

NIQAAB

نِقَاب

**Its Islamic Ruling and
Controversy in the Western world**



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Being a Dissertation submitted to the London Open College in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a
BA Degree in Islamic Studies
1427AH – 2006CE

Contents

1	<i>Introduction</i>	3
2	<i>Terminologies</i>	6
3	<i>Niqaab- its ruling</i>	7
	I. Qur'anic Verses	
	II. Ahaadeeth	
	III. Statements of the learned	
	(a) Sahabah	
	(b) Scholars	
4.	<i>The Niqaab in the past and in the present</i>	22
	I. Banning Niqaab	
	II. The Niqaab under attack	
5.	<i>Why Muslim women choose to wear the Niqaab</i>	35
6.	<i>Niqaab the ultimate liberation</i>	37
7.	<i>Conclusion</i>	52

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GLOSSARY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I begin this dissertation in the name of *Allah*, the Beneficent- the most Merciful. May *Allah* send his choicest blessings & peace on the Noble Messenger Muhammad Ibn Abdullah *صلى الله عليه وسلم* as long as the stars twinkle in the sky, the flowers blossom, *Madinah's* wind cools the senses & the sky glitters above the sand filled deserts.

Introduction

When we delve into the issue of *Niqaab*, its standing within Islaam and whether or not it is an obligation we realise that this in itself is a huge topic and can not be explained (with all its evidences) within the scope of this dissertation. When I wanted to extend this further to *Niqaab* in the West¹ I realised that in front of me was not an easy matter as one can find a wealth of information on *Niqaab*, but to actually weigh it up with the problems Muslims are facing in the West is another matter all together. The recent controversy sparked by Jack Straws comments affected my dissertation greatly as Jack Straws comments came just prior to the completion of my dissertation. Remarkably the debate spurred up much more information than I was able to obtain prior to it; for this reason, to do justice to the topic I found it necessary to add the new information that was available.

The wearing of *Niqaab* by Muslim women has attracted a considerable amount of contentious debate in Western countries. Many commentators view it as a form of oppression and persecution against women, which constrains female social development and personal fulfillment. Some countries, such as France and Turkey, in sympathy with these arguments have introduced bans on the wearing of religious symbols in public institutions such as state schools. However we as Muslims defend the wearing of *Niqaab* as a question of freedom of religion and expression.

Within the scholars of Islaam, we largely find two conflicting opinions (with regards to the *Niqaab*), those who hold that it to be *fardh* and those who see it as not *fardh* but *mustahabb*. My aim in this dissertation is not to go into whether or not the *Niqaab* is *fardh*, rather my aim is to look into whether or not it has a place in Islaam and if so what sort of repercussions will that have on us- living in the West.

For those Sisters who hold the *Niqaab* to be *fardh*, they see it as a religious obligation, which in turn means that they believe that they will be sinful for not wearing it. For this reason, despite the prejudices and abuse they suffer, they still choose to fulfill this obligation. It is clear then that ones understanding of its Islamic significance holds a significant factor in deciding whether or not a Sister wears it and whether or not it should be endorsed in ones life- regardless of the impediments one may face.

In the West, where the woman's body is flaunted, just like a commodity - the stark difference of the *Niqaab* would shock most onlookers. Walking past a billboard and seeing a woman with next to nothing and then finding a fully covered woman wearing the *Niqaab* is an amazing sight indeed. Further, her excellent English accent- makes *the contrast between her actions and appearance all the more striking.*² Especially when we think of

¹ I refer to the 'West' in my dissertation because it is a recognizable shorthand for a certain part of the world and its culture, that is, the Anglo- European world and its ex-colonies (the United States, Australia, Canada, etc.).

² http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_m_z/deborah_orr/article1166544.ece

the hot days in summer, coupled with so much ignorance of *Islaam* (politicians further adding to the hatred), it wouldn't be surprising for this sister to be both verbally & physically abused. Indeed, the stereotypical perception that the *Niqaab* is a symbol of women's oppression is adhered to by many in the West; these adherents have embodied within them different assumptions & levels of sophistication when expressing their views. They further underpin this with an unconscious adherence to their 'liberalistic western ideals' and 'modernization theories' which is compounded by ignorance of *Muslim* women and the fruitful faith that blossoms in their life. In the West, many view the *Niqaab* as one of the strongest visual indication of female oppression in the world. The *Niqaab* is gazed upon as absurd, ridiculous and alien; they see this as austere and many eye it in light of there unyielding conservatism. The *Niqaabi* is treated like a mummy, with no general understanding of the time & world she lives in. Even though the West is gazed upon as possessing a high point of civilization and cultural values- this mummy is treated, in many instances, as a lower class citizen.

Admittedly the events that occurred in the late 20th century, for example Iran's imposition of the *chador* after Khomeini's revolution in 1979, Taliban's imposition of the *burqa* after they came into power in 1997 and the violence perpetuated by radical groups in the name of *Islam* in Egypt, Israel, Algeria and the like makes challenging the popular Western stereotype that the *Niqaab* is a symbol of *Muslim* women's oppression an uphill battle. Further the recent comments by Jack Straw and his like have spurred up an intense discussion on the *Niqaab* and its place in the West. Scholars, journalists and policy-makers often interpret the *Niqaab* as evidence of increasing 'fundamentalism' within *Muslims*. Due to the recent events surrounding the *Niqaab*-debate the inner hatred that was and is instilled within people has now been exposed. *Muslims* should use this opportunity to clarify the many prevalent misconceptions prevailing and especially *Muslim* women should be at the forefront in doing so.

When a *Muslimah* (having been brought up in the West & having received a westernized education) adopts the *Niqaab*, many may turn around in shock and see it in light of self oppression and self erasure. As a matter of fact, many may see her as not being from the West at all (for which reason many passer-bys scream out to them 'go back home!') In a place where there is freedom to wear and dress how one likes what has made these young female shrug off the tight jeans and mini skirts and adopt a dress code that covers even their faces? In truth, the *Niqaab* gives agency to many *Muslim* women who are too often assumed by the existing literature to lack choice and individual decision-making capability.

The recent comments made by Jack Straw³ and the attempts at banning the *Niqaab* around the Western world is really an attempt to criminalize a practice that reflects a part of *Islaam* & for which many *Muslim* women hold a deep conviction. These comments have increased physical and verbal attacks on those who adopt the *Niqaab*.⁴ The *Muslim* identity is under attack in the name of 'unfettered speech', 'integration' and 'debate'. Such incendiary comments made by politicians are in reality, the demonisation of *Islaam*. The term 'debate' is used and coined to vent prejudices, riddled with double standards, and unexamined ignorant assumptions; it is a means by which to provoke the public and justify insulting *Islaam*. The part of our community which is labeled 'the voiceless community' or 'the ladder sections of the community' have been set-upon, attacked and marginalized. Have these women not abided by the law of the land? Have they committed some offence by practicing their faith? Is this what we call a 'democratic', 'pluralist', 'multicultural' and 'liberalistic' society? Surely freedom of speech should work towards enhancing the greater

³ and his like

⁴ Please refer to page 44 where there is some example of Sisters who were attacked directly because of what Jack Straw said.

good, cohesion, respect & easing tensions within the community. This will only be done if people swallow their pride, racism & prejudices. Freedom of speech can't be unfettered, it must be necessarily proportioned, just as we do not allow child pornography, incitement to murder & other necessary & proportionate restrictions in law; it must be moral, ethical, polite & sensible. One should use ones free expression with their conscience.

Jack Straw has used the ignorant sentiments of the community to bully a small segment of the society. His constituency is largely made up of *Muslims*, yet instead of educating people on the *Muslim* faith and identity, he has worked towards increasing Islamophobia. He has attacked the constitutional right of his constituents. He has used his 'political opportunism' to advance his prejudices. Is this the role of an MP? As an MP he should not abuse his position & make highly irresponsible comments in a world which is constantly increasing their attacks on *Muslims*.⁵ We *Muslims* are not averse to dialogue & debate, but there is a manner, way & time. Muslims as well as non-Muslims will not accept insults on their beliefs & that which they hold dear.

It should be noted that I do not envisage going into the discussion on whether or not the *Niqaab* is mandatory. In my dissertation it will suffice to look into its legitimacy and connection with *Islaam*. I feel it is necessary to look into the legitimacy of *Niqaab* within Islamic texts and the views of our noteworthy scholars, as without doing so we may fall prey to following our own preconceived ideas that are dubbed by our flawed understanding of *Islaam*. As truly, the value of many expressions of piety depends on the religious teachings promoting it. Then it will be become clear, by the will of *Allah*, that the banning of *Niqaab* and the Islamophobic comments made by Jack Straw is not just a violation of human rights, but most importantly, a violation of the *Shariah*. After which, I envisage to look into the Western perceptions of the *Niqaab* both socially & politically. In summary my tentative plan is to address these problems, expelling doubts & misconceived ideas that the *Niqaab* is not apart of *Islaam* and that it is oppressive and backward. Lastly I will end by discussing the criticisms & questions that are unleashed against the *Niqaab* and some ideas on how to go about answering them. Without combating such remarks, it can cause to be very dangerous and detrimental for those who have chosen to wear the *Niqaab*, as well as its acceptance in the West- for both the current generation and the ones to come- & *Allah* knows best.

