

حجاب

HIJAAB

Let us do it

How Do You Define Your Identity?

By Ethnicity?
"I am Fulani"

By Religion?
"I am a
Muslim"

By Age?
"I am 28"

By Gender?
"I am a lady"

By Nationality?
"I am a
Nigerian"

By Skin
Colour?
"I am a black
person"

By family
Background?
"I am her
grand
daughter"

By Relationship
to Others?
"I live with my
parents and have
three brothers"





Your Hijab: Your Identity

**Who Really
Are YOU?**



04





Our Prophet (PBUH) said ...

..."Any woman who takes off her clothes in other than her husband's house (to show off for unlawful purposes), has broken Allah's shield upon her.

(Collected by Abu Dawud & At-Tirmidhi)

Narrated by Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin (RA)

"And whoever disputes with the Messenger after the guidance has been made clear and follows a way other than the way of the believers we will leave him in the path he has chosen and throw him into the Hellfire- and what an evil abode"

[Suratul Nisaa' 4:115]

Decide What YOU Want

God Commands ...

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ أَخْوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ

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

[Surah An-Nur, 24:31]

"... the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

[Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:5]

It is YOUR Identity

YOU alone should determine it!

- It is very important for YOU to be aware of aspects of your own identity
- Think about how YOU identify yourself
- Think of situations where YOU might identify yourself
- Think about what YOU will have to say to your Lord concerning His commandments.

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God's praise -- for them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward.

[Quran 33:35]

Its all about YOU



Knowledge Before Action

There are so many different opinions about what Hijab is and what it is not. For some, hijab means pairing a headscarf with Western-style clothes. For others it means wearing loose robes. Still others add a Niqab (face veil) to their ensembles. While some Muslim women only wear black, some wear specific regional styles of clothing, and some Muslim women mix it all together. Whatever you choose to wear, as a Muslimah, you are responsible for finding out what Allah expects of you as Islam cannot be properly followed without knowledge. For this reason Imam al-Bukhari placed a section in his Sahih collection entitled: "Knowledge before Speech and Action." Also, the rightly guided Khalifah Umar Bin Abdulaziz (RA) said, "Whosoever does a deed without knowledge, he will do bad more than he will do good.". It is also reported that Mu'ath ibn Jabal (RA) said: "Knowledge is a leader and action is its follower." Finally the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said: "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim." (Ibn Majah and Bayhaqi in Shu'ab al-Iman; also reported by Anas Ibn Malik in Al Tirmidhi, hadith #74.) Therefore the importance of acting based upon sound knowledge cannot be overemphasised. Be educated in your faith. Learn critical thinking skills, be focused on your goals and submit to your Lord.

Decide Your CHOICE

Opening the eyes of the spirit takes a certain courage and a moment of decision...The moment of realization that maybe it is all real is where submission to God begins. It is not the end of the story by any means, but only the beginning. -- Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood, *Thinking About God*.

Consider this.....

What do you think Peas, Pearls, Pomegranate and coconut have in common?



Did I hear you say three are edible? Yes you may be right but then what about the PEARL?

Clearly not edible so what then do they have in common?



THE VARIOUS SHADES AND GRADES OF HIJAB



The orange keeps itself within its shiny orange hijab to protect its delicious fruit. Otherwise it loses its taste too.



The pea is a splendid plant. It proudly displays its strong green hijab. It protects it from the hot and cold weather and guards it from insects. Allah has blessed the pea with a special hijab, because without it, the seeds would scatter, dry up and die.



So are the banana, the coconut and the pomegranate. Each one has an elegant and unique hijab, which protects it from disease and destruction.



The delicacies and exotic chocolates of this world are covered to protect them from bacteria and preserve their taste. Besides being so elegant it adds to its value!



The jewel of the sea, the pearl, has been given a very tough and rugged hijab - oyster shell. It protects it from sea animals and keeps it sparkling and shining inside.

HIJAB: Obedience; Piety; Modesty



ARE YOU PRIVILEGED TO WEAR THE HIJAB?

CHOOSING A DIFFERENT PATH

The hijab is a gift from Allah. It is an act of obedience; A sign of modesty and piety; It protects from harm, injury and mischief. Even before Islam different peoples had been commanded to wear Hijab as an inherently religious undertaking.

In the Old Testament we read:

“When Re-bek'ah raised her eyes, she caught sight of Isaac and she swung herself down from off the camel. Then she said to the servant 'who is that walking in the field to meet us?' and the servant said 'It is my master' And she proceeded to take a head cloth and to cover herself.” (Genesis: 24:64-65)

In the New Testament we read:

“But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered shames her head for it is one and the same as if she were a (woman) with a shaved head. For if a woman does not cover herself let her also be shorn; but if it is disgraceful for woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.” (1 Corinthians: 11: 5-6)

The Virgin Mary is often depicted in works of art with her head covered. In fact, for a time it was obligatory upon Catholic women to don a headscarf while attending church service. Today Christian nuns and Amish women continue to cover their heads. As a Muslimah, you can choose a different path and submit to your Lord. Yes you can simply choose to honour the calling of your Lord. Really, its YOUR choice.

Muhammad Ali: More Precious Than Diamonds and Pearls



An incident transpired when Muhammad Ali's daughters arrived at his home wearing clothes that were quite revealing. Here is the story as told by one of his daughters:

When we finally arrived, the chauffeur escorted my younger sister, Laila and me up to my father's suite. As usual, he was hiding behind the door waiting to scare us. We exchanged many hugs and kisses as we could possibly give

in one day. My father took a good look at us. Then he sat me down on his lap and said something that I will never forget. He looked me straight in the eyes and said, "Hana, everything that God made valuable in the world is covered and hard to get to. Where do you find diamonds? Deep down in the ground, covered and protected. Where do you find pearls? Deep down at the bottom of the ocean, covered up and protected in a beautiful shell. Where do you find gold? Way down in the mine, covered over with layers and layers of rock. You've got to work hard to get to them."

He looked at me with serious eyes and said, "Your body is sacred. You're far more precious than diamonds and pearls, and you should be covered too."

The intention of Western dress is to reveal the figure, while the intention of Muslim dress is to conceal [and cover] it, at least in public.
(Aisha Lemu and Fatima Heeren in "Woman in Islam".)



From Their Lips

I went to school to pick my 2-year old son, there were so many kids standing around also waiting for their parents/guardians. My son ran towards me and hugged me when I approached the gate and the lady next to me said under her breath "I wonder how the kid knew his mother, she is all covered up" and I just smiled and walked away".

Fatimah A., 33 year old business owner, uses the Niqab (face veil). Warri.

I am 16 years of age and I have a very interesting story to tell. Ever since I could remember I had always worn a hijab but as soon as I turned 13 years old I decided I needed a change so I took my hijab off. (Astagfirullah) For about three years I did not bother to wear my hijab as I was influenced by many of my friends. Then every Saturday I started to attend a women's gathering at a local mosque. Here many of the women wore niqab and I used to look at them wondering what it was like. I did not think they were odd, I knew that they were more courageous than myself because they were practising to live life in the Islamic way. Many stories were told about unveiling and the major sins they would carry out on the Day of Judgement. At the end of this gathering supplications were said and how I cried when we did this. I wanted to feel closer

to Allah because when my hijab came off I started drifting away. At this time in my life I was suffering a lot from a lot of people. I felt helpless and wanted to feel loved. I wanted to be closer to Allah(SWT). After 3 years my friends who I was influenced by broke up with me and how they tormented me. Two of my other close friends at that time knew that I was thinking about wearing the hijab again but to be honest I was half-hearted about it. Then suddenly one afternoon as I returned from college I came home and went up to my room where I saw a hijab on my bed. I went into the bathroom and just put it on my head. The feeling in my heart was sensational. I felt complete. At that moment I started crying so much and the reason for this was that I had drifted away from this Islamic way of living life. I had drifted away from Allah(SWT) and at one time I would never miss my Salah but I had begun to do so in the 3 years of my life. How I regretted this, I really wanted that time back but I was asking for something that was impossible. As I was going into the living room many thoughts went through my mind but I wasn't going to let anyone stand in my way this time. My parents were really happy when they saw me in my hijab and so were my grandparents. Everyone thought I really looked nice. One thing my uncle said to me will always remain with me until I die. He said " Now you have practised to wear the hijab just remember this, never take it off. You have decided to live this way now stick to it."

Sabira B. Student.



I started using the hijab (over a weekend) after attending an Islamic event. Back then, my fiancé was very laid back about religion. When he first saw me in hijab we spent the first ten minutes in silence. Eventually, I said to him, "I'm wearing something on my head." "I know that." "Don't you have a problem with it?" "No it's like football, you support whatever team you want."

On their part, my parents have been extremely understanding. In the beginning, my mother once asked, "Do you have to make it so apparent that you are a Muslim?" But I explained to her that that was the point. I am proud to be a Muslim and wearing the Hijab is part of Islam. When I returned to work the following Monday, several ill comments were passed, but the one that interested me the most was an older colleague who felt pity for me that I had been compelled to choke myself. The heat was so unbearable that she had on a tank top and a short skirt and still felt very hot; compared to my long gown and a veil. She was convinced I was oppressed due to this piece of cloth on my head. But if that myth is true, I told her, why are there so many young women in Europe, in America, and in Japan who abandon their 'liberty and independence' to embrace Islam and adopt the Hijab? A person blinded because of her prejudice may not see it, but a woman with the Hijab is so brightly beautiful as an angel or a saint with self-confidence, calmness, and dignity. Not a slight touch of shade nor any trace of oppression is visible on her face. Of course, not every Muslim woman chooses to veil.. Hijab opens so many more doors than it closes, spiritually and socially. It is unfortunate that there are so many obstacles to our finding this joy and fulfillment, but our best course of actions is to be aware of them, deal with them, and continue this form of jihad (struggle) in the way of Allah. Insha'Allah we will all

receive great blessings and heightened spiritual benefits from our efforts to obey His wise commands, and never forget, no matter how difficult it is, that Allah never puts burdens on us that we cannot bear, and the more we persevere, the more blessings we receive, insha'Allah.

Aminat A. 46, Medical Practitioner, Zaria.

While in the University, some schoolmates would come to my room to borrow my khimar when they had to go shopping at Yaba. The Khimar protected them from being harassed, they say. They were respected by the hooligans and on some occasions got space on the bus ahead of other passengers. The schoolmates I referred to above were non-Muslims. Surely, many felt oppositely from us, asserting that 'hiding behind a scarf' is oppressive. Others even argued that veiling to avoid harassment is a form of victim-blaming, implying that a woman "asks for it" by wearing fitted clothes. Then there are those Muslim women, like my friend Bilkis, who simply don't feel it necessary to wear the hijab. Well, in this country there is no law against people who wear or do not wear the hijab- it's simply a matter of choice. I respect other people's choices, just as I hope they'll respect mine.

Mariam K. 45, Accountant, Lagos.

I have been wearing hijab since September 1999. The first day I came to the classroom in my hijab, my classmates told their friends, who told their other friends, and soon the whole school knew about me starting hijab. There were a few strange looks and stares, but thankfully I had open-minded teachers who supported me. People I didn't even know were constantly approaching me and telling me how much they appreciated what I was doing, how much they admired me, how much they supported me and how they wish they had the same will power. All this before I even started hijab properly. The following Friday on September 17, 1999, I started wearing the hijab for life. I do not regret it since. I have never for one instant regretted it. Insha Allah, you will discover that you feel the same. Even within a few months I came to feel that I would not be properly dressed if I went out not wearing hijab. This is when you know that you have made it! Never feel that you are



alone my sister, or that you are the only one who is scared and worried and nervous. Just about every other sister who has travelled down this road has gone through the same things. I know I have. What you need do is persevere, be determined and be patient. You will find, as I did, that if we are determined to achieve in life, if we take one step then God will help us to take 10 more. God is there for you my sister, His people are and your sisters are there for you. I have been where you are. I am encouraging you and cheering you on. I know what it takes because I had to find that in myself too. I am praying for your success just as I prayed for my own.

Aishat A, 28, Ibadan.

Many years ago, I had not started using the Hijab at the time, I was on the bus from the Lagos Island and in front of me sat two sisters in hijab completely oblivious of their surrounding because they were engrossed in their chat. A passenger sitting next to me made a passing remark: "They are well dressed and they look expensive but they spoiled the look with that head scarf, I can't imagine why any liberated woman should wear that thing!" I distinctly remember this incident because it had an impact on me as I took it as a starting point to dig further on the issue of hijab. It was much later that I personally started to wear the hijab when I found out Islam indeed prescribes a dress code and for a woman, that includes the hijab. In hindsight, the incident led me to a greater

good; I needed that nudge from God to get to where I am today. Through my research I realised that the hijab is a command from Allah. I am glad I have taken it on since. Most people in my life respect me with my hijab: they don't swear around me, they don't crack bad jokes. It shows the world I am different, I am a Muslima, I am a sister and despite what others may think, it offers me protection. You also can do it. Yes, you can start using the hijab- nothing and no one is stopping you.

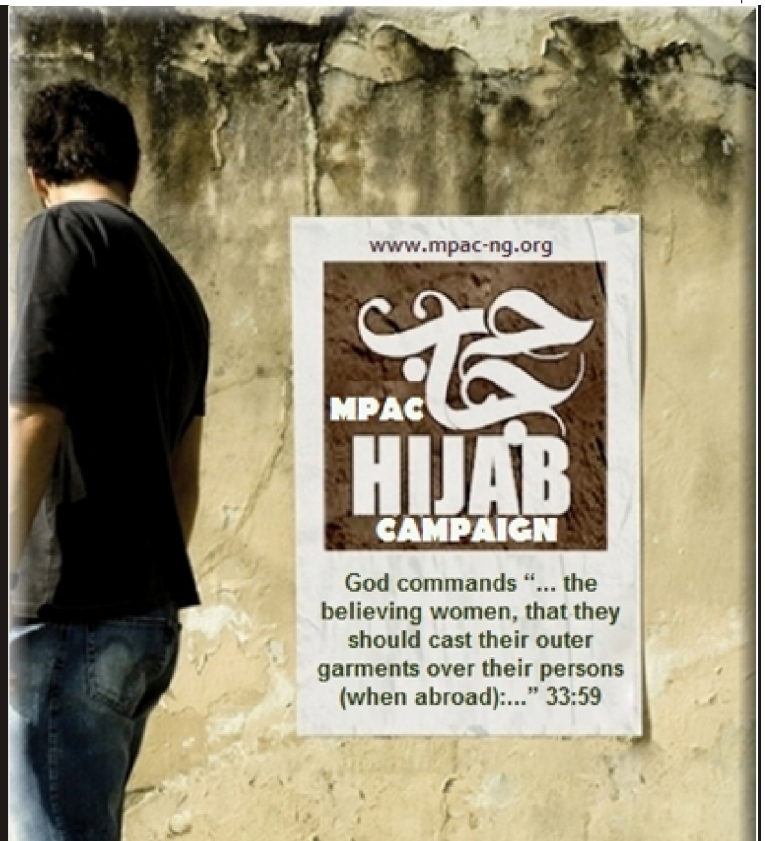
Morenike B, 32, Pharmacist, Ibadan.

I am a Muslim woman who, like millions of other Muslim women across the globe, chooses to wear the hijab. Yes, I have a body, a physical manifestation upon this earth, but it is the vessel of an intelligent mind and a strong spirit. It is not for the beholder to leer at or to use in advertisements to sell everything from beer to cars. I am thankful I will never have to suffer the fate of trying to lose/gain weight or trying to find the exact lipstick shade that will go with my skin colour. I have made choices about what my priorities are and these are not among them. So no one should look at me sympathetically. I am not under duress or a male-worshipping female. I'm liberated.

Firdous I, 38, Housewife, Abuja.

On the morning of Thursday, November 6, 1997 my identity became clear not only to me, but to every person I would encounter from that day forward. I decided to wear the hijab and begin to develop myself as a more conscientious Muslim woman. It was on that very day that I revealed to the world that I am a Muslim and that I was no longer afraid to be who I was.

Jennifer Zaghloull, Muslim convert.



Hijab Poems

You look at me and call me oppressed,
Simply because of the way I'm dressed, You know me not
for what's inside,
You judge the clothing I wear with pride, My body is not
for your eyes to hold,
You must speak to my mind, not my feminine mould, I'm
an individual, I'm no mans slave,
It's Allah's pleasure that I only crave, I have a voice so I will
be heard,
For in my heart I carry His word, "O ye women, wrap close
your cloak, so you won't be bothered by ignorant folk",
Man doesn't tell me to dress this way,
It's a law from God that I obey, Oppressed is something
I'm truly NOT,
For liberation is what I've got, It was given to me many
years ago,
With the right to prosper, the right to grow, I can climb
mountains or cross the seas,
Expand my mind in all degrees, For God Himself gave us
LIB-ER-TY,
When He sent Islam, To You and Me!



Hijab Poems

I am a Muslim woman
Feel free to ask me why
When I walk,
I walk with dignity
When I speak I do not lie
I am a Muslim woman
Not all of me you'll see
But what you should appreciate
Is that the choice I make is free
I'm not plagued with depression
I'm neither cheated nor abused
I don't envy other women
And I'm certainly not confused
Note, I speak perfect English
Et un petit peu de Francais aussi
I'm majoring in Linguistics
So you need not speak slowly
I run my own small business
Every cent I earn is mine
I drive my Chevy to school & work
And no, that's not a crime!

You often stare as I walk by
You don't understand my veil
But peace and power I have found
As I am equal to any male!

I am a Muslim woman
So please don't pity me
For God has guided me to truth
And now I'm finally free!

Why She Won't Wear Hijab

"I'm so tired."
"Tired of what?"
"Of all these people judging me."
"Who judged you?"
"Like that woman, every time I sit with her, she tells me to wear hijab."
"Oh, hijab and music! The mother of all topics!"
"Yeah! I listen to music without hijab...haha!"
"Maybe she was just giving you advice."
"I don't need her advice. I know my religion. Can't she mind her own business?"
"Maybe you misunderstood. She was just being nice."
"Keeping out of my business, that would be nice..."
"But it's her duty to encourage you to do good."
"Trust me. That was no encouragement. And what do you mean 'good'?"
"Well, wearing hijab, that would be a good thing to do."



"Says who?"
"It's in the Qur'an, isn't it?"
"Yes. She did quote me something."
"She said Surah An-Nur, and other places of the Qur'an."
"Yes, but it's not a big sin anyway. Helping people and praying is more important."
"True. But big things start with small things."
"That's a good point, but what you wear is not important. What's important is to have a good healthy heart."
"What you wear is not important?"
"That's what I said."
"Then why do you spend an hour every morning fixing up?"
"What do you mean?"
"You spend money on cosmetics, not to mention all the time you spend on fixing your hair and low-carb dieting."
"So?"

"So, your appearance IS important."

"No. I said wearing hijab is not an important thing in religion."

"If it's not an important thing in religion, why is it mentioned in the Holy Qur'an?"

"You know I can't follow all that's in Qur'an."

"You mean God tells you something to do, you disobey and then it's OK?"

"Yes. God is forgiving."

"God is forgiving to those who repent and do not repeat their mistakes."

"Says who?"

"Says the same book that tells you to cover."

"But I don't like hijab, it limits my freedom."

"But the lotions, lipsticks, mascara and other cosmetics set you free?! What's your definition of freedom anyway?"

"Freedom is in doing whatever you like to do."

"No. Freedom is in doing the right thing, not in doing whatever we wish to do."

"Look! I've seen so many people who don't wear hijab and are nice people, and so many who wear hijab and are bad people."

"So what? There are people who are nice to you but are alcoholic. Should we all be alcoholics? You made a stupid point."

"I don't want to be an extremist or a fanatic. I'm OK the way I am without hijab."

"Then you are a secular fanatic. An extremist in disobeying God."

"You don't get it, if I wear hijab, who would marry me?!"

"So all these people with hijab never get married?!"

"Okay! What if I get married and my husband doesn't like it? And wants me to remove it?"

"What if your husband wants you to go out with him on a bank robbery?!"

"That's irrelevant, bank robbery is a crime."

"Disobeying your Creator is not a crime?"

"But then who would hire me?"

"A company that respects people for who they are."

"Not after 9-11"

"Yes. After 9-11. Don't you know about Biola who just got into med school? Or Dr Ibipo"

"The Debater- haha!"

"Yes. And the other one, what was her name, the girl who always wore a white hijab...ummm..."

"Zainab?"

"Yes. Zainab. She just finished her MBA and is now interning for GE."

"Why do you reduce religion to a piece of cloth anyway?"

"Why do you reduce womanhood to high heels and lipstick colours?"

"You didn't answer my question."

"In fact, I did. Hijab is not just a piece of cloth. It is obeying God in a difficult environment. It is courage, faith in action, and true womanhood. But your short sleeves, tight pants..."

"That's called 'fashion', you live in a cave or something? First of all, hijab was founded by men who wanted to control women."

"Really? Hijab founded by men? I did not know men could control women by hijab."

"Yes. That's what it is."

"What about the women who fight their husbands to wear hijab? Ladies on NYSC camps or seeking employment being forced to remove hijab or women in France who are forced to remove their hijab by men? What do you say about these?"

"Well, those are different."

"What difference? The woman who asked you to wear hijab...she was a woman, right?"

"Right, but..."

