

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	2
THE HIJAAB, WHY?	2
CHAPTER TWO	15
WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?	17
<i>Excuse One:</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Excuse Two:</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Excuse Three:</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Excuse Four:</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Excuse Five:</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Excuse Six:</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Excuse Seven:</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Excuse Eight:</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Excuse Nine:</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Excuse Ten:</i>	<i>27</i>
CHAPTER THREE	29
THE HIJAAB PORTRAYS CHARACTER	29
CHAPTER FOUR	32
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE HIJAAB	32
<i>With regards to the fame:</i>	<i>39</i>
CHAPTER FIVE	42
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	42
<i>Experience One:</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Experience Two:</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Experience Three:</i>	<i>45</i>
CHAPTER SIX	49
THE HIJAAB – CONCLUSION AND OUTLINE	49
<i>So, when I wear the Hijaab.</i>	<i>49</i>

CHAPTER ONE

The Hijaab, why?

All praise belongs to Allah who has guided His believing servants to do acts of obedience and made it easy to do righteous deeds.

Every Muslim has been created to worship Allah alone, without associating partners with Him. The life of every Muslim whether they are male or female should be based upon Islam, because Islam is not merely a religion but a complete way of life in true submission to Allah. Being a certain age, sex or from a certain race does not exempt one from doing good deeds and actions and the amount of reward is not affected by the person's wealth, status or race. Allah does not look upon your wealth, your status, or your race. Rather it's your righteousness and humility that Allah looks out for.

Islam is a universal religion, which is both complete and perfect at the same time. It is neither for men more than women nor women more than men. It gives both equal rights and both shall be judged equally according to their actions, as Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:

*“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman and has faith,
verily to him we will give a new life
and a life that is good and pure
and we will bestow on such their reward
according to the best of their actions.”¹*

Thus the above verse shows, very clearly, that each person will be judged according to their deeds and actions and not their status, age or sex and their reward will be according to their actions.

Being a Muslim should make one proud without looking down at another Muslim. Our main aim as a Muslim should be to please Allah in as many ways as we possibly can. Praying, fasting, paying Zakah, performing Hajj, showing kindness and wearing the Hijaab, these are all some of the actions, which can gain us a lot of reward.

We shall *inshaAllah* look at one of these many ways of gaining Allah’s pleasure and reward by discussing the Hijaab, the dress of every Muslimah (a Muslim woman), which is a proof of the modesty and nobility of every believing woman. We as Muslim sisters must remember that the Hijaab is one

¹ Soorah Nahl : 97

of our means of getting into Paradise. We should feel honoured and dignified. We should feel protected, secure and obedient. We should feel **guarded** like a **pearl**. In Paradise every one will have eternal youth and never get old and enjoy what they like forever.

The Hijaab, by many, has been seen as a sign of ‘oppression’ upon Muslim women. However the true Muslimah considers it to be a humble act of worship. Allah says in the Noble Qur’an:

*“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters
and the women of the believers
to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies...”²*

Above is one of the verses in the Noble Qur’an instructing the women to cover themselves. Allah further says in the Noble Qur’an:

*“And tell the believing women
that they should lower their gaze
(from looking at forbidden things),*

² Soorah Ahzaab : 59

*and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts)
and not to show off their adornment
except that which is apparent,
and to draw their veils all over
and not to reveal their adornment
except to their husbands, or their father
or their husband's fathers,
or their sons or their brothers or their brother's sons
or their sister's sons... ”³*

Both of the above verses make it very clear for a Muslimah, that she should cover herself completely according to the rules set for us, except in front of those whom Allah has made lawful for us not to do so in the above verse.

The next question a Muslimah may ask is at what age must we start to observe the Hijaab?

Abu Dawood reported from Aishah that Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr, came to see the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) wearing a thin dress. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned away and said to her, “*O Asma! When a woman reaches the*

³ Soorah Noor: 31

age of puberty, she cannot reveal any part of her body except this and this.” And he pointed to his face and hands.

The above *Hadeeth* (a report from or about the Prophet) and the *Ayahs* from the Noble Qur’an clearly show that firstly the Hijaab is *fard* (compulsory) upon every living Muslim woman who has reached the age of puberty. Secondly, that she must keep herself covered when going out and in front of non-*mahram*⁴ men.

In another *Hadeeth* narrated by Aishah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “*Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached the age of puberty unless she is wearing the head covering.*”⁵

Allah and his Messenger have given us very clear and unmistakable instructions as to the way and when a Muslimah must wear the Hijaab. The explanations to the ‘whys’ and ‘buts’ that many people use to question the Hijaab have also been given and are also looked upon further in this book.

However, these questions should not arise. The order of the Creator should be taken and acted upon without question just like Imam Bukhari reports on many occasions about the women of the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of

⁴ Men that a woman can marry. See footnote 3.