I pray that this dissertation is a means by which I, and others who read it, receive guidance and goodness. *Ameen*

⁵ With Blair talking about Islamist fascists & Bush saying aspects of *Islaam* contain evil ideologies.

Terminologies

The term '*Niqaab*' means

'...a veil which covers the face, worn by some Muslim women as a part of sartorial⁶ hijāb...'⁷

".... a woman's veil that extends as high as the circuit of the eye...⁸"⁹

For the reader it is important to understand that the term '*Niqaab*' is used synonymously with other terms, depending on the country and culture and ones approach with regards to its ruling. Although they may not be worn the same way and may have different designs, they generally carry the same purpose. Katherine Bullock in her book says

'...This word corresponds to the Arabic *niqāb*, the veil with which women cover their faces...the terminology has varied also, region to region, of course.'¹⁰

Terms used synonymously include: 'veil'¹¹, 'face-veil', 'affixed veil', 'screen', '*burqa*', '*hijaab*'¹², '*khimaar*'¹³, '*purdah*', '*burqa*' and '*jilbaab*'.¹⁴ Another point worth mentioning is that depending on the writer/translator the spelling for *Niqaab* may differ e.g. '*nikaab*', '*niqaab*'

etc. In Arabic it is written as: نقاب¹⁵

⁶ Definition: of tailoring: relating to tailoring or clothing in general

⁷ Wikipedia- encyclopedia

⁸ Aboo Zeyd

⁹ 'An Arabic- English Lexicon' by Edward William Lane (8 Parts)

¹⁰ 'Rethinking Muslim Women and the veil- Challenging Historical & Modern Stereotypes' by Katherine Bullock (The International Institute Of Islamic Thought)

¹¹ One of the definitions of the 'veil' in the Oxford Dictionary is: to protect or conceal the face.

¹² You will see later on how many refer to *Hijaab* to mean *Niqaab*; but due to the manner employed by the write or speaker one is able to identify the difference.

¹³ Please refer to the Appendix for a discussion on the *Khimaar*.

¹⁴ There are more

¹⁵ Please refer to the Appendix for pictures

Niqaab – its Islamic ruling.

Righteous Islamic scholars have talked about the issue of *Niqaab* in detail. Some of them believe *Niqaab* is *fard* and others believe it is not *fard* but it is *mustahabb* (highly recommended). Thus, the dispute is not whether or not the *Niqaab* is apart of *Islaam*; the dispute between the scholars is whether a Sister sins if she does not wear the *Niqaab*.

The scholars of *Ahlus Sunnah* have always differed into two views, from the past & the present- over hundreds of years. There are those who say that a woman must cover her whole body with the exception of her hands and face, and those who say that a woman must cover her whole body, including her hands and face. In this section I would like to examine the evidences propounded for the *Niqaab* -within Islamic texts. It should be remembered that this is an issue over which 'differing is allowed'¹⁶ and my aim is to prove that there is a strong connection of the *Niqaab* with *Islaam*; as a result we, as *Muslims*, should not allow for its vilification- which is in reality, an attack on *Islaam*.

Qur'anic verses

Sadly, we see laymen, even non Muslims stating that *Niqaab* is not mentioned in the *Qur'aan*. It is important to understand that not everyone has the authority to interpret the *Qur'aan* & add their whimsical ideas and flawed understanding. Truly, many who make such a claim have a scarce of understanding of the Arabic language. Or they are ignorant of the Islamic sciences and the lives of our predecessors. Rather, we need to look towards the *Salaf* and the *Muslims* who have a deep understanding of the *Qur'aan*. When this is done, it will become clear that there is no doubt in the fact that the *Niqaab* has a lofty standing within *Islaam* and that many of the scholars say that it is implied within the textual meaning of certain verses in the *Qur'aan*; this illustrates that the attack on the *Niqaab* is an attack on *Islaam*.

It is important to add the Arabic text, as certain words within the Arabic texts are central to our discussion. In *Surah Ahzaab* there are four *ayaat* & in *Surah Noor* there are two; the parts highlighted in red are highly significant, as it is around them our discussion focuses.

Chapter Name & No	Verse No	Ayah (Verse) in Arabic	Ayah (verse) in English
Surah Ahzaab (33)	32	يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقَلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا	O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the [other] women, provided that you remain [truly] conscious of God. Hence, be not over-soft in your speech, lest any whose heart is diseased should be moved to desire [you]: but, withal, speak in a kindly way.

¹⁶ The Obligation of Veling, Bin Baaz, Abdul-Azeez bin Abdullah, Muhammad bin Saalih Al-Uthaimeen and Zayd bin Haadee Al-Madkhalee, page 5

Surah Ahzaab (33)	33	<p>وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا</p>	<p>And abide quietly in your homes, and do not flaunt your charms as they used to flaunt them in the old days of pagan ignorance; and be constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and pay heed unto God and His Apostle: for God only wants to remove from you all that might be loathsome, O you members of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you to utmost purity.</p>
Surah Ahzaab (33)	53	<p>وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ</p>	<p>...And whenever you ask them for anything that you need, ask them from behind a screen: this will but deepen the purity of your hearts and theirs...¹⁷</p>
Surah Ahzaab (33)	59	<p>يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا</p>	<p>O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters, as well as all [other] believing women, that they should draw over themselves some of their outer garments [when in public]: this will be more conducive to their being recognized [as decent women] and not annoyed. But [withal,] God is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace!</p>
Surah Noor (24)	31	<p>وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرَابَةِ</p>	<p>And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts, and not to display their charms [in public] beyond what may [decently] be apparent thereof; hence, let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms. And let them not display [more of] their charms to any but their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' Sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their womenfolk, or those whom they rightfully possess, or such male attendants as are beyond all sexual desire, or children that are as yet unaware of women's nakedness;</p>

¹⁷ The whole text is not added for the sake of brevity.

		<p>مِنَ الرَّجَالِ أَوْ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ</p>	<p>and let them not stamp their feet, so as to reveal what they hide from their adornment And [always], O you believers - all of you - turn unto God in repentance, so that you might attain to a happy state!</p>
Surah Noor (24)	60	<p>وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ اللَّاتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ</p>	<p>AND [know that] women advanced in years, who no longer feel any sexual desire, incur no sin if they discard their [outer] garments, provided they do not aim at a showy display of [their] charms. But [even so,] it is better for them to abstain [from this]: and God is all-hearing, all-knowing.</p>

In verse in *Surah Ahzaab* (v 33) *Allah* says ‘*abide quietly in your homes*’. This is because in the time of *Jahiliyyah* women would expose their faces, necks, chest etc within the public sphere- and this is also witnessed today. Thus it is said that the woman who stays home has the best *Niqaab* - which is the very four walls of her house. When the pious woman leaves her home she covers her face and body to the best of her ability- thus *Niqaab* is a substitute to retain that piety.

Allah then says: ‘...*in such a way as not to show off their adornment (tabarruj)*’. For the most part, when a woman uncovers her face she intends to show off her beauty & those who do not intend such are rare & the rare exceptions have no consideration when a ruling is formed.

Allah says in verse 32 in *Surah Ahzaab* “*O Wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women...*” & in verse 33 “...*Allah only wants to remove from you all that might be loathsome, O you members of the (Prophet’s) household & to purify you to utmost purity.*” In this verse we come to see that if *Allah* warned the best, most pure of Women, whose strong faith & pure nature is unquestionable, then all women should envisage being like them. Other Women are truly not on that standard of uprightness thus they are more needing of the *Niqaab* & of being warned by these verses. We know these *aayaat* refer not only to the Prophets *صلى الله عليه وسلم* wives, but to all women because it also gives the command to establish the prayer, give charity & obey *Allah* and his Messenger. Surely, if these are applicable to all women so are the other rulings within the same verse. This is an important principle in the Religion, that unless stated otherwise, these verses are applicable to all. Imaam Ibn Baaz says:



‘And whoever holds that the command for the Hijaab¹⁸ is specific to just the Prophet’s wives has distanced himself from the truth and contradicted the many evidences that indicate the generality of the ruling...there is no doubt that those who came after are in greater need for the Hijaab than the Mothers of the Believers and the male Companions.



¹⁸ Many scholars used ‘Hijaab’ to synonymously refer to it as ‘Niqaab’.


This is due to the great difference (between the two) in terms of strength in Eeman and insight into the truth...it is not possible that any one person from the ummah can be specified by the texts of the Qur'an & the Sunnah, unless there is an authentic proof that directs us to this specification...¹⁹

The proponents for *Niqaab* say that the following verse "...*whenever you ask them for anything that you need, ask them from behind a screen...*" is, in itself, decisive proof that indicates towards the obligation for wearing the *Niqaab*. They say that as no exceptions are mentioned i.e. the face and the hands, then women are commanded to cover their faces.

