



اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجُهُمْ

Hijab, The Muslim Women's Dress, Islamic or Cultural?

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Preserve your tongue from idle talk because majority of the sins committed by the son of Adam is due to the tongue only. No other part of the body commits more sins than the tongue.

Silence is one of the gates of wisdom.

(Usul-e-Kafi)

Paper No. 2

Why Hijab?

One of the many questions that is asked is why does Islam make *hijab* mandatory for women? Islam has introduced *hijab* as part of the decency and modesty in interaction between members of the opposite sex. Verse 59 of chapter 33 gives a very good reason; it says,

"This is more appropriate so that they may be known [as Muslim women] and thus not be harassed [or molested]."

Men, whether they confess it or not, are slaves of lust and desire.

- *Hijab* protects women from such men; it symbolizes that she has been sanctified to one man only and is off-limit to all others.
- *Hijab* contributes to the stability and preservation of marriage and family by eliminating the chances of extramarital affairs.
- Finally, it compels men to focus on the real personality of the woman and de-emphasizes her physical beauty. It puts the woman in control of strangers' reaction to her.

Common Questions about Hijab and Related Issues

1. Meaning of Casting Down

What "casting down the glances" mean?

It means that a person should not look at the member of the opposite sex except for those parts that may be uncovered.

So, for instance, a man is allowed to look at the face and hands of a non-mahram lady who is not related to him provided it is not done in with a lustful intention. ("Mahram" means person in whose presence *hijab* is not required. See the list at end of this section.)

2. Shaking hands

Is it permissible to **shake hands** with a person of opposite sex?

If the person is mahram, then it is permissible. But if the person is non-mahram, then it is forbidden.

3. Beautification of Women

Is a woman allowed to line eyes with **kohl**, to put **mascara** on her eyelashes, and to wear **rings** in both hands?

A woman is allowed to put kohl or similar cosmetics on her eyelashes and also to wear rings provided it is not done with the intention of drawing lustful attention of men towards herself.

4. Exposing the Chin

A vast majority of Muslim women who observe *hijab* are used to keeping their chins and a small part of the **under chin** exposed while they cover the neck. Is this permissible? And how big an area of the face can women expose; are the ears included in that?

The ears are not part of the face, therefore it is obligatory to cover them. As for the part of the chin and the under chin that is seen when putting on the common head scarf, it is to be considered as part of the face and, therefore, can be exposed.

To be continued next week, Insha'Allah
