. They are afraid that he should not deviate. These apartments have a lot of different people living there. I refused this offer most vehemently since he is a young man. Being in my house could lead to great danger. We have passed that age of adolescence and we know what our condition was at that time. I will at times have to leave my home whilst he will still be asleep. Sometimes for work, I will have to be away from home for a couple of days.

I informed one of the scholars of my dilemma. He cautioned me from allowing any person, even my brother, to stay with my wife and me in one house. He mentioned to me the statement of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, "The in-law is death" i.e. the most dangerous thing for woman is her husband's family like his brother, uncle and cousins. They enter the house quite freely and nobody has any doubt regarding them. Thus the harm and trouble caused by them is much more severe and grave. Another thing is that a man likes solitude with his wife so that he can relax. This will not be possible if my brother, Hamd is also residing in our house." Khalid kept quiet for a while, sipped his tea, and continued, "When I explained my situation to my parents, gave them my reasons and took an oath that I only desire good for my brother, they became very angry with me. They complained about me to our relatives, accused me of disobedience to parents, and depicted me to be sick hearted, evil

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mindful and full of evil intentions since I had such evil thoughts regarding my brother whereas he regards my wife as his elder sister. They then portrayed me to be jealous and full of malice, disliking goodness for my brother and not desiring him to complete his university studies. The worst was when my father threatened me saying, "This is a great embarrassment. How can your brother live with strangers, when your house is available? By Allāh, if you do not allow Hamd to stay with you, your mother and I will never speak to you for the rest of our lives. We will have nothing to do with you after this day and we exonerate ourselves from you in this worldly life and the hereafter."

Khalid lowered his head and then said, "Now I am in great confusion. On one hand I want to please my parents, and on the other hand, I don't want to sacrifice my family happiness. What is your opinion and solution to this taxing and complex problem?"

Salih sat up and answered, "You want my clear and open opinion in this matter! O Khalid, it seems that you are a person of great misgiving and suspicion. Otherwise, what is the cause for these problems with your parents? Don't you know that the pleasure of Allāh lies in pleasing your parents and the displeasure of Allāh is in displeasing them? If your brother lives in your house, he will take care of the needs and duties of the house in your absence. He will be the man of the house in your non-presence." Salih kept quiet for awhile so that he could see the effects of his speech on the face of Khalid. He then continued, "Why are you harbouring evil thoughts about your brother? Why are you being suspicious on an innocent person without proof? Have you forgotten the command of Allāh, "O believers, abstain greatly from thoughts. Verily some thoughts are sin." (Sūrah Hujurāt)

Don't you trust your wife and your brother?"

Khalid interrupted, "I trust them both, but....."

Immediately, Salih cut him, saying, "You are returning to suspicion, thoughts and delusions. Trust me, Khalid. Your brother, Hamd, will be the guardian of your house in your presence and absence. He will never think of approaching his brother's wife with evil intentions, since he will regard her as his elder sister. Ask yourself, if your brother was married, would you have held any evil

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thoughts regarding her, or would you have interfered with her? I think the answer is quite clear, Khalid. Why are you causing anxiety to your parents and your brother, why are you breaking family unity and why are you causing a split due to your suspicions, doubts and misgivings which possess no solid basis. Be intelligent and please your parents so that Allāh ﷻ may be pleased with you. To eliminate any doubts, why don't you place Hamd in the front portion of your house and lock the door separating the front portion from the remaining section of the house."

Khalid was satisfied with the advice of his friend and could not find any reason to now refuse the request. After a few days, Hamd arrived by plane. Khalid welcomed him and took him home where he began residing in the front section of the house.

Days passed. Four years later, Khalid had just reached the age of thirty. He was now the proud father of three beautiful children. Hamd was in the final year of his studies. Khalid had promised to get him an appropriate job at the university. Until that time, Khalid mused, that Hamd could remain living with him until he married and acquired his own home.

One night, after midnight, Khalid was returning home. On the street adjoining his house, he saw from a distance two forms on the side of the road. As he drew closer, he saw an old woman positioned over a young woman lying flat, outstretched on the ground, screeching in pain and turning from side to side. The old woman, on seeing him, also started shouting and wailing, "Young man, please assist us."

Khalid, on seeing this, became curious which led him to proceed closer to them and enquire regarding their situation. The old woman informed him that they were not originally from this city. They had just moved in a couple of weeks before and they did not know anybody in the area. This woman was her daughter. Her husband had gone on journey out of the city for some work and her birth pangs had begun well before her due date. She was in severe pain and they could not find anyone to transport her to hospital, to deliver. Tears flowing from her eyes, the old lady pleaded, "I beg you, come forward. Do me a favour. Transport my daughter and

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myself to the nearest hospital. May Allāh ﷻ protect yourself, your wife and your children from all types of difficulties!”

The flowing tears of the old lady as well as the screeching cries of the young lady lying on the floor affected the heart of Khalid. Compassion overcame him. Motivated by self-honour, noble-mindedness, gallantry and the desire to aid a distressed person, he agreed to transport them. Facilitated by the old woman, they carried the expectant mother to his car, and they proceeded to the nearest hospital. The old woman continued to supplicate for his well-being the whole way.

Khalid's self-honour and noble-mindedness did not allow him to return home and leave this destitute lady and her feeble daughter alone before ascertaining a successful operation and the birth of a healthy child. He informed the old lady that he would wait for her in the men's waiting room. As soon as the child was born, she should inform him of the good news. He then phoned home and informed them of the situation, stating that he would arrive late, so that all at home would be at ease. Khalid seated himself in the waiting room. He reclined on the wall. His eyes drooped and soon he fell into a deep slumber. He could not recall how much time had passed. All he remembered well was the scene, which will never be erased from his mind, when he awoke to the shout of the doctor-on-duty. Two police men and the doctor walked towards him, followed by the old lady wailing and lamenting, "This is the one. This is the one." Khalid was taken aback by this scene. He awoke and hastened towards the old woman soliciting her, "Was the birth successful?"

Before the old lady could answer, the police officer asked, "Are you Khalid?" He replied in the affirmative. The officer then remarked, "We have to speak to you for a few minutes in the office."

They all entered the office, locking the door. The old woman then began wailing, slapping her face and cheeks, and pulling her hair, "This is the evildoer. I hope you never set him free. O sorrow and grief is to the lot of my daughter."

Khalid was shocked and dumbfounded, not understanding at all what was transpiring. He had not fully regained his senses

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from his shock, when he heard the doctor saying, “She claims that you raped her daughter. Due to this, she bore this illegitimate child. When she threatened to expose and disgrace you, and to report you to the police, you promised to marry her. Now you want to take this child, place it by the door of one Masjid so that some good Samaritan will take it to some welfare organization.”

Khalid was absolutely dumbfounded by these accusations. Life appeared bleak to him. He could not see what was occurring around him. Words seemed to be stuck in his throat. He fell to the ground, unconscious.

A while later, he regained consciousness. He found himself in a room with two officers. One of them spoke out, “Khalid, tell me the truth. Your countenance portrays you to be a man of honour and your actions show that it is quite unlikely that you would have committed such a monstrous crime.”

Khalid responded with pain penetrating his heart, “O people, is this the recompense of good? Is this how kindness is repaid? I am an honourable, chaste man. I am married, have 2 sons and 1 daughter. I reside in a good neighbourhood.”

Khalid could not control himself. Tears flowed from his eyes, tears of oppression and injustice, tears portraying his innocence and purity. When he regained his composure, Khalid narrated the whole incident which had occurred. After narrating his side of the story, the officer said to him, “Do not worry. I believe that you are innocent. However we have to follow legal proceedings to prove your innocence. The matter is very simple in this case. We will have to conduct some medical tests which will expose the truth.”

Khalid interrupted, “What reality? The reality that I am innocent, honourable and chaste! Don’t you believe me? Even dogs show kindness to those who are kind to them. However there are so many people who cause harm and deceive those who do good to them.”

In the morning, samples of Khalid’s sperm were taken and sent to the laboratory for testing. Khalid sat with the officer in another room making du‘ā’ and beseeching Allāh ﷻ to expose the reality. Approximately two hours later, the results returned. The

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medical tests proved Khalid to be innocent of those accusations. Khalid could not control himself with joy. He fell down in sajdah (prostration), praising Allāh ﷻ for having made apparent his innocence. The officer apologized for the inconvenience caused to him. The old lady and her daughter were handed over to the police for investigation and so that they could be punished accordingly.

Before leaving the hospital, Khalid decided to bid farewell and thank the doctor who had presided over the case. He proceeded to his office and thanked him for his effort. The doctor unexpectedly remarked, "If you don't mind, I would like to speak to you for a few minutes." The doctor then began discussing some side issues before he gathered courage and said, "In reality Khalid, I think that you possess some kind of illness, after studying your samples. However, I am not certain. I would therefore like to test your wife and children so that I can be certain."

Fear appeared on the face of Khalid. He remarked, "O doctor, please tell me what is wrong with me? I am happy with the decree of Allāh ﷻ. My concern is my small children. I am prepared to sacrifice for them." He then burst out crying. The doctor soothed and calmed him, and then said, "I cannot tell you anything until I am convinced. It could happen that my doubts are incorrect. Please bring your wife and children without any delay."

A few hours later, Khalid returned with his wife and children. Tests were carried out on them. After completion, he left them in the car and returned to talk to the doctor. Whilst speaking to him, Khalid's phone rang. He answered and spoke for a short while. After ending the conversation, he turned to the doctor who enquired, "Who were you telling not to break the door of the room?"

Khalid answered, "That was my brother, Hamd. He lives with me in my apartment. He has misplaced his key. He asked me to return quickly to open the door." The doctor asked surprised, "And for how long has he been living with you?" Khalid answered, "For the last four years. He is now in the final year of his studies." The doctor enquired, "Is it possible for him to come so that we can see whether this sickness is hereditary or nor?" Khalid replied happily, "I will bring him tomorrow."

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At the appointed time, Khalid and Hamd came to the hospital. Necessary samples required were taken. The doctor requested Khalid to return a week later so that he could show him the final analysis after being certain. Khalid remained perturbed and worried the whole week. The following week, he returned to the doctor, who welcomed him with open arms. He served him some lemon juice to soothe his nerves. He then narrated the virtues of patience in difficulties and problems, explaining that this was the system of this worldly life. Khalid interrupted him saying, "Please doctor, do not wreck my nerves any longer. I am ready to accept whatever sickness I have. This is the decision and judgement of Allāh ﷻ. What is the problem?"

The doctor lowered his head and then said, "Many times the truth is bitter and painful. However it has to be known. Running away from problems will not solve them nor change the reality."

The doctor kept quiet for a moment and then dropped the bombshell saying, "Khalid, you are sterile. It is impossible for you to beget children. Those three children are not yours. They are actually from your brother, Hamd."

Khalid did not possess the capacity to hear such startling news. He screamed out loudly, which reverberated in the whole hospital and then fell down unconscious. After two weeks, Khalid regained consciousness to find that his whole life had been shattered and destroyed.