With regards to the '*Jalaabeeb*' (which is the plural of *jilbab*- an outer garment) mentioned in verse 59 of *Surah Ahzaab* there is a great discussion on the meaning of the term '*jilbaab*' itself, what it includes and to what length it is to be work. I will lightly touch on the topic here; the proponents of *Niqaab* use the following interpretations to understand the *jilbaab* to include the face:

'Alee bin Abee Talhah  reported from Ibn 'Abbaas  that he said: "Allah has commanded the believing womwn, when they come out of their homes due to a necessity, **to cover their faces by placing their jalaabeeb over their heads, and only exposing one eye.**"²⁰ (even the uncovering of the eye is so she can see the road otherwise uncovering the eye is unnecessary)²¹

Muhammad bin Sireen  said: "I asked 'Ubaydah as-Salmaanee  about Allah's saying: '**to cast their jalabeeb upon themselves**' so **he veiled his face and head and exposed his left eye.**"

Umm Salamah  said: "The Ansaaree women came out of their homes, walking as if they had crows upon their heads due to the tranquillity, and they were dressed in black garments."

Abu 'Ubaydah As-Salmaanee & others mentioned that "The believing women used to cast their jilbaabs from (over) the top of their heads downward, **to the point that nothing was visible except their eyes**, for the purpose of seeing the road."

¹⁹ Al- Buhooth Al-Islaamiyah (monthly publication): no. 10, pg. 6-8.

²⁰ The interpretation (tafseer) of this companion is a decisive proof, even to the point that some scholars say this saying has the ruling of being marfoo (raised) to a saying of the Prophet

(صلى الله عليه وسلم). (A marfoo' narration is a hadeeth reported by a Companion that is raised to the level of being a statement or an action of the Prophet. The word marfoo' in Arabic means "raised".

²¹ The Tabiee Ali Bin Abu Talha explained that this was the last opinion of Ibn Abbaas and the other opinions quoted from him were from before *Surah Al-Ahzaab*, Verse #59 and the order of the "Jalabib"

Although there are many more evidences (with regards to the *Jilbaab* being interpreted by the *Salaf* to include the *Niqaab*) it suffices us here to understand that, it (the *Niqaab*) is a part of our *Salaf's* understanding of the *Deen*. For many, the *Niqaab* holds an integral part of the *Hijaab*. So how do people today misplace *Niqaab* to not be from *Islaam*? And how do they have the audacity to attack it?

Going on to *Surah Noor* where (in verse 31) where *Allah* says: "...**protect their private parts...**" For those who believe the *Niqaab* is *fardh*, this command inculcates all of the means that eventually lead on to it²²; since the means take on the same ruling as what was intended in the command.

'..And there is no doubt for one who has common sense that from the means that lead toward guarding the private parts is the veiling of the face. This is since exposing it is a cause for drawing looks towards it, reflecting on its attractive features and finding pleasure in that. And consequently this leads to a man trying to communicate and get in touch with a woman....²³

Then *Allah* says "...**And do not display their zeenah (adornment) except for that which is apparent from it.**" This refers to that which is unable to be concealed, such as the outer garment like the *jilbaab*, the *khimaar* & so on. Or it may refer 'to that which becomes exposed from a woman unintentionally, due to some unintended cause, such as strong wind or due to carrying an object, as well as whatever else a woman is pardoned for, if her face & hands become exposed due to it'²⁴ They quote Ibn Masood, with a chain of narration that bears the highest level of authenticity as saying it (that which is apparent from it) means the *thiyaab* ((outer) garment).²⁵ In the same verse *Allah* says not to show ones *zeenah* except "**that which is apparent from it.**" They say that one should take note that *Allah* did not say "**except for what they make apparent (or reveal) from it.**" Also *Allah* mentions a *zeenah* that can be shown to her *mahaarim* & another which is exempted. Thus they categorize *zeenah* into two kinds: firstly, '*Dhaair*' (the apparent adornment), secondly, '*Baatin*' (the hidden adornment). The first is that can be seen by all & one is unable to conceal. The other is that which is not allowed to be exposed except to the specified persons. The generalization of the '*Dhaahir*' & the specification of the '*Baatin*' points towards the impermissibility of exposing ones face & hands in public.

The '*Khimaar*' which is mentioned further on in the ayah "...**let them draw their head-coverings over their bosoms...**" for those who believe the *Niqaab* to be *fardh*, also includes the covering of the face; this is necessitated either by the term '*khimaar*' linguistically inculcating that or by general reasoning. An example of general reasoning:

'..Indeed, when people seek the beauty of an appearance, they do not ask except concerning the face. If it is beautiful, they do not look towards

²² Abu Huraira 'narrated from the Prophet who said "Allah has written for Adam's son his share of adultery which he commits inevitably. The adultery of the eyes is the sight (to gaze at a forbidden thing), the adultery of the tongue is the talk, and the inner self wishes and desires and the private parts testify all this or deny it." (sahih Al Bukhari Volume 8, Book 74, Number 260)

²³ Shaykh Uthaymeen in 'the Obligation of Veiling' pg 31

²⁴ Zayd bin Haadee Al-Madkhalee, 'the obligation of veiling' pg 65

²⁵ Tafseer at-Tabaree: vol. 8, pg. 92-93; Tafseer Ibn Katheer: vol. 6, pg.47

anything else in the same manner as possessing importance...And if it is this way, then how can we come to understand that this Religion, which is based upon wisdom, would obligate the covering of the neck and chest and then allow the exposure of the face?²⁶

Some translations of the *Qur'aan*, translate '*Juyobihinna*' (the singular is *jayb*) to inculcate the face, thus the entire body.

Further on, in the same verse, Allah says "...and let them not stamp their feet, so as to reveal what they hide from their adornment..." Regarding this verse, *Shaykh* Uthaymeen says

So if a woman is forbidden (in this ayah) from stamping her feet, for fear of causing *fitnah* for a man...then how about exposing the face? Which of the two is a greater cause for *fitnah*? That the man hears the sound of the anklet produced by the foot of a woman, not knowing who she is, nor her beauty nor if she is young or old...ugly or beautiful...which of the two is greater *fitnah*? This, or that he looks at a woman's uncovered face that is perhaps beautiful, fair, young, bright, enticing, and which is perhaps beautified with that which attracts *fitnah* (temptation) and calls for the prohibited look? Indeed, every man that has an interest in women knows which of the two is a greater *fitnah* and which is more deserving of being covered and concealed.²⁷

Laslty, with regards to verse 60 of *Surah Noor*, where Allah tells the old women past childbearing (*Qawaa'id*) to "**discard their garments**" this is clear proof that it refers to the *jilbaab*, as it does not mean that they remain naked. Rather, it means to take off their outer garment & other inner garments that do not cover what is normally exposed such as the hands and face. For those who propose the obligation of the *Niqaab* say that this is proof that girls and women who are the age of wedlock are not included; thus they must cover with their outer-garments and *Niqaab*.

aHaadeeth

There are a number of *ahadeeth* that point towards the *Niqaab*, either directly or indirectly. I will not be able to refer to all of them; from my research I came across a few which I will mention. Below follows my own discussion on what I have found, may Allah make it a source of beneficial knowledge and may it be presented in the best of ways. *Ameen*

An interesting question is: when these verses on *Hijaab* were revealed how did the *Sahabah* رضي الله عنهم exegesis them in light of the *Niqaab*? How did they رضي الله عنهم inculcate these

²⁶ Al-'Uthaymeen, Muhammad bin Saalih, *Risaalat ul Hijaab*, Saudia Arabia

²⁷ Shaykh Uthaymeen Pg 34 'the obligation of veiling'

verses in their lives? When answered, these questions will help us to derive a better understanding of *Niqaab* with relation to the covering ordained by *Allah* on *Muslim* women.

Narrated 'Aa'ishah رضى الله عنها: The wives of Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to go to Al-Manasi, a vast open place (near Baqia at Medina) to answer the call of nature at night. 'Umar رضى الله عنه used to say to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم "Let your wives be veiled," but Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم did not do so. One night Sauda bint Zam'a رضى الله عنها the wife of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم went out at 'Isha' time and she was a tall lady. 'Umar رضى الله عنه addressed her and said, "I have recognized you, O Sauda." He said so, as he desired eagerly that the verses of Al-Hijab (*the observing of veils by the Muslim women*) may be revealed. So Allaah revealed the verses of "Al-Hijab".²⁸

We learn from this hadeeth that Umar رضى الله عنه did not like the fact that he was able to recognize Sauda رضى الله عنها. One of the ways by which one can recognize another is the face; as a matter of fact this is a vital part of recognition. In the West, people identify each other with the face. Face shows an expression and is a source of identification.²⁹

Narrated Safiya bint Shaiba رضى الله عنها said "Aa'ishah رضى الله عنها used to say: "When (the Verse): "They should draw their veils over their necks and bosoms," was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their faces with the cut pieces.³⁰

This *hadeeth* carries some very important significations.

- 1) There is no specification that this is referring only to the Prophets wives and family
- 2) There is a clear correlation between the verses being revealed and the face being one of the acts of implementation derived from the verses.

