

I. Reply to Hijab Issues

A. Critique About Hijab

- i. Why do people say that Islam has double standards in Hijab issues.

The perception of double standards in Islam regarding the Hijab arises from the differing dress codes prescribed for men and women. Critics argue that these differences lead to unequal treatment, with women facing more stringent requirements.

Further complicating the issue is the perception that Hijab may obscure the talents and abilities of women by focusing on their appearance rather than their skills and contributions. This viewpoint suggests that covering up hides a woman's potential and hinders her contributions to society.

- ii. Why do people say that Hijab is a form of oppression.

Some view the Hijab as a form of oppression because they believe it imposes restrictions on women's freedom and visibility in society. They think that women are forced to wear the Hijab even if they don't want to. This perspective is often informed by instances where women are compelled to wear the Hijab by law or social pressure, which can be seen as a form of control over women's bodies and choices.

On the other hand, many argue that wearing the Hijab is a personal choice and an expression of faith, identity, and autonomy. They contend that the Hijab can be empowering, allowing women to define their own standards of modesty and resist objectification. It's also important to recognize that experiences with the Hijab vary greatly among individuals and cultures, and it's not universally perceived as oppressive.

B. Hijab is Obligatory in Islam.

The Hijab is considered a Fard (obligatory) act of worship. The evidence for its obligation comes from both the Quran and the Sunnah, as well as the consensus among Muslim scholars throughout history and the continuous practice since the time of the Prophet Muhammad until today. The evidence from Quran is the following three verses:

- i. Evidence from Quran

1. The verse from the Quran, [Al-Noor, 24:31], prescribes that a woman's veil, known as a Khimar in Arabic, should be of sufficient length to cover the neck and the upper chest area, traditionally referred to as the cleavage. The term 'Khimar' translates to a head cover, indicating that prior to the revelation of this verse, it was customary for women to cover only their heads with such a garment. The verse further delineates the individuals before whom a woman may unveil, listing

those to whom she is not required to wear her Hijab. Additionally, the verse advises women who wear anklets to walk in a manner that prevents the anklets from making noise, thereby drawing attention. This directive emphasizes modesty and discretion in both attire and behavior.

The verse states “And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts [guard modesty], and not to reveal their adornments except what appears thereof [what is traditionally visible], and to draw their veils over their chests [cover cleavage and the neck] and not to reveal their adornments except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, or their women [female companions], or those whom their right hands possess [male and female slaves], or male attendants with no physical desire [very old men], or children who are still unaware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance all together, O believers, that you may succeed.”

2. The verse from the Quran [Al-Ahzab, 33:59] prescribed a Jilbab (cloak or long robe) that is long enough to cover the entire legs. “O Prophet! tell your wives, your daughters and the believers' women to bring down over themselves their Jilbab. This will make it more likely that they will be recognized and not harassed. God is the All-Forgiving, the Mercy-giver.”
3. The verse from the Quran [Al-Noor, 24:60] specifies an exception for very old women not to wear Hijab provided that they wouldn't decorate themselves. The verse also states that it is better if they continue wearing the Hijab. “And women of old age who are too old to get married, there is no blame upon them for putting aside their outer garments [Hijab] but provided that they do not displaying adornment. But to modestly refrain from that is better for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.”

ii. Evidence from Sunnah (Hadith).

1. Narrated by Aisha, the mother of the believers. It mentions an incident where Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr, came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not wearing proper clothing. The Prophet then advised her that after reaching the age of puberty, a woman should only show her face and hands. He said, "O Asma, when a woman reaches the age of puberty, it is not proper for her to show anything but this and this," and he pointed to his face and hands. This hadith is often cited in discussions about the Islamic dress code for women. Fn¹.
2. The Hadith about the incident that led to the revelation of the verses of Al-Hijab. A'isha reported that the wives of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to go out in the cover of night when they went to open fields (in the outskirts of Medina) for easing themselves. 'Umar bin Khattab used to say: Allah's Messenger, ask your ladies to observe veil, but Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not do that. So

¹ Depending on the numbering system: Sunan Abi Dawud Hadith 4104. OR Book 34, Hadith 85. OR Book 33, Hadith 4092. The Hadith is Mursal but Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is Sahih. It was also Abu Dawood in Mishkat Al-Masabih 4372. OR Book 22, hadith 63.

there went out Sauda, daughter of Zam'a, the wife of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), during one of the nights when it was dark. She was a tall statured lady. 'Umar called her saying: Sauda, we recognize you. (He did this with the hope that the verses pertaining to veil would be revealed.) 'A'isha said: Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, then revealed the verses pertaining to veil. fn²

3. Aisha (RA) reported: "The verse 'and let them draw their Khimar over their upper chest area' (Quran 24:31) was revealed, and believing women cut their waist sheets short and made headcovers from them." fn³

iii. Hijab is part of the Christian traditions as well

1. Pictures of Mary (Mariam), the mother of Jesus, show here wearing Hijab.
2. Nuns wear Hijab.

iv. Niqab (face cover) is recommended but not mandatory.

