

The Hijab

Hadijah KIBIRA (Uganda)

Concerning matters of clothing, every one in the world does some covering of their body. But for Muslim women, the method of doing so must conform to the framework of Islamic law. Muslim women the world over wear the Hijab and I am one of those that have fully embraced this dress code. However, considerable misunderstanding still exists about the Islamic dress code and although there has been much discussion and practice of it, the subject still presents several puzzles to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Can such a dress be viable in the modern world? It is uncivilized and oppresses women!

The Hijab is legitimately defined as the dress that covers the whole body of a woman including her head, hands and feet. It was prescribed for women in Qur'an 33:59 *"Oh prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (except eyes to see the way). That will be better that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed..."*

And in Qur'an Surat 24:31 *"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their Furuuj (private parts) and disclose not their adornments except only that which is apparent, and that they should draw their head covers over their bosoms and that they disclose not their adornments except to..."*

And Qur'an Chapter 7:26 *"Oh children of Adam, verily We have bestowed upon you clothing to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment (beauty) to you and clothing guards against evil; that is the best..."*

The prophet [saw] said: "when a young girl begins to menstruate, it is not correct that anything should be seen of her except her face and hands up to the wrist." [Abu Dawud]

The hijab is comprised of two pieces of cloth:

- The Jilbab is an outer garment, a one-piece dress that covers the home clothes and drapes down the floor. It should be large enough to cover the whole body. It should be wide, flowing and loose so as not to describe the shape of the body such as the waist, bust line, bums and the thighs.
- And the khimar, a piece of cloth worn from the head that should be drawn to cover the neck up to the bosom.

These should be close in texture and opaque but not so decorative, conspicuous or

ostentatious. They also should not resemble men's clothes or be excessively cheap or ugly.

Looking hip and cool is not a Muslim woman's goal. The Hijab is tailored to the Quran And Sunnah not to the latest high street fashion. Neither do we go to the other extreme where appearance doesn't matter nor is wearing un-ironed and messy clothes acceptable. Muslim should wear clean, presentable clothes as did our beloved Prophet [SAW].

The Hijab is advantageous particularly in a society where rape, sexual molestation and disrespect of women are very common. It is rewardable, being a command from Allah [SAW], gives an honored position in society and is protection for Muslim women against the behavior of the wicked. It therefore gives respect to a Muslim woman, makes her decent and guards her chastity.