"But fashions that are designed and promoted by male-dominated corporations, set you free? Men have no control on exposing women and using them as a commodity?! Give me a break!"

"Wait, let me finish, I was saying..."

"Saying what? You think that men control women by hijab?"

"Yes."

"Specifically how?"

"By telling women how and what to wear, dummy!"

"Doesn't TV, magazines and movies tell you what to wear, and how to be 'attractive'?"

"Of course, it's fashion."

"Isn't that control? Pressuring you to wear what they want you to wear?"

[Silence]

"Not just controlling you, but also controlling the market."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, you are told to look skinny and anorexic like that woman on the cover of the magazine, by men who design those magazines and sell those products."

"I don't get it. What does hijab have to do with products."

"It has everything to do with that. Don't you see? Hijab is a threat to consumerism, women who spend billions of dollars to look skinny and live by standards of fashion designed by men...and then here is Islam, saying trash all that nonsense and focus on your soul, not on your looks, and do not worry what men think of your looks."

"Like I don't have to buy hijab? Isn't hijab a product?"

"Yes, it is. It is a product that sets you free from male-dominated consumerism."

"Stop lecturing me! I WILL NOT WEAR HIJAB! It is awkward, outdated, and totally not suitable for this society ... and modern time. Moreover, I am only 20 and too young to wear hijab!"

"Fine. Say that to your Lord, when you face Him on Judgment Day. Tell Him you consider yourself too young at 20 to obey Him"

"Fine."

"Fine."

[Silence]

"Shut up and I don't want to hear more about hijab, niqab, 'iborun', scarf....!"

[Silence]

She stared at the mirror, tired of arguing with herself all this time. Successful enough, she managed to shut the voices in her head, with her own opinions triumphant in victory on the matter, and a final modern decision accepted by the society - but rejected by the Faith:

"Yes!" - to curls on the hair - "No!" - to hijab!

"And he (/she) is indeed a failure who corrupts it [the soul]!"

[Surah As-Shams, Quran 91:10]
Subhana'Allah!!!

"Nay! You prefer the life of this world; While the hereafter is better and more lasting."

[Surah Al-A'la, Quran: 87:16-17]

"You are the best community (Ummah) raised up for (the benefit of) humanity; enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah."

[Surah Al-Imran, Quran: 3:110]

Adapted from "A Discussion by A.Q. Alidost"

"THE HEREAFTER IS BETTER AND MORE LASTING"

Uncovering the Hijab

Khadijat Shekoni

Islam has no fixed uniform of dress for Muslim women. But there are a few requirements, which come from the Qur'an and hadith:

First, a woman's body should be covered such that only certain parts are revealed. Secondly, the clothing must be loose enough so that the shape of the body is not visible. Other parameters (as stated in ahadith) are that women shouldn't dress so as to look like men, women shouldn't dress in a way similar to those who don't believe in God, and the clothing should be modest, neither ragged nor overly fancy. As a Muslimah, I believe my sole purpose in life is the worship of God alone, according to His instructions, as revealed in the Holy Qur'an, and through the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (SAW). As such, I wear my hijab as an act of obedience to God. Contrary to popular belief, the covering of the Muslim woman is not oppression to her, I am a living witness to this truth. Since I took on the hijab 17 years ago by the mercy of Almighty Allah, I have felt quite confident and liberated, I plan to keep it on Insha Allah. Hijab is a free choice I make everyday, every time I step out of my house or meet a non-mahram. By the will of Allah, I hope to make this right choice everyday, for the rest of my life, and look forward to reaping the benefits in the Akhirah. I once had a discussion with a Muslim female colleague who argued that hijab is a form of segregation between people. I asked her how this could be true when we both know that God Almighty, Who prescribes the code of dressing, being neither a male nor female, does not discriminate against women, a segment of His creation.

Some will argue that if this were the case, why then are women only obligated to cover their hair as part of their dress code, while men are not. The answer is

If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female, and have faith, they will enter Paradise and not the least injustice will be done to them.

[Quran 4:124]




simple: as a woman, I know that I am different to a man, yet equal to him before our Creator. Also, statistics support the facts that different parts of men's and women's body attract different emphasis and women and men

are perceived very differently. One study, done at the University of California, found that media photographs emphasize the faces of men but the bodies of women. In the average picture of a woman, less than half the photo (45%) was devoted to the woman's face. In the pictures of men, nearly two-thirds (65%) of the photograph featured the man's face.

By covering my hair, I am making a statement about my identity. Modesty and chastity, very important ideologies within Islam, are achieved by combining the prescribing standards on behaviour with the dress, speech and manners of a Muslim- man and woman.

A woman in Islam enjoys equal rights to those of man before her Lord, she stands on an equal footing with man and both, while enjoined to operate on the basis of respectful relationship, share mutual rights and obligations in all aspects of life. It is with this in mind that my Muslim sisters must understand that the concept of modest dressing doesn't just mean covering the body, but it also has to do with private conducts and public appearance. Modesty is therefore a total package, with dress being only part of it.



A woman who adheres to the tenets of Islam is required to follow these wholeheartedly. It is an act of faith and establishes a Muslim's life with honour, respect and dignity. Contrary to popular belief, Muslim and non-Muslim, hijab is not worn for men; to keep their illicit desires in check – that is their own responsibility, as the Prophet (PBUH) said “Turn your eyes away” to Jabir ibn Abdullah (RA), when he asked the Prophet (PBUH), about a man's gaze falling inadvertently on a strange woman (Reported by Muslim). The Quran, in Surah 24:30, also starts with the command: “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty...”

Hijab for Muslims who choose to adopt it represents a free choice to obey God's commandment. From the moment I decided to wear the hijab, I knew I had made the choice to become the public face of Islam. I have been asked hundreds of questions about Islam and/or Muslim culture. And I am expected to explain what every Muslim on the planet thinks about a given issue. As complicated as those questions may be I am also expected to have an opinion on them. There is however one simple question which people never fail to ask me- why do you wear hijab/the veil/ that “thing” on your head/the scarf? After providing an “official” answer about why a Muslim should wear the hijab- per the Quran, modesty, distinction as a Muslimah, etc, I always try to highlight the personal benefits I have derived from wearing hijab. For me, the biggest benefit I have gotten from wearing my hijab has



nothing to do with other people or their understandings of Islam. The best and most important benefit is the closeness I feel to Allah by doing something He has commanded- no matter how difficult it is at times. That's enough for me.

I feel like when wearing my hijab I am very conscientious about how to behave. If I do something wrong, I am worried others will attribute it to Islam. Although this makes me feel at times as a walking billboard for Islam, it is still a nice feeling to know that people have such a high expectation of me to behave one hundred percent better than the next person.

Modesty is a part of my dress and conduct, but it is also part of a Muslim man's dress and conduct. Dress alone does not tempt some men to wrong action; mental sickness causes them to do wrong things, as it does some women. While the hijab identifies me as a follower of Islam, with it comes tremendous responsibility. So my sister, while I encourage you to consider now the best time to submit to Allah and obey His commandment, I want you to know that hijab should not merely be a covering dress, but more importantly, it should be the outer manifestation of an inner commitment to worshipping Allah – it should symbolize a commitment to piety at all times.



