

MODULE 5

Class Title: Hijab - Part 3 (3rd part of a 4 lesson series)

Category: Scripture/Popular Culture

Aim of Lesson: To understand the ruling on outer covering – *jalbab* – according to Surah Al Ahzab: verse 59

Class format: Power point Presentation & discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalamu 'alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Ta'awwudh*) *A'oodhu billahi min Ash Shaytaanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul 'uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* [Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verses 25-28]

Slides 1 – 4:

We have been talking about *hjiab*. Does anybody remember what we talked about in the last class?

We were analyzing *Surah Noor*, the verse of *hijab* in *Surah Noor*.

We saw that the phrase "wa-lyadhribna bikhumurihinna ala juyubihinna," is a **command** for women to draw their head coverings over their bosoms.

Allah (swt) did not say, "And tell the believing women to **put on** their veils," because implicit in the verse is the understanding that women were already wearing a *khimar* or head covering.

However, unlike the practice at the time of leaving the scarf hanging down the back with the neck and cleavage exposed, Muslim women were to take it one step further and draw the "*khimar*" or veil over the neck and cleavage area.

Those who argue that the Quran says nothing about veiling are completely misreading this verse. Not only does the Quranic text make it clear that women are expected to veil, it also dictates the extent of the veiling, i.e., covering the neck and cleavage and according to another interpretation face as well.

This point is explained by practice of the ladies around the Prophet (pbuh) – the women *sahabas*. Reports from Aisha (ra) and other women of the Sahaba clearly tell us how they immediately implemented this verse by tearing up pieces of cloth and covering their hair and bodies.

Bukhari recorded that Aisha (ra) said: "May Allah have mercy on the women of the early emigrants. When Allah revealed the verse: [وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ]

(and to draw their veils over their bosoms), they tore their aprons and veiled themselves [made *khimars*] with them." [Tafsir Ibn Kathir]

Then we experimented ourselves that there could be two possible ways of drawing a *khimar* over your bosoms. One, pulling it down your head so that everything is covered and like some of you had suggested bringing it like *that* [teacher demonstrates again].

And then we said perhaps there is a difference of opinion here; I'm saying perhaps because we'll come to that later. But the fact that your entire body other than this bit is covered, there is absolutely no difference of opinion on that. Not even half an ounce. Everybody clear on that? Is there anything that is not understood before we move on? *Alhamdulillah*.

So we talked about *Surah Noor* verse 31. Other four commandments relate to dress and can really be expressed as three rules. I'm repeating it so we all remember.

- Displaying the beauty except 'what is apparent of' except to the people listed in the verse.
- Extending the head covering to cover the bosoms - We have done that.
- And drawing the outer garment close around.

Let's come to this bit which says, draw the outer garment close around.

Slides 5 - 6:

What does this outer garment business mean? Look at *Surah Al-Ahzaab*: verse 59. It says,

'O Prophet (pbuh), tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men), that is better that they may be known and not annoyed and Allah (swt) is Ever-forgiving, All-Merciful.'

Slide 7:

'*Yudneena alay hinna min jalaabeebe hinna*', remember I told you *hinna* is a female pronoun.

Jalaabeeb is the plural of *jalbab*.

Have you heard this word *jalbab*? It's an Arabic word. *Jalbaab* is the word which is used predominantly by Muslims around the world. Even though they aren't Arabs, even 'Non Arab Muslims' in other parts of the world use the word *jalbaab*. It's the same thing which we call *abaya*. *Jalbaab* is an outer covering.

Khimar is the head covering and *jalbab* is actually the outer sheet or coverlet which a woman wraps around on top of her garments to cover herself from head to toe. It hides her body completely. (Lisan-ul Arab, vol. 1, p. 273).

The root word is JA LA BA which is basically used for such things which completely cover something. For example, the blankets we use in cold weather or the darkness of the night which covers all things completely.

According to one scholar - Ibn Al-Hazam – "In Arabic language, the language of the Prophet

(s.a.w.), Jalbab is that outer sheet which covers the entire body. A piece of cloth which is too small to cover the entire body could not be called Jalbab.” (Al-Muhalla, vol. 3, p. 217)

Slides 8 –

These are all *jalbaabs*.

One verse is talking about *khimar* and the other is talking about *jalbaab*. This is a coat but it’s an outer covering. These are all different types of *jalabeeb*. If you’re an Eskimo, this will be your *jalbaab*. If you live in a rainy country, then this could be your *jalbaab*.

Look at this, I have a feeling this picture is from Tunisia, these women are wearing their *jalabeeb* and they are wearing these funny little hats to protect themselves from the sun.