Further if we look at the *hadeeth*:


Narrated Aa'ishah, Ummul Mu'minin رضى الله عنها "May Allah have mercy on the early immigrant women. When the verse "That they should draw their veils over their bosoms" was revealed, they tore their thick outer garments and made veils from them.³¹

²⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 4, Hadith # 148

²⁹ As is said by Cleemers in 'the big cover- up' publish by The Observer. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1646389,00.html>

³⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Hadith # 282

³¹ Abu Dawood Book 32, Hadith # 4091

We learn from this *hadeeth* that they tore their thick outer garments- thus apart of their *jilbaabs*. According to the *Ameer Al-Mu'mineen*  in the field of *hadeeth* (the author of *fath al bari*), the phrase 'covered themselves' means: 'they covered their faces'³² From the following *hadeeth* further emphasis is placed on the fact that there is a correlation between the verses on veiling being revealed and the covering of the face:

Narrated Aisha رضي الله عنها: "...He came to me and recognized me on seeing me for **he used to see me before veiling**. I got up because of his saying: "Inna Lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun," which he uttered on recognizing me. **I covered my face with my garment...**"³³

Here we see that A'aishah رضي الله عنها did not cover her face before the verses on covering were revealed '**...he used to see me before veiling....**' that means that after the verses on veiling were revealed they would cover their faces. This shows a direct correlation between the revelation and their action (wearing *Niqaab*).

For many, *Niqaab* is understood to be from the highest acts of modesty; but is this true? If we are to say yes then does that necessitate that the Sister who does not cover with *Niqaab* possesses less *Hayaa'*? Secondly, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "**Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches (i.e. parts). And Haya is a part of faith.**"³⁴ if *Niqaab* is apart of *hayaa'* and *hayaa'* is apart of *eeman* then shouldn't every sister wear the *Niqaab* in aspiration for higher *eeman* levels? Especially when we come across the thoughts of the *Sahabiyyah* (umm Khallad) رضي الله عنها, as she was searching for her son (who had died in the battle field), some of the Companions رضي الله عنهم of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to her: "**You have come here asking for your son while veiling your face**"? She said: "**If I am afflicted with the loss of my son, I shall not suffer the loss of my modesty.**"³⁵ This is one of the reasons a Sister wears the *Niqaab*-out of an act of faith, an act of modesty. According to the scholars who necessitate the *Niqaab*, they say that to cover ones beauty and areas of attraction is from the greatest forms of modesty that a woman can adorn herself with.³⁶ This means that *Niqaab* is enjoined- as it is a means of guarding ones chastity because the means come under the same ruling as the ends. What may come as a surprise to many is even Cleemers, a non-Muslim, the mayor of Maaseik (in Belgium)- who banned the *Niqaab* and placed for those who contravene it €125 fine said that the real reason women adopt the *Niqaab* is due to '**...the extreme belief in their faith.**'³⁷ Further, Tanya Gold, whose article was published in the Daily Mail says:

If a woman wears it from choice because she thinks she will be closer to her God and she doesn't wish to be the object of random lechery then she must. I have

³² Fath al Bari

³³ Sahih Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Number 274

³⁴ Sahih al- Bukhari Volume 1, Book 2, Number 8

³⁵ Sahih al- Bukhari Volume 1, Book 2, Number 8

³⁶ "...her observance of Hijaab, by means of covering her face & those areas of beauty from her which serve as an attraction- this is from the greatest forms of modesty that she can abide by and adorn herself with.." Shaykh Uthaymeen in 'the Obligation of Veiling' pg 29

³⁷ <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1646389,00.html>

no right to judge and neither does the snarling man on the train.³⁸

The Mothers of the Believers³⁹ رضي الله عنهم, undoubtedly, wore the *Niqaab*. Now, we can look at this from two angles:

- (a) It was incumbent on them- not us, thus it is not necessary all Muslim Women wear it.
- (b) It was incumbent on us and them- thus all Muslim Women should wear it.

Regardless of whether or not it was one of the other, one should come to understand that it is definitely recommended but there is a difference of opinion on whether or not it is *faradh*. If we look towards the *ahadeeth* we come across numerous examples by which to understand that the Mothers of the Believers wore the *Niqaab*. These *ahadeeth* are put forward for the Muslim Women at large to contemplate over.

But sadly today people have the audacity to claim that *Niqaab* does not have a standing within *Islaam*!

Another example is when

A'ishah رضي الله عنها said: "Male riders would pass by us while we (wives) were in the state of *Ihraam* with the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. When they would approach us, (each) one of us would let her *jilbaab* fall down from (the top of) her head over her face. And when they had passed on, we would uncover our faces."⁴⁰

Now, this is strange seeing as how the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "**The *Muhrimah* (woman in the state of *Ihraam*) should not wear the face veil (*niqaab*) or gloves.**"⁴¹ So why it then, that Aishah رضي الله عنها was still covering her face? We learn from this *hadeeth* that that due to the strong restriction of exposing the face, even in the state of *ihraam* they were covering their faces in the presence of men who weren't *mahram*- this shows the emphasis placed on wearing the *Niqaab*. Also, we can see how common it was to cover the face at that time when not in *ihraam*. Shaykh Uthaymeen says "**This is evidence for the covering of the faces and hands.**"⁴² Further, we see in another *hadeeth*:

Yahya related to me from Malik from Hisham ibn Urwa that Fatima bint al-Mundhir رضي الله عنها said, "We used to veil our faces when we were in *Ihram* in the company of Asma bint Abi Bakr As-Siddiq رضي الله عنها."⁴³

Another well cited *hadeeth*⁴⁴:

Narrated Umm Salamah, Ummul Mu'minin رضي الله عنها :
I was with Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم while Maymunah was with him. Then Ibn Umm Maktum

³⁸ <http://www.q-news.com/media-DailyMail-Burka.htm>

³⁹ i.e. the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم wives

⁴⁰ Ahmad, Abu Dawud & Ibn Majah

⁴¹ Reported by Abu Dawud

⁴² Shaykh Uthaymeen in 'the Obligation of Veiling' pg 46

⁴³ Imaam Malik's MUWATTA Book 20 Hadith # 20.5.16

⁴⁴ There is question on its authenticity

came. This happened when we were ordered to observe veil. Rasulullaah ﷺ said: Observe veil from him. We asked: oh Rasulullaah! is he not blind? He can neither see us nor recognize us.

Rasulullaah ﷺ said: Are **both of you blind? Do you not see him?**⁴⁵

In this we see that the Prophet ﷺ is telling them to observe the veil in front of him; what is interesting is when they said '*He can neither see us nor recognize us*', again this shows the importance placed on those who were not *mahram* seeing them.⁴⁶

What is interesting is whether or not the entire woman is '*awrah*'. There is a *hadeeth* that is quite popular:

Abdullah ibn Masud said the Prophet ﷺ said: "Rasulullaah ﷺ said "**All of a woman is 'awrah.**"⁴⁷

This would mean that the woman's face is *awrah*- in which case that too should be covered.

When going through the *ahadeeth* I found two instances when even during the congregational prayers women would join – yet they were not recognised by others. For example: the *Eid* prayer and the *Fajr* prayer. When *Eid* came women were urged to come to the *Masjid* to pray, but a *Sahabiyyah* informed the Prophet ﷺ that some do not have the necessary means by which to cover themselves, to which the Prophet replied:

"Let her sister (in Islaam) cover her with her jilbaab..."⁴⁸

A debate does revolve around the term '*Jilbaab*' but for those who regard *Niqaab* to be mandatory in many instances interpret it to include the face. With regards to the *Fajr* prayer in congregation:

Aishah رضي الله عنها said: "The Prophet ﷺ would offer the *Fajr* prayer (in congregation) and then witness that the believing women, **wrapped up with their shawls**, had prayed with him. They would then return to their homes, and no one would recognize them due to the darkness (of dawn)." Then she said: "If the Prophet ﷺ would see the women that I see (in my time), he would have surely restricted them from going to the *masjids*, just as the women of the Tribe of *Israa'eel* were restricted."

Here we can see that they came 'wrapped up with their shawls' although we are told that that they were not recognisable 'due to the darkness (of dawn)' there is ground to suggest

⁴⁵ Abu Dawood Book 32, hadith # 4100

⁴⁶ This *Hadeeth* is said to be weak.

⁴⁷ (Shaikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid quotes this *hadeeth* narrated by Tirmidhi with a *sahih* *isnaad* and says this is a direct *hadeeth* from Rasulullaah (Sallallaahu Álayhi Wasallam) and has made it clear that a woman must cover everything including the face and hands!)

⁴⁸ *Sahih* Bukhari, Muslim and others

that reference is being made to their faces being covered- as many scholars have employed this understanding.

When one goes to look at a prospective wife, the Prophet ﷺ advised for him to look at the woman's face as the face is a vital part of ones beauty and attraction.