O ye Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness, - that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may receive admonition! 7:26



Hijab of the Heart

A person only fulfilling the criteria of hijab of the clothes is observing hijab in a limited sense. Hijab of the clothes should be accompanied by hijab of the eyes, the heart, the thought, and the intention. It also includes the way a person walks, talks, and behaves. Many of my sisters mistakenly think that by simply wearing a headscarf, they are observing proper hijab. However, this is not the case. Hijab is an all-encompassing term that denotes the entire aura, demeanor of the Muslimah, from her clothes, to her attitude, and most importantly to her hayah and modesty. When we practice true hijab, we never allow ourselves to be alone in the company of non-mahram men because we know this would negate our hijab. When we practice true hijab, we not only ensure that all of our hair is covered, but also that the rest of our body is properly attired with loose, modest clothing. Since the hijab is one of the most noticeable badges of a Muslim woman, these much we owe to our identity as Muslimah. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said "Make your character good for the people."

Al-Muwatta', Volume 47, Hadith 1

Hijab on Campus

Your time on campus is an important stage of your life from which you will face many challenges that will add to your self development as a human being. It will test your deen, and your perception of yourself as a young lady. The first set of interactions will be difficult, especially when you observe how other girls your age behave. You worry that you will behave like them, and this can easily happen unless you remember that you are there to learn for the sake of Allah (SWT), and that the knowledge that you gain, will be for the sake of Allah (SWT), and through that for the benefit of mankind- through the people that you meet, and work on behalf of. This is what helps to make faith real – from belief to the environment in which you live, eat, breathe, think, see and work in. Generally, the attitude of most people you will meet on campuses will be positive, and except for a few places where hostile and negative attitude towards Islam is still tolerated and respected, most people you will meet are quite open-minded and respectful of diversity. Still, you should be prepared and sensitive to the shocking views that certain members of the general public may hold on the issues of hijab. Many media and general public comments vary from claims that hijab is a sign of oppression and male domination over women to claims that hijab are voluntary or mere Arab culture. Such ignorant comments can be found on almost every discussion boards dealing with the issue. In order that the issue be truly addressed it is necessary to deal with the underlying misconceptions and ignorance that people hold. People may not agree with the wearing of the hijab, but when it is explained to them correctly, many will respect the right of others to wear it and understand its true meaning and significance. It is ignorance that leads to fear in people and hence prejudice and discrimination against what they hold misconceptions about.

By educating people and alleviating fears we take steps towards spreading correct understanding of the issue and bringing peoples together. This also means that in order for you to make any meaningful contribution on this topic, you must be correctly informed of why you have adopted hijab. Often a negative event can be the catalyst for bringing about a positive change at an academic level and at the level of classroom relationships.



“Before I started covering, I thought of myself based on what others thought of me. I see that too often in girls, their happiness depends on how others view them, especially men. Ever since, my opinion of myself has changed so much; I have gained (a lot of) self-respect. I have realized whether others may think of me as beautiful is not what matters. How beautiful I think of myself and knowing that Allah finds me beautiful makes me feel beautiful,” Saba M. Baig, a graduate.

When faced with issues of concern regarding the use of hijab on campus



- **Immediate Plan of Action**

Talk about the issue with friends, family and lecturers in a calm and responsible manner. Simply letting the people around you know about hijab and how you feel about what is going on and thus eradicating some of the misconceptions they may hold can go a long way. People are more likely to be receptive to those close to them, so make sure you take the time to express your views.

Involve your campus Muslim student organization so that a case-specific solution can be generated to address the problem. If all these efforts fail to address the problems, log and submit official complaint to the school authority.

- **Ongoing Plan of Action**

Reactive work is essential but only deals with the symptoms of the problem that lies beneath. In order to truly tackle the problem, a proactive approach needs to be taken- an approach through which the deeper issues are dealt with and addressed.

Organize a day about Women in Islam and use the occasion to run hijab campaigns on your campus to combat negative stereotypical image of the hijab which lies at the root of discrimination. To enable you do this, start an Islam Awareness Week on your campus if you already do not have one. Make sure you dedicate a day or an event to the issue of Women in Islam and Hijab Issues. Try to get as much on- and off-campus media publicity for your programmes (prepare media kit to promote the campaign in the media) and ensure that both Muslims and non-Muslims (target and invite specific groups that may have had specific incidents involving students in hijab e.g. NYSC state officials) are fully educated about the high esteem of women in Islam, and the rights they have held since the Qur'an was revealed. Also, add that denying Muslim women to wear hijab is a clear violation of basic human rights - that of freedom of thought, conscience, and belief - which are enshrined in the Nigerian constitution.

Distribute Literature:

You may have a Dawah stall that you set up regularly on campus or on Fridays. If you do, ensure that you have good literature available that addresses some common misconceptions held about the status of women in Islam.

Talk to your Student Union, identify and lobby a prominent and responsible female official of the Student Union to help you promote the campaign on hijab. Invite her as a guest speaker to speak at your functions on issues like freedom of expression as it pertains to women rights. Then in a follow on speech link this with the Muslim women's right to freely express their belief and conscience, in their chosen attire. Also, in most Student Unions you will find a Women's Officer or some such person you can talk to about your concerns as a Muslim female student with a concern that affects most other Muslim female students. Let them know of the discrimination you may feel and ask them to help by portraying the positive image of Muslim women in any other appropriate campus events specifically organized to address such concerns. Better still, volunteer and work with them to produce an information leaflet about major issues affecting female students on campus, Muslim (female) students, women in Islam, the hijab or some other such issues, that can promote the Muslim cause on campus.

Write in to your local student paper:

Write a letter or even a short article and try to get it printed in your student paper. Tell a personal story or experience and put your view across intelligently and clearly. Understand that most people in the audience you target for your message may be non-Muslims and may not be interested in many scriptural quotes, try to make people understand your points rather than turn your message to a theological debate. Also, when you write for the student audience, don't make it your main aim to get people to agree, but simply to have them understand and respect our way of life. In your daily life as well as in your writing, treat all people with respect and dignity that they deserve, just as you would like to be treated.

Link up and lobby the Student Affairs office of your school proactively to make the school recognize the use of hijab as a fundamental right. Step forward with creative ideas to be seen and heard as a positive and visible element on campus.

To protect use of hijab on campus, log and table all incidences of harassment and discrimination through your Muslim student association, to the Student Affairs office. Your Muslim student association should retain copies of all reports for administrative uses.

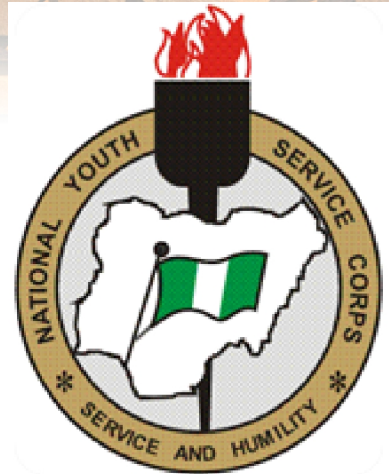
Lastly, we must protect our right to wear hijab and support our sisters wherever they are being persecuted for standing up for the most basic rights - that of freedom of thought, conscience, belief and worship; and we must work to build understanding of Islam and our way of life in our own society. The best way to defend the right to wear hijab is to wear it ourselves. The use of hijab for women is prescribed in the Qur'an and to be able to defend it as a fundamental right we must be practicing it. So, wear your hijab.