He had become partially paralyzed. He had lost his mind due to the shock. He had already been transported to the mad hospital, where he would be spending the rest of his life. His wife was handed to the Sharī'ah court so that she could confess and thereafter be stoned to death for committing the heinous act of adultery.

His brother, Hamd was placed behind bars waiting for the sharī punishment of 100 lashes to be meted out to him.

The three beautiful children were taken and placed in the social welfare home, to live with other unwanted and orphaned children.

This is the system of Allāh ﷻ. 'The brother-in-law is death.'
"And you will never find in the system of Allāh any change."

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Note: This is the disastrous consequence of disobeying the commands of Allāh ﷻ. Enjoining of family ties is undoubtedly a noble action and an important command in our religion. However, the commands of Allāh ﷻ must be adhered to. Most people object to observing hijâb in family circles and segregation of non-mahram family relatives citing the reason that it is too difficult or that one is breaking family ties. The answer to this is that it is better to bear a slight amount of difficulty and inconvenience than to face the serious repercussions thereafter. Family ties should definitely be maintained but only with those whom Allāh ﷻ has ordained and to the level which He has allowed. Even if one has to disobey one's parents in these matters, then there is no harm as Rasûlullāh ﷺ has stated, "There is no obedience to the creation in the disobedience to the Creator (Allāh ﷻ)."

2) A woman fell in love with her sister-in-law's (brother's wife's) brother due to non-observance of proper hijâb. After careful planning, they ran away from the house, went to live in the city and got married. This man's brother, who had been living in the city from before, now began living with them. There was no thought of ever observing any form of segregation from the brother-in-law. However the harms of this eventually became apparent when the woman fell in love with her brother-in-law. Fulfilling all their passions was easy. Now a need arose to remove the husband. The two of them plotted, Shaytân being the third, encouraging a brother to kill a brother and a woman to kill her husband. This eventually came to pass.

Note: The end result of discarding the injunctions of the laws of Allāh ﷻ is nothing but loss in this world and the hereafter. The youngster, who eloped with his brother-in-law's sister, embarrassing his brother-in-law and sister, is now murdered by his own brother and the woman for whom he did everything.

3) A woman complained to her parents that she could not sustain two husbands any longer. They should free her from the clutches of her brother-in-law. Her irreligious parents were not bothered. Finally she committed suicide.

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4) A man, who outwardly seemed pious, became attracted to his wife's sister due to non-observance of hijâb. Their love for each other reached such an extent that no thought of their own respect as well as harm to others remained. This evil woman became her sister's enemy who was a mother of small children. The man too became an enemy of his own wife and siblings. They decided to marry but could not do so as it is not permissible to be married to two sisters at one time. They posed the question to a scholar, who mentioned that he could not marry his wife's sister until her 'iddah was not complete (which is three menstrual cycles or birth if pregnant). As the wife was expecting, the husband waited until just before birth. He then divorced his wife. As soon as she gave birth, he absconded with his sister-in-law and married her.

5) A man gave scant regard to the laws of hijâb. He allowed his nephew unrestricted visits to his home. In fact, he commanded his wife not to observe any form of hijâb with him. He left his village once for some work. His wife was all alone with his nephew. From before, a spark of love had lit up in their hearts. Now it exploded into flames. They were in seclusion and thus fulfilled their bestial desires. So enamoured were they with each other that they now regarded the husband to be a barrier to their future. Shaytân whispered to them that as long as he was alive, they would not be able to enjoy themselves. The husband returned fatigued due to his long and arduous journey. As soon as he fell asleep, the merciless nephew and conniving wife crushed his skull with a boulder, placing him into an everlasting sleep.

6) A government employee was granted a governmental house to reside in. He began living there with his wife and children. His nephew also came to live with them. Proper shar'ī hijâb was taken to be a joke and improper. Love soon formed in the heart of the nephew for his uncle's wife. This love intensified until eventually they even had the audacity on a few occasions to hold each other's hands openly and unashamedly. The husband had no sense of self-respect. He would turn a blind eye to these happenings. However this too was insufficient. They resolved to terminate his life. One

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night, they crushed his head, strangled him and beat him for hours until he was no more. Outside the house, construction was underway for the fitting of an underground tank. Some ground had already been dug up. They dug a hole within this area and buried him there. His identity card was taken to the seashore and thrown there. When he did not turn up for work, an enquiry was directed to the wife. She remarked that a friend of her husband had come a few days earlier and they had gone for some reason to the seashore. People who used to work with him went there and found his documentation. For a long while thereafter, the case remained stagnant as no information regarding him was received. Once, the police came to enquire about her husband. Her answer and manner of speech as well as a slip of her tongue placed the police investigators into doubt regarding her. Subsequently she was arrested and threatened. Finally she agreed to speak the truth. She showed them her husband's grave and narrated to them the whole incident. She explained that the actual aim was to also kill the innocent children. However since it took quite a while to kill the husband, there was not enough time to fulfil the rest of their dastardly act. Her lover for whom she had perpetrated this despicable deed had jilted her and moved away to Punjab. He was eventually apprehended. Both are presently serving time in jail.

7) 'Ārif-billāh Maulānā Shāh Hakīm Muhammad Akhtar Sāhib narrates regarding a very pious man. People would entrust their valuables to him. Due to carelessness in observing hijāb from family members, he fell in love with his wife's sister. One night he shaved off his beard, pilfered all those people's valuables, and absconded with his sister-in-law.

8) A letter was sent Maulānā Shāh Abrār ul Haq Sāhib. The husband had signed on top and written on top that his wife was a very pious woman. (The husband signs the letter so that no fear of evil arises. However he did not know the contents of the letter.) In the letter the lady had written that she had fallen in love with her husband's brother. Hadrat wrote back advising her to study the book روح کی بیماریاں اور ان کا علاج 'Remedies to spiritual maladies' and to thereafter inform of

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her condition. After a while she wrote back stating that through the blessings of that book, she had been saved and that she had commenced observing proper shar'ī hijāb.

9) Two brothers formed a spiritual link with Maulānā Abrār ul Haq Sāhib. Due to the blessings of attending his majlis (discourses), one of the brothers introduced shar'ī hijāb in his home. Once when his brother came to visit him, he went out of his way to host him, gave him the best to consume, and demonstrated a lot of affection to him. The brother asked where his sister-in-law was. The first brother informed him that they had commenced observing proper hijāb. On hearing this, the second brother became upset and stopped speaking to him. When Maulānā Abrār ul Haq Sāhib was informed, he called the second brother and questioned him, "Who did you go to meet?"

He replied, "My brother."

Hadrat: Did you meet him?

Brother: Yes.

Hadrat: Did he respect and honour you?

Brother: Yes.

Hadrat: Did he feed you?

Brother: Yes.

Hadrat: Then why did you become upset? You went to meet your brother and you did so. Is it not that your nafs (carnal self) desired to meet your brother's wife?

The brother then regretfully admitted that this was his hidden desire.

10) Salimah lived a happy life with her husband Safdar and their children. When Salimah's father passed away, he left behind a 5 year old daughter, Naimah. Concerned about her welfare, Salimah took her home and lovingly brought her up. After a few years, Naimah began attending college. A pious woman of the locality, who used to teach the Qur'ān to Naimah, explained to Salimah that Naimah was now mature and that she should now observe hijāb from her brother-in-law. She reasoned thus, "My daughter, Allāh ﷻ has ordered this separation for some reason. He has kept many benefits concealed in His laws. Observance of hijāb from family

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non-mahrams is a protection from immodesty in households, families and amongst relatives.” However Salimah understood their relationship to be that of brother and sister or father and daughter. The fear which the old lady expressed materialized. The husband and sister-in-law fell in love. He divorced his wife and married his sister-in-law. Salimah, who had once showered mercy on her sister by bringing her home, now became a stranger in this very home. She went to live elsewhere. The children lived with their father but refused to accept Naimah as their mother. They made her life miserable. Finally she told Safdar, “I married you, not your children. It would have been better if I married my classmate, Sajjad.” On hearing this, Safdar was dumbstruck. He realized his mistake and divorced Naimah as well.

Note: From here we can realize the importance of hijâb, even if there remains a substantial age gap between two people. Even a man of 100 years cannot be trusted as the desire for women remains till death. Similarly, there have been many instances when a young boy fell for an older woman. The most pure and chaste path is to observe the commands of Allāh ﷻ as it is. In this is our safety and protection. Even if no evil intentions occur, then too the command of Allāh ﷻ remains applicable, since we are His slaves and bound by His regulations and rules. Never mock the sharī laws.

Allāh ﷻ states: “The evil of that which they perpetrated afflicted them and that which they used to mock encompassed them.”

A certain professor felt that there was no need for hijâb for his wife from his students. Open permission was granted to his students to visit his home. A love relationship developed between his wife and one of the students. Eventually she left him and ran off with this student. Then only did the professor come to his senses, remarking that he now understood its importance.

السعيد من وعظ بغيره

“An intelligent person is he who takes lesson from others.”

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In conclusion, just as hijāb is observed from strangers, to a greater extent it should be observed from family non-mahram males, since the harm caused by transgression amongst them is much more perilous. Thus special care should be observed with the following family members as they are all regarded as strangers in the sharī'ah

- 1) Cousins (mother's and father's brother's or sister's sons)
- 2) Brother-in-laws (sister's husband, husband's brother)
- 3) Father's sister's husband, mother's sister's husband
- 4) Husband's uncles and nephews

Hijāb from Mahram Males

As mentioned earlier, there are some male relations for whom hijāb has been excluded since Allāh ﷻ has created a natural barrier of shame between these people, and thoughts are generally pure and clean amongst them. Also these members are so close that there would be difficulty if there had to be segregation amongst them.

However, in spite of this concession, caution should be exercised. Immodest, tight-fitting dresses which reveal the contours or shape of the body as well as see-through clothing should not be worn in front of one's mahrams, even if it be one's father, brother or son, not to speak of other people. The consequences which could arise are disastrous. Islam is a religion of shame and modesty. When this quality is lost, then many evils evolve which destroy the fabric of society. Today incest found in Muslim homes has reached shocking proportions. This is due to our abandoning the divine guidance granted to us. When the punishment in the hereafter for fornication is so severe, we can well imagine the punishment kept in store for those who engage in this most vile action, which is only practised by swine in the animal kingdom! Nonetheless, there are severe repercussions in this worldly life as well as in the grave for perpetrators of this depraved and abominable action.

Harm in this worldly life - Hurmat e Musāharat

This is a law of the sharī'ah which forbids specific males from marrying specific females. This law applies when there has been

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unlawful contact between a male and female (intentionally or unintentionally) with certain conditions laid down in the sharī'ah.

Sometimes this law applies to married or engaged couples, hence rendering compulsory separation between them. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "If a male touches a female with lust, her mother and daughter will become unlawful for him." (*Kanz ud Daqā'iq* pg. 98, footnote 9)

Hadrat Ibn 'Umar ؓ narrates, "If a male has intercourse with a female, kisses or touches her with lust or looks at her private parts with lust, the female becomes unlawful on the male's father and son, and the female's daughter and mother become unlawful on the male." (*Fath ul Qadīr* vol.3 p. 215)

Due to this, the scholars have repeatedly stressed the importance of the following things:

1. Mother-in-laws should adopt caution with their son-in-laws and vice-versa.
2. Father-in-laws should adopt caution with their daughter-in-laws and vice-versa.
3. Mothers should adopt caution with their young mature sons.
4. Fathers should adopt caution with their young mature daughters.

Who could be more pure and safer from the snares of Shaytan than Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat Ayesha radiyallāhu anha, yet once when Rasūlullāh ﷺ saw Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ sitting alone in the house with his daughter, he exclaimed, O Abu Bakr, Shaytān is not far. Do not sit alone with your daughter, but get a third person to be present with you." (*Me'yārus Sulūk*)

Hadrat Thānwī ؒ said, "If a man touches his mother-in-law or his wife's daughter (from his wife's previous marriage or current marriage) with lust, thinking that it is his wife, then he realizes his mistake and immediately takes his hands off, his wife will still become unlawful for him.

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The wife becoming unlawful here is not as a form of punishment, but is due to the natural implication of the consequences of the act. A perfect example of this is if a person takes fatal poison without the intention of harming himself, he will still be harmed or even killed, because it is the nature of the poison to kill.

In exactly the same way, spiritual deeds bring about their natural effects even when a person has no deliberate intention of harming oneself. These spiritual influences are known and understood by Rasûlullâh ﷺ and also known by the people who are experts in Sharī'ah.

Note that punishment in the hereafter will only be meted out if the female is touched intentionally. The same applies if a female touches a male.

Sometimes a man places his hands with lust on his son's wife (daughter-in-law) by mistake or through mischief. In either case, the daughter-in-law will become unlawful on her husband, that is, his son.

Due to the delicate nature of the law of Hurmat e Musāharat, it is very important that none of the above-mentioned females (mother-in-law, daughter-in-law and wife's daughter, whether from him or from a previous husband), should be present where the wife sleeps. If for some reason, other females are present in the wife's bedroom, the husband must not touch anyone unless he knows for certain it is his wife.

One must not rely on one's knowledge of one's wife's bedding etc. Relying on this can lead to making regrettable mistakes. If one has to take anything from the afore-mentioned females, one must be extremely careful and make sure that the male's hand does not touch the female's hand. One must not trust one's own self. If the hand touches, and by doing so feelings of excitement and desire develop in the man or woman, then Hurmat e Musāharat will take effect.. Sometimes one does not know what the feeling in the other

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person's heart is, then how can one overlook the law of Hurmat e Musāharat?

If one knows that lust emerged in one's own heart, then one will feel too shy to reveal it in fear of what people will think and say. This will result in a person committing unlawful acts for the rest of one's life. (*Abridged from Islāh e Inqilāb e Ummah, vol. 2 pg. 59/60*)

By no means do any of the scholars say that daughters should have suspicions about their fathers, sons about their mothers, daughters-in-law about their fathers-in-law etc. There is no doubt that their rights must be fulfilled at all times. But what the scholars are saying is that care must be taken at all times so that Hurmat e Musāharat does not take effect thus causing a major blunder because it could lead to the permanent breaking up of a well settled and united family.

Considering these times of corruption, the scholars have stated that to stay alone in the house with the daughter-in-law is makrūh (abominable). If there is any chance of sin being committed, then it becomes harām (unlawful).

Important Ruling:

When a boy reaches the age of ten, it is not permissible for him to sleep in the same bed as his mother, sister or brother. In the same way, when a girl reaches the age of ten, it is not permissible for her to sleep in the same bed as her father or brother.

People that Become Unlawful when Hurmat e Musāharat Applies

1. If a male touches or kisses etc. a female, or vice versa, with lust occurring in either the male or female:

The female's mother (including step mother), grandmother, daughter (including step daughter), granddaughter and other females in the same line of descent become unlawful on the male, i.e. the male cannot marry them.

The male's father (including step father), grandfather, son (including step son), grandson and others in the same line of

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descent will become unlawful on the female, i.e. the female cannot marry them.

2. If a male touches or kisses etc. his mother-in-law, or vice versa, with lust occurring in either the male or female:

The male's wife (i.e. mother-in-law's daughter) will become unlawful on him.

3. If the father-in-law touches or kisses etc. his daughter-in-law, or vice versa, with lust occurring in either the male or female:

The daughter-in-law will become unlawful for her husband.

4. If a male touches or kisses etc. his wife's daughter (step daughter or his own daughter), or vice versa, with lust occurring in either the male or female: The male's wife will become unlawful on him.

5. If a female touches or kisses etc. her husband's son (her own or step son), or vice versa, with lust occurring in either the male or female: She will become unlawful on her husband.

Note 1: Unlawful intercourse between the males and females mentioned in each case will have the same outcome.

Note 2: If the male looks at the female's private part (or if the female looks at the male's private part) and the person looking has lust, the case will have the same outcome.

Note 3: If any of the above cases happen unintentionally, *Hurmat e Musāharat* will still apply.

When *Hurmat e Musāharat* takes place it is totally unlawful for the male and female to stay together, therefore it will become compulsory for the husband to divorce his wife.

Although the couple become unlawful on one another, it is still compulsory for the female not to marry some other person until she has been divorced by her husband or by a *Shar'ī* Council.

Conditions for *Hurmat e Musāharat* to Apply

If any of the factors mentioned below occur, then *Hurmat Musāharat* will apply.

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1. Unlawful intercourse – with the condition that both the male and female are mature or one who is nearing the age of puberty (murâhiq).
2. If there is lust in either the bāligh/murâhiq male or bāligh/murâhiq female when they make physical contact (touching, kissing etc.) with no cloth in between or there is a cloth but it is so thin that the body heat can be felt through it.

Lust will be Defined as the Following:

- a) If an erection occurs in a male when physical contact is made or if erection increases when erection had already occurred prior to physical contact.
- b) If erection does not occur in a male due to health reasons or old age, then if lust occurs in the male's heart at the time of physical contact. If lust was present prior to physical contact and it increases when physical contact is made.
- c) If lust occurs in a female when physical contact is made and it was not present prior to physical contact. If lust was present prior to physical contact and it increases when physical contact is made.

It is not necessary that both persons experience lust when physical contact is made. Lust in either the male or female will be sufficient for Hurmat-e-Musâharat to apply.

3. If a male looks at the internal private part of a female with lust or a female looks at a male's private part with lust and both male and female are bāligh or murâhiq. Physical contact is not necessary for Hurmat e Musâharat to apply in this case.

Hurmat e Musâharat will only apply if the person looking experiences lust. If the person being looked at experiences lust but the person looking does not, Hurmat e Musâharat will not apply.

These are just simple guidelines to show where Hurmat e Musâharat applies, but if a personal query about the law of Hurmat e Musâharat does arise, it must be referred to a Mufti for a fatwa. *(Extracted and abridged from Hurmat e Musâharat by Mufti Muhammad-Faruq, Blackburn)*

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Today, incest in Muslim families is occurring very frequently. The filth of television, movies, pornography and the internet is a major cause for this evil. Nabī ﷺ has predicted that close to Qiyāmah, family members will be sitting in one room and fornicating. By viewing this, seated together in one room, fornication of the eyes, ears and heart occurs. At times, actual fornication takes place. A young girl sat with her brother watching these filthy videos. Their desires were provoked and they committed the vilest of acts, which could only be equaled by swine. A few days later when reality hit home, the girl committed suicide.

Hadrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar ؓ reported that Nabī ﷺ has said, “For sure a time will come over my ummah similar to that which came over the Banī Isrā’īl. Just like one sandal is identical to another, if someone from them (Banī Isrā’īl) committed fornication with his mother openly, there will (also) appear someone from amongst my ummah who will do the same. (*Mishkāt*)

Harm in the Grave

An amazing and eye opening incident occurred in one village in the Frontier province in Pakistan. Whilst the janāzah salāh of an old man was being performed, inside the bier the sound of his head being lifted and being banged against it with full force was heard. After completion of the salāh, the upper sheet was lifted. A poisonous snake was found there taking hold of the tongue of the deceased, pulling it up and then jerking it with a great force thereby banging his head on the bier. People ran for their guns and rifles to kill the snake. The scholars who were present remarked, “This does not seem to be a snake of this world, you do not have the power to kill it. Leave it alone and bury him quickly.”

Somehow, he was placed in the grave. Whilst lifting him, the snake itself left the bier and went into the grave. As soon as the dead person reached the grave it sat on his chest and began biting him. People closed the grave and returned. They were anxious to know for which action he was being punished already this world. Some went to his house to enquire from his wife. She remarked, “It is not

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appropriate to mention this, but since Allāh ﷻ has already afflicted him with punishment in this worldly life, I will inform you. Do you know what an evil and irreligious type of person he was? All of these children of mine, he was their father as well as grandfather. After my mother passed away, this misguided person said, “Where am I going to search for another wife now? We are living in a foreign land and people do not know us. O my daughter, you will now be my wife.” Thus, I am his daughter as well as his wife.”

The farsightedness of the fuqahā’ (jurists) should be appreciated. Looking at the conditions of their time and the increase in evil, they have commanded hijāb to be observed between some mahrams also wherever there is a possibility of corruption and iniquity. For example, they discourage a father-in-law from travelling or staying in solitude with his daughter-in-law as this could lead to serious repercussions. May Allāh ﷻ elevate the ranks of our seniors! Many of them were such that once their biological daughters reached the age of puberty; they abstained from staring directly at them, speaking to them very informally and sitting in seclusion with them. Even though this is not compulsory, they did this to be saved from even the thought of evil and to remain chaste, never placing reliance on themselves. May Allāh ﷻ also grant us this concern and save us from all evils as well as the causes leading up to them.

A person wrote to Hadrat Hakīm ul Ummah stating that his daughter-in-law had passed away. He noted, “I am very grieved. She was young. She was always serving us. She was pious. She was always concerned about us. I am in severe anguish due to her demise.....” Hadrat wrote back, “Were you perhaps not infatuated with your daughter-in-law?” A while later, he replied, “I have pondered over the matter. This is actually the case.”

Hadrat ‘Ārif billāh Maulānā Shāh Hakīm Muḥammad Akhtar Sāhib lowers his gaze when speaking to his daughter-in-law. He says, “When one takes caution with even one’s mahrams, then it becomes easy to take precautions with non-mahrams.”

Conclusion

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Hereunder are a few articles mentioned from different perspectives on hijâb. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to appreciate these beautiful teachings of our religion, practise upon them and propagate to others. The honour and respect of a woman lies in the most perfect teachings of our Nabī ﷺ and the example of his honourable wives and daughters.

