

Search of Truth, Series - 10

Purdah (Hijab)



Jamaat-e-Islami Hind

Dawat Nagar, Abul Fazl Enclave, New Delhi - 25



098100 32508,



09650022638



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PURDAH (Hijab)

The Islamic Hijab or Purdah system is being opposed in many countries these days. Many countries have gone so far as to ban the Hijab and even scarves. Muslim women are facing discrimination on numerous occasions only because they wear the Hijab. Everywhere people talk of Individual Freedom and many use this Individual Freedom to lead their life as per their desires, but it seems as though this Individual Freedom does not apply to Muslim women.

Some women use this individual freedom as licence to wear whatever clothing they like. The truth is that they even have the freedom not to wear any dress at all. If they don't wear transparent clothing and exhibit their body parts, nobody seems to have any problem with it. Conversely, the people who oppose this indecency are silenced by enforcing individual freedom on them. Those who oppose the Hijab do not tire of watching with prying eyes every part of semi-nude girls walk the fashion ramp.

This is also true that on the basis of faith and religion, Christian nuns are allowed the freedom to wear scarves and cover their bodies, whereas on the same ground nobody wishes to allow Muslim women to enjoy this freedom. If a woman wears man's clothes, nobody seems to have any problem, but when the same woman dons a scarf or Hijab, she is tormented with all sorts of objections. Nowadays, Newspapers, Magazines, Movies, TV and Internet are filled with sexual anarchy, and nobody is bothered about it. Everywhere the sexuality of boys and girls is being aroused and nobody seems to be bothered about this either.

There are tons of indecent and obscene advertisements on display, but nobody seems to be bothered about this. But if Muslim women try to protect themselves from prying eyes of men by wearing decent and dignified clothing, the whole society stands up in its opposition.

Be it a common man or intellectuals of the society, nobody is ready to accept the fact that the ever increasing cases of Sexual Anarchy and Rape are due to provocative dresses and titillating advertisements spread everywhere and also the movies that promote indecency or sexuality. How grave is the situation can be gauged by this statistics:

Our Nation in 2013 :

Reported incidents of Rape 33,707

Crimes by relatives 1,18,866

Kidnappings 51,881

Eve-Teasing 70,739

(www.ncrb.nic.in)

This statistics was recorded when only 1 of 69 incidents is reported.

No Civilised and Decent Society would accept this state of affairs. Mere Fear of Police and Law cannot control this situation.

Islam, which is a complete system of life ordained by the Lord, has showed us the solution to curb this evil. Solution is linked it to Faith. This is why the occurrence of sexual anarchy and rape is minimal in Muslim societies. Hijab is one among basic solutions. The summary of all measures may be understood from the following points:

1. The determination of the areas of operation for men and women : the basic area of operation for men is earning livelihood while that for

women is her home;

2. Ban on free and unnecessary contact and mingling of men and women;
3. The determination of Mahram and Non-Mahram relationships. (Mahrams are those between whom marriage is not permitted. Non-Mahrams are those between whom marriage is possible);
4. Men are commanded to restrain from unnecessarily looking at women and meeting them;
5. Women are also commanded to restrain from unnecessary looking at men and meeting them. If unavoidable, they can do so whilst in Hijab;
6. Women are commanded to be in complete Hijab when they need to step outside homes;
7. Men and women are both enjoined compulsorily to avoid meeting Non-Mahram individuals of opposite sex alone.
8. The limitations of covering of body in the presence of Mahram relations are also determined;
9. The people before whom a woman can display her beauty and to what limits are also determined.

If we think over the solutions mentioned above, it may be clearly understood that by prescribing these solutions, the crimes against women can be brought to an end. That is, Hijab or Purdah system is NOT symbolic of the Slavery of a woman, but of her Safety and Independence. Here are some instances :

1. The DGP of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Dinesh Reddy said some time back that the revealing and provocative dress

worn by women are a big reason for ever increasing number of rapes.

2. In 2005, the Vice-Chancellor of University of Mumbai, Shri Vijay Khole said in a statement that "the scanty and provocative clothing of women is a big reason for rapes".
3. In December 2011, the Brahman Samaj of Muzaffarnagar, UP declared that Jeans are provocative clothing and should not be worn by women.

The people who oppose Purdah can be classified in four parts :

1. Those who have not been introduced completely to Islamic way of life and the role of faith in it;
2. Those whose mind is so corrupted that their thirst doesn't end unless they stare at the bodies of women;
3. The women who think their beauty is for exhibition and they have full right to display it; and
4. Those who oppose Hijab only because they have to oppose everything that relates to Islam even if it can benefit the society tremendously.

We request all these people to study the Islamic way of life and specifically the Commandment of Purdah in an objective manner before opposing it.

The weakness of opposition to Purdah may be realised by noting that people reverting to Islam have high percentage of women. Women who were afraid of Hijab and would have gone far from Islam, are the ones who having worn Hijab feel themselves be safe and empowered.

The perceptions of some of these women are reported here :

1. "I walked down the same streets and neighborhoods where only days earlier

I had walked in my shorts, bikini.... Although the people, the faces, and the shops were all the same, I felt as if the chains had been broken and I was finally free. Suddenly a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I no longer spent all my time consumed with shopping, makeup, getting my hair done, and working out. Finally, I was free."

–Sarah Bokker, Miami, USA

2. "By grace of Allah now I am a Muslim! I wear Hijab like a protective shield. Due to this on one side I feel strong and on the other I get a chance to project the true image of Islam."

–Marita Rehana, Australia

3. "It is an error of judgment to think that a Muslim woman covers herself because she is a private possession of her husband. In fact she preserves her dignity and refuses to be possessed by strangers. It is Non-Muslim (and so called "liberated" Muslim) women who are to be pitied for displaying their private self for all to see."

–Nakata Khaola, Japan

4. "The first time I wore Hijab I not only felt happy but I felt contented too. Now I feel a lot safe and people respect me more now."

–Sister Noor, India

5. "Purdah is the most wonderful dress for women in the world. It gives women a sense of security. Only Islam gives protection to women.....Islam is the only religion in the world that gives love and protection to women. Therefore, I have converted."

–Kamala Surayya, Kerala, India

For more details email us at
dawah.jih@gmail.com