⁵ Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi

Allah be upon him) used to. Without wanting an explanation, they would take the command of Allah and act upon it without the 'buts' and the 'whys'. The women, as soon as they heard of the revelation regarding the Hijaab, they cut the edges of their waist sheets and covered themselves without question. These were great women. They did not wait to be persuaded or coaxed into obedience. They knew that as true worshippers of Allah they had to gladly follow His orders straight away and this was for their own good from Allah. These women who were promised Paradise but still they carried out Allah's orders with pleasure and happiness. They had love for their Lord, their religion and their Prophet. Thus they abided by every rule and regulations without question or complaint. Allah states in the Noble Book:

*“It is not fitting for a believer, men or women,
when Allah and His Messenger have decided
a matter for them
to have any option about their affair...”⁶*

The Muslimahs of today should try and follow the magnificent example of the great women from the time of the

⁶ Soorah Ahzab: 35

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They should follow the example of the women from the Muhajiroon and Ansaar, who were considered the best in the way they stuck to the commandments of Allah. The Muhajiroon left Makkah for the sake of Allah and the Ansaar welcomed them in Medina for the sake of Allah and they were united in brotherhood for the sake of Allah. Any woman who accepts Allah as her Lord and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as the Messenger cannot reject any act of faith, let alone an action that is compulsory to do. The Muslimah is telling the people, through her Hijaab, that she should be judged for her mind and not her body. She is reflecting honesty and purity by wearing the Hijaab and indicating to others that she is an honourable person who respects herself.

The Muslimah cannot go against the rules set for her, especially when our punishment for disobedience has been clearly put in front of us. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, *“There are two types of the people of Hell that I have not seen. People with whips like the tails of oxen, with which they beat the people and women who are dressed yet still appear naked, who are inclined to evil and make their husbands incline towards it also. Their heads are like the humps of camels, leaning to one side. They will not*

enter Paradise, or even smell the scent, although its scent can be smelt from such a distance.”⁷

Lets look at the women of today’s society. What do women wear when they go out? What do we see on the television and in the magazines? Women with clothes on, but still you can see their skin. These clothes highlight the contours of her body and invite others to gaze at her. They are determined to show off their body. However, Islam does not degrade a woman in such a way. Islam wants the opposite for a woman. Islam brings out the good qualities of an individual and removes the bad characteristics. It gives dignity and stops a person becoming cheap. *Subhanallah*, so true is this saying of the Prophet and so right is their punishment since they disobey their Creator with such vanity. This *Hadeeth* should be enough for a Muslim woman who has sound faith and loves her religion to wear the Hijaab. The one who chooses to disobey her Lord, then her punishment is clearly the Fire, the fire whose heat is severe and the pain from it indescribable.

There was once an occasion where a journalist was once visiting a university in Damascus. She came across a Muslim woman wearing the Hijaab and asked her whether she found

⁷ Muslim

it too hot in the summer. The Muslim woman responded to her by quoting the following verse from the Qur'an:

*"The fire of hell is fiercer in Heat."*⁸

Such should be the attitude of every Muslim woman. We should honour the Hijaab and stand up for it in any way possible. It is our shield, our protection from the evil in this life and a way of achieving good in the next. If someone feels a small bit of discomfort because of Hijaab then this is nothing compared to security in this life and everlasting happiness in the next life.

The way of dress in the world of fashion changes as each day goes by. The different types of dress, skirts, and blouses come and go. It is something that even the designers themselves cannot keep up to date with or rather keep up with at all. It is so amazing. The world of fashion is determined to design every dress to be a source of attraction. It is geared towards promoting temptation for the opposite sex and encourages physical relationships outside marriage. We hear about all these designers designing a certain style or dress for certain people, who then go out and model these outfits for

⁸ Soorah Taubah: 81

magazines, catwalks, papers etc. They put themselves on display without shame, on the market of the shaytaan (devil). It is a huge industry and a lot of money is involved. The world of fashion need us to be morally low, not to control our greed and not care about Allah and what awaits us in the next life. That way they can guarantee making money for themselves from our wealth that Allah gave us and take us away from useful and charitable spending. The dress of the Muslim woman on the other hand is to cover as much as one possibly can, and not to make herself and her body an item of display or a source of attraction. With her Hijaab she proclaims that she is neither a cheap toy for the pleasure of others nor a commodity on sale no matter how much is offered for her to lose her honour. Such a huge amount of money is spent in chasing fashion and style that never lasts long enough that it is incredible. Wealth is wasted on vanity and creating passions that make one another untrue to each other. All around we see and hear of family break-ups, loss of shame, people taking sexual partners in a way worse than animals and distrust of one another due to this culture of free mixing supported by wearing clothes exactly the opposite of Hijaab.

The famous writer Aishah Lemo states in her book, “Contrasting western fashions which every year concentrate quite intentionally on exposing yet another public gaze: one

has seen the rise and fall of the mini dress, the micro skirt, the wet look, hot pants, the see-through; the topless and other garments designed to display the intimate part of a woman's body.”

Many incidents have occurred where Muslim women have been called names, abused for the way we dress. Why? Because it is in contrast to the fashion of the current Century! This is what puts a lot of Muslim sisters off from wearing the Hijaab, the fear of being attacked or called names. However, many a Muslimah has been through serious dilemmas and still came through strong and positive.

A fine example for us is of Tayyibah Amatullah, a 21-year-old American convert to Islam who relates a very interesting incident, which happened to her. She was walking, alone, along the St. Paul's skyway system in Minneapolis, USA, when five police officers stopped her and ticketed her. Her crime – **wearing the Hijaab**.

Amatullah was wearing gloves and a veil, which covered all her body except her eyes. She was ticketed as she was, according to the officers, violating a 1963 State law against concealing her identity in public. The offence carried up to 90 days in prison and a \$700 fine. The officers described her as 'Bizarre'.⁹

⁹ Straight Path Magazine 1994

So what do you think of this unfair incident. Was the way Amatullah dressed 'Bizarre' and extraordinary? Or were the actions the officers took 'bizarre'? What was Amatullah's crime? That in the 90's she was covered instead of uncovered! So then there also has to be a law that if a woman walks around naked or with see-through clothes then she is violating the law of exposing too much! Where is the justice here? Why should human beings, who have free will, not be allowed to practice their faith in the way they want? Who is anybody in comparison to the Lord of the Worlds? People feel safe amongst police officers. Police officers whose jobs are supposed to be to stop crime, stop attacks and make sure that everyone receives fair treatment with justice. However, it is truly only the law of Islam that offers a woman dignity, justice, protection and equal rights.

This fine example of Amatullah should encourage every Muslimah in the world and make us more determined than ever before, stronger and more optimistic to wear the Hijaab and carry out the law of our Most Merciful Lord. The feeling to know that someone else has been through such an event should make us dedicated and more steadfast in our religion and encourage us to strive to obey our Lord and help others to do the same.

For many women, like Amatullah, the Hijaab is a test of being a Muslim. For some it will be facing the world, for others it will be their own family and friends. This is a test to hold on to patience and to continue to carry out the command of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah said, *“How amazing is the affair of the Muslim! His affairs are all good. If he experiences ease, he is grateful and that is good for him. If he experiences hardship, he faces it with patience and perserverence and that is also good for him.”*¹⁰

¹⁰ Saheeh Muslim

CHAPTER TWO

What's stopping you?

The question why numerous sisters in our time do not wear the Hijaab has been put to many women of today and many different reasons have been stated. For some it is their parents, others are still not convinced and for some it's also the hot summers. But they all sound like excuses rather than reasons, as we are all aware that the Hijaab is obligatory thus leaving no room for silly reasons or foolish excuses.

This question has been put to some women in the Al-Bayaan magazine, an article by Dr. Huwayda Ismaeel and the ten excuses are:

- 1. 'I am not convinced (of the necessity) of the Hijaab.'**
- 2. 'I am convinced of the Islamic dress, but my mother prevents me from wearing it and if I disobey her I will go to the fire.'**
- 3. 'My position does not allow me to substitute for Islamic dress.'**

4. 'It is so very hot in my country and I can't stand it. How could I tolerate it if I wore the Hijaab?'
5. 'I'm afraid that if I wear the Hijaab I will put it off another time and because I have seen so many others do so.'
6. 'If I wear the Hijaab nobody will marry me, so I'm going to leave it off until then.'
7. 'I don't wear the Hijaab based on what Allah says: "...and proclaim the grace of your Rabb..." (Soorah Ad-Dhuhaa 93:11). How can I cover what Allah has blessed me with of silky soft hair and captivating beauty?'
8. 'I know the Hijaab is obligatory, but I will wear it when Allah guides me to do so.'
9. 'It's not time for that yet. I'm still too young for wearing the Hijaab. I'll do it when I get older and after I make Hajj.'
10. 'I'm afraid that if I wear Islamic clothing that I'll be labelled as belonging to some group or another and I hate partisanship.'¹¹

¹¹ By Dr. Huwayda Ismaeel, English translation from Al-Bayaan magazine with some editing.

Looking at these excuses, as that is what they are, only excuses, it is hilarious how people will say and do anything to get their way to please and convince themselves and it is only in this life that these excuses may work as Allah says:

“The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).”¹²

Excuse One:

I am not convinced (of the necessity) of the Hijaab.

Accepting Islam and declaring the *shahaadah* (There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) means that we have to abide by all the rules of Islam and wearing the Hijaab is one of the main ones. We, as Muslims cannot accept what suits us and reject what we dislike - this is not what Islam is about as Allah says:

“The only saying of the faithful believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say ‘we hear and we obey’

¹² Soorah Al-Imraan 3:185.

and such are the successful (ones).”¹³

This verse clearly cancels the excuse of the first sister, that she is not convinced of the Hijaab. How can a Muslim accept Islam, declare the *shahaadah* and then reject the Hijaab?

Excuse Two:

I am convinced of the Islamic dress, but my mother prevents me from wearing it and if I disobey her I will go to the fire.

The second excuse is that the Hijaab is convincing for this sister. However, as her mother does not like the idea and the fact that she does not want to disobey her mother prevents her from wearing it, because she is worried she will go to the Fire by being disobedient to her mother. Well, the next question would be, does this sister not think what her punishment would be for disobeying her Lord, who created both her and her mother? Has she not heard the *Hadeeth* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “*There is no obedience to the created in the disobedience of Allah.*”¹⁴ ?

¹³ Soorah Noor 24:51

¹⁴ Ahmed

Further to the saying of the Prophet, Allah states in the Noble Qur'an:

*“But if they strive with you
to make you join in worship with Me
others that of which you have no knowledge,
then do not obey them.”¹⁵*

When parents ask their children to disobey Allah in anyway, it is then that we have to disobey them and obey the Lord of the Worlds. No doubt we have to be polite, respectful and show best manners when we refuse them, but how can we obey our parents who are asking us to disobey our Lord who created our parents and us and we are all His slaves?

Excuse Three:

My position does not allow me to substitute for Islamic dress.

