



اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجَّهُمْ

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

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Imam al-Hasan ('a.s.) said, 'He who seeks to please Allah at the expense of displeasing people, Allah suffices him in everything including his affairs with people. But the one who seeks to please people at the expense of Allah's displeasure, Allah relegates him to those very people.' [Bihar al-Anwar, v. 71, p. 208, no. 17]

Paper No. 1

The Qur'an and Hijab

Islam has strongly emphasized the concept of decency and modesty in the interaction between members of the opposite sex. Dress code is part of that overall teaching. There are two verses in the Qur'an in which Almighty Allah talks about the issue of decency and *hijab* as defined earlier.

The First Verse

In Chapter 24 known as an-Nur (the Light), in verse 30, Allah commands Prophet Muhammad as follows:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغْضُبُوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ، ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ.

"Say to the believing men that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste). This is better for them."

This is a command to Muslim men that they should not lustfully look at women (other than their own wives); and in order to prevent any possibility of temptation, they are required to cast their glances downwards. This is known as "hijab of the eyes".

The Second Verse

Then in the next verse, Allah commands the Prophet to address the women:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُبْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ...

"Say to the believing women that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste)..."

This is a similar command as given to the men in the previous verse regarding "hijab of the eyes".

This *hijab of eyes* is similar to the teaching of Jesus where he says, "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, you shall not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." (The Gospel of Matthew, chap. 5, verses 27-28.) So if you see a Muslim casting his/her eyes downwards when he/she is talking to a member of opposite sex, this should not be considered as rude or an indication of lack of confidence — he/she is just abiding by the Qur'anic as well as Biblical teaching.
