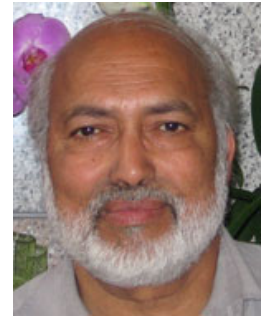


The Muslim Veil

THE Muslim veil has been in the news. In Fremont, a Muslim woman — a mother of six children — was murdered in broad daylight. Police declared it a hate crime because she was wearing a headscarf, or hijab.

Last month in London, British politician Jack Straw created controversy when he said Muslim women wearing full veil, the nigab, inhibit inter-community relations. Although he did not support a law banning a woman's right to choose to wear the veil, he would like them to abandon it altogether. Numerous politicians quickly came to support Straw's position. The British Muslim women countered with a press release saying, "The Muslim community does not need lessons in dress from Jack Straw any more than it needs lessons in parenting from John Reid."



Meanwhile, an Australian Imam created an uproar in the media and the global Internet community when he compared scantily clad women in Australia as an inducement for men to molest or to rape. He further elaborated that there should be a global dress code for both men and women so that the private parts of either sex would not be revealed.

The interpretation of the veil varies from one culture to the other. One form of veil is the niqab. This is usually full black covering on a woman's body from head to toe. The only opening is in the area of the eyes, hands and feet. A hijab is a very loose full covering over the woman's hair and her chest.

I see the present climate for the Muslims in the United States is drowned in prejudice.

Women and men who wear some form of Muslim covering on their head and body are living in fear of being verbally abused and sometimes physically attacked. In Antioch, girls from age 10 to 18 have altogether given up the Muslim head scarf because their classmates displayed unfriendly trends and a few called them, "terrorists."

The Quran has been quoted very often as the source for Muslim dress code and here is the paraphrasing of two revelations, 24:31 and 33:59, that have set Muslim laws in relation to the veil: "Tell the believing men and women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity, and do not reveal their charms in public beyond what may normally appear in decency, draw your head-coverings or outer garments over your bosoms so that you may not become the subject of molestation and indecency."

Because we live in a multicultural world, the dress code for Muslims varies from country to country. It is subjected to numerous versions of what constitute decency in Indian culture when compared to what is decency in the Arabian cultural setup.

As a matter of fact, most of the Muslim women whom I have interviewed have said, "Chastity and modesty do not only live in the outer garments and appearances — it resides deep in the heart and mind of an individual."

Iftekhar Hai is the president of the United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance.
Next week: the Rev. Anthony McGuire

THIS IS WHAT I SEND THEM TO PRINT. (The above was what they printed)

The Muslim Veil

The Muslim veil has been much in the news lately. In Fremont, a Muslim woman, a mother of six children was murdered in broad daylight. Police are still seeing if it was a hate crime because she was wearing a Muslim headscarf, or the hijab.

In London, last month, British politician Jack Straw created controversy when he said, "Muslim women wearing full veil the (niqab) inhibit inter-community relations." Although he did not support a law banning a woman's right to choose to wear the veil, he would like them to abandon it all together. Numerous politicians quickly came to support the position of Jack Straw. The British Muslim women countered with a press release saying, "The Muslim community does not need lessons in dress from Jack Straw, any more than it needs lessons in parenting from John Reid."

Meanwhile, an Australian Imam created uproar in the media and the global internet community when he compared scantily clad women as an inducement for men to molest or to rape because it could have seductive appeal. He further elaborated that there should be a global ethic code for both men and women so that the private parts of either sex would not be revealed in a seductive manner which may lead to unpleasant situation.

The interpretation of the veil varies from one culture to the other. One form of veil is the niqab. This is usually full black covering on a woman body from head to toe. The only opening is in the area of the eyes, hands and feet. It is somewhat like a burqa worn in Afghanistan where a filter is woven in the area of the eye.

Another form of veil is the hijab. It is a very loose full covering over the woman's head and her chest. The length is up to the waist line.

The present climate for the Muslims in the United States is getting drowned in prejudice. Some of the news is slanted in such a way that a form of collective guilt on Muslims comes out to the readers.

Fear of been verbally abused and sometimes physically attacked was so much on the minds of girls from age, 10 to 18 that in the East Bay they have altogether given up the Muslim head scarf. Fellow class mate has displayed unfriendly trends and a few called them, "terrorists."

If this trend is not checked now, it is possible that the secular employment sector may also come up with an unwritten law of discrimination against American Muslims who advertise their religiosity.

The Source:

The Quran has been quoted very often as the source for Muslim dress code and here is the paraphrasing of two revelations 24:31 and 33:59. "Tell the believing men and women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity, and do not reveal their charms in public beyond what may normally appear in decency, draw your head-coverings or outer garments over your bosoms so that you may not become the subject of molestation and indecency."

Another quote one hears from Muslims is, "Hijab/head covering is a sign of modesty." A Lutheran pastor asked me, "What about women who do not wear the hijab – Is that a sign of immodesty? I said, "Absolutely Not. – but I have never seen the image of Mary, the mother of Jesus without the headscarf and nuns wear a head covering all the time without being questioned."

It is a fact that majority of Muslim women do not wear any form of veil in USA. Yet there are houses where some wear the veil and some don't. Each one exercise their right without being judgmental of other's modesty factor – life goes on as normal.

Dress code for Muslims varies from country to country depending on cultural and traditional fashion. Decency and modesty is also found in the dresses of women all over the world in all cultures. There is no one standard code.

To conclude, most Muslim women whom I have interviewed say, "Chastity and modesty does not only live in the outer garments and appearances _ it resides deep in the heart and mind of an individual."

Iftekhar Hai,

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