It is a duty for every Muslimah to learn her *deen* (way of life in Islam) and ask about the things that affect her. As Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:

¹⁵ Soorah Luqmaan 31:15

*“Ask the people of remembrance
(i.e. scholars) if they do not know.”¹⁶*

The third excuse that the Hijaab does not allow this sister to replace her everyday dress for Islamic Dress, is once again only an excuse and not in any way a good enough reason. A woman is not in anyway permitted to leave her home without observing the Hijaab. If you learn the true essence of the Hijaab and the reasons for wearing it, no woman would want to be seen in public without the Hijaab.

Allah says in the Noble Qur’an:

*“And whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him,
He will make a way from him to get out
(from every difficulty)
and He will provide him from sources
he never could imagine.”¹⁷*

¹⁶ Soorah Nahl 16:43

¹⁷ Soorah Talaq 65:2-3

This everyday dress of ours can be worn under our Hijaab. What one likes one can wear as long as we are covered when we go out and when we are in the company of men or amongst them. We should be out to gain the pleasure of Allah, to please Allah and not to please the fashion trade, our employees or school and college friends at the cost of angering the Almighty. It is our *Rabb* (Lord) that we have been created to please. He is the one who provides for us all that we need, He directs the affairs and it is He that will judge us on the Day of Judgement.

Excuse Four:

It is so very hot in my country and I can't stand it. How could I tolerate it if I wore the Hijaab?

What is the heat of this world in comparison to the heat of the fire? As Allah says:

“The fire of Hell is more intense in heat if they only understand.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Soorah At-Taubah 9:81

How can this sister use the heat of her land as an excuse? Has she not read the saying of Allah Almighty? Does she not fear the Fire of Hell? Shaytaan has trapped us in one of his weak snares. Shaytaan is trying to take us from the heat of this world straight into the heat of the next. Allah very clearly states in the Noble Qur'an:

*“They will neither feel the coolness nor have any drink
except that of boiling water
and the discharge of dirty wounds.”¹⁹*

As a Muslim, we must remember that this life is only a temporary and short life and it is in the Hereafter that we will live our lives for the rest of time, for eternity.

To get to *Jannah* (Paradise) we must overcome the surroundings of hardship, which we face in this world. We must abide by the rules and regulations of Islam and overcome the temptations of this world as the Fire of Hell is surrounded by lust and easiness.

¹⁹ Soorah An-Naba 78:24-25

Excuse Five:

I'm afraid that if I wear the Hijaab I will put it off another time and because I have seen so many others do so.

Imitating others will never get anyone anywhere. Every soul shall be judged upon their own actions. No one on that great Day of Judgement will be allowed to say that 'so and so did it so I imitated them'. That will not be acceptable. We will be judged as individuals according to our own good and bad deeds. Allah sent messengers so that our actions are in line with what they taught and did. Allah loves good deeds even if they are very small. So how can this sister say that she is afraid to wear the Hijaab as she may later take it off as she has seen others do so? Isn't it strange that we are prepared to copy our friends but we feel shy to copy the wives of the Messenger (mothers of the believers)? Will our friends save us from the punishment of Allah or can they have better than the teachings of Allah?

We should hold onto the rope of Allah and do our best to obey His great orders in every way that we are able.

Once we accept Islam as our religion, we accept to abide by its every rule and the Hijaab is one of them. This is a personal responsibility. We must remember that every

individual on the Day of Judgement will be judged according to the actions he or she has done in this world.

Excuse Six:

If I wear the Hijaab nobody will marry me, so I'm going to leave it off until then.

Any man who looks for a wife who shows off her beauty is not a worthy husband at all. Thus the worry that we won't find husbands by wearing the Hijaab should be overlooked. A true Muslim man would want his wife to obey the commands of his Lord. He would want her to wear the Hijaab, which is her shield and her protection. It shows the man that the sister is a loyal sister, a modest sister, and a sister obeying her Creator, a sister only for him. If he likes her to display her beauty to others then he is not jealous about guarding her as a precious treasure and wants to make her a cheap source of pleasure for others and probably likes looking at other ladies himself.

Allah has told us many times in the Qur'an that a marriage based upon worldly matters is never a successful marriage whereas a marriage based upon Islam is in fact the blissful and peaceful marriage.

Excuse Seven:

I don't wear the Hijaab based on what Allah says: "...and proclaim the grace of your Rabb..." (Soorah Ad-Dhuhaa 93:11). How can I cover what Allah has blessed me with of silky soft hair and captivating beauty?

Allah has bestowed His mercy upon us by giving us many things in this world and one of them is beauty. But how do we repay our Lord? By going against His commands? Yes, Allah has blessed this sister with silky hair and beauty but He has also commanded her to keep that beauty concealed for her husband only and not to display it amongst other men.

How can this sister accept one of Allah's commands and ignore the other? Yes, Allah has bestowed beauty to us women but He has also given us some rules as to what to do with that beauty. So how do we thank our Lord, by ignoring Him?

Excuse Eight:

I know the Hijaab is obligatory, but I will wear it when Allah guides me to do so.

Everything is only done with the Will of Allah. He has made a means for everything. That is why when we have a headache or temperature or any type of illness we take

medicine. To live and survive we need food, which is bought with money for which we go out to work. Thus to wear the Hijaab we must strengthen our faith and learn more about our faith, more about the Hijaab. Clearly, we can't sit at home in front of the television waiting for Allah to guide us. We have to give a little to receive a little. We must make *Du'a* (supplication) for ourselves that Allah grants us stronger *Imaan* (faith) and courage to wear the Hijaab.