My Personal Experience

"My name is Mariam Oluwatosin Adams and I'm going to share a personal experience with you. After my graduation in 2003 I was mobilised to the Calabar NYSC camp to start my mandatory service in the NYSC scheme. During my final year at school, I had heard various stories about life at camp and during service. Some exciting and interesting, some not so pleasant. I believe every person's experience differs hence all the stories only made me more excited, more interested and they helped me prepare. I prayed my experience would be memorable and memorable it was. On arriving on camp the uniforms were not ready hence I moved around camp freely and readily participated in all activities. Until Friday when all uniforms were distributed. Seeing that some of the dresses distributed did not really conform to the Islamic dress code, I cautiously moved around camp avoiding the early morning jog which required us to wear white vest and shorts.

I was only visible at meal times and often abstained from lunch and this seemed to work. But soon, luck ran out on me- and a few other sisters that were in similar situation. A colleague and I were on our way to the dining for breakfast after our morning chores when the Camp Commandant spotted us not dressed in shorts.



Past Cases

In 2003 five female Muslim Corp members in hijab were expelled from NYSC camps in Cross-River and Rivers States for refusing to put on white shorts for the morning parade.

The cornerstone of any democracy should distinctly be tolerance, equality, high values, human rights, respect for diversity and respect of due process. It is blatantly clear that the concerned NYSC officials were unable to abide even by their own rules in exercising their discretion in the cases. Discriminating or excluding corps members from camp activities singularly because of their religious dress code is a dangerous precedent that threatens the lofty achievements which NYSC scheme has recorded.

After 'interrogations' he took the decision to decamp us. Words spread and some other Muslims got involved (8 sisters and some brothers) and after several representations by concerned Muslim Corps members who intervened on our behalf, we were released.

Needless to mention the insults and punishment we bore. After this ordeal I knew the masjid was no longer safe hence the next day after fajr, while the early morning jog was ongoing, we sneaked off to the bush where we stayed until a brother came to get us. This was not acceptable to some sisters who risked staying in the masjid while two others bravely, very bravely wore white trousers and white small (cap-like) hijab and joined the match. These two sisters were asked to wear the shorts and remove their 'hijabs'. On refusing, they were expressly decamped. It was a very sad day. The case went to court.

The ordeal did not end on camp, once in the city we had challenges to submit our monthly forms. We were often asked to dress 'properly' despite wearing the full attire we were told the green neck of the NYSC top had to be visible but people who did not even wear any uniform were attended to. The officials shamelessly treated us with open bigotry.

NYSC and all government bodies in Nigeria are to serve all Nigerians and promote tolerance and unity irrespective of our diversity. This personal experience, and others that are much more painful and unpleasant, goes to show that Unfortunately muslims are increasingly being treated as less equal citizens especially in respect to dress code. This account occurred before the war on terrorism became directly entrenched in Nigeria."

Among Other Objectives, NYSC is Established ...

To inculcate in Nigerian Youths the spirit of selfless service to the community, and to emphasize the spirit of **o n e n e s s** and brotherhood of all Nigerians, irrespective of cultural or social background.

With a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity.

Source: NYSC website

Admirably, an increasing number of professional Muslim women in Nigeria are taking to the use of hijab. This class of the Nigerian workforce are choosing to put Allah's command first, disregarding how others would react. Most Nigerian employers especially in the public sector treat Muslim women using hijab in workplaces with respect, however there are still many workplaces environments where Muslim women using or wishing to use hijab face many challenges and discriminations. Muslim women report that the issue of attire comes up most often in the initial interview for a job. Some interviewers will ask if the prospective employee plans to wear hijab to work. Others may inappropriately inquire about religious practices or beliefs. Sometimes the prospective employee, feeling pressure to earn a living, will take off hijab for the interview and then put it on when hired for the job. It is important that all employers realise that modest dress is not equated with incompetence or bad corporate outlook. Other issues that Muslim women have reported include unwanted touching, verbal harassment or subtle ostracism and denial of promotion. Many Muslim female employees have also reported being pressured to attend celebrations of other religious traditions on company behalf or to attend employer-sponsored celebrations at which alcohol is served. Muslim women are reportedly facing job discrimination in the private labour market on account of their hijab which some employers consider unpatronising since they will be in high public contact. Unlike other religious groups who wear religious attire, Muslims wearing the hijab are unfairly subjected to discrimination in the workplace. There is consensus that discrimination at work is a violation of a human right that entails a waste of human talents, with detrimental effects on productivity and economic growth, and generates socioeconomic inequalities that undermine social cohesion, yet such unfair discrimination is on the increase.

How come then that some Muslim sisters in hijab continue to face the scourge of discrimination simply because of a dress which does not diminish or affect their competency or efficiency at work? The following are examples of experiences reported by Muslim women wearing hijab and comments made by employers which illustrate the barriers and types of discrimination that Muslim women experience:

- Asked by employer to remove hijab
- Told over the phone by employer to go to the company to fill out an application form, however when she arrived soon after at the company, wearing hijab, she was told the position was taken.



- She applied for a job not wearing hijab, and was offered the position. When she showed up for work wearing hijab she was told that the position was not available.
- Verbal harassment on the job against religion and culture.
- Harassment and yelling from supervisor on the issue of hijab.
- She is told "If you don't cover your head everything will be OK."
- Given a back room or store room job when she understood she was being hired for a sales job.
- Told by employer that she would be hired on condition of removing her hijab.

Be aware that not all acts from your employer may constitute discrimination. For instance, an employer can ask that an employee's attire not pose a danger to that employee or to others. For example, a Muslim woman who wears her hijab so that loose ends are exposed should not be operating rotating equipment. That employee could be asked to arrange her hijab so that the loose ends are tucked in. An employer can ask that the hijab be neat and clean and in a colour that does not clash with a company uniform. However, any act of discrimination (direct or indirect) is a challenge to your identity. Ensure that you specifically inform your management that you wear hijab for religious reason, and it is preferable that this is done in writing if verbal notice does not yield favourable results. If this does not resolve the problem, use your organization's internal grievance resolution procedure- most large companies will have a Human Resources department where a complaint can be filed- and ask for a copy of the policy that states employees may not cover head for religious reason.

However, whatever steps you take throughout your struggle, you must apply wisdom and be legally aware. Here are some practical steps you may take to resolve the problems of discrimination at work:

- Know your rights in a democracy and learn the language of the people to speak for your rights in a democracy. You have a legal right to wear the hijab and the only exception would be if the hijab becomes a health or safety issue. It is the responsibility of your employer to demonstrate how hijab becomes one. Use available internal conflict report and resolution procedure within your organization to resolve the problem in the first instance. Keep a written report and copies of all correspondence.



- Get out of your cocoons and be part of the wider community so that others know that you are not against them and so that they come to see you for what you are: law-abiding citizens who believe in freedom, dignity, and respect for everyone.
- Let your mosques and Islamic organizations become part of the wider community instead of being obsessed with rituals and dogmas that have no relevance to the life of the people. Let the pulpit reflect the life-changing vision of Islam and the realities of people's lives.
- Join hands with all peace-loving and democratic citizens for common purposes. Enlist their support in this struggle to protect the freedom to practice your religion.
- Master the media and communications so that your message is conveyed to everyone.
- You can file a lawsuit: Use legal tools to pursue and get your rights. It is illegal to impose a dress code which prevents the use of hijab.

