HIJAB AND EMPOWERMENT

For millions of Muslim women, the hijab is an empowering choice. It imbues them with a sense of modesty and pride in their faith, helping them feel stronger, respected and more self-assured. The hijab encourages others to judge women based on their character and values, rather than superficial physical attributes.

Choosing to wear the hijab can empower women by allowing them to self-express freely, without the constraints of societal pressures to dress a certain way. This sense of freedom enables many women to feel empowered, as they are able to shift the focus away from the sexualization of their bodies and towards an assessment of their capabilities and character.

The hijab is an act of obedience, honor, dignity, modesty, purity, righteousness, belief, and faith. It serves as a shield and protection, as well as a symbol of freedom.

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In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

HIJAB - SYMBOL OF FREEDOM

The word "Hijab" originates from the Arabic root word 'hajaba', meaning to conceal. In Islam, Hijab refers to the dress code for post-pubescent Muslim females. It entails covering the entire body except for the face and hands, with some opting to cover those as well, by wearing a garment known as a Burqa or Niqab. Hijab is not obligatory in all-female or familial settings. Besides attire, Hijab encompasses other things like modesty, dignified behavior, and noble speech, which applies to both men and women.

HIJAB IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD

Although there are many benefits of hijab, it is first and foremost a commandment from God. Therefore, wearing it is an act of faith and obedience to 'The Creator, as mentioned in the Qur'an:

> *Tell the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men).” Qur’an (33.59)*

God, in His wisdom, guides humans for their benefit. Wearing a hijab, like other acts of obedience, strengthens one's connection to God and brings satisfaction. Hijab does not indicate women's inferiority to men.

HIJAB IS MODESTY & PROTECTION

Islam promotes modesty and decency within society, aiming to minimize immorality. The hijab, among other practices, helps achieve this goal. The Qur’an reminds both men and women to uphold modesty, showing that this principle is shared equally and not placed solely on women.

> *The Qur'an states, "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do." Qur’an (24:30)*

> *It then states, "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears there- of and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers." Qur’an (24:31)*

The hijab is intended to promote modesty and moral integrity within society by minimizing sexual temptation for both men and women. It helps safeguard individuals and communities by fostering stability within families and social structures.

HIJAB IS RESPECT

In many societies, young girls are indoctrinated from a young age to believe their value is directly tied to their physical appearance. They are pressured to conform to unrealistic and degrading beauty standards in order to satisfy unreasonable societal expectations.

According to Islamic teachings, a woman's worth and respect should be based on her virtuous character and actions, not her physical appearance which she has little control over. The hijab encourages women to direct their self-worth towards their inner qualities and intellect, rather than relying on their physical appearance to gain recognition in society.

HIJAB IS IN THE BIBLE

The hijab, or head covering, is not a new practice for Muslim women. They follow the example of righteous women from the past, such as Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Bible also references this tradition, as seen in the following verses:

> *And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head." (1 Corinthians 11:5)*

> *I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, which is proper for women who profess to worship God." (1 Timothy 2:9-10)*

IS HIJAB OPPRESSION?

The hijab is not a symbol of oppression, inferiority, or restriction. Rather, it is a personal choice that does not hinder a woman's contribution to society, education, or career. It is simply a way for women to express their religious and cultural values, without being judged or discriminated against based on their appearance.

The hijab is not a portable prison, nor is it worn with the intention of being intimidating or anti-social. In fact, community values should dictate that people are not judged or mistreated due to their choice of clothing.