

## What is Hijab?

The hijab is a divine commandment, which is compulsory to follow. Many people have misconceptions as to what the hijab actually is, most seem to have in mind that the hijab is just covering the head but infact it is quite more than that.

The word hijab means to cover or to hide and is from the Arabic root word HIJABA. Hijab is not a veil or a face veil but it is to cover or to hide. In the Holy Quran in Surah Nur verse 31, Almighty Allah (SWT) says:

وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ  
فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ  
بِخُمْرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ

**"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; and that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must) ordinarily appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty...."**

So from this verse we see that the requirements of hijab are:

- 1) To lower the gaze
- 2) To guard your modesty
- 3) Not to display your beauty and your ornaments except that appear thereof ordinarily
- 4) To draw your veil over your bosoms i.e. chest

### Lowering your gaze

This is compulsory for both men and women. In a hadith reported by **Jareer bin Abdullah he said:**  
**" I asked the Holy Prophet (SAW) about an accidental glance (at a strange woman). He ordered me to turn my eyes away. (Muslim 7:2970).**

Also in another hadith **Buraidah reported that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said to Ali (RA),**  
**"Do not give a second look O Ali, because while you are not to be blamed for the first (glance) you have no right to the second one" (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Abu Dawud and Daarimi 13:2976)**

However, there are some exceptions such as when in education, shopping etc in daily life but gazing is not allowed. What has been advised is for example if in college or university or school you should look once then look away and not to keep a constant gaze on the teacher.

**Once Hadhrat Aishah (RA) was lifted by the Holy Prophet(SAW) onto his shoulders to gaze over a wall where Ethiopians were performing (Bukhari) - so she was watching for a reason with the right intentions, and intentions count so look then look away but don't keep gazing. Also the other exception is when looking for a marriage partner.**

In a hadith **Abu Hurairah reported that a man came to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and said: I intend to marry a woman of the Ansar. He said, "Then look at her" (Muslim 1:2964).**

Also to elaborate in support of this hadith in another hadith **Jabir reported that the Holy Prophet (SAW)has said,**  
**"When anyone of you asks a woman in marriage, if he able to look at her he should do so". (Abu Dawud)**

### **Guard your modesty**

Guarding one's modesty is the social behaviour of a Muslim.

In a hadith **Umme salamah reported that she was with the Holy Prophet(SAW) along with Maimunah when Ibne Makhtoom came to him. (Umme Salmah and Maimunah are the Wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW). The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "screen from him". I (meaning Salmah) said, "O messenger of Allah (SAW), is he not blind and cannot see us". The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "Are you blind and unable to see him?" (Ahmad, Tirmizi and Abu dawud 19:2982).**

This hadith was said after the hijab verse was revealed. So to create a state of mind is the whole point of Hijab regarding modesty.

Also in this aspect comes the issue of free mixing.

Free mixing means to be alone with a man who is not legally your mahram according to shariah. The reason being for this is clarified in a hadith where **Umar reported that the Holy prophet (SAW) has said, "no man is alone with a (Stranger) woman but the Satan makes a third". (Tirmizi 21:2984).**

So then the question arises about going to universities and collages where men and women are mixed? The answer to this is that if you have to see a male teacher in his office or classrooms try to always have someone with you like your friend or someone. However if the teacher doesn't allow that then leave the door of the office open so it then becomes a public place and not a private place as to when the door is closed. This way everyone can see you and therefore Satan cannot tempt anyone. Also if it is a Muslim brother calling a sister, he should not call her unless another woman is there too.

In **Tirmizi there is a hadith that says, "do not call a woman without other women being there".**

### **Shaking Hands with woman:**

Shaking hands is also not permitted in Islam as **Hadhrat Aishah (RA) narrates in a hadith in Bukhari that the Holy Prophet (SAW) only accepted baith of women verbally.** And there many other hadith also in support of this.

However at the same time Islam does not allow us to offend anyone. In the West not shaking hands might be perceived offensive, this is why some scholars allow to shake hands with non Muslim woman. The intention should be pure. This does not apply to colleagues who you see on daily basis because now you have build trust and you can explain to them the ruling of Islam with wisdom.

### Character of a woman

- 1) When a woman is walking she should not make noise or strike her feet hard, they should walk normally and quietly. In the Holy Qur'an Surah Nur verse 31 it says:

وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ

"...They shall not strike their feet when they walk in order to shake and reveal certain details of their body"

- 2) They should not have soft speech when talking to a man. So that includes no joking, giggling, smiling, high-pitched voices. But she should speak in more of a business like manner and quite strict manner.

The Glorious Qur'an  
says:

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا

- 2)

"Then be not of soft speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease aspire (to you) but utter customary speech". (Surah Al Ahzab verse 32)

As a Muslim one should always keep in mind that what ever they say is being recorded by the angels and those who believe are **"those who avoid vain talk"** (Surah Mu'minun verse 3)

5) Modest dress- doesn't wear flashy and extravagant clothes outside. In the Holy Qur'an it says:

**"O children of Adam, we have provided you with garments to cover your bodies, as well as for luxury but the best garment is the garment of righteousness..." (7:26)**

So you see from the requirements of Hijab it does not include the face veil or anything of such.

The face veil or Niqab is however a Sunnah of the wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the sahabeyas. And is an act of greater taqwa (righteousness). **Beauty and Ornaments**

**Hadhrat Aishah (RA) said that Asma Daughter of Abu Bakr (RA) came to the Holy Prophet (SAW) wearing thing (transparent) cloths. He (SAW) approached and said, "When a girl reaches the age of puberty she should only expose her hands and feet" (Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitab ul Adhab).**

In another hadith **Hadhrat Aishah (RA) came to Hadrat Abdullah Ibn Tufail (her nephew) and wasn't covered much and the Holy prophet (SAW) disapproved and pointed to her hands and face can only be shown.**

Also **Alqamah bin Abu Alqamah reported from his mother who said that Hafsa daughter of Abdur rahman visited Aishah (RA) wearing a thin khimaar, Aishah (RA) tore it and put a thick khimaar on her (Maalik 66:4178)**

The four major [Sunni schools of thought](#) ([Hanafi](#), [Shafi'i](#), [Maliki](#) and [Hanbali](#)) hold that entire body of the woman, except her face and hands is part of her *awrah*, that is, the parts of her body that must be covered during prayer and in public settings. There are those who allow the feet to be uncovered as well as the hands and face

Imam Ibn Kathir says that before Surah Nur was revealed the women didn't cover their front parts, they had their hijab round the back after the Surah was revealed. Imam Qurtubi also supported this. In the Holy Qur'an Surah Al Ahzab verse 59 it says:

**"O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks ("Jalabib") veils all over their bodies (when abroad) that is most convenient that they should be known (as Much) and not molested: and Allah is\_Forgiving Most Merciful"**

The Jalabib is like a cloak, any lengthen garment for covering. So is it compulsory to wear the jalabib in Islam?

Some opinions of scholars say that yes, it is compulsory to wear the jalabib. However, most scholars agree that, it is recommended but its not a sin if you don't wear it. If you do wear it then you will be rewarded. But it is highly recommended when there is alot of men around, but we cannot say that it is Haram as no where in Qur'an or Sunnah does it say that not to wear a jalabib is Haram!

Any Islamic principle is always specifically mentioned in Qur'an and Hadith as Haram, but if they both are silent on a issue then its silence means permissibility. Also the following requirements are compulsory:

- 1) Head covering includes ears and neck
- 2) Cover bosoms/chest
- 3) No transparent clothing
- 4) No tight/fitted cloths (you shouldn't be able to see your body shape)

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By Shaykh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri