

WHAT IS HIJAB



'The status of Women in Islam', in particular the wearing of 'Hijab' is often the target of negative media attention. This often stems from misconceptions surrounding the purpose of Hijab.

One of the most visual signs of Hijab being observed amongst women is the covering of the hair, however, Hijab involves much more than this. Hijab is defined as 'that which covers and conceals', whether it be clothing, words, actions etc. Hijab extends beyond clothing to include moral conduct, behaviour, attitude and intention of both males and females. Furthermore it includes 'Hijab' of the eyes, the heart, thoughts and intentions. Men and women are both required to dress modestly and hence cover certain parts of their body.

Muslim women who observe Hijab, in the clothing sense, find it liberating and feel it serves to protect them from preying eyes and unwanted advances from men. In addition they argue that people learn to admire their personality and intellect, irrespective of their beauty. Further it frees them from having to follow the latest fashion trends. Various terms are used to describe the Hijab across cultures such as Jilbaab, Niqaab, Burkha, Headscarf, Veil and so on. Contrary to popular misconceptions, Muslim women are given much greater respect than males. Equally a mother's rank has been placed much higher than that of the father.

In some Muslim societies women cover the entire body including the face from men other than their family members that they are not allowed to marry. They choose to cover that which they believe has been gifted to them by Allah i.e., their beauty, and show themselves only to whom they are permitted.

Hijab is also an ordained requirement of all the previous divine faiths including Judaism and Christianity. Modest dress has been worn by righteous women throughout history; prominent examples are the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus (peace be upon her) and traditional Catholic Nuns. Women observe Hijab of their own free will and it cannot be forced onto someone. They simply observe the Hijab because it is a command of Allah (God).

Allah (God) says in Quran: "O Prophet! Tell thy Wives, and Daughters, and the believing Women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons: that is better, that they should be known (as such) and not abused. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [Qur'aan Ch33: V60]



Allah (God) Also Says:
"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and protect their private parts. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do... And tell the believing women to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent..."
[Qur'aan Ch24 v30-31]