Excuse Nine:

It's not time for that yet. I'm still too young for wearing the Hijaab. I'll do it when I get older and after I make Hajj.

Death can come at any time. For some it comes earlier than they expected. As Allah says:

“When their time comes, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment).”²⁰

As mentioned previously, Allah will judge us upon the actions we do, not our age. Once a woman reaches the age of

²⁰ Soorah Al-An'aam 7:34

puberty, her actions are accounted for. She must cover herself in Hijaab. How can anyone use the phrase 'I'm still too young' when no one except Allah knows who will see tomorrow. Being young does not mean we won't die. Why is it that all these insurance companies charge the younger generation more for a car to be insured than the older generation? This is something to think about. Anyone can die at anytime, young or old, but the question we need to ask ourselves is 'are we ready to face our Lord?' when we do die?

Excuse Ten:

I'm afraid that if I wear Islamic clothing that I'll be labelled as belonging to some group or another and I hate partisanship.

In Islam, there are only two parties; one is the party of Allah and the other being the party of the Shaytaan. So how can this sister not wear the Hijaab, as she is worried she may be labelled to belong to a group? If she wears the Hijaab she is obeying her Lord, obeying the command of her creator and therefore belonging to the party of her Creator. Whereas if she pushes the Hijaab aside and does not wear it then she is clearly following the temptations of the Shaytaan, thus joining on to the party of the Shaytaan.

By wearing, the Hijaab we are recognised as a Muslimah and that is one the aims of the Hijaab.

The Hijaab does not push us to any particular group, as **the Hijaab itself is an order from Allah**, not any group leader.

CHAPTER THREE

The Hijaab portrays character

For many women the Hijaab is an identity to be recognised as a Muslim woman. Thus Hijaab is not only a matter of covering oneself, but it is also about the attitude, the way of thinking and behaving of a Muslimah. The Hijaab does not only identify the woman as a Muslim but many people will judge Islam by us. For that reason alone it is very important that the modest dress of a Muslimah should as well as changing the way we dress, also change our attitude. It should keep us aware of who we are and how we are behaving and whether that behaviour suites the way we are dressed. It should create God-consciousness within the Muslim woman and help us to get closer to the creator of the heavens and the earth. The Hijaab should be like an encouragement for the Muslimah to carry out good actions and stay well away from the evil actions and temptations of the shaytaan.

As a Muslimah, dressed in Hijaab, we should always be careful with the way we speak. We should, as Islam advises us, come across as polite and well mannered and not abusive and foul mouthed, as by wearing the Hijaab we are

representing Islam and people will judge it by us. Nonetheless, these rules apply to the Muslimah even inside our home, when we are permitted to take off our Hijaab. Our character should be of a good nature all our life, every second of the day.

The Hijaab is an act of obedience and modesty. It is a sign of purity and like a shield that protects the woman from abuse. It is a sign of righteousness and *Emaan*. These are some of the many reasons for wearing the Hijaab.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that Allah says, “...*If my servant draws near to Me a hand’s span, I draw near to him an arm’s length; and if he draws near to Me an arm’s length, I draw near to him a fathom’s length. And if he comes walking, I go to him at speed.*”

So why not strive to please Allah, as for each deed we do Allah comes to us with at least double? It is a way for us to get closer to our Lord and gain much reward. Allah wants His believing women to be protected and stay safe. He is happy when a believer carries out one of His commands. That is why He draws closer to the Muslim, and wearing the Hijaab is pleasing to Allah as He mentions it in the Qur’an in clear terms and at great lengths.

The Muslim woman is considered and many times referred to as a precious jewel, which should be protected. Like a jewel or diamond, every part of a woman is a source of attraction, from the ends of the hair to her toenails. In today's society many women enjoy the attention they get from the opposite sex. They enjoy being a source of attraction, an object to be stared at and made comments at. Whereas the Muslim woman hates such attention. She hates such behaviour, therefore protects herself and covers herself according to the rules in the Noble Qur'an set by Allah, the All-Wise, the All-Knower.

CHAPTER FOUR

The requirements of the Hijaab

The requirements to how the Hijaab must be worn are more than one but never too much for a believer as they are not burdensome. For some Muslim sisters these requirements may be very easily carried out and for others a little more effort may be needed.

As it has been mentioned above in many of the narration and verses from the Noble Qur'an, first and foremost the Hijaab is *Fard* (obligatory) upon every Muslim woman and it is to cover the whole body of a woman.

We see that today many Muslim ladies who feel they are observing the Hijaab are in fact not. The *ayah* in the Qur'an clearly tells the women that everything has to be covered, which includes the legs, arms, feet, ears and neck. We see many young women wearing their Hijaab loosely on their heads or behind their ears which is not correct as they are revealing parts of their body and the aim of the Hijaab is to conceal the **whole** body.

Shaikh Al-Albaani says in his book “Ghaayatul Maraam”, page 283, “...Drawing the *khimaar*²¹ over her head, neck and chest is an obligation...”

