

HIJAAB FOR WOMEN

Question:

Why does Islam degrade women by keeping them behind the veil?

Answer:

The status of women in Islam is often the target of attacks in the secular media. The hijab or the Islamic dress is cited by many as an example of the subjugation of women under Islamic law. Before we analyze the reasoning behind the religiously mandated hizaab, let us first study the status of women in societies before the advent of Islam

1. In the past women were degraded and used as objects of lust

The following examples from history amply illustrate the fact that the status of women in earlier civilizations was very low to the extent that they were denied basic human dignity:

1. Babylonian Civilization:

The women were degraded and were denied all rights under the Babylonian law. If a man murdered a woman, instead of him being punished, his wife was put to death.

2. Greek Civilization:

Greek Civilization is considered the most glorious of all ancient civilizations. Under this very glorious system, women were deprived of all rights and were looked down upon. In Greek mythology, an imaginary woman called Pandora is the root cause of misfortune of human beings. The Greeks considered women to be subhuman and inferior to men. Though chastity of women was precious, and women were held in high esteem, the Greeks were later overwhelmed by ego and sexual perversions. Prostitution became a regular practice amongst all classes of Greek society.

3. Roman Civilization:

When Roman Civilization was at the zenith of its "glory", a man even had the right to take the life of his wife. Prostitution and nudity were common amongst the Romans.

4. Egyptian Civilization:

The Egyptian considered women evil and as a sign of a devil.

5. Pre-Islamic Arabia:

Before Islam spread in Arabia, the Arabs looked down upon women and very often when a female child was born, she was buried alive.

2. Islam uplifted women and gave them equality and expects them to maintain their status.

Islam uplifted the status of women and granted them their just rights 1400 years ago. Islam expects women to maintain their status.

Hijaab for men

People usually only discuss hijab in the context of women. However, in the Glorious Quran, Allah (swt) first mentions hijab for men before hijab for the women. The Quran mentions in Surah Noor:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do." [Al-Quran 24:30]

The moment a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he should lower his gaze.

Hijaab for women.

The next verse of Surah Noor, says:

" And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands fathers, their sons..." [Al-Quran 24:31]

3. Six criteria for Hijaab.

According to Quran and Sunnah there are basically six criteria for observing hijab:

1. Extent:

The first criterion is the extent of the body that should be covered. This is different for men and women. The extent of covering obligatory on the male is to cover the body at least from the navel to the knees. For women, the extent of covering obligatory is to cover the complete body except the face and the hands upto the wrist. If they wish to, they can cover even these parts of the body. Some scholars of Islam insist that the face and the hands are part of the obligatory extent of hijaab.

All the remaining five criteria are the same for men and women.

2. The clothes worn should be loose and should not reveal the figure.
3. The clothes worn should not be transparent such that one can see through them.
4. The clothes worn should not be so glamorous as to attract the opposite sex.
5. The clothes worn should not resemble that of the opposite sex.
6. The clothes worn should not resemble that of the unbelievers i.e. they should not wear clothes that are specifically identities or symbols of the unbelievers religions.

4. Hijab includes conduct and behaviour among other things

Complete hijab, besides the six criteria of clothing, also includes the moral conduct, behaviour, attitude and intention of the individual. A person only fulfilling the criteria of hijab of the clothes is observing hijab in a limited sense. Hijab of the clothes should be accompanied by hijab of the eyes, hijab of the heart, hijab of thought and hijab of intention. It also includes the way a person walks, the way a person talks, the way he behaves, etc.

5. Hijab prevents molestation

The reason why Hijab is prescribed for women is mentioned in the Quran in the following verses of Surah Al-Ahzab:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad); that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [Al-Quran 33:59]

The Quran says that Hijab has been prescribed for the women so that they are recognized as modest women and this will also prevent them from being molested.

6. Example of twin sisters

Suppose two sisters who are twins, and who are equally beautiful, walk down the street. One of them is attired in the Islamic hijab i.e. the complete body is covered, except for the face and the hands up to the wrists. The other sister is wearing western clothes, a mini skirt or shorts. Just around the corner there is a hooligan or ruffian who is waiting for a catch, to tease a girl. Whom will he tease? The girl wearing the Islamic Hijaab or the girl wearing the skirt or the mini? Naturally he will tease the girl wearing the skirt or the mini. Such dresses are an indirect invitation to the opposite sex for teasing and molestation. The Quran rightly says that hijab prevents women from being molested.

7. Capital punishment for the rapists

Under the Islamic shariah, a man convicted of having raped a woman, is given capital punishment. Many are astonished at this harsh sentence. Some even say that Islam is a ruthless, barbaric religion! I have asked a simple question to hundreds of non-Muslim men. Suppose, God forbid, someone rapes your wife, your mother or your sister. You are made the judge and the rapist is brought in front of you. What punishment would you give him? All of them said they would put him to death. Some went to the extent of saying they would torture him to death. To them I ask, if someone rapes your wife or your mother you want to put him to death. But if the same crime is committed on somebody else wife or daughter you say capital punishment is barbaric. Why should there be double standards?

8. Western society falsely claims to have uplifted women

Western talk of womens liberalization is nothing but a disguised form of exploitation of her body, degradation of her soul, and deprivation of her honour. Western society claims to have uplifted women. On the contrary it has actually degraded them to the status of concubines, mistresses and society butterflies who are mere tools in the hands of pleasure seekers and sex marketeers, hidden behind the colourful screen of art and culture.

9. USA has one of the highest rates of rape

United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. It also has one of the highest rates of rape in any country in the world. According to a FBI report, in the year 1990, every day on an average 1756 cases of rape were committed in U.S.A alone. Later another report said that on an average everyday 1900 cases of rapes are committed in USA. The year was not

mentioned. May be it was 1992 or 1993. May be the Americans got bolder in the following years.

Consider a scenario where the Islamic hijab is followed in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic hijab, that is the complete body is covered except the face and the hands upto the wrist. After this if any man commits rape he is given capital punishment. I ask you, in such a scenario, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same, or will it decrease?

10. Implementation of Islamic Shariah will reduce the rate of rapes

Naturally as soon as Islamic Shariah is implemented positive results will be inevitable. If Islamic Shariah is implemented in any part of the world, whether it is America or Europe, society will breathe easier. Hijab does not degrade a woman but uplifts a woman and protects her modesty and chastity.