

A WOMAN'S DRESS: THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Islam as a religion of peace teaches modesty and moderation in whatever muslim do. This paper focus mainly on how Muslim women should dress up in global word. It also mentions the prohibited items for muslim women such as surgeries for beautification, reshaping noses and breast. In conclusion, the paper advice that if veiling system is embraced it will check high rates of immoralities, adulteries, fornication, prostitution as well protect women against indiscriminate free-mixing of pious that is prevalent in our society.

Keywords: Woman, Dress, Islamic, perspective

INTRODUCTION

Islam being a modest-religion teaches modesty and moderation in whatever a Muslim does. Hence, it teaches Muslims to dress modestly by covering almost all parts of their body.

Every tribe or nation has its own distinctive culture with regard to their ways of dressing. These differences are due largely to the different climatic conditions, traditional heritage, professional ethics and social exposure of each tribe, nation and profession. For example, the Europeans would prefer to appear always in suit while the Arabs would opt for white *Jalabiya* and *Mindil* similarly, the Hausa's and the Yoruba would gorgeously dress in big *Agbada* or *Babariga* with a cap to match, while the Ibos would put on *Buba*, tie wrapper to their waist and put hats on their heads with feathers as mark of honour, dignity and distinction. In a likewise manner, a banker will use tie, while medical doctor will use a white pull-over his dress.

It is therefore, erroneous to describe the Arabs mode of dress as the only acceptable Islamic mode of dressing and those of other tribe un-Islamic. Precisely, there is no Islamic dress than what modestly cover the nakedness of a woman.

HOW WOMAN SHOULD BE DRESSED IN ISLAM

Despite the fact that Islam has restrained its followers from indulging in luxuries and ornamentation and leads them towards virtues, spiritualism and blessings in the next world. It has also prohibited monastic life and abstention from the blessings of this world.

A woman may dress privately to please herself or her husband, but when she goes out or when other men than her close relatives are present. Islam makes it *haram* for woman to wear clothes which fail to cover almost all the both and which are transparent, revealing what is underneath. It is likewise *haram* to wear tightly fitting clothes which delineate the parts of the body, especially those parts which are sexually attractive. Abu Hurarah narrated that the messenger of God (peace be on him) said

I will not be a witness for two types of people who are destined for the fire people with whips like tails of Cows, who beat the people (i.e. tyrannical who are the enemies of their own people) and woman who although clothed are yet naked, seducing and being seducing. Their hair styled like tilted humps of camels. These will not enter the Garden nor will its fragrance even reach them, although its fragrance reaches a very great distance.

The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) described such women as being clothes, yet naked, since their clothing, being transparent and fine does not do the job of concealing but is rather intended to reveal it such is the dress of the woman of present day.

The veil is called *Hijab* in Arabic and serves as protection for woman against unwanted approaches. It will also serve as a means of reducing the temptation to *zina*.

The Holy Prophet has reported by Aishat said that Asma, daughter of Abubakar came to see the prophet with a thin cloth over her. The prophet turned aside from her: Saying! "O Asma when a woman reaches puberty it is not good that any part of her (body) should be seen except this and this" (pointing to his face and hands) (Hadith from Abu Daud).

It is also forbidden in Islam for woman to use man dresses and vice versa for man. Moreover, it is prohibited for men and women to wear transparent or tight fitting dresses that can show the anatomic structure of human being, for these are direct invitation to committing fornication and adultery (Yusuf, 1993).

The Holy Qur'an enjoins woman to lower their gaze and dress decently by covering their bosoms with veils.

And say to the believing woman that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appears thereof, that they should draw their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons; or their sisters' son or their woman or the slaves whom their right hand possess or male attendants free of sexual desires or small children who have no knowledge of woman. And they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. O you believers! Turn together towards Allah in repentance that you may be successful" (Q. 24:31).

The above Qur'anic verse specifically enjoins women to cover all parts of their body except what ordinarily appear i.e. faces, hands and legs. It also enjoins woman to draw their veils over their bosoms because all parts of a woman's body is amorously naked. Nevertheless, this does not mean that every woman must veil her face or be in seclusion. It is Islamic ally permissible for woman to wear trousers provided they put on a free garment that covers their bodies down their two legs (Oyin, 2003).

The general rule for the enjoyment of the good things of life, such as food, drink and clothing, is that their use should be without extravagances or pride.

Extravagance consists of exceeding the limits of what is beneficial in the use of the halal while pride is something related to the intention and the heart rather than to what is apparent. Pride is the intention to look superior and above others and Allah does not love any proud boaster (57:23).

The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said: On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will not look at the person who trails his robe behind him out of pride.

In order to avoid the suspicion of pride, the prophet (peace be on him) forbade Muslims to wear garments of “fame” that is, clothes which are worn in order to impress others and which generate competition in vain and idle pursuits. According to a hadith reported by Ahrnad, Abu Daud, al Nisai and Ibn Majah:

The veiling system contains a number of advantages, particularly being a society where raping, sexual molestation and respect of woman are common. Some of these advantages were stipulated below:

- a. Veiling is a protection for Muslim woman against the behaviour of wicked
- b. It is an identity of the Muslim woman
- c. It gives her a dignified position in the society
- d. It acts as a barrier between man and woman to keep them away from sin.
- e. Veiling also saves woman from atmosphere at home, so that she can perform any duties at home properly and as well encourages non-using veil within the community to put on the veil.