Further, we also see women wearing the *Khimaar* in a proper manner but their outer garments, their *Jilbaab* are missing. They feel their loose clothing is enough to cover them, however this is again incorrect. Allah very clearly states that the women must draw their veils, their cloaks over their body, covering even what they are wearing as that can also act as a source of attraction.

So clearly, the Hijaab firstly starts with covering the hair, ears, chest and neck. Secondly the Hijaab must cover the rest of the body, loosely, so that none of the figure can be distinguished, the contours or precise shape of parts of the body are hidden, and that none of the body can be seen through it.

Shaikh Al-Albaani in his book “Hijaab al-mar’ah al-Muslimah fil Kitab was sunnah” explains the requirements and here are seven of the points he mentions:

²¹ *Khimaar* refers to only the headscarf, which covers the hair, ears, neck and chest area.

1. **The whole body, except for the exempted parts should be covered.**
2. **Any veil which itself becomes attractive must be avoided.**
3. **Garments should not be transparent or semi-transparent.**
4. **Dress should be loose and not tight fitting.**
5. **The form of dress should not resemble that of men.**
6. **It should not resemble that of non-believers.**
7. **Garments should not reflect worldly honour.**

The Shaikh's first rule that the whole body must be covered, except for the exempted parts, is implying to the hands and face. The Shaikh goes with the opinion that the face and hands do not have to be covered, however, if the Muslimah wishes to carry out this deed then there is extra reward for her *inshaAllah*. Nevertheless there are other scholars who have given the opinion that the face and hands have to be covered without question, that it is a must.

Islam does not set regulations as to what style the Hijaab must be, but it **must** cover the **whole** body, loosely without giving away any hint to what shape or colour the woman's

body is or what she is wearing. This can be in two parts, even three, that is upto the individual as long as it fulfils the requirements.

It must be long enough to not show her clothes or any part of her body. It further has to be thick enough so her figure and her bone structure cannot be distinguished.

Aishah once asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),“How should a woman deal with the bottoms of their dresses?” The Prophet said: *‘They should lower it an inch.’* She said: “And if their legs are revealed?” He said: *‘They should lower it an arm’s length and not add anything to that.’*

In this *hadeeth* the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is clearly telling the women that their Hijaab must be long enough to not reveal **any** part of their body. As well as thickness, length and the looseness is just as important. If the Hijaab reveals the woman’s body, then there is no purpose in that Hijaab as it is neglecting one of the fundamental requirements. There is a fine example of how Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) disapproved of a dead woman being wrapped in such shrouds that would display her body as being a woman’s. Shaikh Al-Albaani writes, “See for yourself how the dearest daughter of the Prophet considered

the use of such a cloth detestable as it would not properly drape feminine parts of a dead woman's body. Certainly such a garment for a living woman would be more worse."²²

This was the great daughter of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She did not like the idea of a dead woman, a woman who has no connections left with this world, whom no one would even look at with lust and desire, to be covered and wrapped in clothing that would somehow reveal her body. Thus this shows the great importance for the Hijaab and the importance of it being practised.

There was once an incident where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was given a thick piece of garment. He passed it onto the companion named Usamah who in turn gave it to his wife. When the Prophet inquired after the garment Usamah told him that he had given it to his wife. The Prophet then told him to ask his wife to use a *gholalah* (thick type of fabric) under it as it may describe the size of her bones.

We have many examples in front of us, explaining the importance of the looseness, thickness and length of the Hijaab.

²² "Hijaab al-mar'ah al-Muslimah fil kita was sunnah", page 63

Further, to make the Hijaab a source of attraction is again cancelling the essence of the Hijaab. One of the ways is wearing perfume. How many times have we passed women and thought 'I wonder what she is wearing?' or 'That smells very nice.' If we, women, do that what do you suppose the men think? Don't you think that it is an attraction for them? An invitation for them to look and comment.

Ad 'Diyah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "*Any woman who perfumes herself and passes by some people that smell her scent, then she is a Zaniyah (adulteress)*"

Ibn Daqiq al 'Id, one of the masters of knowledge, writes that in this *hadeeth* a woman is forbidden to go to the mosque wearing perfume, because it stimulates carnal desires in men.

Perfume is clearly a source of attraction, thus once again losing the essence of the Hijaab, as the Hijaab must not be made attractive and not put on display but left simple.

One of the other issues that Shaikh Al-Albaani points out is that the woman should not dress like the men neither should her dress resemble that of the men.

Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) *cursed men who appeared like women and cursed the women who appeared like the men.*²³

Moreover, as well as not resembling the men, the Hijaab should not resemble the dress of the non-believers either. As Allah says in the Qur'an:

“So that they may not be like those who were given the scriptures before this...”²⁴

Abu Dawood and Ahmed have related that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, *“The one who takes on the similitude (manner) of a certain people, then he/she becomes one of them.”*

Further Shaikh Al-Albaani writes about the matter echoing the teachings of one of the greatest scholars of Islam called Ibn Taymiyya, *“Any similarity to non-believers must be avoided, in matters of worship, festivals and dress.”²⁵*

Therefore the women's Hijaab must not in any way resemble that of men or the non-Muslims. One of the aims of

²³ Bukhaari

²⁴ Soorah 57: 16

²⁵ “Hijaab al-mar'ah al-Muslimah fil kita was sunnah”, page 78

the Hijaab is to distinguish the Muslim woman as being Muslim; thus dressing like the non-Muslim would again defeat that object.