Women's Liberation Through Islam ⁵

Today people think that women are liberated in the west and that the woman's liberation movement began in the 20th century. Actually, the women's liberation movement was not begun by women but was revealed by Allāh ﷻ to Nabī ﷺ. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah are the sources from which every Muslim woman derives her rights and duties.

A. Human Rights:

Islam, fourteen centuries ago, made women equally accountable to Allāh ﷻ in glorifying and worshipping Him setting no limits on her moral Progress.

Also, Islam established a woman's equality in her humanity with men, in the Qur'an in the first verse of the chapter entitled "Women" Allāh ﷻ says,

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Rabb who created you from a single soul and from its mate and from them both have spread broad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allāh in whom you claim (your rights) of one another and towards the wombs (that bore you) Lo! Allāh has been a watcher over you" (4:1)

Since men and women both come from the same essence, they are equal in their humanity. Women cannot be by nature evil (as some religions believe) or then men would be evil, also.

B. Civil Rights:

⁵ Author unknown - Article abridged and edited from the Internet

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In Islam, a woman has the basic freedoms of choice and expression based on recognition of her individual personality. First, she is free to choose her religion. The Qur'ân states; "There is no compulsion in religion. Right has been made distinct from error". (2:256)

Women are encouraged in Islam to contribute their opinions and ideas, There are many traditions of Nabî ﷺ which indicate that women would pose questions directly to him and offer their opinions concerning religion, economics and social matters.

A Muslim woman chooses her husband and to keep her name after marriage. A Muslim woman's testimony is valid in legal disputes. In fact, where women are more familiar, their evidence is conclusive.

C. Social Rights:

Nabî ﷺ said, "Seeking knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim (male and female)". This includes knowledge of the Qur'ân and the Hadîth as well as other knowledge. Men and women both have the capacity for learning and understanding. Since it is also their obligation to promote good behaviour and condemn bad behaviour in all spheres of life Muslim women must acquire the appropriate education to perform this duty in accordance with their own natural talents and interests.

While maintenance of a home, providing support to her husband and bearing, raising and teaching of children are among the first and very highly regarded roles for a woman, if she has the skills to work for the good of the community, she may do so as long as her family obligations are met and she follows the laws of hijâb.

Islam recognizes and fosters the natural differences between men and women. Some types of work are more suitable for men and other types for women. This in no way diminishes each one's effort or its benefit. Allâh will reward both sexes equally for the value of their work though it may not necessarily be the same activity.

Concerning motherhood Nabî ﷺ said, "Heaven lies under the feet of mothers". This implies that the success of a society can be traced to the mothers that raised it. The first and greatest influence on a

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person comes from the sense of security, affection and training received from the mother. Therefore a woman having children must be educated and conscientious in order to be a skilful parent.

D. Economic Rights:

The Qur'ân states: "by the creation of the male and female: Verily [the ends] you strive for are diverse" (92:3-4)

In these verses, Allâh ﷻ declares that He created men and women to be different, with unique roles, functions and skills. As in society, where there is a division of labour, so too in a family, each member has different responsibilities. Generally, Islam upholds that women are entrusted with the nurturing role, and men, with the guardian role. Therefore women are given the right of financial support.

The Qur'ân states: "Men are the maintainers of woman because Allâh has made some of them to excel others and because they spend of their wealth (for the support of woman)" (4:34)

This guardianship and greater financial responsibility is given to men requires that they provide women with not only monetary support but also physical protection and kind and respectful treatment.

Muslim woman have the privilege to earn money, the right to own property, to enter into legal contracts and to manage all of her assets in any way she pleases. She can run her own business and no one has any claim on her earnings including her husband. A woman inherits from her relatives.

E. Rights of a Wife:

The Qur'ân states: "And among His signs is that he created for you mates from among yourselves that you may live in tranquillity with them and he has put love and mercy between you. Verily, in that are signs for people who reflect". (30:21)

Marriage is therefore not just a physical or emotional necessity but in fact a sign from Allâh ﷻ! It is a relationship of mutual rights and

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obligations based on divine guidance. Allāh ﷻ created men and women with complimentary natures and in the Qur'ān He laid out a system of laws to support harmonious interaction between the sexes “they are your garments and you are their garments.” (2:187)

Clothing provides physical protection and covers the beauty and faults of the body. Likewise, a spouse is viewed this way. Each protects the other and hides the faults and compliments the characteristics of the spouse.

To foster the love and security that comes with you and security that comes with marriage, Muslim wives have various rights. The first of the wife's rights is to receive mahr, a gift from the husband which is part of the marriage contract and required for the legality of the marriage.

The second right of a wife is maintenance. Despite any wealth she may have, her husband is obligated to provide her with food, shelter and clothing. He is not forced, however, to spend beyond his capability and his wife is not entitled to make unreasonable demands. The Qur'ān states: “Let the man of means spend according to his means and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allāh has given him. Allāh puts no burden on any person beyond what he has given him.” (65:7)

Allāh ﷻ tells us men are guardians over women and are afforded the leadership in the family. His responsibility for obeying Allāh ﷻ extends to guiding his family to obey Allāh ﷻ at all times.

A wife's rights also extend beyond material needs. She has the right to kind treatment. Nabī ﷺ said, “The most perfect believers are the best in conduct. And the best of you are those who are best to their wives.” Allāh ﷻ tells us that He created mates and put love, mercy and tranquillity between them.

Both men and women have a need for companionship and sexual needs and marriage is designed to fulfil those needs. For one spouse

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to deny this satisfaction to the other, temptation exists to seek it elsewhere.

F. Duties of a Wife:

With rights come responsibilities. Therefore, wives have certain obligations to their husbands, The Qur'ân states: "The good women in the absence of their husbands guard their rights as Allāh has enjoined upon them to be guarded." (4:34). A wife is to keep her husband's secrets and protect their marital privacy. Issues of intimacy of faults of his that would dishonour him, are not to be shared by the wife, just as he is expected to guard her honour. A wife must also guard her husband's property. She must safeguard his home and possessions, to the best of her ability, from theft or damage. She should manage the household affairs wisely so as to prevent loss or waste. She should not allow anyone to enter the house that her husband dislikes nor incur any expenses of which her husband disapproves.

A Muslim woman must cooperate and coordinate with her husband. There cannot however, be cooperation with a man who is disobedient to Allāh ﷻ. She should not fulfil his requests if he wants her to do something unlawful. A husband also should not take advantage of his wife, but be considerate of her needs and happiness.

Conclusion:

The Qur'ân states: "And it becomes not of a believing man or a believing woman, when Allāh and His messenger (Muhammad) have decided on an affair (for them) that they should (after that) claim any say in their affair. And whosoever is rebellious to Allāh ﷻ and His messenger ﷺ, verily goes astray in manifest error," (33:36) The Muslim woman was given a role, duties and rights 1400 years ago that most women do not enjoy today even in the west. These are from Allāh ﷻ and are designed to keep balance in society; what may seem unjust or missing in one place is compensated for or explained in another place. Islam is a complete way of life.

The Sweet Taste Of Īmān⁶

When Īmān with its pristine purity penetrates the deep channels of the heart, it creates a solid bond with Allāh ﷻ, and pleasing Him becomes the ultimate goal of life on earth in such a manner that no force or authority can deter such a solid and sound relationship. So when this submission is complete, the Divine Force gets into action and causes the unimaginable to happen. Such was the case of this Russian sister who embraced Islam and received the real taste of the sweetness of Īmān.

The following is a breathtaking account of her embracing Islam and what ensued, as related by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Al-Fāris. We should ask ourselves, “If she can do it, why not I?”

The Shaykh says

This story, my revered brothers, is about a Russian woman – *a Russian woman!* I am not talking about any woman from here or there, or anyone from the Islamic world. This woman travelled with a group of woman to a neighbouring Gulf state to import foreign goods. They were accompanied by a Russian national. They were to purchase personal electrical equipment and appliances and to bring them into Russia on the pretext that they are for personal use so as to be exempted from excessive custom duty and only pay a minimal duty. The Russian business man would pay for the goods which were in the possession of the women and sell them at much higher prices. The ladies were to receive a small portion of the profit. Such a thing is common and done abundantly due to the low cost of goods in the Gulf States.

When they had reached the desired destination, the Russian man presented to the young women a plan, which was completely different from the one they had agreed upon. He said, ‘We came here to obtain a great amount of monetary gain which this country

⁶ Courtesy: Al Majlis Magazine, Kenya which was republished in the An-Nasihah

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is distinguished for. What is your opinion to pursue more wealth?' He readily requested them to trade their bodies in return for wealth. 'So whoever is prepared for the deal should announce it quickly.' Soon he was able to convince a large number of the young women to agree to his plan. Naturally the ladies were convinced, and why not? There was no *īmānī* force to restrain them, nor decent morality to stop them. One woman, however, felt that it was not possible for her to indulge in such a deed.

The man laughed and said, 'In this country you will be finished. You do not possess anything except what you are wearing now.' She deliberated over the situation and quickly shaped a plan in her mind. She snatched her passport and ran from the house into the street. She had nothing with her except what she was wearing and her passport. Out in the streets she went wandering about aimlessly. The Russian man called out to her saying, 'If the road closes upon you and the going becomes difficult, you can come to me and this is my address...', but the woman had already gone.

The person relating this story says, "I was walking along the street with my mother and sisters when suddenly this woman on the street hurriedly came running towards our direction and said, "I am from Russia, and such a thing has happened to me", and started to relate the entire story, "All I need from you is accommodation for a short period of time in which I can ponder over my situation with my family in my country." At the end of our discussion, we decided to accept her request and took her home with us. She started to communicate with her family, but with no response, as the communication lines in her country were not in order. Nonetheless, she continued all the time trying to contact her family.

"Of course, my sisters started to treat her as a sister and presented Islam to her, but she disliked and disregarded it. She was unwilling to even discuss Islam. This was because she came from an orthodox family which dislikes Islam and the Muslims. One day, I went to the da'wah library and sought assistance from the manager of the library.

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The librarian resumes with the story: This man took some books and went away. After a period of time, he again came to me, but this time, he was accompanied by four women; three of them had themselves covered with some sort of hijāb, i.e. only their faces and hands were open, and the fourth one was only partially covered; both her hair and face were uncovered. The man said: 'This lady is a Russian.' He related the entire story and said, 'I came to you last week and requested some books and now I require other books and cassettes. I have proposed to her to accept Islam and she has started to show some interest. I have promised her that I will marry her if she became a Muslim.'

The librarian continued, "I gave him another lot of books. He took them and came back after some days and said that she has agreed to become a Muslim and wants to announce her Islam. When she had declared her Islam, I told the man that there is a group of women who are teaching the Qur'ān and are well known for their high standard of teaching.

The librarian, continuing the story said, "After a period of time, the man came and said, 'I have married her and I am now satisfied and very happy. All praise and gratitude to Allāh.' The thing that aroused my interest most was this woman had covered herself fully, not like his sisters and his mother. Strange! She adhered to complete hijāb.