Abu Hameed رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: "When one of you (believers) intends to marry a woman, there is no sin on him if he looks at her, so long as his looking at her is only for the purpose of the intention of marriage. And this is even if she is unaware of it."⁴⁹

We further find a clear indication in the following *hadeeth*:

'Look at her. For verily, it is more likely that love should grow between the two of you.'⁵⁰

Scholars have used these ahadeeth as evidence, that it was not from the norm to be able to see the woman's face, thus the Prophet ﷺ is advising him to go and see her.

What I would lastly like to discuss within this section is vital to my dissertation. It is important to clarify whether or not there is any indication within *ahaadeeth* that the *Niqaab* was worn by other then the *Ummahatul Mu'mineen* or was it solely for them? I would like to reiterate that my aim here is not to prove whether or not *Niqaab* is *fardh*, my aim is to see its legality in *Islaam* so that after I have clarified that I can go onto to see the war against *Niqaab* in the West- and how this is a war on *Islaam* and its values. The truth is that if we look towards these *ahadeeth* we see a clear correlation between the *Niqaab* and Muslim Women adopting it other than the *Ummahatul Mu'mineen*.

Narrated Safiya bint Shaiba رضي الله عنها said "Aa'ishah رضي الله عنها used to say: "When (the Verse): "They should draw their veils over their necks and bosoms," was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their faces with the cut pieces."⁵¹

Here we see that there is no specific mention of the *Ummahatul Mu'mineen*, rather we find there is generality used within the text.

Abdullah ibn Masud said the Prophet ﷺ said: "Rasulullaah ﷺ said "All of a woman is 'awrah."⁵²

The Prophet ﷺ did not use 'my wives' or 'women of my house' or any such phrasing. Rather he said 'woman'- which, again, is generally intended to signify all women- not just the Mothers of the Believers.

⁴⁹ Reported by Imam Ahmad

⁵⁰ An-Nasaai, At-Tirmidhi and others

⁵¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Hadith # 282

⁵² (Shaikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid quotes this *hadeeth* narrated by Tirmidhi with a sahih

isnaad and says this is a direct *hadeeth* from Rasulallah ﷺ and has made it clear that a woman must cover everything including the face and hands!)

Narrated Thabit ibn Qays رضي الله عنه: A woman called Umm Khallad came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم while she was veiled. She was searching for her son who had been killed (in the battle) Some of the Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to her: You have come here asking for your son **while veiling your face? She said: If I am afflicted with the loss of my son, I shall not suffer the loss of my modesty.** Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: You will get the reward of two martyrs for your son. She asked: Why is that so, oh Prophet of Allaah? He replied: Because the people of the Book have killed him.⁵³

Umm Khallad رضي الله عنها was not from the *Ummahatul Mu'mineen*, rather she was a *Sahabiyyah*. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not say why are you covering your face? Rather he was asking out of wonderment as she was facing such a calamity as is clearly shows within her words 'if I am afflicted with the loss of my son, I shall not suffer the loss of my modesty'.

Narrated Aa'ishah, Ummul Mu'minin رضي الله عنها said "May Allah have mercy on the early immigrant women. When the verse "That they should draw their veils over their bosoms" was revealed, **they tore their thick outer garments and made veils from them.**^{54,55}

In this *Hadeeth* we see the clear approval and praise the *Ummul Mu'mineen*, A'aishah رضي الله عنها had for the Immigrant women. The reason being that they too wore the *Niqaab*- this clearly shows that not only did the *Ummahatul Mu'mineen* wear it rather it was worn by other *Sahabiyyaat* with recognition of these verses.

Yahya related to me from Malik from Hisham ibn Urwa that Fatima bint al-Mundhir رضي الله عنها said, "We used to veil our faces when we were in Ihram in the company of Asma bint Abi Bakr As-Siddiq رضي الله عنها".⁵⁶

If we look carefully 'Fatima bint al-Mundhir' رضي الله عنها was not from the mothers of the believers, rather she was from the *Sahabiyyaat*. Furthermore, in *Ihraam* women are not obliged nor supposed to wear the *Niqaab* – but why was it that they were still covering their faces? Does this not point towards the great significance they placed on the *Niqaab*?

Aa'ishah رضي الله عنها narrates that on one occasion a female Muslim wanted to give a letter to the Holy

⁵³ Abu Dawood Book 14, Hadith # 2482

⁵⁴ Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalane, who is known as Ameer Al-Mu'mineen in the field of Hadeeth, said that the phrase, "covered themselves", in the above Hadeeth means that they "covered their faces". [Fath Al-Bari].

⁵⁵ Abu Dawood Book 32, Hadith # 4091

⁵⁶ Imaam Malik's MUWATTA Book 20 Hadith # 20.5.16

Prophet ﷺ, the letter was delivered to the Holy Prophet ﷺ from behind a curtain.⁵⁷

Indeed a curtain can be a form of *Niqaab*- as it can fulfil the same purpose as *Niqaab*; which is the covering of the face. This further is an indication that covering oneself- ones whole body- was an act done by not just the *Ummahatul Mu'mineen*. So how is it that today we have fallen into dispute with regards to: the *Niqaab* being apart of *Islaam* or not. Today the outrage the kuffar find in their hearts for the *Niqaab* is an act of hatred towards *Islaam*.

Statements of the learned⁵⁸

Abu Ubaidah Salmani⁵⁹ رضي الله عنه is quoted saying "*Jilbaab should fully cover the women's body, so that nothing appears but one eye with which she can see.*"⁶⁰

Imaam Muhammad bin Sirin رضي الله عنه said "*When I asked Ubaida bin Abu Sufyan bin al-Harith⁶¹ رضي الله عنه how the jalbaab was to be worn, he demonstrated it to me by pulling a sheet of cloth over his head to cover his entire body, leaving the left eye uncovered. This was also the explanation of the word 'Alaihinna in this verse⁶²*"

The Mufasssir, Imaam Al-Qurtubi رحمته الله cites in his tafseer of the ayah on Jilbaab (Al-Ahzab 33:59), that the Jilbaab is: "*a cloth which covers the entire body...*" Ibn 'Abbaas رضي الله عنه and 'Ubaidah As-Salmaani رضي الله عنه said that it is to be fully wrapped around the women's body, so that nothing appears but one eye with which she can see."⁶³⁶⁴

Imaam Qurtubi رحمته الله in his Al-Jamia li Ahkaamul Qur'an states: "*All women are in effect covered by the terms of the verse which embraces the Shar'ee principle that the whole of a woman is 'Awrah' (to be concealed) – her face, body and voice, as mentioned previously. It is not permissible to expose those parts except in the case of need, such as the giving of evidence...*"⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Abu Dawood Book 33, Hadith # 4154, Agreed upon by Nasai

⁵⁸ there are many I have only added a few.

⁵⁹ an other well known Sahabi

⁶⁰ Tafseer Al-Qurtubi





⁶¹ Another well known and knowledgeable Companion of Rasulullaah

⁶² Commentary by Ibn Jarir and Ahkam-ul-Quran, Vol.3, p.457 also in "hijaab wa Safur" quoted by Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Baaz under the chapter of his fatwaa on hijab on page #54

⁶³ Tafseer Al-Qurtubi Surah Al-Ahzab ayah # 59


⁶⁴ This was also agreed upon by Imaam Wahidi, Imaam Neishapuri in the book of tafseer of Qur'an "Gharaib-ul-Quran" and "Ahkam-ul-Quran", Imaam Razi, in his tafseer of Surah Azhab in the book "Tafsir-i-Kabir" Imaam Baidavi in his tafseer of Qur'an "Tafsir-i-Baidavi" and by Abu Hayyan in "Al-Bahr-ul-Muhit" and by Ibn Sa'd Muhammad bin Ka'b Kuradhi and they have all described the use of jalbaab more or less in the SAME way as the two described by Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه


⁶⁵ "Al-Jamia li Ahkaamul Qur'an"

At-Tabari  and Ibn Al-Mundhir  described the method of wearing the Jilbaab according to Ibn Abbaas  and Qataadah . The sheet should be wrapped around from the top, covering the forehead, then bringing one side of the sheet to cover the face below the eyes so that most of the face and the upper body is covered. This will leave both eyes uncovered (which is allowed in necessity)⁶⁶

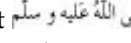
*"The Muslims have unanimously agreed that women are not allowed to go out of their homes with their faces uncovered, especially in places where there are many evil people."*⁶⁷


Further according to Mufti Anwar Ali Adam Al Mazahiri⁶⁸: "Imaam Shaafi, Maalik and Hanbal hold the view that niqaab (covering the face and the hands completely with only a small area for the eyes to see) as being compulsory (fard). Imaam Abu Hanifa says that niqaab is Wajib and the face and hands can be exposed provided that there is not fear of desire if one looks at the female face, otherwise if there is the slightest chance of desire developing in the looker (the meaning of desire is that the looker would see the female face and think that she is beautiful, sexual thought is not what is meant) then exposing the face and hands is Haraam. ⁶⁹

Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Baaz  said "It is compulsory for a woman to cover her face in front of non mahram men" ⁷⁰

Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah  relates that the correct opinion for the Hanbali and Malki madhaib is that it is wajib to cover everything except one or two eyes to see the way. ⁷¹

Jamiatul Ulama Junbi Africa stated that the proper opinion for the Hanafi madhab is that "A woman must be properly and thoroughly covered in a loose outer cloak which totally conceals her entire body including her face"⁷²

Ibn Al-Hazam said "In the arabic language, the language of the Prophet  the word jilbaab (as mentioned in the Qur'an Surah Ahzaab ayah # 59) means the outer sheet which covers the entire body. A sheet smaller than that which would cover the entire body, cannot be categorized as jilbaab.⁷³

Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Baaz  "According to the understanding of the best generations (the "Salaf") after the ayah of hijab was revealed than Muslims women must cover everything including the face and hands. they can show one eye or two eyes to see the way. this was the opinion held by

⁶⁶ Rul-ul-Ma'ani, Vol 22, p.89

⁶⁷ Nayl-ul-Awtaar (6/226) of Imaam Ash-Shawkaanee.

⁶⁸ Mufti A'azam (Head Mufti) of Madrasa Madinatil Uloom Trinidad & Tobago.



⁶⁹ This is from the fatwaa issued by Mufti Anwar Ali Adam Al Mazahiri on 13/9/99. He derived the opinions of the 4 Imaams from these sources Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Tafseer Ma'rifatul Qur'aan, Durre Muhtaar, Fatawa Shami, Al Mabsoot, Fathul Qadeer. And the opinion of Imaam Abu hanifah is a directly derived from his statements in the Famous book of hanafi Fiqh Fatwaa Shami


⁷⁰ This has been quoted in Shaikh Bin Baaz's pamphlet on Hijab and in the book 'Islamic Fatwas regarding Women' and in the Arabic version of the book "hijab Wa Safur" page #51

⁷¹ from the Arabic book "Hijab wa Safur" under the fatwaa of Ibn Taymiyyah on hijab, page # 10

⁷² Islamic Hijab by Jamiatul Ulama P.12

⁷³ Al-Muhallah, Vol 3. Pg 217

many of the Sahaabah like Ibn Abbaas, Ibn Masud, Aa'ishah (Radhiallaahu Ánhuma) and others and this opinion was upheld by the Tab'ieen who followed than as Ali bin Abi Talha and Muhammad bin Sirin  and by the righteous ulama who followed them as Ibn Taymiyyah and Imaam Ahmed bin Hanbal " ⁷⁴

Shaikh Abubakar Jassas  states "This verse of Surah Ahzab shows that the young women when going out of their homes are ordered to cover their faces from strangers (non-mahram men), and cover herself up in such a manner that may express modesty and chastity, so that people with evil intentions might not cherish hopes from her".⁷⁵

Qazi Al-Baidavi 

"to let down over them a part of their outer garments" means that they should draw a part of their outer garment in front of their face and cover themselves" ⁷⁶

(There are many more that I was sadly unable to include within the scope of this piece of work)

⁷⁴ "hijaab wa Sufur"

⁷⁵ Ahkum Al-Quran, VOL. III, p.48

⁷⁶ Tafsir-I-Baidavi, Vol 4, p.168

The *Niqaab* in the past and in the present

What many are unaware of is that even Non-Muslim women have worn and wear the *Niqaab* too.⁷⁷ The Christian directive towards men and women dressing decently and modestly is something well documented and indeed most visibly demonstrated by Christian nuns. More relevantly to the issue of covering the hair, neck and face, followers of the more orthodox Eastern Churches will be most accustomed to *Epanokamelavkion* and other forms of covering for nuns and monks. Indeed, the female emphasis on maintaining such an external appearance draws its strength from King David in the book of Psalms, who states, "*the dignity of the daughter of a king is her inwardness*" – something remarkably similar to the Islamic concept of modesty or *hayâ'* and the Jewish practice of *Tzniut*.



Nun with face veil

Hindu women in northern India also veil:



Women also wore the *Niqaab* as a mark of wealth & status.⁷⁸ Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Jews and Christians before *Islaam's* advent would also wear the face veil.⁷⁹ In one Muslim tribe, the Tuareg, men, not women, wear face veils.⁸⁰ The fascinating and deeply spiritual Jewish concept of *Tzniut* expresses the same sentiment; an attempt to refocus people from concentrating on the external appearance of a person but rather make sincere necessary contact with the inner self by encouraging modest dress and the covering of the hair and face even, exhibited most vividly in the *Bedeken* during marriage ceremonies; here, the groom brings down the veil over his bride's face, reminiscent of

⁷⁷ Please refer to the appendix for more pictures and information.

⁷⁸ Thus, when peasant women moved to the city, they were anxious to veil to demonstrate their new wealth. El-Guindi, 'Veiling Infitah', p.475

⁷⁹ See H.Sharma, 'Women and their Affines: veil as a Symbol of Seperation', *Man*, 12, 2 (1978); Emile Marmorstein, 'The Veil in Judaism and Islam', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 2 (1954); Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*.

⁸⁰ Robert F. Murphy, 'Special Distance and the Veil', *American Anthropologist*, 66, 6 (December 1964).

Rebekka's covering her face with her veil upon seeing Isaac before marriage as per Jewish Scripture.



The Jewish ceremony of *Bedecken*

The veiling symbolizes her duty to live up to Jewish ideals of modesty and reminds others that in her status as a married woman she will be absolutely unapproachable by other men. According to Rabbinical teaching, *“The covering of the face symbolises the modesty, dignity and chastity which characterises the virtue of Jewish womanhood.”*



Until the end of the Edo period in 1867, brides wore a *wataboshi* hood which was supposed to conceal the bride's face to everyone except the groom. The *wataboshi* are still used at traditional, non-Western style weddings in Japan.⁸¹

From these examples we learn that women have and do wear the face-veil, be that for cultural or religious reasons. Some keep it on permanently; some wear it occasionally and traditionally. Today the face-veil has come to be seen as something innovative or medieval. In truth it has always existed in the past and still does- not only within Muslims. It does not carry any evil repercussion or connotations on the society.

For Muslim Women it is an act of faith to wear the *Niqaab*.

⁸¹ <http://www.seiyaku.com/customs/veil/veil.html>

Niqaab in the West⁸²

The *Niqaab* for many in the West brings about a certain stereotypical image: a tool used by *Muslim* men and *Islaam* to subjugate the woman and to oppress and dishonour her from freedom. In Western minds⁸³ it is regarded as a means by which women are caged up without their own wish by tyrant male dominating family members and husbands; they see *Niqaab* as having nothing more than a forceful or cultural basis. As you will come to see from this section, Muslim women in *Niqaab* are referred to with the most derogatory terms. The media has done no favours for the Muslims, rather the publishing of articles and the airing of Islamophobic voices has further instigated misconceptions about Muslim Women & in particular about the *Niqaab*. In the West they are proud of their multicultural society, yet there is so much hatred and ignorance within the non *Muslims* about *Islaam* and its Women- as will be demonstrated. In this section I will add some extracts and quotes from articles defaming the *Niqaab*. The first section 'Banning the *Niqaab*' deals with the ban on the *Niqaab* or the attempt to ban the *Niqaab* & where it is taking place. The next section '*Niqaab* under attack' deals with the blasphemous and notorious comments made on the *Niqaab* in articles featured by famous newspapers.

Banning the *Niqaab*

-France-

The *Niqaab* in France is banned in:

- civic spaces
- schools
- universities
- state or private & official buildings.⁸⁴

-Germany-

In Germany the ban applies to all civil servants.

-Netherlands-

They are considering to ban the *Niqaab* in Netherlands:

Last December, parliament voted to forbid women from wearing the burqa or any Muslim face coverings in public, justifying the move in part as a security measure. The cabinet is awaiting the results of a study into the legality of such a ban under European human rights laws, before making its final decision. The results are expected in the second half of this

⁸² Note: Some of these writers are using the term hijab interchangeably with niqaab/purdah, i.e. face veiling. Hijab is more usually understood to mean simply a covering encompassing the hair and neck, but not the face itself

⁸³ These minds are both Non-Muslim and Muslim, as even amongst the ignorant Muslims there is hatred for the *Niqaab*.

⁸⁴ In November 2005 the European Court of Human Rights ruled the ban was legitimate.

month. “This is an enormous victory for traditional Dutch decency,” said Geert Wilders, the populist member of parliament who first proposed the burqa ban, after hearing parliament had backed it. “The burqa is hostile to women and medieval. For a woman to walk around on the streets completely covered is an insult to everyone who believes in equal rights...“It is not acceptable for people to completely cover themselves on the street. It threatens public order and security. Plus it is a terrifying sight and only increases the cleft between natives and foreigners,””⁸⁵

The Dutch have been from amongst the first to legalize Euthanasia, Cannabis and Prostitution; for such a country the Niqaab is a sign to oppose all of their ‘Western Ideals’.⁸⁶

-Norway-

Furthermore, recently the *Niqaab* was banned in Norway as the Directorate for Primary and Secondary education of Norway gave the permission for the *Niqaab* to be banned in schools.