The Shaikh concludes his book by summing up the requirements of the Hijaab. He writes, “The garments should cover the entire body except the face and hands, and should not become an attraction in itself. Neither should it be thin, nor tight. It should not accentuate the body. It should not be perfumed or resemble those worn by men or unbelieving women. It should not suggest fame.”²⁶

With regards to the fame:

Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah have related the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “*The one who wears a garment designed for a worldly fame, Allah will make them wear a garment of humility on the day of resurrection, then he will be set ablaze.*”

Any Muslimah who wears her Hijaab to gain worldly pleasure or for the praise of others then she is once again defeating the true essence of Hijaab. This is because the Hijaab should be worn due to it being a commandment from

²⁶ Ibid, page 110

Allah, to gain His pleasure and not to gain worldly fame, but as an action of pure worship.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, *“Whoever seeks the pleasure of Allah at the risk of displeasing the people, Allah will take care of him and protect him from them. But whoever seeks the pleasure of people at the risk of displeasing Allah, Allah will abandon him to the care of the people.”*²⁷

Finally, the Muslimah should be proud of her dress. We should feel happy when wearing the Hijaab. It should not make us feel as though it is an obstacle or that it is impractical for us. Rather we should be pleased to carry out the command of Allah and encourage others to do the same, since the Hijaab is for every Muslimah a part of the *Deen*. It is our way of contributing to the service of the *Deen* and it is our shield from evil in this life and our achievement for the next.

I conclude with some wonderful advice from the great Shaikh Abdur Rahman As-Sudais, the Imam of Masjid Haram, in Makkah Saudi Arabia.

“My Muslim sister! You will never be able to reach the perfection that you desire, nor will you be able to regain your

²⁷ Tirmidhi

lost glory of the past or achieve your highest rank or position unless you follow the teachings of Islam and unless you stop at the limits and boundaries of the *Sharee'ah* (Islamic law).

This will make your heart love and appreciate the good qualities and will keep you away from bad and evil qualities.

So stay in your home. By Allah, you will be praised. You will please your household and make your home happy. You will perfect your Hijaab. You will perfect your chastity, relieve others and you will make yourself happy and comfortable.

With Islam you are a 'protected jewel', but without it you are dolls in the hands of wrongdoers, a mere object of amusement and a merchandise of trade...

How many young women get trapped and how much tragedy happens when the Hijaab is destroyed...

Therefore, to all our Muslim sisters, in the east and the west of the Muslim world, I call upon you from this holy and pure land to hold fast to the Qur'an and bite onto the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the molar teeth and to follow the teachings of Islam and its etiquette.'²⁸

²⁸ Al-Muminah Magazine, December 1995

CHAPTER FIVE

Personal Experiences

Like Amatullah who has been mentioned previously, many sisters have come across hardships and have struggled to wear the Hijaab. For some of us it is fighting the Shaytaan that is the hardest barrier to overcome. Here are three descriptions of three different sisters expressing their experiences.

Experience One:

I was the average girl at university. I was, as expected, into the latest fashion and trend.

A new day at university meant a new outfit, well, one that I had not worn that week. I had to have a different hairstyle and different make up. I even went as far as wearing a different perfume everyday.

Deep down I felt it was like a burden; it took up a lot of my time. Every evening I would have to think about my outfit for the next day, when I could have spent that time studying.

Whilst on my way home from a lecture one day I was passed a small leaflet. It was announcing a get together. It was organised by the Muslim ladies of the university. I put it away in my bag and did not think much of it. I did always look up to women with Hijaab. I felt they were better than me as they dressed in such a modest dress.

At home, later that evening I came across the leaflet again. I pulled it out and had a read. I eventually decided to go. I don't know what made me decide to go but as Allah guides whom He wills...

I arrived at the gathering. I did wear a small scarf just so I would not feel left out. However, when I got there I was welcomed. Everyone said *salaam* to me and asked how I was and what I was doing etc. All the ladies had such charming and polite characters. Most of them wore the Hijaab fully. But underneath they wore everyday clothing like I did but as one of them said: "I dress like this to please my Lord and what I wear under is for me." The words made me think. I thought so true, why should we dress to please people and to keep up with trend when I could please my Lord by wearing the Hijaab.

It was from that day and the saying of that sister that made me think and look into the Hijaab and today *Mashallah* I am

in full Hijaab for the sake of the creator of the world and I am proud to be a Muslimah wearing the Hijaab.

Experience Two:

I was always interested in Islam. I prayed, I fasted in the month of Ramadhan, I had even done Hajj but my main problem was wearing the Hijaab. I found it so difficult. I don't really know what it was, something was just stopping me. Of course it was the shaytaan, whom I was finding it very hard to fight in this case.

Each morning I would decide right today I'm going to wear it. But then when it came to the crunch I would always back down. I would be the first one in the family to wear it so I felt why not start it off, the Shaytaan just kept coming in my way until I read an article in a women's Magazine. It was some great advise of a great man: **"...So whenever the woman abandons the teaching of Islam and neglects the proper Islamic dress and takes easy the matter of Hijaab, exposing herself to men (by) walking among them and wearing perfume, *her dignity and honour vanishes and her brightness disappears and her modesty dwindles...*"**

This was the day I started to wear the Hijaab and I encourage every Muslim woman to do the same. It is your

uniform and as the Shaikh says your source of honour and dignity so wear it and guard your modesty.

