

Why Hijab?

We hope that a perfect clarity is made concerning the difference between the *hijab* adopted by *Jahiliyah* civilization in its dealing with woman and the *hijab* adopted by Islam as a protective shield for woman against aggression and attacks against her dignity by the followers of sick inclinations.

What remains for us is to specify the central motives upon which Islam depended in legislating the law of a modern dress according to the limits of the Merciful Allah on His servants.

For the sake of clarifying the central motives without expatiation, we mention the following points: First, regarding the relation between man and woman, two theories are suggested:

Theory one allows that man may sexually enjoy any woman in the society – this has nothing to do with adultery.

Theory two restricts man's right for enjoyment to the women with whom he has a legal and lawful matrimonial relation, and without which it is unlawful for him to take her for enjoyment sexually.

The first theory is the one practised today by European man-made civilization.

The second theory is the theory of Islam regarding the relation between man and woman.

This is the essence of the matter from which other details are derived. All man's behavior towards woman is derived from the first theory which relates to his sexual enjoyment of women by participating in parties, gatherings with other than his wife/wives and the illegal mixing of the two sexes, and imposing the state of adornment on women and its publicity in society and other affairs related to it.

Concerning the Islamic theory, the following points are divided:

By the act of covering woman's body, except the two hands and face, from the eyes and minds of men, other than her household, and not spending time in idle talk and walking with men and the like, as well as the prohibition of complete privacy with a man other than her household and other affairs related to Islamic jurisprudence, the Islamic concept concerning the natural relation between man and woman is a

protection and safeguard against indecency and corruption.

If we take into consideration the nature of the two opinions and their results. surely we will come to the conclusion that Islam is greatly covetous concerning the dignity of woman and her respectability, purity and honour with the caution of not changing her to a salable ill-used commodity for man in society.

Therefore, Islam is covetous for fixing and organizing sexual relations and then strives towards closing the means used by those evil-minded individuals for exploiting woman and achieving their enjoyment through her as they wish.

Then the *Jahiliyah* theory being old or new, desires to set free abandonment of these principles for the sake of men.

The problem with this outlook is based on the sake of man and his interest even it seems that some profits are achieved for woman!!

If we also take into consideration the size of profits and gains which men achieve sexually and economically under this theory, we will find that the phenomenon of harem and the act of exploiting woman practised in the period of *Jahiliyah* are the same which are practised today in the name of an attractive guise that insults women.

The new limitation which is used by modern *Jahiliyah* in the hands of women is different from the old one only in its covering and outside appearance. It remains a fetter to bind her hands, forbid freedom, and confiscate her will. So man has made woman a captive and slave by using different means for achieving man's aims through trading, brothels, cinemas, television and radio, newspapers, and fashion.

Various masses of women began to contemplate what they suffered under European civilization and there are a few just men who raise their voices against the miserable tragedies of woman are subjected to in Europe under the shadow of exploitation practiced by men.

Here are some examples showing man's exploitation of woman and the miserable results:

In Britain, 9 out of 12 girls – below 20 years of age – are subjected to rape and kidnapping. The security forces were able to catch 13% of the criminals. The percentage of crimes increased by 84% in recent years; whereas juvenile crimes increased by fivefold during the first half of 1975. ¹

An Italian newspaper *Amica* disclosed the following exciting facts concerning the crimes committed in its country: "In fact, an Italian woman fears leaving her home in order not to expose her dignity to the mad young men who wander the roads and streets and those who have no work except attacking women and girls and kidnapping them with the aim of robbery or sexual abuse...surely a woman refuses to accept any honourable work which forces her to return home at night so as not to expose her dignity and life to danger."²

In another report disclosing the woman tragedy under the materialistic culture, the American Association for Family Services says: "The disintegration of the family, which has reached an epidemic stage, tops the list of social problems. Every year more than one million persons are separated or divorced, which is sevenfold higher in percentage compared with that of a century ago.

The number of illegitimate children increased three times compared to 1938, and each year 4 million illegitimate births are registered in the U.S.A. Regarding the problem of the corruption of the youth, which has a close relation with divorce, statistics doubled three times more than those of 1940."

Another report says: "The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reports that in murder cases within families, the husbands are mostly the murderers of their wives; and in 15% of family crimes the children are the victims of their parents."

According to recent statistics released by UNESCO, "60% of the housewives in the U.S.A. and Europe feel discontented, disappointed, and miserable."³

Dr. Homer, a Swede, when asked by the United Nations to study the status of women in Arab countries in 1975, announced: "It is the Swedish woman who should demand her freedom, as the woman in the Arab countries has already reached the peak of her freedom under Islam." She added: "the Swedish woman tries these days to have this year announced as 'The International Year of the Woman,' and then declare another year for the man, so that he may extract his rights from the women."