‘Erling Lae, the leader of Oslo City Council, has decided to remove the veil in schools because it causes problems for teachers who cannot see their students’ faces. The ruling will now make it possible for the niqab to be banned from schools in other municipalities in Norway.’⁸⁷

-Italy-

In September 2004 local politicians in the north of Italy resurrected old laws against the wearing of masks, to ban women from wearing the *Niqaab*. In July 05 the Italian parliament approved anti-terrorist laws which make hiding one's features from the public - including through wearing the *Niqaab* - an offence. In the town of Drezzo women who wore the *Niqaab* were given penalty tickets by the police- as we would have with parking tickets- every time they are seen in public wearing the *Niqaab*.⁸⁸ For example, Sister Sabrina Varroni, a mother of four and a re-vert to Islaam, was fined \$100 (40 euros) for appearing twice, in public, with the *Niqaab* on, once of which was due to collecting her children from school. Cristian Toletini a member of the xenophobic⁸⁹ and separatist Northern League has interpreted & found two laws on the books to help him stamp them out: one passed under

⁸⁵<http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2006/03/07/dutch-consider-burqa-ban-to-muslim-dismay.html>

⁸⁶ It is said that there is a rise of Islamophobia in the country due to the murder of the columnist and direction ‘Theo van Gogh’ by a Dutch-Moroccan militant in 2004 due to his having made a film accusing Islaam of condoning violence against women. Further, the murder of the anti-immigration populist ‘Pim Fortuyn’ two years prior to the incident, helped in provoking anti-Muslim backlash.

⁸⁷ Protest Niqaab ban in Norway: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/display/ShowJournal?moduleId=103277&categoryId=34614>

⁸⁸ September 2004

⁸⁹Fear of foreigners: an intense fear or dislike of foreign people, their customs and culture, or foreign things

Mussolini's fascist rule in 1931, banning the wearing of masks in public, and another dating from 1975, at the height of the Red Brigades scare, forbidding the wearing of items that disguise a person's identity. He has instructed local police to enforce them. Not satisfied with the ruling, Cesarino Monti, a Northern League senator, has proposed an even tougher one: a fine of up to 5,000 euros and up to six months in jail for Muslim women caught wearing *Niqaab*. It seems quite absurd, that a Sister that is known to all other inhabitants of her village is being fined for leaving her house.

-Belgium-

In Belgium, the city of Maaseik, on the Dutch border, has banned the *Niqaab*. In Belgium, *'the burqa, together with a smaller type of face mask, the niqab, has been banned by bylaw in the cities and towns of Ghent, Antwerp, Sint-Truden, Lebbeke and Maaseik'*.⁹⁰

-Turkey-

The *Niqaab* is banned in civic spaces, including schools, universities - state or private - and official buildings.⁹¹

The *Niqaab* under attack

Tanya Gold, writing in the over-heated style that masquerades as journalism in a newspaper with a circulation that continues to plummet, wrote about *Niqaab*:

I have seen women in burqas in the streets where I live. I respond to them with a mixture of pity: 'How can your religion/culture/family do that to you?' And contempt: 'Why do you put up with it? Why don't you tear off your shroud, lose the husband, get a decent education and crash through the glass ceiling with the rest of us?'⁹²

Bob Clarkson (a back-bench lawmaker for the conservative opposition National Party) made the following comment:

'Muslim women wearing burqas could be crooks hiding guns and should go back to where they came from...they should not wear the full-cover veil if they wanted to "fit into our country." ... If they insisted on wearing their traditional dress, they should "go back to Islam, go back to Iraq or go back wherever they want to,"... They must accept

⁹⁰<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/08/30/wburqa30.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/08/30/ixworld.html>

⁹¹ In November 2005 the European Court of Human Rights ruled the ban was legitimate.

⁹² <http://www.q-news.com/media-DailyMail-Burka.htm>

our New Zealand values. I mean that's all there is to it.⁹³

Mario Borghesio, a Northern League MEP, said the burqa deserved to be banned because it is :“*a symbol of the most obscurantist type of Islamic fundamentalism*” and has become a “*symbol of death*” because some of the women involved in the Beslan massacre⁹⁴ were veiled.⁹⁵

In Deborah Orr’s articles titled ‘Why the sight of veiled women offends me’, published in ‘The Independent’, she says:

‘I’ve been more and more troubled lately by the sight of veiled women swathed in heavy black, getting on with their everyday business in Britain....She was dressed outlandishly in an outfit that proclaimed her adherence to an ancient religious code that contradicts the law of this land in its denial of equality of opportunity to women and men, and advocates a life for women so circumscribed that even a small measure of independent life outside the home is impossible. How could this woman, constrained as she was, be expected to bring up a son and daughter who would thrive in a culture that has such different expectations of men and women to hers? The answer has to be – rather less than suitably... Maybe – like other Muslim women, we’re told – she revels in the fact that there are bright, stylish clothes under her veils, and make-up on her face. More fool her then, that she understands the pleasure of female display but still believes that her own small pleasures are something dangerous and incendiary, to be suppressed outside the privacy of her home... Multiculturalism tells us that it is rude and insensitive to be critical of such garb, and that we must tolerate and even celebrate difference. But I’m afraid I find that the sort of difference these women proclaim by getting themselves up in these sinister weeds to be deeply offensive. I understand that in a free society they are

⁹³ This is from a article published in August 2006 in New Zealand, in which a politician by the name of ‘Bob Clarkson’ (a back-bench lawmaker for the conservative opposition National Party) made this comment:http://rawstory.com/news/2006/New_Zealand_politician_says_burqa_w_08252006.html

⁹⁴ The Beslan school hostage crisis (also referred to as the Beslan school siege or Beslan Massacre) began when armed Muslim Chechen terrorists took more than 1200 school children and adults hostage on September 1, 2004, at School Number One (SNO) in the Russian town of Beslan in North Ossetia. On the third day of the standoff, shooting broke out between the hostage-takers and Russian security forces. According to official data, 344 civilians were killed, 186 of them children, and hundreds more wounded. Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev took responsibility for the hostage taking, reportedly led by his principal Ingush deputy Magomet Yevloyev. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beslan_hostage_crisis

⁹⁵<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4§ion=0&article=52008&d=26&m=9&y=2004&pix=world.jpg&category=World>

entitled to dress as they please, just as I am. But I also understand that in a free society I am at liberty to say that the values these outfits imply are repulsive and insulting to me. I find these clothes to be physical manifestations of outdated traditional practices, dating from early Islam and before, that oppress and victimize women, sometimes in the most degrading, cruel and barbaric of ways. Looking at women in these outfits, and comprehending some of the beliefs they imply, is awful and saddening.⁹⁶

There were also other responses 4 of which can be found in The Independent's web-site⁹⁷ to this article. The first letter conveys feminist outrage, the second concerns about "trust" and "security", whilst the third and fourth are basically defensive.

Nicole Ivanoff⁹⁸ from Bury, Greater Manchester wrote:

Sir: Deborah Orr is "offended" by the sight of veiled women swathed in black in the streets of London (8 July). Offended? Walking past women who cover their hair with scarves, their faces with veils, their bodies in shapeless garments for so-called religious reasons does not offend me: it makes my blood boil.

If the leaders of British Muslim communities fail to grasp how sad and angry most of us women in this country feel when we think about the way a large proportion of Muslim women are treated by their men, they will never understand why it is so hard for us to remain tolerant or respectful of their religion and way of life.

No doubt a minority of Muslim women do defend their decision to hide face and body in the name of their faith. But there are hundreds of different interpretations of the Koran. There are hundreds of different ways Muslim women express their faith and live their lives. Millions across the world wear modern clothes and go about the business of building a life as independent, free women.

⁹⁶http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_m_z/deborah_orr/article1166544.ece

⁹⁷ <http://comment.independent.co.uk/letters/article1169713.ece>

⁹⁸a Labour candidate for what looks like a safe Tory council seat in Lancashire in **June 2004** (you can read a brief biography **here**: http://www.therossendalefreepress.co.uk/news/s/132/132996_candidate_profiles__north_manor_and_ramsbottom.html)

By being "understanding", "respectful" or "tolerant" of any woman who hides her hair, covers her face or wraps her body in black because that is what the men in her life or her religious leaders demand of her, are we not saying to our Muslim sisters, "We don't care about you, your liberation is not our business, you are no sister of mine, go back to your own country"?⁹⁹

M J Adderley from Stockport, Cheshire wrote:

Sir: Bravo Deborah! At last someone saying out loud what most females think. **This has to be the most sinister garment since the IRA balaclava.**¹⁰⁰ Unless I can see someone full-face I cannot begin to trust them and I will not speak to them.

I think of all those British women who suffered for women's rights over the past century and I grieve that we have made so little impact on these younger women who appear to live in their own time zone, in a foreign state, and certainly not ours. These are not Britons.