In today's day and age no woman can have the excuse that people may look at her as the Hijaab is becoming very very popular amongst the West and amongst the Muslims. So obey the teaching of your Lord.

Experience Three:

This is an extract on the experience of a Japanese sister who accepted Islam and wears the Hijaab.

“Women all over the world, non-Arabs, are embracing Islam and wearing the Hijaab as a religious requirement, **My Hijaab is not a part of my traditional identity**; it has no social or political significance; **it is purely and simply, my religious identity.**”

“What does the hijaab mean to me?”

“Until I visited the main mosque in Paris I had nothing to do with Islam; neither the prayers nor the Hijaab were familiar to me. The benefits of observing Hijaab became clear to me following a lecture at the mosque when I kept my scarf on even after leaving the building. The lecture had filled me with such a previously unknown spiritual satisfaction that I simply did not want to remove it. I did feel different,

somehow purified and perfected; I felt as if I was in Allah's company”

“In my Hijaab I went unnoticed, protected from impolite stares.”

“My Hijaab made me happy. It was both a sign of my obedience to Allah and a manifestation of my faith. I did not need to utter beliefs, the Hijaab stated them clearly for all to see, especially fellow Muslims and thus it helped to strengthen the bond of sisterhood in Islam. Wearing the Hijaab soon became spontaneous, albeit purely voluntary. No human being could force me to wear it; if they had, perhaps I would have rebelled and rejected it.”

“The Hijaab reminds people who see it that Allah exists, and it serves as a constant reminder to me that I should conduct myself as a Muslim.”

“Just as police officers are more professionally aware while in uniform, so I had a stronger sense of being a Muslim wearing my Hijaab.”

“Men treated us with respect and special politeness. **Woman wearing a *Khimaar* shared a sisterhood which lived up to the Prophet's saying (Allah's blessings and peace on him): ‘a Muslim gives her salaam to the person she crosses in the street, whether he knows him or not.’”**

“I felt elegant and more relaxed.”

“I often wonder why people say nothing about the veil of the Catholic nun but criticize vehemently the veil of a Muslimah, regarding it as a symbol of 'terrorism' and 'oppression'”

“Once, on a train, the elderly man next to me asked why I was dressed in such an unusual fashion. When I explained that I was a Muslimah and that Islam commands women to cover their bodies so as not to trouble men who are weak and unable to resist temptation, he seemed impressed. When he left the train, he thanked me. In this instance, the Hijaab prompted a discussion on Islam with a Japanese man who would not normally be accustomed to talking about religion. Indeed, it was I who also felt uneasy looking at my younger sister's legs while she wore short pants. I have often been embarrassed, even before declaring Islam, by the sight of a woman's bosom and hips clearly outlined by tight, thin clothing. I felt I was seeing something secret. If such a sight embarrasses me, one of the same sex, it is not difficult to imagine the effect on men”

“If a nudist were to ask a 'liberated' female who rejects the Hijaab why she still covers her bosoms and hips which are as natural as her hands and face, could she give an honest answer?”

“But in Islam we have no such problems: Allah has defined what may and may not be bared, and we follow. Just as a short skirt can send the signal that the wearer is available to men, so the Hijaab signals, loud and clear: " **I am forbidden for you.**"

If it oppresses women, why are so many well-educated young women in Europe, America, Japan, Australia, indeed all over the world, abandoning "liberty" and "independence" and embracing Islam?

A person blinded by prejudice may not see it, but a woman in Hijaab is brightly beautiful as an angel, full of self-confidence, serenity, and dignity. No sign of oppression scars her face.”

CHAPTER SIX

The Hijaab – Conclusion and Outline

So, when I wear the Hijaab.....

1. I please Allah. I am obeying the commands of my Lord when I wear the Hijaab and I can expect great rewards in return.
2. It is Allah's protection of my natural beauty. I am too precious to be "on display" for each man to see.
3. It is Allah's preservation of my chastity.
4. Allah purifies my heart and mind through the Hijaab.
5. Allah beautifies my inner and outer countenance with hijaab. Outwardly, my Hijaab reflects innocence, purity, modesty, shyness, serenity, contentment and obedience to my Lord. Inwardly I cultivate the same.
6. Allah defines my femininity through the Hijaab. I am a woman who respects her womanhood. Allah wants me to be respected by others, and for me to respect myself.

7. Allah raises my dignity through the Hijaab. When a strange man looks at me, he respects me because he sees that I respect myself.
8. Allah protects my honour 100% through my Hijaab. Men do not gaze at me in a sensual way, they do not approach me in a sensual way, and neither do they speak to me in a sensual way. Rather, a man holds me in high esteem and that is just by one glance at me!
9. Allah gives me nobility through the Hijaab. I am noble not degraded because I'm covered not naked.
10. Allah defines my role as a Muslim woman through the Hijaab. I am someone with important duties.
11. Allah expresses my independence through the Hijaab. I am stating clearly that I am an obedient servant of the Greatest Master. I will obey no one else and follow no other way. I am not a slave to any man, nor a slave to any nation. I'm free and independent from all man-made systems.
12. My Hijaab gives me unique confidence.

13. Allah wants others to treat me – a Muslim woman -
with kindness. And the Hijaab brings about the best
treatment of men towards me.