The failure of other Muslim employees to wear hijab is legally irrelevant. You only need to show sincerely-held religious beliefs to make your case. MPAC may be able to support you in terms of legal costs.

- Last but not least, trust in Allah and struggle for truth and justice, for that is what life is all about. Life, for those who are true to their faith, is all about struggle; we rest only in the next world. As the Prophet (PBUH) told his beloved daughter when he was on his death bed, "After today, all toils of your father are over!"

While resorting to options available to you to alleviate the condition; while pursuing your legitimate rights; you should never acquiesce in taking off hijab nor relish its removal, for doing so is akin to rejoicing in disobeying Allah. Other alternatives may be studying abroad, home schooling, or funding and establishing Islamic schools.

In November 2010, MPAC conducted a survey to examine what expectations Nigerian Muslim women who wear hijab at workplace have regarding their employment opportunities. The findings reveal that such women are not only aware of discrimination at workplace, but also expect to be treated differently in the workplace as a result of such unfair discrimination. The survey found 40% of women who wear hijab were concerned about applying for work. Although 88% said they were not willing to take off their hijab when applying for work, 76% said they were aware of incidences where women wearing hijab were refused work, and 40% said they were personally concerned about applying for job because of their attire. All members of the Nigerian society should find this trend unacceptable.


The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There is no obedience to anyone in disobedience to Allah." In other words, Muslims are not bound to obey bosses or managers if he/she orders to disobey Allah. Since wearing hijab is a religious requirement in Islam, you are allowed to exercise this right in your workplace. Wearing hijab is part and parcel of the Muslim woman's religious and personal freedom.

The observance of such freedoms is prescribed in modern constitutions, international agreements, and the Declaration of Human Rights. Your boss is not allowed to discriminate against you on that ground or force you to take off your hijab.

What to do...

If you need help and supports on hijab issues.

Help and supports are available. If you need to speak to a sister about any situation concerning hijab, please contact MPAC at info@mpac-ng.org



If he does so, he is violating the laws of the land. This must be made clear to him in a polite but firm manner.

As a Muslimah, therefore, you should never compromise your principles. If you cannot handle this issue by yourself, you may do well to get a letter from the MPAC. Sending your boss a firm and clear message that what he is asking is a violation of law is usually enough to bring some sense to him. Just because a woman covers, doesn't mean she is automatically entitled to respect, or has already proven the worth of her mind. Respect must be earned regardless of one's appearance and it is not earned through a dress code alone. Therefore, it is crucial to know that the best advocates on your behalf is to strive for and retain excellence and exceptional performance in your organization, putting foremost the core Islamic values of honesty, integrity, hard work, mercy, human dignity and others.

One thing must be clear; you are never allowed to be rude or impolite to your parents regardless of how harsh or hurtful their attitude towards you may be. Rather, you should show through practical examples that you still love them; speak to them gently and act kindly. Bear hurtful words patiently but reinforce your determination to follow the truth by thinking of the transient nature of this world, and never lose sight of the fact that our final destination is meeting Allah in the next world.

Message on Hijab

Hijab is a religious obligation in Islam. As such, it is not a cultural tradition, nor a political statement, but an aspect of Islamic religious belief. The right to freedom of religion is enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution (Articles 38 and 42 of the Nigerian constitution), and in many global Conventions on human rights to which Nigeria is a signatory. Freedom of religion is recognized as one of the most fundamental liberties every human being is due. Perhaps to some, it seems as though freedom of religion is about freedom of thought or belief alone. But really, freedom of religion is about freedom of expression. The way I dress as a Muslim woman is an expression of my religious belief and as such should and must be protected as one of my basic human rights.



- Let remembrance of Allah (dhikr) be your constant companion. It will lessen your burden and give you joy and soothe your ailing heart.

- Remind yourself continually about the struggles and sacrifices of the Messengers of Allah. It would be a good idea to read Surah Yusuf reflectively, as it embodies the constant struggle between truth and falsehood.

- Use every opportunity to speak to your parents gently and persuasively to convince them of their wrong attitude. If they do not listen, don't give up praying to Allah to open their hearts and guide them to the truth.

- Do your best to be an example of modesty and decent behavior, all of which are extensions of a person wearing hijab. Perhaps through your struggle and steadfastness and the guidance from Allah the Most High, your parents' attitudes may change. But do not become sad or disappointed if they do not.

- Parents put great emphasis on their children's obedience. Be obedient in all other aspects, except when it comes to disobeying the rules of Allah.

- Try to get closer to your parents. Spend time in strengthening your relationship with them, especially your mother. Remember, people usually respond positively to requests of people they love and are strongly attached to. Ask her about her opinion in your choice of colors, shoes, dresses, and so on. Maybe she just wants to be sure that you stay well dressed and elegant. Or she may just be afraid that you won't have any chance to marry one day, so explore her reasons for disapproving and try to tackle them by displaying real examples from your environment, but do not argue with her.

Of course, this might be the crux of the problem and your mother might not think it is obligatory. Still, you should not argue with her or with your father. Respect them at all times. Choose a suitable time when she is calm and share the idea with her so that you show your belief that hijab is obligatory.

- Finally, think about all other creative ways of persuading them like turning to someone who is more knowledgeable to talk to them or giving them a book that explains this issue.



If You Are a New Hijab User

In this case, also, be prepared and stay positive. If you confront opposition at work, write a very professional letter, avoiding too much religious discussion, and emphasizing that your appearance will remain professional and will not affect your job performance. Refer to your right to practice your religion freely, and that covering is a religious requirement that you have recently reached the level of faith to be able to fulfill. Be polite (don't threaten them!) and emphasize that it is just a small piece of cloth, not to be blown out of proportion. If you are unable to reach an agreement with your employer, contact MPAC or any other Nigerian Muslim organization to advocate on your behalf.

The Martyr of Hijab: Marwan El-Sherbini (7 October 1977 – 1 July 2009)



as he stabbed Marwan repeatedly. Marwa appeared in a court hearing to testify against him on July 1st. She was continually harassed by her assailant and at least once physically attacked by him when he forcefully removed her Hijab in a school playground. During the hearing, he produced a knife and viciously attacked Marwa, stabbing her 18 times in front of her 3-year old son before anyone successfully intervened. Her husband attempted to shield her, and was also stabbed and then mistakenly shot by an armed guard who thought he was the attacker.

The daughter of chemists Ali El-Sherbini and Laila Shams from Alexandria. In 1995 she graduated from the El Nasr Girls' College, where she also acted as a student speaker. She was a member of the Egyptian national handball team from 1992 to 1999. From 2000 to 2005 she studied pharmacy at the Faculty of Pharmacy of Alexandria University, obtaining a bachelor's degree. In 2005, El-Sherbini moved with her husband to Bremen in Germany. In 2008, the couple and their two year old son moved to Dresden, where her husband Elwi Ali-Okaz, a lecturer at Minufiya University, obtained a doctoral research position at the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics. At the same time, El-Sherbini worked at the University Hospital Dresden and at a local pharmacy, as a part of an accreditation scheme to practice pharmacy in Germany. On July 1st 2009, Marwa Sherbini, the three month pregnant mother of one, was stabbed 18 times and killed in a courtroom in Dresden. During the attack Alex W. was allegedly shouting "You don't deserve to live!"