Dr. Homer continues in her report by saying: "25% of Swedish women suffer from psychological and nervous sicknesses, and 40% of Sweden's income is spent on these diseases caused by the so-called freedom which the Swedish woman attained and which she is practising. In fact, the tragedy of the Swedish woman is this very permissiveness which has taken her to the edge of such a terrifying and perilous precipice."⁴

The breakdown of family stability in Britain which has dramatically increased the number of unmarried mothers, of unmarried people living together and people living alone, is much to blame for these social ills. According to figures published by the British Government on Jan. 14, 1988, the percentage of illegitimate births has soared from 4% in the 1950s to 21% of all births in 1986, with the exception of Denmark with 43%, Britain has the highest rate in Europe.

The statistics of social trends confirm that Britain has the highest divorce rate in Europe and nearly twice the rate of France and West Germany.

Between 1979 and 1985, it was found that the proportion of people cohabiting without marriage nearly doubled. Some 15% of all single women between the age of 18 and 49, including many divorced, were illicitly cohabiting in 1985.

The breakdown in family life has also seen a rapid rise in the number of people living alone. Nearly 25%

of all households contained only one person in 1986 compared with an average 10 persons in 1951!

The way the woman is treated in the western countries, which claim to be the champions of freedom and equality, is evident from the International Meeting on Women and Mass Media held in Athens, Greece, November 20, 1985.

One of the participants, Petra Kelly, a member of the West German Parliament, bitterly complained, "In Germany they treat us (German women) like a minority, equal to invalids, the lower strata of society and like children. They portray us pornographically and consider using violence against us as natural. Every 15 minutes a woman is a victim of rape."

The Meet urged the Greek Parliament to pass legislation banning the exploitation of women on television. Though criticism of the exploitation of women is fully justified, the women of these so-called advanced countries are themselves to be blamed. If women did not consent there would be no pornographic publications, sex films and nude advertisements.

The following statistics reveal how alarming the family breakdown epidemic has become in non-Muslim societies:

France:

One in four marriages end in divorce; in cities the rate may be as high as 50%. Each year 600, 000 couples marry, 100, 000 choose to live together without marriage and 100, 000 divorce.

Canada:

Almost 40% of first marriages end in divorce. The divorce rate doubled between 1972 and 1982.

The Former Soviet Union:

About 70% of marriages break up in 10 years, according to *Moskovskaya Pravda*, factors involved include drunkenness, lack of money and lack of privacy.

Central and South America:

The UNESCO Courier stated that single-parent families are often created by women migrating to the cities and having children in a series of unstable unions. Due to alcohol abuse or the inability of husbands to find adequate work locally, the family breaks up and mothers and children are left in poverty.

The nations with the highest percentage of illegitimate births in the world are in the Caribbean and in Central and South America.

China:

Although China's divorce rate is lower than most western nations, it has risen 70% in 5 years. The *Peiking Review* reported that the divorce rate is rising dramatically.

United States:

Half the marriages will probably end in divorce. Sixty percent of the children born will spend part of their childhood in a single-parent family.

Japan:

The divorce rate has doubled in the past 20 years. Before 1947, men were allowed to evict their wives in the streets with only a short note of divorcement. Now, about 70% of divorce cases are initiated by women.

South Africa:

The Coalition of South African Women's Rights says that one out of two South African women is raped in their lifetime. This includes children and even babies and old women!

Britain:

The divorce rate in the U.K. is the highest in western Europe. Nearly 1 out of 7 single women, age 18 to 49, lives with a man she has not married.

The *Hospital Today*, a magazine of London, in its editorial of the April 1975 issue, published a summary of the annual report of the British Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. It says: "...Despite the abundance of contraceptives and legalized abortion, it is noted that 86% of the children are born to unmarried mothers! There is a further serious problem. In 1973 the following cases were: 1 case of an 11-year-old pregnant girl; 6 cases of 12-year-old pregnant girls; 38 cases of 13-year-old pregnant girls; 255 cases of 14-year-old pregnant girls. There were 166,000 cases of legal abortion during the same year, 50% of which were by unmarried women."⁵

Turning to the East, we find the decadence of society in the communist world is no less hideousness as that in the capitalist world. The magazine, *Interphase* in its April 1977 issue reports: "The grave problem of the Soviet communist society is that out of every two marriages one ends in divorce in most parts of western Russia. In Moscow, for example, nearly 49% of the marriages ended in divorce after the birth of the first child. In the Mavadansk region, the percentage of divorce is as high as 72.9%. The Physicians, Conference, held at Moscow University in 1975, called for urgent measures to tackle this grave social problem, concerning the high divorce rate and the low birth rate..."⁶

It is worth noting that the said family problems are confined to the non-Islamic regions of the previous Soviet Union. In spite of the many years of communism's suppression of Islamic teachings in the Muslim lands under the Soviets, Islam still exercises its influences on the life and social conduct of the Muslims there, reducing family – instability and the exploitation of women.