'I inquired from him politely how that happened, and he related to me an astonishing incident. He said, "In the market, my wife inquired about a woman who had covered herself completely. She asked me, 'Why has she covered herself in such a manner? I am sure this woman has some defect which she wants to conceal.' The man said, 'I, defending the Islamic sense of honour, said to her. 'No, this woman has adorned the hijāb which Allāh ﷻ has ordered for His slaves and the one prescribed by His Rasūl ﷺ.' Then after reflecting for some time, she told me, 'When I enter any shopping complex, the gazes of the owners of these shopping complexes remain fixed on my face. I should cover this face of mine. It should be reserved

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for my husband only. Therefore, I won't go out of this market except after I have covered myself fully'. She insisted that I purchase a full hijāb for her. She started wearing it at once."

The librarian says that he then met this man only after about five or six months. After greeting him, I asked him, 'Where have you been?!' He said, "Some circumstances kept me away." He continued by saying, "After I had married this woman, her passport had to be renewed from her country of origin. We, therefore, had to travel to Russia.

We purchased two seats and boarded the plane, with my wife in her complete hijāb. I said to her, 'O Slave of Allāh! We will have problems now.' She said, 'O Khalid! Now you want me to obey these immoral infidels, who will lead the way to hell when they die, for what they are and what they do, and disobey Allāh ﷻ?! I cannot do that!!' These were her actual words!

"We boarded the plane and the people began mocking at her in Russian. He continued saying, "I didn't understand a word the people were saying, but my wife sometimes smiled and at times laughed and translated what they were saying. 'This one is saying, 'Look at her! She looks like such and such, and this one commented, '.....', and this one is making fun.' Whenever she translated what they were saying, it was like an arrow piercing my heart without being removed. She said, 'No. Do not become upset. This is an insignificant thing compared to what the Sahābah ﷺ underwent!'

When we landed, she said, 'We will not put up at my families residence. My family is distinguished for their staunchness and fanaticism towards their religion. We will rent a room and stay there and complete all the procedures, thereafter we will visit my family'. The next day we went to the passport office. My wife presented a black and white photograph of herself in her hijāb revealing her face only. We were sent from officer to officer. Each one demanded that she present a colour photograph of herself

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exposing her face, hair and neck. Every officer said, 'It is not possible for me to give a passport except with this specification.' Finally we were told that we had to travel to Moscow and speak to the chief immigration officer. My wife turned towards me and said, 'O Khalid, we must travel to Moscow.' 'O lawful daughter, O so and so', I pleaded , trying to convince her.' *"Allāh does not overburden any soul except with what it can manage."* *"Fear Allāh to the degree that you can manage."* And right now you are not forced by anybody. The passport will only be seen by a few people, then you can hide it in your house until it expires, and its duration is six to seven years.' She said, 'No. it is not possible for me to expose myself after knowing the religion of Allāh ﷻ, the Almighty. If you do not want to travel to Moscow, then I will travel alone as the matter is very important.' Eventually I relented and agreed to accompany her.

We arrived at the office of the principal officer at the Immigration office of Moscow. He saw the passport and the photograph and said, 'What proves to me that you are the one in this photograph?' He wanted her to uncover her face. She said, 'Ask one of your female officers or your secretary to come and verify, but you cannot do it.' He became annoyed and took the passport together with the photo and locked them in his drawer and said, 'You won't have a new passport or the old one, unless you bring photographs with the required specification.' We tried to convince him; but without any success. I also tried to convince my wife with a verse from the Qur'ān. "Nobody is overburdened except with what he can manage", but she replied by saying, 'O Khalid, I learnt at the house teaching the Holy Qur'ān, *"Whoever fears Allāh, He will make for him a way out and will provide him from where he does not expect."* As we were discussing, the Principal Immigration Officer chased us from his office.

We performed our 'ishā' salāh that evening and had our supper. I prepared to go to bed and she said, 'O Khalid, you are going to sleep? With this trying situation, will you sleep? We are in a situation that needs us to resort to Allāh ﷻ for help. Come on and

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beg to Allāh ﷻ. I stood up and prayed whatever Allāh ﷻ enabled me to pray, and went to sleep. But as for her, she continued praying. I opened my eyes, I could see her either in *rukū'*, or in *sajdah*, or in *qiyām*, or making *du'ā'* and crying, until the time of Fajr. "Waking me up at Fajr time, we performed our Fajr *salāh*. She then said, 'Let us go to the Immigration Office.' I asked her perplexed, 'On what grounds? Where are the photos? We have no photos?' She said, 'Let us go and try. Do not lose hope of Allāh's ﷻ mercy and do not despair of Allāh's ﷻ benevolence.'

When we stepped into the Immigration Office, at once, one of the officers, called out her name, 'Mrs. So and so,' and she replied, 'Yes?' He said to her, 'Take your old passport and fill in the application forms for a new passport with required specifications, but pay the fee first.' We were overjoyed. By Allāh, if he would have told us to pay all the money we had, we would have given it to him. We took the passport, paid the fee, and returned to our room.

My wife looked at me and said, "Did I not I tell you that Allāh will make a way out." These words struck my heart and made an immense impact on my *īmān*.

We now decided to visit her family. 'When we reached the place and knocked at the door, a gigantic-sized youngster, her brother, opened the door. When he saw his sister, he was happy, but also perplexed. His sister was also happy to see him; but then his curiosity knew no bounds. The face was of his sister, but the dress was not. Black – covering everything apart from her face! She entered the house smiling and hugged her brother. I entered after her and sat in the living-room. The house was of a low-class family house and very simple. One could see signs of poverty in it. I sat alone as she entered into the inner rooms of the house. I could hear them talking, men and women, in the Russian language, without understanding a word, nor knowing what was going on in there. Suddenly their voices raised and the tones changed and the screaming increased. I sensed that there was something wrong, but I was unable to get the real picture as I didn't understand the

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language. After a short while, three young men came with an old man to where I was sitting. I thought that they were now ready to welcome their son-in-law, but the welcome turned out to be slaps and blows. When I saw myself between these inhuman people I knew I could be killed there. I hurriedly opened the door as fast as I could, and ran out with them in hot pursuit. I was able to shake them off my trail. "I examined myself and saw signs of blows on my forehead, cheeks and nose. My mouth was bleeding and my clothes were torn. I said to myself. 'I am now safe but what is the situation with my wife?' I forgot about myself and started thinking about her. I pictured her in my mind thinking, 'Is she at this time facing the same slaps, blows and situation that I had already faced? I'm sure she will give in. I'm sure she will leave me. I'm sure she will renounce Islam.' I stayed in my room until dawn. I changed my clothes and went out to try to gather some information. I watched their house from a distance, trying to figure out what was going on in there, but the door was closed. Hours and hours went by as I kept watching, going and coming back. I repeated the same thing on the second day and then on the third day I lost hope and thought that my wife was dead. She's murdered. But, if she is dead, then at least there should have been some movements in the house, and visits of condolence from relatives, but I saw nothing. On the fourth day, after these people had gone to their jobs, the door opened, and my wife's face appeared, looking right and left. Never had I seen in my life a more pleasant scene than what I was witnessing now, despite the fact that her face I was seeing was red – covered with blood! I hurriedly went close and stared at her. I was astonished and confused. I felt sick. Her colour had changed to red. There was blood on her face, on her arms, on her thighs and on her legs. Only a small piece of cloth covered her. Her feet and hands were chained and locked together behind her back. I looked at her and starting crying uncontrollably. She said to me, 'O Khalid, listen! First be assured about me, that I am still a Muslim. Whatever I am going through now, is nothing compared to what the *Sahābah* ﷺ and *Tābi'īn* encountered, together with the *Ambiyā'* and Messengers before them. Secondly, I request you, Khalid, not to interfere between me and my family. Thirdly, wait for me in the room until,

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Inshā Allāh, I come there, but increase your du‘ās and prayers at night. Perform salāh.”

I went back to my room and remained there. After three days, I heard a knock. I asked myself, ‘Who is that? Who could be at the door?’ Suddenly I heard a sound of a voice very familiar. I had never heard a sound so sweet, so pleasant and more beautiful than this. It was the voice of my wife, saying, ‘Open the door, I’m so and so.’ I opened the door and my world lit up. She said to me, come, let us leave now.’ ‘Now?! I inquired, quite surprised. ‘Yes’, she said. We got into a taxi. I asked her in Russian, ‘The airport?’ She replied, “No! No! We are not going to the airport. We are going to such and such village.” “Why? Don’t we want to run away?” I asked her. She replied, “No, if my family come to know about my escape, they will try to trace us to the airport. But let us go to a village, then from there to another village, then to the third, fourth, fifth, and then to a town with an international airport.”

We eventually booked our tickets and hired a room until our departure. I looked at my wife, trying to see if any part of her body had been spared of bleeding – none. On our journey to the airport, I had asked her to relate all that had happened. Unfolding the entire incident, she commenced by saying, “When I entered the house and sat down together with my family, they started asking me about my dress and the man who accompanied me. I told them I had embraced Islam and had married this Muslim man.” They exclaimed, “This cannot be possible.” I said to them, “First let me narrate the entire story to you,” and told them everything; about the Russian man, and how he wanted to lead me to indecency and sell my dignity. They said, “Listen. If you would have taken up with immorality and sold your dignity, it would have been better for us than you being a Muslim! *[Just look how bigoted these people were!]* You are not getting out of this house unless you become an orthodox communist or a stiff corpse!” At that very moment, they took hold of me and tied me up, and then came for you and beat you up. I was listening when they were beating you while I was tied. Then after you had ran away, my brothers chained me up, and

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began whipping me. I was subjected to agonizing strokes from evening up to bedtime. In the mornings my brothers and father were at their jobs and my mother remained in the house. I was left with nobody apart from my fifteen year old sister. She used to amuse me. This amusement was the only solace and break I had. Sometimes I remained unconscious. They used to strike me until I became unconscious and slept. Their only demand was that I renounce Islam, and I refused.

It reached a point that during my sister's joking spells, my sister started asking me, "Why are you leaving your religion and the religion of your fore-fathers?" I started to convince her and explain to her. She began to understand and started feeling convinced, and also became impressed. The picture became clear to her and the fallacy, in which they were living in, became apparent. She at once said, "The truth is with you. This is the right religion. This is the religion I should follow." She then said to me, "Listen, my sister, I am going to assist you." I said to her, "If you want to help me then let me meet my husband."

She continued, "My sister started looking from the upper windows and saw you walking. She said to me, 'I'm seeing a man with such and such characteristics', and started to describe you. I said to her, 'That is my husband. If you see him, open the door for him so that I can talk to him.' True to her words, she opened the door and I came out and spoke to you. But now there was a problem; I was chained up with two chains, then there was a third chain, which was fastened to one of the pillars, so that I could move about to a limited range. The keys of this chain were with my sister."