The evidence for the obligation of the Niqab is not conclusive: Many scholars agree that the evidence for the obligation of the Niqab is not conclusive and can be interpreted in other ways.

1. Schools of Fiqh that consider the Niqab obligatory:

- Hanabali: The Hanabali school of thought considers the Niqab obligatory for free adult women.
- Some Maliki scholars: Some Maliki scholars, such as Imam Malik ibn Anas, also consider the Niqab obligatory for free adult women.

2. Schools of thought that consider the Niqab recommended:

- Hanafi: The Hanafi school of thought considers the Niqab recommended for women, but not obligatory.
- Shafi'i: The Shafi'i school of thought also considers the Niqab recommended for women, but not obligatory.

² Depending on the numbering system: Sahih Muslim Book 39, chapter 7, hadith 25. OR book 26, Hadith 5397 USC-MSA numbering system.

³ Depending on the numbering system: Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 4758. OR book 35, Hadith 280. OR Volume 1, book 60, Hadith 281 USC-MSA numbering system.

C. Women Nature.

i. Feminine side and professional side in Women.

Women possess multifaceted identities, including aspects that are personal, such as those shared in intimate relationships (feminine side), and those that are professional, contributing to society through various roles like nursing and education. In Islam, there is an emphasis on separating the personal aspects of a woman's identity from her professional life. Islam obligates modesty and prohibit the commercialization of a woman's appearance. Commercials and advertisements that utilizes the women physical appearance to attract customers are prohibited in Islam.

ii. Responsibilities of men and women.

While women are obligated to dress modestly, men are also obligated to lower their gaze. In [Al-Noor, 24:30] "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things such as women physical appearance), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily Allah is aware of what they do."

iii. Shytan uses the physical appearance of women to generate lust.

While the men have the obligation of lowering their gazes and not look at women physical appearance, women are also obligated not to propagate unethical temptation by using the physical appearance to arouse men. Shytan doesn't spare an opportunity to generate Haram lust. He takes advantage of women who are not dressed modestly and men who don't lower their gaze to generate the unethical temptations.

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud that the Prophet Muhammad that says: "The woman is an 'Awrah (thing to be covered), so when she goes out, the devil beautifies her to men (uses her physical appearance to arouse men)." fn⁴

D. Wisdom Behind the Hijab.

i. A woman's worth lies in her talents and contributions to society, not her physical attributes.

In some narratives, the Hijab is seen as a barrier to the objectification of women, contrasting with Western norms where a woman's value is often associated with her physical appearance. Islam

⁴ Narrated in Al-Tirmidhi; Ibn Khuzaymah; Ibn Hibban; Al-Tabarani's Mu'jam al-Kabir, al-Awsat, and al-Bazzar; Ibn Abi Shaybah.

promotes the idea that a woman's worth lies in her talents and contributions to society, not her physical attributes and women should not be looked at as lust objects.

ii. Islamic Sharia protects the public space.

Like air pollution and noise pollution, Sharia does protect the public space from image pollution. One source of image pollution is a woman wearing little cloths advertising a product. They use women physical features to appeal to men. The implicit message is that buy the product and get the girl for free.

iii. The message communicated in high school culture regarding the physical appearance.

The message communicated in high school culture regarding physical appearance can be quite complex. Generally, there is a significant emphasis on physical appearance as a form of nonverbal communication and a way to express individual identity. This includes attributes such as hair, clothing, body type, and personal grooming. How one looks can convey as much about a person as what they say.

In high school culture, there can be implicit messages that suggest certain standards of beauty and attractiveness, often influenced by media and societal norms. These standards can affect students' self-esteem and social interactions. The pressure to conform to these standards can be intense, leading to a focus on physical appearance that might overshadow other qualities and contributions.