This is one piece of cloth, not a stitched garment. It doesn’t have to be a ‘coat’. A lot of women wear a *chaadar* in our country, they don’t wear a coat.

The reason I wear a coat is because it leaves my hands free and otherwise I find it very fiddly whether I am driving or doing ‘whatever’. So you don’t have to worry about your *chaadar* falling. Some women wear the *chaadar* beautifully, it doesn’t fall off. *Ajrak*, a lot of people in Sindh wear *ajraks*, you know the long big ones.

The point is, the exact style of the outer covering is not prescribed. That depends on you, where you live, your culture, your personal preference – as long as the dress requirement of covering is met.

Slide 14:

Remember the dress requirements?

- Loose not tight, must cover *satar*, not ‘see through’.
- Girls and boys clothing must not be alike.
- Must not imitate other religions.
- Must not have *tabarruj*.

For e.g. if your *jalbaab* becomes your *zeenat*, then what are you hiding? If the *jalbaab* is so fancy; ok if you feel that ‘I can’t show my clothes so I might as well put all the embellishments on the *jalbaab*’, then what are you hiding?

Allah (swt) says hide our *zeenat*. So what you are doing is, you are taking your *zeenat* from the inside to the outside. That’s also something to think about. You need to see that all your clothing requirements are met in your outer garments too. It cannot look like a nun’s ‘habit’ although you are completely covered. No *zeenat* but why shouldn’t you be wearing it? Because it is imitating another religion. So you can’t wear a nun’s ‘habit’.

My *jalbaab* should not be so sheer that everything inside is visible. It can’t be ‘see-through’.

Somebody asked a very interesting question. That person said, I'm wearing a loose dress. Our clothes in particular; because of our cultural context and because we have been Muslims for generations, the clothing in our part of the world is very modest, compared to other cultures. If you look at the *shalwar qameez*, it was meant to be very modest, very loose. It's always loose and weather has got a lot to do with it as well, because if you wear thick and tight clothes you'll sweat like crazy, these generally keep you cool. So somebody was saying if you wear something loose and if I wear a big *khimaar* on it, will that meet the *hijab* requirements or not?

So the first thing that came to my mind was, 'Ok if you consider your undergarments as your *libaas* then this would be your *jalbaab*'! But when I consulted my teacher she said, "No, if you are wearing something loose, that covers you completely, doesn't have any *zeenat* (adornment) and fulfills all the above dress requirements and you have a *khimar* on your head that covers your bosom too then that would meet the *hijab* requirements.

Be careful here. The trends in our *shalwar qameez* these days do not, I repeat, do not meet these dress requirements by a mile. So, if someone says – any old *shalwar qameez*, whether covering properly or not, is ok and is *jalbab* then that is problematic.

Similarly, any old head covering, whether sheer – like we have chiffon *dupattas* – are *khimar*, then that is a problem.

The ruling for an outer garment is there very clearly!

Slide 17:

So, *alhamdulillah* we have covered two of the dress commandments, one is, 'extending the head covering to cover the bosoms' and the other, 'drawing the outer garment close around'.

Is there any confusion about these two? Please ask now.

Then the third bit is, 'what is apparent of it'. Not displaying the beauty beyond what is apparent of it. Let's see how.

Slides 18 – 20:

Your height is something you can't hide, no matter what you are wearing, a tall person will be a tall person and a short person will be a short person. Of course I don't mean high heels. I mean that is 'apparent'. What your height is or what your physical built is, is apparent. For example it doesn't matter if I wear a black *abaya* or blue one or flowered one, I will look fat. My built is that way. If you are thin, then it won't matter if you wear a loose *abaya* or whatever, you will still look like a thin person. Is that true or not? Height and width you can't hide!

You see we take the *hijab* to the extremes and unfortunately in our part of the world that is exactly what happens. Women were just treated like cattle with *hijab* being an excuse to exclude

them altogether from all sorts of productive activity and all sorts of participation in society in general, they were treated as cattle.

So taking the *hijab* commandment like, ‘the women should just be locked up in a room and throw away the key!’ That’s not what it is like. And the scholars say that there is a reason why there is such a lot of stress on ‘the *hijab* commandment number one’ and ‘interaction between the two sexes’. There is a lot of stuff in Islam about that, gender relations - how to deal with the opposite sex.

If women were supposed to never interact with men then what was the point of having these commandments in the first place! Hindi movie dialogues would be like, ‘you go to your husband’s home as a bride and the only time you come out is when you are dead!’ So this is treating women like what? A commodity.

Islam came to uplift the status of women and what Prophet (pbuh) did, was to abolish all these customs of *jaahilyah*. You can be covered completely and be a productive member of society.