These miserable tragedies, and the like, form some fruits of the modern European theory about the relation between a man and a woman.

For the sake of this, Islam takes measures to close the sources of corruption in the life of people and to

work, according to its concepts, to stop the state of exploitation of women and the confiscation of their rights and to establish dignity and honour in the life of people.

Thus, Islamic *Hijab* is among the most prominent terms used by the Divine Authority to protect woman and make a clean human society.

We should address the current situation in many Muslim countries where Western values have replaced Islamic ones. The societies of these countries have discarded Islamic principles, including *hijab*, the statistics of the West have followed. Divorce, prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, and the beginnings of diseases such as AIDS are plaguing the societies who have chosen to abandon their religious edicts. Illegal relationships between boys and girls, men and women are becoming accepted or at least unrestricted.

In Muslim countries where the society and the government remain loyal to Islamic values, the occurrence of sexual crimes, indecency, divorce and other social ills are noticeably less. The family structure remains strong and healthy. The women have no fear of their environment and are relatively safe to walk through their streets and bazaars.

Which theory is better then? Should we choose unlimited release, which results in destruction and downfall, or the proposal which leads to the preservation of society and which protects both man and woman without making any difference even the supposition of the feeling of distress from some protective procedures which follow the Islamic proposal?

Through social and psychological studies of the life of Man, a true scientific fact is disclosed showing that Man enjoys two kinds of natural needs (*jaw'ah*) in his entity:

A. There is a number of natural needs which impose themselves spontaneously for stimulating without any external motives like the instinct for the food and the instinct for the need of showing himself to others, and love for ownership and the like.

B. Another kind of natural needs, in spite of their existence in man and their activities, is able to be stimulated if other factors and motives of stimulus are supplied from external human existence. Among the prominent factors of these natural needs are: sexual instinct, which is motivated by dissolute poems and literature, seductive music, nudity and the like.

The upright Islam, the message of the Lord of the worlds the Creator, Who is Aware of hidden affairs, is completely cognizant of the remote factors which molded mankind, and the dangers against the movement of human life if he goes out of the natural frame prepared for it and by following it, the highest balances are achieved between these needs and natural functions in all fields of human life.

According to Islam's awareness of these facts, it desires for not stimulating these external instincts which are outside the frame of the required balance.

To be harmonious with this desire, Islam puts various social, economic and political schemes to work. These schemes provide a deep condition of agreement between these internal human motives and the demands of the individuals and the groups in which one lives.

The Islamic scheme in *hijab* and its fashioning the relation between man and woman aims to keep the balance between man's demands on the one side and its great desire for the purity, chastity and security of the relation between the two sexes on the other. Thus, Islamic *hijab* becomes a related foundation with the natural side of the human life in addition to caring for morals and purity and organizations of social life from the Islamic viewpoint.

Islam, through the modest *hijab* for woman, limits the nature of the relations between the two sexes in a special way. It also deals with man and woman together, limiting the responsibility for each of them towards lawful execution. Woman is separated from man in responsibility inside the framework of this scheme, only in *hijab* but they have the same responsibility in other duties.

This is not to say that the role of man and woman in an Islamic society are the same. They are not. A man shoulders the responsibility of maintaining the family unit by his wealth and earnings, providing food, shelter, clothing, medical care and general welfare for his household. The woman is free to earn money and has full authority over that money, but she is not required to finance her household.

A Muslim woman is responsible to care for and give proper training to her children and to provide a peaceful and harmonious environment in which the family unit may prosper and grow.

Hijab has an effect on the family unit as well as on the society. At home where *hijab* is respected and honoured practically, family members show kindness, helpfulness and peace towards one another. Because of the separation of the two sexes of non-*mahrims*, crimes of a sexual nature inside the family unit have no chance to fester as we witness all too often in Western families where incest has grown in such proportions that it is almost taken for granted as common behaviour.

Islamic *hijab* provides much more than mere physical cover. It is a cover that acts as a repellent of every kind of crime and vice which destroys the individual and the society.

1. Al-Qabas Newspaper, Kuwait, issued 6.2.1976, which also quotes from an Italian Magazine Tempo.

2. Ibid., 6-10-1976.

3. Man and Religion, English version, 1st ed., p.81, Al-Balagh Foundation quoting from a bulletin by Al-Iskanadariah University.

4. Ibid., p.82.

5. Ibid., p.84.

6. Ibid.

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