Moreover, expressions like "Beauty is only skin deep" and "Don't judge a book by its cover" highlight the tension between the importance of physical appearance and the recognition that it's not the most important aspect of a person. Despite these sayings, the reality in many high school cultures is that appearance often plays a significant role in how individuals are perceived and treated.

iv. Adolescent girls' death due to self-starvation.

Eating disorders, including those stemming from a desire to meet certain body standards, are serious and can be life-threatening. According to the National Eating Disorders Association, every 52 minutes, one person dies as a direct consequence of an eating disorder. For young women aged 15 to 24 who suffer from anorexia nervosa (self-starvation), the mortality rate is 12 times higher than the death rate of all other causes of death. Eating disorders are most common among adolescent females who suffer the pressure of meeting beauty standards.

v. Lines of defense against fornication and adultery.

The verse from Al-Isra (17:32) advises believers to avoid even nearing the act of adultery, emphasizing that it's not just the act itself but the path leading to it that should be avoided. This is because the steps leading to adultery can be gradual and subtle, making it important to maintain

boundaries that prevent one from getting close to committing the act. In other words, Islam teaches that we don't wait to the last minutes where the boy and the girl are running at full speed to the edge of the cliff and then we ask them to make a sudden stop to avoid falling from the cliff edge.

In this context, Islam establishes several preventive measures to safeguard individuals from falling into adultery. These measures include encouraging modesty and shyness, advocating for lowering the gaze to avoid temptation, prohibiting a non-related male and female from being alone together in seclusion, discouraging flirtatious behavior, and upholding the practice of wearing the hijab. These guidelines serve as a series of barriers, making it more challenging to cross into the territory of sinful behavior.

Ayat that order the lowering of the gaze, fear of Allah, Hadith of No Khlowa (being alone in a private place) is allowed.

E. Stories Related to the wisdom behind the Hijab.

i. The story of the reporter that won the award.

Once a female reporter won an award that made her male coworkers jealous. In order to put her down they said that she won the award because she is talented and sexy, hinting that she has sexual appearance and they don't have the same, and this is why she got the award. The female reporter got offended and rightly countered that she got the award because of her talent and it has nothing to do with her feminine side.

ii. The story of the Muslim woman looking for a job.

A qualified Muslim woman was struggling to find a job. Discouraged, she sought help from an employment agent, who happened to be a woman. Unfortunately, the agent made insensitive remarks about the woman's ability to compete with male candidates. The agent said to the Muslim woman "why would an employer hire you instead of hiring a man who can work harder and not be disturbed by pregnancy or going through her menstrual cycles." The agent suggested changing her appearance to improve her chances by having a nice haircut, wear a dress that shows her legs and cleavage. The Muslim woman found these advises deeply offensive. She firmly countered that she wanted to be judged based on her skills and experience, not her attire. She emphasized that a good employer would focus on her qualifications, symbolized by pointing to her head. Her appearance, symbolized by a gesture mimicking a hijab, were irrelevant to her ability to excel. The Muslim woman further said that the one way this is guaranteed is that if the employer hires me with my Hijab. He shouldn't be looking here and the Muslim woman pointing to her chest, and shouldn't be looking down her and she pointed to her legs. These are none of his business, she continued. I want him to look here and she pointed to her head and made parenthesis around her head with her two hands that looked like a hijab and the parentheses indicated the focus of the employer on what is inside the head.

- iii. Professor's comments about hiring a beautiful secretary.

During a discussion about project costs, the professor mentioned having a beautiful female administrative assistant is part of the fixed cost. After class, a group of female students approached the professor to express their discomfort with how some comments might be interpreted as insulting to women because they indicate that women are hired because of their physical appearance (lust objects).

- iv. Advertising for bulldozers.

Two friends, one Muslim and one white American, were driving down the freeway when they saw a large billboard advertising bulldozers. The billboard featured an almost naked pretty woman. The Muslim friend expressed confusion about the connection between the heavy construction machine and the body of the woman. The white American friend explained that the ad might be using a suggestive image to imply that buying a bulldozer makes you more attractive.

F. Danger of Adultery and Fornication.

- i. It is against equality between males and females

Female are the ones who suffer the consequences of the acts.

- ii. Why buy the cow if you can get the milk for free.

Divorce is expensive. Let us have fun without worrying about marriage or divorce.

Alex as a name for female or male use of neutral names to hide the gender.

Niqab is not good in the west. The Halloween joke.

Because of physical appearance, pretty women may be promoted over talented ones. Explain.