Continuing, she said, "The day after I asked you to remain in your room until I came there, I was able to fully convince my sister. She embraced Islam, and resolved to make a sacrifice greater than mine. She was determined to help me to run away from the house, but the keys of the other two chains were with my brother, and he was very strict about them. On that very day, my sister came up with a plan; she prepared a very strong beer for my folks and organized a

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drinking party. So they all drank and drank until they became totally intoxicated and slipped into a deep slumber. She then took out the keys from her brother's pocket and unlocked the chains, and I came to you in the late hours of the night."

I asked her, "And what about your sister?" She replied, "I advised my sister not to announce her Islam, but to keep it secret and worship in secrecy, until we can plan something for her."

We travelled on our scheduled flight and returned back to the country. I took my wife to the hospital and she was admitted for some days for the treatment of the wounds sustained due to the beatings."

A View Through Hijāb⁷

Previously I wondered how easily sisters could breathe under a veil. It seemed to be a matter of habit; once accustomed to it, there was no inconvenience. The first time I wore a niqāb I felt nice, in fact extremely wonderful, as if I had become a special person. I felt like the owner of a masterpiece who enjoyed its secret pleasure. I had a treasure which no one knew about and which strangers were not allowed to see.

During my first few months in Riyadh, only my eyes were uncovered. But when I made a winter outer garment I included a thin eye cover. My garment became perfect and so did my comfort. I no longer felt uneasy in a crowd. Before my eyes were uncovered, I was sometimes uncomfortable when my glance accidentally met a man's. This new covering prevented, like dark eyeglasses, the virtual intrusion of strangers.

A non-Muslim might notice a bearded man accompanied by a woman covered in black. Such a couple might be considered a caricature of the oppressing-oppressed or possessing-possessed

⁷ Abridged from 'A view through hijāb' written by a Japanese woman who accepted Islam in 1991, Valli publications

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relationship thought to be characteristic of that between a husband and wife in Islam. But the fact is that the woman feels respected and guarded by one who really cares for her, or if I may say so, as a princess escorted by her guard. It is erroneous to regard Muslim women merely as private possessions of men who jealously prevent them from being seen by strangers. A woman covers herself in obedience to Allāh ﷻ for the sake of her own dignity and pride. She refuses to be possessed by the stare of a stranger or to be his object. She feels pity for western women who are displayed as objects of desire.

It has been over two years since I became a Muslim. My hijâb has changed five times with the change of both my surroundings and my religious understanding. Soon after my conversion in France, I wore fashionable matching dresses and scarves. Now in Saudi Arabia I cover completely in black, from head to toe. Thus I have experienced the hijâb from the simplest to its complete form.

Many years ago when a Japanese Muslimah appeared with a head cover at an Islamic organisation in Tokyo, she was told by another Japanese Muslimah to reconsider the matter of her dress because it shocked people. Very few Muslim women in Japan covered their heads at that time. Now there are more and more Japanese women who are embracing Islam and wearing the head cover in spite of difficult situations. All of them acknowledge that they are proud of their hijâb and that it strengthens their faith.

Viewing Islam from the outside, one can never perceive what is observed within it. We see the matter from two completely different perspectives. To a non-Muslim, Islam looks like a prison with no liberty or freedom. But living within Islam, we feel a peace, freedom and joy which is known in no other way. One might claim that a person born in Islam believes it is best because it is a way of life with which he has always been acquainted - that he grew up without experiencing the outside world. But I am a revert. I abandoned the so-called freedom and pleasure of modern life and chose Islam. If it is true that Islam is a religion which oppresses

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women, why are so many women in Europe, America, Japan and elsewhere embracing Islam today! If only people would reflect on this.

A person blinded by prejudice may not be able to see the beauty of a woman in hijâb - a woman who is self-confident, peaceful and dignified - not a shade or trace of oppression upon her face. The Qur'ân describes those who deny the signs of Allâh ﷻ as being blind. How else can we explain the disbeliever's lack of understanding towards Islam?

To My Muslim Sisters⁸ (By A Christian Woman)

Between the Israeli assault on Lebanon and the Zionist 'war on terror' the Muslim world is now centre stage in every American home. I see the carnage, death and destruction that have befallen Lebanon, but I also see something else: I see you. I can't help but notice that every woman I see is carrying a baby or has children around her. I see that although they are dressed modestly, their beauty shines through. But it's not just outer beauty that I notice. I also notice that I feel something strange inside me: I feel envy. I feel terrible for the horrible experiences and war crimes that the Lebanese people have suffered, being targeted by our common enemy. But I can't help but admire your strength, beauty, modesty, and most of all, your happiness. Yes it's strange, but it occurred to me that even under constant bombardment, you still seemed happier than we are, because you were still living the natural lives of women. The way women have always lived since the beginning of time. It used to be that way in the West until the 1960's, when we were bombarded by the same enemy. Only we were not bombarded with actual munitions, but with subtle trickery and moral corruption.

Through temptation - They bombarded us Americans from Hollywood, from fighter jets or with our own American-made tanks. They would like to bomb you in this way too, after they've finished

⁸ By Joanna Francis - abridged

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bombing the infrastructure of your countries. I do not want this to happen to you. You will feel degraded just like we do. You can avoid this kind of bombing if you will kindly listen to those of us who have already suffered serious casualties from their evil influence. Because everything you see coming out of Hollywood is a pack of lies, a distortion of reality, smoke and mirrors. They present casual sex as harmless recreation because they aim to destroy the moral fabric of the societies into which they beam their poisonous programming. I beg you not to drink their poison. There is no antidote for it once you have consumed it. You may recover partially, but you will never be the same. Better to avoid the poison altogether than to try to heal from the damage it causes.

They will try to tempt you with titillating movies and music videos, falsely portraying us American women as happy and satisfied, proud of dressing like prostitutes, and content without families. Most of us are not happy, trust me. Millions of us are on anti-depressant medication, hate our jobs and cry at night over men who told us they loved us, then greedily used us and walked away. They would like you to destroy your families and convince you to have fewer children. They do this by presenting marriage as slavery, motherhood as a curse, and being modest and pure as old-fashioned. They want you to cheapen yourself and lose your faith. They are like the serpent tempting Eve with the apple. Don't bite.

Self-value - I see you as precious gems, pure gold or the 'pearl of great value'. All women are pearls of great value, but some of us have been deceived into doubting the value of our purity. Our pearls are priceless, but they convince us that they're cheap. But trust me: there is no substitute for being able to look in the mirror and seeing purity, innocence and self respect staring back at you. The fashions coming out of the western sewer are designed to make you believe that the most valuable asset is your sexuality. But your beautiful dresses and cloaks are actually sexier than any other fashion, because they cloak you in mystery and show self-respect and confidence. A woman's sexuality should be guarded from unworthy eyes, since it should be the gift to the man who loves and

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respects you enough to marry you. And since your men are still manly warriors, they deserve no less than your best. Our men don't even want purity anymore. They don't recognize the pearl of great value, opting for the flashy rhinestone instead. Only to leave her too!

Your most valuable assets are your inner beauty, your innocence, and everything that makes you what you are. But I notice some Muslim women push the limit and try to be as Western as possible, even while wearing a veil (with some of their hair showing). Why imitate women who already regret, or will soon regret, their lost virtue? There is no compensation for that loss. You are flawless diamonds. Don't let them trick you into becoming rhinestones, because everything you see in the fashion magazines and on television is a lie. It is Satan's trap. It is fool's gold.

A woman's heart - I'll let you on a little secret just in case you're curious: premarital sex is not even that great. We gave our bodies to the men we were in love with, believing that this was the way to make them love us and want to marry us, just as we had seen on television growing up. But without the security of marriage and the sure knowledge that he will always stay with us, it's not even enjoyable! That's the irony. It was just a waste. It leaves you in tears. Speaking as one woman to another, I believe that you understand that already. Because only a woman can understand what's in another woman's heart. We really are all alike. Our race, religion and nationalities do not matter. A woman's heart is the same everywhere. We love. That's what we do best. We nurture our families and give love and support to the men we love. But we American women have been fooled into believing that we are happiest having careers, our homes in which to live alone, and freedom to give our love away to whomsoever we choose. That is not freedom. And that is not love. Only in the safe haven of marriage can a woman's body and heart be safe to love. Don't settle for anything less.

It's not worth it. You won't even like it and you'll like yourself even less afterwards. Then he'll leave you.

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Self denial - Sin never pays. It always cheats you. Even though I have reclaimed my honour, there's no substitute for having never being dishonoured in the first place. We Western women have been brainwashed into thinking that you Muslim are oppressed. But truly we are the ones who are oppressed; slaves to fashions that degrade us, obsessed with our weight, begging for love from men who do not want to grow up. Deep down inside, we know that we have been cheated. We secretly admire and envy you, although some of us will not admit it. Please do not look down upon us or think that we like things the way they are. It's not our fault. Most of us did not have fathers to protect us when we were young because our families had been destroyed. You know who is behind the plot. Don't be fooled, my sisters. Don't let them get you too. Stay innocent and pure. We Christian women need to see what life is really supposed to be like for women. We need you to set an example for us, because we are lost. Hold onto your purity. Remember: you can't put toothpaste back in the tube. So guard your "toothpaste" carefully!

I hope you receive this advice in the spirit in which it is intended: the spirit of friendship, respect and admiration. From your Christian sister with love.

My Body Is My Own Business⁹

MULTICULTURAL VOICES: A Canadian-born Muslim woman has taken to wearing the traditional *hijâb* scarf. It tends to make people see her as either a terrorist or a symbol of oppressed womanhood, but she finds the experience LIBERATING.

I often wonder whether people see me as a radical, fundamentalist Muslim terrorist packing an AK-47 assault rifle inside my jean jacket. Or may be they see me as the poster girl for oppressed womanhood everywhere. I'm not sure which it is.

I get the whole gamut of strange looks, stares, and covert glances. You see, I wear the *hijâb*, a scarf that covers my head, neck, and

⁹ The next three articles have also been taken from the Internet.

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throat. I do this because I am a Muslim woman who believes her body is her own private concern.

Young Muslim women are reclaiming the hijâb, reinterpreting it in light of its original purpose to give back to women ultimate control of their own bodies.

The Qur'ân teaches us that men and women are equal, that individuals should not be judged according to gender, beauty, wealth, or privilege. The only thing that makes one person better than another is her or his character.

Nonetheless, people have a difficult time relating to me. After all, I'm young, Canadian born and raised, university educated why would I do this to myself, they ask.

Strangers speak to me in loud, slow English and often appear to be playing charades. They politely inquire how I like living in Canada and whether or not the cold bothers me. If I'm in the right mood, it can be very amusing.

But, why would I, a woman with all the advantages of a North American upbringing, suddenly, at 21, want to cover myself so that with the hijâb and the other clothes I choose to wear; only my face and hands show? Because it gives me freedom.

Women are taught from early childhood that their worth is proportional to their attractiveness. We feel compelled to pursue abstract notions of beauty, half realizing that such a pursuit is futile.

When women reject this form of oppression, they face ridicule and contempt. Whether its women who refuse to wear makeup or to shave their legs, or to expose their bodies, society, both men and women, have trouble dealing with them.