THE PROHIBITED ITEMS FOR MUSLIM WOMAN

The prophet (peace be on him) declared that a woman should not wear a man’s clothing vice versa. He cursed men who imitate women and women who imitate men. (al-Bukhari and others).

Aspects of such imitation include the manner of speaking, walking, dressing, moving and so on. The evil of such conduct, which affects both the life of the individual and of this natural order, there are men and there are women, and each of the two sexes has its own distinctive characteristics. However, if men become effeminate and women masculinized, this natural order will be reversed and will disintegrate.

Islam denounces such excesses in beautifying ourselves as require altering one’s physical features as Allah created them. The Qur’an considers such alterations as inspired by Satan who ... will command them (his devotees) to change what Allah has created. (4:119).

Among such excesses are tattooing and shortening the teeth one of the practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs.

The messenger of Allah (peace be on him) cursed the tattooer and the one who is tattooed, the shortener of teeth and the one whose teeth are shortened. Reported by Muslim.

As far as tattooing is concerned, it permanently disfigures the face and other parts of the body with blue pigment and repulsive designs. Some Arabs, especially women, these abominations is added the pain and agony which the person being tattooed must undergo from the pricking of the needles. Because all of this, both the tattooer and the one who is tattooed have been cursed (Yusuf, 1993).

As for cutting or shortening the teeth, the prophet (peace be on him) cursed both the men and the women who do it and the women who request it. If a man does it, he merits an even greater curse. Similarly, the prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited widening the spaces between the teeth, and he cursed.

... Women who widen the gaps between their own or others’ teeth for the sake of beauty, changing what Allah has created (Muslim).

Allah obviously creates some women with gaps between their teeth and other without. Some women who have no such gaps desire to create them artificially, either by filling or by cutting

away parts of the adjoining teeth. Islam considers this forum of deception and excessive involvement with personal beauty, both of which it discourages.

Surgeries for beautification are in vogue today as result of the materialistic outlook of western civilisation, a civilisation stressing the body and its desires. Men and women spend hundreds and thousands of dollars to reshape their noses or breasts, or whatever they consider misshapen. This behaviour most certainly belongs to the category of excessive beautification, unnecessarily changing what Allah has created, and it deserves the curse of Allah and His prophet (peace be on him). Likewise involves torture, pain, and waste of money merely for the sake of one's appearance; it is, also an expression of an individual's preoccupation with form rather than substance, with body rather than with spirit.

Among the extremes of beautification prohibited by Islam is *al-nams*, which denotes removing the hair of the eyebrows by plucking it in order to *thin* or *sharpen* them. The prophet (peace be on him) cursed both the women who do the plucking and those who see to have it done (Abu Dauda).

This practice is particularly frowned upon because it is customarily done by prostitutes.

In the category of female adornments, the addition of any other, real or artificial to one's own hair that is, the wearing of wigs and hair pieces is also prohibited. It is reported by (Al-Bukhari on the authority of "Aisha, her sister Asma, ibn mas'ood, bn "Umar, and Abul Huraira that: "The messenger of Allah (peace he on him) cursed *wasilah* denoting a woman whose profession is making wigs and hair pieces, and *mustawsilah* a woman who uses them.

The prophet (peace be on him) was very strict in combating such deceptions, so much so that if a woman lost her hair due to some illness he did not permit her to add other hair to that on her head, even if she were soon to be married (Bukhari)

Al-bukhari reports, Aisha's narrative concerning a girl of the Ansar who was married and subsequently fell ill, losing her hair. Some people wanted to add other hair to her own but when they asked the prophet (peace be on him) about this he replied, "Allah has cursed the *wasilah* and the *mustawsilah* (Bukhari).

Al-Bukhari reports Asma's narrative concerning a woman who said to the prophet (peace be on him). "O messenger of Allah since my daughter has had measles, her hair has fallen out and I am about to give her in marriage. Shall I add some strands of hair to her hair?" and the prophet (peace be on him) replied.

"Allah has cursed the *wasilah* and the *mustawsilah* (Bukhari) The prophet's terming falsification and deception and Islam condemns deception and dissociates itself from those who practise it either by material or psychological means, for "The one who deceives us is not one of us" Reported by a number of *sahabah* (companions of the prophet).

CONCLUSION

Islam is a religion of peace and it allows people to live in peace and it is certain obvious embracing system of veiling, would check the high rate of immoralities, adultery, fornication, prostitution and protects women against indiscriminate free mixing of pious that are prevalent in our society.

Woman in veiling are always around to play role model which is expected of good wives and mothers to their children. These types of women are said to be generally meticulous, submissive and obedient to their husbands, hence cases of divorce are very rare and it also encourages modest dress and decent behaviour which preserve virtues in women.

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