We see from the example of Ayesha (ra), she was 18 years old when Prophet (pbuh) died and she lived on another 50 years, was there at the time of all 4 *Khalifas*, and she was in total *pardah* and her contribution to Islam is so great that half of our religion is from Ayesha (ra). The great companions like Omar (ra) used to go to her for advice. Literally, half our religion’s transmission is because of Ayesha (ra). So she was an extremely productive member of society and she was in total *pardah*.

I remember reading this beautiful article - Finding the Prophet in his People by Ingrid Mattson. Ingrid Mattson was Vice President of the Islamic Society of North America. She is an American who got married to an Arab gentleman and she reverted. She says:

‘Soon after I met my husband, he told me about a woman he greatly admired. He spoke of her intelligence, her eloquence and her generosity. This woman, he told me, tutored her many children in traditional and modern learning. With warm approval, he spoke of her frequent arduous trips to refugee camps and orphanages to help relief efforts. With profound respect, he told me of her religious knowledge, which she imparted to other women in regular lectures. And he told me of the meals she had sent to him, when she knew he was too engaged in his work with the refugees to see to his own needs. When I finally met this woman I found that she was covered, head to toe, in traditional Islamic dress. I realized with some amazement that my husband had never seen her. He had never seen her face. Yet he knew her. He knew her by her actions, by the effects she left on other people.’

He had never seen her! *Alhamdulillah* and I’m talking about it today because this article was written just a few years ago by a contemporary Muslim woman, describing another contemporary Muslim woman.

We get scared of *hijab*, we say, ‘God knows what’s going to happen?’ Nothing happens! You follow Allah (swt)’s commandment. Simple as that!

So ‘what is apparent of’, sometimes when you walk what happens is that your body shape can be apparent. Because when you walk; obviously it depends on how loose your outer garment is, That’s fine.

Look at these ladies, playing basketball happily. I myself go swimming in the sea with my full *niqab* on. It’s fun. Who cares if someone is calling you ‘Batman’! I don’t care. I know a lot of ladies who don’t care, people around me, my friends who have been para-diving in their full *niqab*, who have been snorkeling, I mean nothing stops you from doing what Allah (swt) wants you to do. It doesn’t stop you from doing anything! And that is our greatest fear that, ‘Oh my God! Now I’m going to become like God knows what’.

Your participation is not hindered by what you wear. Yes, you can’t be in a swimming competition, perhaps certain things you can’t do, simply because you have to wear certain clothes in public which you shouldn’t wear, other than that there is no issue.

Slide 21:

What about the face?

‘What is apparent of’ some people take the face as being ‘what is apparent of’. Based on the hadith that Prophet (pbuh) said to *Asma bint Abi Bakr* that when a girl comes of age she should be fully covered except for *this* and *this* (and he pointed to the hands and face). [Sunan Abu Dawud]

However, others say that face is part of what should be covered.

For me, my *hijab* happened when I covered my face. That was when it happened for me. I’m telling you a personal experience. The most difficult thing for me was when I put a *dupatta* on my head. The toughest battle! But covering my face was easy peasy. And then... you still have to work on your attitude. Remember last week’s discussion? You still have to work on your attitude all the time.

Slides 22 – 24:

So let’s look at evidence of covering of face. There is evidence from the practice of female companions that they used to cover their face.

Narrated Safiyya binte Shaiba: Aisha (RA) used to say, "When (the Verse): "They should draw their veils over their necks and bosoms," was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their faces with the cut pieces. [Bukhari & Abu Dawud]

Umm-e-Salmah (ra) narrates that when the verse that ‘they should cast their outer garments over the persons’ was revealed, the women of *Ansar* came out as if they had crows over their heads by wearing outer garments. [Abu Dawud]

Ayesha (ra) narrates, 'Riders would pass us when we accompanied the Prophet (pbuh), while we were in *ihram*. When they came by us, one of us would let down her *jilbab* over her head on her face and when they had passed on, we would uncover our face.' [Abu Dawud]

Slides 25 – 30:

Have you heard of 'Helen of Troy'? What is said about her? 'The face that launched a 1000 ships. Not the hand or the leg, only the face.

Allah (swt) says in verse 31, 'Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty, that they should not display their beauty.'

The WOW factor! That's what *zeenat* is. Your face is not wow factor?

I consider my face as my 'wow' factor. When you say somebody is cute, what do you mean? Cute what? What do you mean by that? Face! Absolutely. Your face is your fortune. The amount of beauty products that are available for your face compared to the rest of your body are like huge. True or not? It's like the cherry on the cake. And a lot of times, if you're like me, you've got big fat cheeks and you wear that *hijab*, it's like a pretty picture being framed.

Look at her. Look at her, turn around. Come and stand over here. It's like framing a pretty picture. A lot of times, regular ordinary looking girls look absolutely sublime in a *hijab*. It's true because it hides a lot of the blemishes and the fat cheeks, you just look gorgeous.

Just to make it clear the point of this discussion is NOT to say if a woman doesn't wear *niqaab* she will go to *Jahunum* (Hell), as we know there are two valid view points on this.

One view held by the scholars is that the *niqaab* (covering the face) is compulsory and other scholars hold the view it is *Mustahab* (recommended and the best thing to do but not compulsory).

Those people who say things like "The *niqaab* is not in Islam or is not important" or is "bad for da'wah" these people should understand that the *Niqaab* **is** from the Quran and Hadith and even if you hold the view of it not being compulsory, it is still THE BEST thing and recommended and anyone who wears it is to be respected.

And if anyone discourages the wearing of *niqaab* or denies it being in Islam or makes fun of someone who wears it they should fear Allah (swt).

Slide 31:

The scholars who interpret that the face must be covered say that there are exceptions to the rule. Face can be uncovered in certain situations.

One is in the state of *ihram* however if there is no fear of facing a stranger and today that is zero. The *hadith* of Ayesha (ra) was when? In the 7th century where there were few people, so when

somebody used to come, they would cover their faces. Today it is impossible to be like this. I mean forget about this possibility; people are like *this* close to each other. There are millions of people *Alhamdulillah*. So need I say more, when there is no fear of facing a stranger?

The other is a prospective bride, for example if you do a full *purdah*, you can show your face and you should. It's not necessary that the *rishta* (proposal) works out but the fact is that it is his right and your right as well to see each other. And sometimes when you say that, people go like, '*really?*' Yes, really! You can't marry anyone without their consent. And yes that includes Muslim women/girls. But we have buried these basic things of Islam.

And then for official identification, like when you travel, when you have to get your picture taken for a visa, there is an exception. Just pull your *niqab* down a little bit.

When you travel, you should check up the visa photograph requirement because sometimes these photographers are completely ignorant of what the situation is. Last year I remember applying for the British visa, the photographer said, '*you have to take off your hijab*'. And I was like, *really!* That was not the requirement.

And for medical treatment. Like you have to get a root canal or any other medical treatment, you can uncover. But that is an exception.

Islam is not barbaric. Some people have used it as a barbaric concept that even if a woman needs medical treatment, they will not take her simply because there is no woman medical doctor, so they let her suffer in pain. That's ridiculous! In the name of *purdah*.

And this concept of '*chaardiwari* and *chaadar*' (four walls and covering sheet) is totally alien to Islam. Ayesha (ra) would be totally scandalized if she was alive today. Because she was a *pukka* (total) feminist. Feminist in *purdah*!

Slides 32 – 61:

Allah (swt) has commanded the believing women to:

1. not display their beauty beyond "*what is apparent of it*" except to the people listed in 24:31
2. extend the head covering to cover the bosom
3. draw the outer garment close around

Actually it isn't that complicated at all, once you look at it in a systematic manner. It's not rocket science either. It's pretty simple and straightforward. Commandments of Allah (swt) that apply to a majority of people are pretty simple to understand and also very easy to find loopholes around. That's the *fitnah* (trial).

[Note: play video]

A lot of times our brain buys it, but *something* keeps it from accepting this commandment and that is exactly what we need to do – find that something. That something is a veil on our hearts. We need to lift the veil from our hearts.

We have been talking about understanding Allah's (swt) commandments, whether it's a commandment of *hijab* or of *salah* or of anything else. *Wahi* is something that your heart accepts. It's never just your brain. If you are going to accept *wahi* with your brain only, you are never going to get it.

We looked at different types of “evidences” – grammatical, historical, practice of female companions of the Prophet (pbuh), explanation of the verses by sahaba like Ibn Abbas (ra) and main stream scholars of Islam – all, and I repeat all, point to the fact that hijab is a commandment of Allah (swt) for Muslim women. They must cover their heads and bodies in a manner that nothing is exposed in front of non-mehram men – and we had discussed that list in our dress code class (Dress Code – part 2) – except some things that are apparent anyways no matter what you do. Here, there are 2 opinions of scholars; face must be covered, face covering is not obligatory, but definitely part of Islam.

Even today, there is overwhelming evidence – in the practice of Muslim women – all around the world about the meaning of these commandments.

[Note: show slides]

So *InshaAllah* what we need to do, is to pray to Allah (swt), for those who aren't hundred percent convinced right now, and for those *Alhamdulillah* who are already doing it. So we need to renew our intentions in our mind, ‘why am I doing this?’

We need to lift the veil from our hearts, *InshaAllah*. Next week we will talk about attitude of *hijab*.

Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillah Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*