In the Western world, the hijâb has come to symbolize either forced silence or radical, unconscionable militancy. Actually, it's neither. It

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is simply a woman's assertion that judgment of her physical person is to play no role whatsoever in social interaction.

Wearing the hijāb has given me freedom from constant attention to my physical self. Because my appearance is not subjected to public scrutiny, my beauty, or perhaps lack of it, has been removed from the realm of what can legitimately be discussed.

No one knows whether my hair looks as if I just stepped out of a salon, whether or not I can pinch an inch, or even if I have unsightly stretch marks. And because no one knows, no one cares.

Feeling that one has to meet the impossible male standards of beauty is tiring and often humiliating. I should know, I spent my entire teenage years trying to do it. It was a borderline bulimic and spent a lot of money I didn't have on potions and lotions in hopes of becoming the next Cindy Crawford.

The definition of beauty is ever-changing; waifish is good, waifish is bad, athletic is good -- sorry, athletic is bad. Narrow hips? Great. Narrow hips? Too bad.

Women are not going to achieve equality with the right to bare their breasts in public, as some people would like to have you believe. That would only make us party to our own objectification. True equality will be had only when women don't need to display themselves to get attention and won't need to defend their decision to keep their bodies to themselves.

Hijāb - A Moment Of Thought

The commandments of hijāb are of great importance. It is true that they are in fact somewhat difficult to follow. But one thing is true beyond doubt, and that is whosoever succeeds in following these commandments will have less difficulty in obeying other commandments of Allāh ﷻ. This is the most bitter pill to swallow, in terms of obedience, but it is most beneficial in that it makes it quick and easy for a Muslim to be close to Allāh ﷻ.

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Today, our standards of piety have become limited to reciting endless incantations and rosaries, praying extra Salāh, reciting the books of prayers, fasting when possible, giving alms and charity and obeying those commands which may be followed with ease. But we readily ignore and reject all those rules and prohibitions which interfere in any way with our lifestyle, nafs and desires.

We profess deep love for Allāh, but do not refrain from disobeying Him, even though it is obligatory on us to refrain from all that He has declared harām.

The foundation of piety is built on seeking Allah's forgiveness for all our disobedience and rebelliousness against Him. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has said, “Refrain from sinning and you will become the most pious of worshippers.”

The sin of refusing to observe hijāb is more severe than other sins, which is why it is critical to immediately desist from it and to sincerely resolve not to repeat it. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. It is a sin which is committed in the open for all to see. The one committing this sin, without saying a word, is openly declaring to everyone that she/he has no regard for Allāh's commands, and that she/he has revolted against Allāh. Our Prophet ﷺ has said: “All of my ummah is worthy of forgiveness, except those who have openly sinned.”

This is true not only for religion, but even under the laws of any government of this world, those who openly betray their governments are not forgiven, and what is the punishment for betrayal, but death?

2. The sinful consequences of refusing to observe hijāb are not limited only to the one committing this sin; since it encourages and spreads lewd and shameful behaviour, it ultimately affects the entire society which thus gets caught in Allāh's punishment in this world and in the hereafter. It is commonly observed that such a sin

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also paves the way for all kinds of other mischief, even murder. Those women who do not observe pardah should ask themselves why they are doing so. Is it the temporary pleasures and fulfilment of desires which is keeping them from it? They should realise that life in this world is short while, life in the hereafter is forever. They should also realise that by not observing hijāb they are embittering their lives here as well as condemning themselves to the punishment of hell-fire in the hereafter. We are not able to bear, even for a second, the heat of a burning coal placed on the palm of our hand. And yet we never think, how will we be able to bear the severe torment and fires of hell? If we worry that our father or husband or other relatives will not approve and will be displeased with our following Allāh's commands, then we should also think whether this will be an acceptable excuse to present to Allāh on the Day of Judgement. Will He forgive us if we say that we did not follow His orders because we feared displeasing our family and friends. Even though it is Allāh's absolute and unalterable law that 'obeying anyone while disobeying Allāh is forbidden'. That is, if someone asks us to disobey Allāh, we are forbidden to obey him. We should simply cast this person aside. We should consider whether this person whom we are pleasing by disobeying Allāh will be willing to receive and bear the punishment in our place on the Day of Judgement?

Allāh ﷻ clearly states in the Noble Qur'ān: Then would those who are followed clear themselves of those who follow (them); they would see the penalty and all relations between them would be cut off. And those who followed would say: "If only we had one more chance we would clear ourselves of them as they have cleared themselves of us." Thus will Allāh show them (the fruits of) their deeds as (nothing but) regrets nor will there be a way for them out of the fire. (2:166-167)

Ponder on this verse, and it becomes clear that on the Day of Judgement, those people who disregarded the commands of Allāh and disobeyed Him to follow and please others, will be enemies unto each other and all relations between them will be severed. On

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that day, the young will blame their elders for not letting them obey Allāh and observe hijâb, while the elders will say that they had no control over them, they only asked them to disobey, but did not force them. Then, how frustrated and helpless will those feel who had disobeyed Allāh to please others around them. How sorry and miserable will those feel when they realise that the people they had tried to please and on whose account they were to endure such grave punishment, were denying all responsibility for their wrong doing and were accusing them of being guilty instead. Let alone men, even Shaytān, on the Day of Judgement, will say:

And Shaytān will say when the matter is decided: It was Allāh Who gave you a promise of truth: I too promised but I failed in my promise to you. I had no authority over you except to call you but you listened to me: then reproach me not, but reproach your own souls. I cannot listen to your cries nor can you listen to mine. I reject your former act in associating me with Allāh. For wrongdoers there must be a Grievous Penalty. (14:22)

So, we know that on this day no one will come to anyone else's aid, and every human being will be left alone to answer for his own deeds. Even the Shaytān will say to those who followed him: "I had no real power over you, all I could do was to tempt and preach you; you chose to follow me and committed sins of your own free will. I am disgusted with you for associating me with Allāh and obeying me in His stead. You were with me in life, and you will be with me now. We will go to hell and abide there together."

For the sake of Allāh, think! Is the goal in life to gain Allāh's Pleasure, or the pleasure of a few relatives? By Allāh, those who sever their worldly relations in this life for the sake of Allāh, will attain heaven right here on earth. He, who turned away from people and cut his relations with them solely to gain Allāh's Pleasure and to avoid punishment in his final and everlasting abode in the hereafter, has attained true success. He will be rewarded with such joy and pleasure that all the joys of this world will seem insignificant and worthless by comparison. As a poet has said:

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You shouldn't care if the entire world is unhappy with you; As long as your beloved is pleased with you; Keep this in mind as you decide; What should you do and what shouldn't you do.

Let us pray to Allāh to grant us great courage and fortitude, to bless us with complete īmān, unwavering trust and belief in the Noble Qur'ān, and the ability to obey His commandments as they should be obeyed. May Allāh shower salāt and salām in great abundance, on our beloved Prophet ﷺ, the best of creation, and upon his family and his companions.

The War on Hijāb

Rasūlullāh ﷺ predicted about the later times, times such as the age wherein we find ourselves - that holding onto dīn would be like holding a burning coal in one's hand.

This is what the upholders of the Sunnah, especially those who after realisation turn from error of modernism towards the light of the Sunnah are experiencing today. From all sides they are confronted by the Satanic onslaught of forces aligned against the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ either due to misunderstanding, inadequate Islamic knowledge, un-Islamic upbringing, inferiority complex or the impact of material sciences with their roots anchored in atheistic theories and doctrines or scepticism.

In such barren grounds, such surroundings of hostility, and unfriendliness towards the beloved and sacred practices of our beloved Nabī ﷺ it becomes of fundamental importance for us to renew doubly our efforts in the noble endeavour to plant the seeds of the forgotten, trampled upon and murdered Sunnah, so that these noble institutions of piety may once again flourish with strength and glitter in the generations to come.

In raising this torch of the Sunnah, the upholders of the dīn should take reassurance and hope from the following declaration of

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Rasūlullāh ﷺ, “He who clings to my Sunnah when my Ummah is corrupt, will receive the Reward of a hundred martyrs.” (Mishkāt). Today, in these times of religious turmoil and anti-sunnatism, all lovers of the Sunnah have donned the mantle of struggle against the onslaughts of the irreligious. And, the best and the strongest form of struggle in the struggle to revive and preserve the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ is to cloak ourselves with the practices of the Sunnah. It devolves upon us to give practical expression to these Sunnah's, no matter how 'little' or how 'insignificant' they may seem to the man drowned in the deception of this worldly life.

One such Sunnah and requisite of our beautiful dīn is the Islamic headgear and hijāb. The hijāb has elevated women to the peak of respect and has saved a woman from disgrace and humiliation, given her a chance to be treated like an honourable human being and not a mere sex object for the lustful desire of bestial miscreants.

Banning hijāb is banning modesty and decency. There is no doubt that those behind it have the fervour of a crusader.

Spiritual Purity

Hijāb is a Divine imposition calculated for the maintenance of Islamic human fibre. This fibre remains intact and develops only with spiritual purity. Without hijāb spiritual purity and progress are impossible-unattainable goals.

Thus spiritual and moral purification are the goals of hijāb. When the Qur'ānic law of hijāb is abandoned 'rijz' (filth and immorality) becomes the order of the day. The catastrophic consequences of immorality, moral filth are too glaring and prevalent to require any elucidation. Every intelligent person will acknowledge that the physical diseases stemming from promiscuity and the ascendance of vices pertaining to sexual misconduct are the direct products of hijāb abandonment.

May Allāh ﷻ make us among those who seek to imitate the sacred life and example of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Āmīn.

O Concealed Jewel, O Protected Rose¹⁰

The following message is to you, the Cultivator of generations, the Producer of great Men. Realize your value and worth in Islam.

1. Have you seen the Jewel? Why is it that some people love it while it is simply a stone? It is because it is not so easy to see it, nor can you touch it except by paying an exorbitant price. Similar is the case of a woman - it is forbidden for a man to see her or touch her in order that he does not dishonour her. She is like an untouched (pure) jewel, which is affected by the least touch.
2. Have you seen how a rose wilts, withers, and loses its lustre and beauty if it is touched too much? Likewise, the woman is not allowed to be touched except by one in a lawful relationship of marriage. And whoever attempts to touch her - unlawfully - will earn a severe punishment or death.
3. Do you know the punishment for one who violates the marriage trust and cheats on his wife? The penalty is death, since he has fallen short in regards to the jewel which is with him, in addition to transgressing the rights of others.
4. Have you seen a jewel searching for a person (to possess it)? The same is the case of a woman, like a precious jewel, she is sought out, not the seeker.
5. Consider the ruler or head of state - if everyone were able to speak to him directly and sit in his presence, he would not be held in awe, nor possess the same prestige and status amongst the people that he has. Similarly, the woman is like a noble queen. It is not the right of every person to speak to her directly or sit in her presence; this is something allowed to the select few.
6. Allāh ﷻ has created the male strong of body in order that he may go out and earn his livelihood, even in difficult circumstances. This is so that he may serve the women and children of his family. As for the woman, she has been created gentle, soft and sensitive, so that she may cultivate the future generations. The man goes out and works with the natural elements, while the woman deals with the human being (raising the children).

