# 194976 - Hijab in Islam is not due to sexual obsession

**the question**

I am curious about the coverings that you have to wear if youre a female in your religion/culture. it really does all seem very vain for us that are Christian because it implies that a woman thinks every man wants her if she is not wearing this type of garb. it also seems that men are not to be trusted with someone from your culture/religion becuase of your "beauty" that you feel you posess, but people could be beautiful and not every man wants them. can you shed some light on this for me? I will be honest and say that when I see someone wearing this, I always think "how vain are you?". thank you ahead of time for replying.

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

First of all we would like to thank you for your frankness, the clarity of your question and your search for an answer. We hope that you will find the answer in these few lines we write.

We will begin our answer by posing a question, which we would like you to answer, then after that our point will become clear, by Allah’s leave. Our question is: do you think that if a girl takes off all her clothes and walks about in the markets of London or Paris completely naked, will you accept that from her or will the authorities and laws in that place allow her to do that?

We think it most likely that your answer will be no, and that you will not accept this idea, especially since the laws that protect public order do not allow that at all. This is no secret to anyone who lives in that country.

If we take it to another level, we say to you: do you think that if she wore something that covered her private parts, but it uncovered her chest and she went shopping topless, we think that you would also agree that such behaviour is ill-mannered and that it is disrespectful and a

transgression of public etiquette as it is known among people.

Forget about those who expose themselves blatantly; what do you think that if a woman went out in the streets and public places wearing nightclothes…?

Perhaps you also know that the authorities in Western countries have the right to object to those who wear swimwear in public places, and that the manager of the company or boss in a workplace has the right to prevent female employees from working with him wearing revealing, provocative clothing, and it is mandatory to wear regular, modest clothing.

Our question now is: do you think all these countries, people, organisations, laws and customs are vain or obsessed with sex, as you say? Or do you think they are abhorrent and unjust, aimed at suppressing freedom, and could not be introduced by anyone but people who are obsessed with sex? Do you think that if a woman uncovers her chest or her private parts or wears swimwear in public places, all men will want her or that she is engaging in prostitution and trying to tempt them?

If you say that there is a difference between the two scenarios, and nakedness in public places is unacceptable, but that uncovering the hair and face is something normal and is not provocative and does not transgress public order, we say to you: who is to decide between us and you in defining the parts of the body that may be uncovered and the parts that it is unacceptable to uncover? Why do you want to make us adhere to the limits that you set, and do not want to accept the limits set out in Islamic sharee‘ah?

Furthermore, why should a particular society, such as Western society, decide for other societies what is appropriate for them and what is not?

Once you know that banning nakedness or scanty dress in public places does not imply all the things that you mentioned in your question, then we would tell you that we Muslims believe that modest dress is this hijab which you see Muslim women wearing and accuse them of being vain?

Why do you look at modesty, or whatever you think is contrary to public taste, manners and

morals – why do you regard your point of view or that of your society as the criterion for judging other societies or people?

Why do you reject our view concerning this matter, and ask us to adhere to your concept and definition of modesty? If a girl uncovers her thighs and stomach, is this modesty? Or should she limit it to uncovering her legs and forearms only? What is the guideline for your choices in this matter? What right do you have to make all of humanity adhere to your particular concept?

Or: is this a remnant of the “right” of the white man or, let’s say, the white or blonde woman, to control the world and define its concepts, customs, manners and taste?

Why do you not describe the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) as you have described us in your question as being “vain”? You know that she wore a kind of hijab. Did she understand modesty as something sexual, according to your description?

Why do women in the church cover their hair during the service in the church and during the prayer?

What is the difference between the state of prayer and outside prayer? If wearing the hijab during prayer increases piety and faith, then why would a woman remove part of her faith and piety outside of prayer?

Why do you not make the same accusation of vanity with regard to what is mentioned in the first Epistle of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, in which he says:

“But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved.

For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

For man did not come from woman, but woman from man;

neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels.”

1 Corinthians 11:5-10 – New International Version (NIV)

In the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, it says:

“I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,

but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.”

1 Timothy 2:9-12– New International Version (NIV)

Furthermore, the face-covering (niqab) is also mentioned in the Bible, as a sign of modesty and good manners in a woman.

In the book of Genesis it says:

“He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.

Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel

and asked the servant, ‘Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?’

‘He is my master,’ the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.”

Genesis 24:63-66 – New International Version (NIV).

We do not have room here to quote more verses than these. There have been specialist studies dealing with such matters, which you can try to find and study.

All we are trying to do is base our discussion with you on logic and fair-mindedness towards others and on a sound foundation of thinking and discussion, far removed from any accusations of "vanity" and the like. Such accusations are the easiest thing for an opponent to say, and there is no one who is not able to refute them or respond in kind.

We assure you that the obligation of hijab in Islamic sharee'ah is not because Islam accuses every woman who does not wear hijab of being immoral, or because all men will look at her as a focus for their wickedness and desires. Islamic societies raise people to be righteous and pious at all stages of upbringing, in the family and in the street, school, mosque and at university. The fact that there are many Islamic rulings that encourage good manners, decency, chastity and modesty is sufficient to deter many people from committing immoral actions.

But Islam does not only look at the majority of people; rather it pays attention to the fact that there is also a small percentage of evildoers, in order to protect the well-being of the majority and so that they will not be affected by the actions of the minority, that could spoil life for people and spread immorality if they are not stopped, just as if the authorities in Western countries left perverts, homosexuals and the patrons of strip clubs to act upon their desires and preferences in the streets or in public places, without any checks or measures – you can imagine what the consequences would be for those societies.

Here we will present to you a further quotation which says that attempts to remove women's niqabs (face veils) and make them uncover their faces is the way of the evildoers.

In the Catholic edition of the book of Daniel, it says:

"Now Susanna was a woman of great refinement and beautiful in appearance.

As she was veiled, the scoundrels ordered her to be unveiled, so that they might feast their eyes

on her beauty.”

Daniel 13:30-31 – New Revised Standard Edition

No comment!

Finally, we invite you to read studies on safety which keep an eye on statistics charting attacks on women, such as rape for example. You will find terrifying numbers. According to the organization RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), which is the largest American national organisation against sexual assault, every two minutes in America there is a sexual assault, which means that sexual assaults in one year number 207,754. This is a huge number which requires a serious effort to unearth the causes and look for the remedy. See:

http://rainn.org/get-information/statistics/frequency-of-sexual-assault

If we were to look for statistics on marital infidelity, illegitimate children, broken families, and incest, we would find many problems that occurred as a result of women not dressing properly and overstepping the limits that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, set for them in the Holy Qur’an, and which can be found even in the Old and New Testament as they exist in print form, as mentioned above.

We hope that you will think about what we have mentioned above, after which we may discuss further the main reasons that motivate Muslim women to wear hijab, and the psychological and social effects of that piece of cloth.

If you accept our logic in this debate, we welcome all questions and sincere requests to learn more about the religion of Islam.

And Allah knows best.