On 6 July 2009, about 2,000 Muslims of the Egyptian community and other nationalities in Germany held funeral prayers for El-Sherbini, in Dar Al-Salam Mosque, in Berlin. On 11 July, a public memorial, organized by local civil rights groups, was attended by more 1,000 people, including the Egyptian ambassador and officials from the state of Saxony. White roses and photos of the victim and her family were placed outside Dresden's City Hall.

The Max Planck Institute for Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics, where El-Sherbini's husband researches, issued a statement on the occasion of the official ceremony, expressing shock and sympathy. This was preceded by the Max Planck Society having strongly condemned the attack on 8 July, stating: "The fact that the attack was racially motivated is especially distressing to us, considering that the Max Planck Society is a scientific research organization with staff members from the most various nations. Sherbini is being hailed

by many Egyptians, as well as others, as the 'Hijab Martyr' , she lost her life because she was Muslim, a part of her identity made obvious by her hijab.

On 11 November 2009, Alex Wiens was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Marwa El-Sherbini and the attempted murder of her husband Elwi Ali Okaz. Judge Birgit Wiegand stated that the court had found "particular gravity of guilt", because the offence was accomplished in front of the child, against two people, in a treacherous way, and in a court of law. This requires the convict to serve a minimum of 18 years before a board will review the possibility of parole for the first time.

MPAC prays that Allah (SWT) give her peace and grant her Al-Jannah Firdous, amin.



O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other)...

(The Qur'an, Al Hujurat, 49:13)

"[If] anyone slays a human being-unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading corruption on earth-it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind.

[...](The Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah, 5:32)

Thinking about wearing Hijab? Here are some tips to help you overcome obstacles that may get in your way:

Your Friends Worried about how your buddies will take it? Your friends should accept your decision and be proud of your courage. Give them time and be patient. Be conscious of Allah, not the girls or guys. If your friend does not like you for the beauty of your character, intelligence, morality, and sincerity, you deserve better! And keep yourself content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Countenance, and let not your eyes pass beyond them to those who seek the pomp and glitter of this life. [18:28] So, always remember Allah, your best Friend!

Your Parents It's difficult to do things when the people closest to you oppose it. As Muslims, it's our duty to please our parents, unless their wishes go against the command of Allah. As much as your parents do for you, their love and mercy could never compare to that of your Creator. Ease your parents into your decision and pray that it becomes easy for them to understand.

At School It takes courage to be different. You are likely to hear, "what is that thing on your head?" or "who made you do it?" Questions aren't bad. Know your reasons and explain why you chose to wear Hijab.

At Work The United Nations states that, "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (universal declaration of human rights, article 18). most countries in the world abide by this declaration and have their own laws that protect an individual's freedom of religious practice at work.

At the Gym what about swimming or basketball for sporty sisters? Obeying Allah and wearing Hijab does not limit your physical activity. Organize sisters-only sports events. This encourages true sports-womanship. When you play, it's about the love of the game, not the glory (or the guys watching!).

Yourself Not sure if you're ready? You are not alone in having mixed and intense emotions about choosing to wear hijab This is actually a healthy and natural process because this means that your soul is conscious of its duty to Allah, and continues to struggle against the whispers of shaytan. Remember one thing however: that Iman (faith in Allah) includes submitting to Allah's will. Research, understand the reasons and talk to girls who have gone through it. Once you become thoroughly convinced that covering is a command from Allah and you make the free choice to adopt the hijab, you must prepare yourself mentally for the way your life will change. This involves knowing in your heart and being capable of explaining to others all of the benefits and logical reasons for wearing hijab. Without this inner commitment, the outer appearance is meaningless. You must also be prepared to accept the added responsibility of being a visible representative of Islam, and therefore be on your best behaviour, being kind, fair, just, polite and following all of Allah's injunctions. You can no longer mix freely with Muslim and non-Muslim friends in Islamically disliked situations; no more riding the fence. Finally, ask Allah to help you put your beliefs into action. Prophet Muhammad related that Allah said, "if [My servant] draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Tips for Beginning to Wear Hijab

- Wear it for the sake of Allah (SWT)
- Wear it for the hope of Jannah
- Wear it today and trust in Allah SWT for tomorrow
- Wear it and spite the Shaytan
- Make your own decision to wear it

Once you have come to know in your heart that you must wear Hijab, then you have to set a day and

JUST DO IT.

Allah Assures that He

“...does not burden a soul except what it can bear. For it is what it has earned, and upon it is what it has made due. "Our Lord and Sustainer, do not condemn us if we forget or do wrong. Our Lord and Sustainer, do not put a burden on us like the burden You put on those who were before us. Our Lord and Sustainer, do not put a burden on us that we cannot endure. And blot out (our sins) and forgive us, and be gentle to us. You are our Protector. So help us against the rejectors.”

(Surah al-Baqarah. ayah 286)

My Struggle...

They ask: How will you progress in life with yourself covered from head to toe?

I ask: How will I progress to the Other Life if I do not do so?

They ask: What is the use of all your education if you do not care to make a career?

I ask: What is the use of reading His Book if I am void of His fear?

They ask: Why do you insist on being backward in these enlightened times?

I ask: Why do you insist on being modern while being oblivious to all the avoidable sin- that of disobedience?

They ask: What happiness do you find in hiding your face?

I ask: What happiness do you find caught up in this rat race?

They ask: Why do you want to complicate your life further?

I ask: Why do you wish to humiliate yourself in the Life Hereafter?

They ask: How will you face everyone from behind a veil?

I ask: How will I face my Lord when I am judged and I fail?

They ask: What will you gain by this action?

I ask: What if I gain His Mercy, even if it's a fraction?



MPAC NATIONAL CONVENTION

3rd & 4th September 2011

Convention Theme:

Towards Peace, Justice & Understanding

Venue:

Teslim Balogun Stadium, Surulere, Lagos

Event Objectives

- To advance understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims in Nigeria and internationally.
- To promote understanding of the Muslim faith; to promote dialogue and build community cohesion across faiths and societies.
- To encourage the participation of Muslims in the democratic process and to actively promote discourse through means of political representation.
- To promote shared values, understanding and mutual respect for all.
- To promote religious and civic identity among Nigerian Muslims and the role of Muslims in addressing intra-religious conflict.



Sheik Abdur-Rahman
Olanrewaju Ahmad (Nigeria)



Sheik Yusuf Estes (USA)



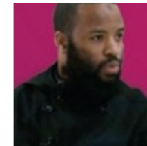
The Most Revd Josiah Idowu-Fearon
(Nigeria)



Sheik Abd-Rasheed Mayaleeke
(Nigeria)



Imam Mutahir Sabree (USA)



Ustadh Ilyas Townsend
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Muslim Public Affairs Centre Nigeria

Muslim Public Affairs Centre is an incorporated public service agency working for Muslim Defense, Muslim Empowerment and Promoting individual liberties, religious, civil and political rights of Nigerian Muslims. As an experienced and independent voice within the Nigerian Muslim community working for the good of the society, MPAC operates on the core Islamic values of justice, mercy, human dignity, freedom and equality for all.

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