¹⁰ Author unknown- Abridged and edited from the Internet

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7. What do you think will happen if a lion and gazelle were placed together in one place? Is it possible for them to co-exist? Obviously not! Likewise it is of necessity that the man be separated from the woman, in the interest of the woman. She is beautiful, attractive and weak. Hence, the strong will overcome and devour her and violate her chastity- even if she were not willing.
8. The woman who performs any good action is entitled to and given the same reward as the man.
9. The woman is excused from certain religious obligations during the post-child birth and menstrual periods, since these conditions are a cause of weakness and hence, she is in need of rest and relaxation.
10. If a woman dies while giving birth, she is rewarded with the highest station of Jannah.
11. The person who is killed defending his mother, wife, daughter or sister will be rewarded with the highest station in Jannah.
12. It is permissible for a woman to seek separation from her husband if he has failed to fulfil her marital rights.
13. Is there anything more valuable to the human being than his own life? Indeed, the honour and dignity of women is more valuable, precious and important to the Muslim than his own life.
14. It is permissible for a woman to remarry - whomsoever she desires - if she is divorced from her husband or widowed.
15. If a woman possesses wealth, she is free to use it in any lawful way, without permission of anyone i.e. father, husband or others (even though it is preferable to consult with them before spending). It is obligatory on the man to spend his wealth for the maintenance - housing, food, etc. - of those under his care including his mother, wife and daughter, even if he does not desire to do so and even if she is wealthy.
16. The woman has a right to the inheritance of her relative - at the time of his death - even if he does not desire that she receive it.
17. The mother has been given preference over the father - three times over - concerning their right to kindness and benevolence from their children. Whoever truly desires Jannah should know that it lies at the feet of his mother.

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18. Whoever has daughters and treats them well – they will be a cause of him being screened from the hell-fire.

19. If a man kills a woman intentionally, he no longer deserves to live and will be killed (under Islamic law), even if the victim was his wife. Similarly he will be killed if he had to violate the chastity of any woman by raping her.

20. Nabī ﷺ said, “The best of you are those who are best in the treatment of their wives.” He ﷺ also said, “No one honours a woman except an honourable man. And no one humiliates her or holds her in contempt except one who is wicked, vile, evil and depraved.”

With these words I address you – as someone of intelligence

Is There any Greater Honour than This?

Distorted Image of Muslim Women

Since the height of the feminist movement in the late 70's there has been a magnifying glass placed over the status of Muslim women. Unfortunately, the magnifying glass that has been used is an unusual one. Unusual in the sense that it is very selective about which items it will magnify; other items it will distort to such a degree that they will no longer look familiar. I remember once reading in an “in depth” article about the lives of Muslim women. This article “explained” that at any time a man can divorce his wife by simply stating “I divorce you, I divorce you, I divorce you”. This article can lead anyone ignorant of the Islamic ruling regarding divorce to believe that in less than five seconds the woman is left with no husband and is left to care for herself (and possibly children) by any means necessary. The question that immediately popped up in my mind was, “Did the author innocently write that out of sincere ignorance or was it another of the many attempts to degrade the religion of Islam and its followers (Muslims)?” It may be my own paranoia, but I tend to believe it was the latter of the two.

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The truth of the matter is that Islam has the most humane and most just system of divorce that exists. Firstly, many options are taken and tried before coming to the decision of the divorce. If the man and woman decide that they can no longer live together successfully as a husband and wife, the husband (in most cases, not always) pronounces the divorce by saying “I divorce you”. At this point the waiting period begins. The waiting period lasts for three menstrual cycles to assure the woman is not pregnant. This period allows the couple time to think about what they are doing and if this is what they really want to do. There are no lawyers involved to antagonise an already delicate situation. In the case that it is realised, that the woman is pregnant, the waiting period lasts the entire time she is pregnant. During the waiting period (whether the woman is pregnant or not) the man is obligated to provide food, clothing and shelter to the woman as he did before the divorce pronouncement. If the couple carries the divorce through to the birth of the child and the woman suckles the baby, the man is obligated to feed and clothe both his ex-wife for the time the woman suckles (the maximum being two years). After this weaning, the child will be provided for by the father until he/she is no longer in need of support.

It is quite ironic that in such an “advanced society” as America, there are divorce cases in which women are being forced to pay alimony to their ex-husbands. Can this and many other things we know about the American system of divorce compare to the Islamic system of divorce?

I have also read stories wherein it is stated that women are forced to marry men without their consent. This in no way resembles the marriage system in Islam. In Islam the woman marries the man of her choice. She may even marry someone that her mother and/or father objects to. The point is that it is the woman who makes the final decision as to whom she will marry. Once the man and the woman decide that they are interested in one another for marriage, a dowry is decided upon. A dowry is not a bride’s price but, it is a gift from the groom to the bride. They agree upon a gift that is affordable by the groom. In the time of the Prophet ﷺ, often things

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such as livestock and money were given. This is a wise decision in the event that a woman becomes divorced or widowed; she has some financial security to fall back on even if it is for a limited amount of time. Once the man and woman are married, the man is required to clothe, feed, shelter and educate her (or allow her to be educated) in the same manner as he does himself.

The last distorted image that I will cover is that of the Muslim women's dress. The western influenced media portrays our dress to be outdated and oppressive. Needless to say however, I differ with these adjectives. Our dress code does not hinder us from doing anything productive in our lives. Muslim women maintain a variety of jobs [under necessity], none of which are devalued nor hampered due to their dress code. And as for the timing of Muslims women's dress during these contemporary times, it seems most appropriate due to decreasing morals in the world today.

For those who say that Islamic dress is outdated, they speak from great ignorance. The decreasing morality and trials of this time makes hijâb even more in need. More than ever before, sex crimes are rampant. Although this society tells women they can wear what they want to wear, anytime a rape occurs the woman is the one put on trial and one of the first questions is, "What were you wearing?" This concept seems as though it is a set up directed against the so called contemporary woman. Also there is a direct correlation between the respect a man has for a woman and the amount of her body she displays flauntingly.

In conclusion, I hope this article helped to clear up some distorted/misunderstood aspects of Islam and women. Women in Islam are respected and held in high regard. We will never find success and/or solutions to our problems until we realise that Allâh ﷻ knows best and that this disbelieving society will ruin itself.

Movement of Women's Freedom and its Effects in Egypt

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A clear example of the strong effects of western culture and lifestyle regarding freedom of women is found in the book of a famous Egyptian, Naqīb Qāsim Amīn entitled *Tahrīr ul Mar'ati* (Freedom of women). He has also written another book entitled '*Al Mar'at ul Jā'idah* (The modern woman)

(Note: Published in 1900 – the famous Egyptian Fadīl Farīdī Wajbī wrote an answer to this book entitled '*Al Mar'at ul Muslimah*' (The Muslim woman), Abul Kalām Āzādī, during his younger days, translated it into Urdu).

In the first book, the author claims that by calling towards *be-pardagī* (unveiling of one), there is no opposition to *dīn*. He explains that Islam is made up of a few principles and general boundaries. If its duty was to explain subsidiary laws and matters, then it would not have the ability of being a universal law which would be suitable for all times and nations. Those laws of *sharī'ah* based on customary practises and habits can be changed according to conditions and times. The only demand of the *sharī'ah* is that there should not be such a change or alteration in it by which any of its basic matters and foundation is affected and damaged.

The author of this book has discussed four subjects

- (1) *Pardah*
- (2) Women taking part in general life
- (3) Number of wives
- (4) *Talāq* (divorce)

In the four subjects, he has chosen the pathway of the west, and he has forwarded the claim that this is the path and way of Islam.

The deep influence of western education, western culture and its values is more apparent in his other book "*The modern woman*". In this book, the author has chosen a modern western manner of reasoning and argumentation which destroys all those beliefs and accepted axioms which are not aided by reality or experience, whether these beliefs and axioms have reached by *dīn* or by any other means. This is that method which the western people call scientific. At the end of this book, the author has given open

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invitation to adopt the ways of the western civilization and society. Criticizing the pride of the Muslims and Egyptians over their culture, way of life and their history, he writes,

“This is our sickness which has to be cured first. The only cure is that we make our coming generation aware of the conditions of western civilization, and enlighten them on its principles and secondary matter. When that time comes (which is not far off), then the reality will become bright like the sun. At this time, we will come to know the value of the western civilization. Then we will be convinced that no reformation can take place as long as it is not based on modern western knowledge and as long as people’s conditions do not become subservient to this knowledge, whether it is with regards to materialism or character. We see that the present advanced nations; in spite of being different in nationality, language, religion and homeland; are so similar to one another on their form of government, system, justice, family life, manner of upbringing, language, writing, manner of building and even in basic habits, clothing, greeting and eating and drinking. Based on this, we present the western people as an example, we give emphasis on following them; and based on this, we invite all the people of our country to study the lives of the western women. (*The Modern Woman*, pp. 185, 186)

Both these books have been well-accepted by the modernists of Egypt. The result of the zeal shown by modernists in publishing them and taking part in movements for women rights is that a strong wave of freedom of women and be-pardagī was created. The custom of intermingling of men and women began. To attain education, Egyptian girls and students began journeying to Europe and America. A professor of the Alexandria University Doctor Muḥammad Husayn wrote in his recent well-researched book,

“The inclination towards and unveiling of women which is a result of this movement and call has frightened people with Islamic thought. They have severely disliked the changes which have occurred with the women’s conditions as well as the enthusiasm which is been created of rebelliousness against the authority of the

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husband and father and which is contrary to old-fashioned character and custom. In shock and surprise, they see the changing of clothing from the loose-fitting and concealing Egyptian clothing to the tight and open western clothing; which are now being accepted so quickly by women, which could not have been imagined before. (*Ittijāhāt ul wataniyya fil ādāb il mu'āsir, vol.2 p. 235*)

He writes, mentioning those women who have taken a special inclination in this movement and who have even journeyed to America and Europe in this regard, “The wife of Ali Bāshā Sha'rāwī, Hadyi Sha'rāwī has been in the forefront in the women's liberation movement. She has been so audacious that she has done such actions which till now no Muslim women ever had the courage to do. To study the lives of the western women, she has journeyed to Paris and America. She speaks to reporters informally and clearly states her free thoughts and impressions. (*Ittijāhāt ul wataniyya fil ādāb il mu'āsir, vol.2 p. 235*)

May Allāh ﷻ, through His infinite mercy grant us the ability to practise on every command of His and to follow the most wonderful teachings of His beloved messenger ﷺ! May Allāh ﷻ accept this work and make it a means of guidance for all, a means of attaining His pleasure and salvation in the hereafter for the compiler, his parents, his teachers, his spiritual guide, his family members and the whole ummah! Āmīn

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