Nawal El-Saadawi, a feminist thinker and writer says:

'...the minister did not go far enough, and should have banned all forms of veiling. "Wearing the niqab is against a woman's humanity because it hides the face, thus hiding her personality," she asserted. "You become a faceless being. How can you speak to a person without a face?" El-Saadawi, however, believes that the government's stand on these issues has been ambiguous and contradictory. "On the one hand, the minister is standing strong against fanatic religiosity, but on the other, he allows the hijab. Rather than compromising with the fundamentalists, he should stick to a principle, because otherwise he is compromising his legitimacy," she asserted... "Wearing the niqab imposes certain limitations. There are, of course, the physical constraints of having your face and

⁹⁹ Many *Niqaabis* actually had or have mothers or sisters who did not or do not wear the *Niqaab*. Thus the use of "Us women" maybe limited to herself, her Labour party circles, or own biased observations or the experiences of a handful. There are many false claims within this comment based on biased views. It seems like her capacity for logical thought has clearly deserted her on this issue. To be quite frank, she has misinterpreted the notion of "liberation" and she is no 'Sister' to *Niqaabis* as she has clearly expressed in stereotypical bias statements. This article by Deborah Orr isn't a thoughtful comment, it's full of extremely insulting words; the women and/or their clothes are described as: dressed outlandishly, constrained, bizarre[ly], fool, sinister, deeply offensive, repulsive and insulting, awful and saddening, and stifling. She shows nothing but disgust and hatred for the women themselves; if she really feels that they're the victims of oppression, then you wouldn't expect font in mine.her to have such contempt for them.

¹⁰⁰ I added the bold font for emphasis.

hands covered, but there is also psychological repression because you cannot move and talk freely and naturally. It also has to do with a woman's image of herself, because she becomes very conscious that her body is a source of continuous temptation for men."

In Nov 2005 Daily Mail published an article by Tanya Gold, titled 'My week beneath the Burqa'. Which interestingly depicts a biased view on how a Muslim Woman would feel under a *Niqaab*; although, clearly, for someone who has not tasted the sweetness of modesty via the *Niqaab* this sort of experience is understood, yet it serves helpful as an insight to what it would feel like for one engulfed in Western culture to see from the eyes of a *Niqabi*.

'..the first thing I notice about wearing the garment is how it limits my movements and obscures my senses...I am wearing gloves (a woman who wears a burqa will not show her hands) and it seems to take me an hour to open my bag and purse for the money...The man at the till is exaggeratedly courteous. As I turn back into my street, I long to tear off the burqa....But I am afraid to; it seems stuck to me. At home I pull it off, breathe deeply and toss it to the floor. I hate it....Millions of Muslim women across the globe are isolated in these fabric prisons...As I walk down Oxford Street, I develop eyeache. This is because of the mesh. One man shouts: 'Why ain't you got no eyes?' Another grins: 'Hello, darling.' Shop assistants are polite, but I don't stay long. There is no point: I can't see the goods properly. I do not go into any restaurants or bars because I can't eat. The anger and frustration build in me. I feel inferior. I feel disabled. And I feel judged....I don't like speaking in my burqa. It has transformed my personality. I have become an introvert...As the week continues, I am resentful. I feel half-alive and utterly isolated; the only part of me that is fully functioning is my rage. Opening my handbag is a major logistical operation; using the cashpoint a near impossibility. The escalators at Tube stations are potentially fatal and everywhere I seem to be stared at, pointed out and, sometimes, insulted...Women either ignore me or give me that pity/contempt glance I used to throw at the girls in veils. Men are polarised¹⁰¹ - they are either rude or, strangely, tender. Everywhere there is curiosity... My week is over. I am confused. I hated my burqa and saw it as a prison imposed by the frailties of men - an attempt to impose second class citizen status on women. But I also hated the judgemental stares and

¹⁰¹ division of opinion

the hostility. The week was a strange window into a different culture but I have no answers. The burqa still hides a mystery. But I thought a lot - about the roles women play to please men, the masks they wear (whether veil or blusher) and the lengths they will go to in order to flourish in our culture and to survive. My ambivalence about the burqa never left me. If a woman wears out from choice because she thinks she will be closer to her God and she doesn't wish to be the object of random lechery then she must. I have no right to judge and neither does the snarling man on the train. Tolerance is a two-culture tango. But if she wears it because of abuse and coercion and the it is a crime. But how will I know I can not see her face'¹⁰²

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, as quoted in the Sunday Times said:

"...what increasingly alarms me is the emergence of a post 9/11 generation of young women in the West who are out to make a statement by wearing the niqab. They enjoy all the western freedoms but choose to flaunt the veil. They are the female equivalent of the radical young men who travel to Pakistan and come back wanting to blow up trains."¹⁰³

Tony Blair defined the Niqaab:

It is a mark of separation and that is why it makes other people from outside the community feel uncomfortable 104

Salman Rushdie said

"He was expressing an important opinion, which is that veils suck, which they do."¹⁰⁵

Yasmin Alibhai said:

'We don't yet live in an Islamic republic, so I will say it - I find the veil offensive'¹⁰⁶

Cabinet Minister Jack Straw has said he would prefer Muslim women not to wear veils which cover the face.

¹⁰² <http://www.q-news.com/media-DailyMail-Burka.htm>

¹⁰³ Ayaan Hirsi Ali [Sunday Times, 29 October 2006](http://www.sundaytimes.co.uk/st/2006/10/29/061029a11.shtml)

¹⁰⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6058672.stm

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23370188-details/Salman%20Rushdie%20says%20Muslim%20veils%20'suck'/article.do>

¹⁰⁶ http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_a_l/yasmin_alibhai_brown/article1822224.ece

Lastly I would like to add Jack Straws comments:

Cabinet Minister Jack Straw has said he would prefer Muslim women not to wear veils which cover the face.

The Commons leader said he did not want to be "prescriptive" but he believed that covering people's faces could make community relations more difficult.

Mr Straw has said he asks Muslim women at his Blackburn constituency surgeries if they would mind removing veils.¹⁰⁷

To sisters: Is it really necessary to wear veils covering your face? As I understand it, it is not required at all. I'll say to you sisters, you are making your life extremely difficult, drawing attention to yourself, disguising your identity and generally being a nuisance. Your face, sisters is your identity, its who you are. When you hide your face, you hide your identity. You are nothing but a blob walking in the street, no personality, no thoughts, a statistic, a symbol of oppression. How can you get a job or do anything if you don't have an independent existence, do you want to be the property of your father and husband, brother? Do you not want to say this is me, this is my face, this is my name and this is what I am? You CAN NOT do this with your face covered! It is the anti-thesis¹⁰⁸ of democracy and it does British Muslims especially Muslim men an extreme disservice.¹⁰⁹

I landed on a web site recently, in which non-Muslims were making conversation via a message board; here are some of the comments made regarding the *Niqaab*: (from various messages):

1. Another thing regarding the wife¹¹⁰, is that an unfortunate builder walked in on her and saw her without her berker on (the veil that covers all the face except the eyes) and she complained about him! Sorry love but you are in england now and and men are deemed responsible if they can't control their lustful urges when looking upon a

¹⁰⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5411954.stm>

¹⁰⁸ Direct opposite

¹⁰⁹ <http://forum.mpacuk.org/showthread.php?t=1491>

¹¹⁰ The discussion is on [Abu Hamza al-Masri](#)'s wife.

woman! I hate seeing women wearing those awful veils! Its so medieval!¹¹¹

2. Its disgusting they should make his wife wear a bikini and grate cheese for marcia and her builders at that deli.

3. For once I agree with Whatty. All muslim women should be forced to wear itsy bitsy, teeny weeny, polka dot bikinis!!

4. been listening to phone in's on the radio, hot topic these days is islam, muslim women attire, etc. Apparently des the actual veil part, on its own, is a niqab and is more a cultural thing than religious. After listening to a few phone in's where muslim's have phoned in to explain reasons for this, reasons for that. All had differing versions as to what the quoran actually says. It left me pretty confused. I can only conclude that like many religions people take from them what they want and believe accordingly.

5. Tracy,

the reason you see so many young muslim women covering up these days is because of bullying at their colleges from fanatical young blokes. Most of these young girls would rather not wear these silly outfits, their mothers usually don't, but these daft young fundamentalists at their schools insist that they wear these stupid robes and head coverings. As if God could give a damn whether women wore rags over their heads or face. Does Alla insist on animals covering up? There was a time, a few hundred years ago when Western religious women used to cover up and until fairly recently Catholic women used to wear a scarf when they went to mass.

We in the West have grown out of that nonsense or we have evolved out of it. The morons in the East still have a lot of growing up to do. Why do we put up with them here?¹¹²

The banning of Niqaab in schools and renowned universities has stirred an intense and a lengthy legal battle ever since it was issued by Minister of Education Hussein Kamel Bahaaeddin in 1994

The legal wrangle came to an end this week when the upper bench of the State Council, the highest administrative court, rejected a lower tribunal's decision to revoke the ban on the niqab. "The minister's decision defining the characteristics of the school uniform is one

¹¹¹ The underlining is mine for emphasis.

¹¹²<http://www.cityneighbours.com/phorum3.1.2/read.php?f=19&i=106&t=1068>

of his prerogatives as the arbiter of the organisation of the education system," the court was quoted as saying in its ruling. The court also said the decision does not contradict the principle of freedom of religion as enshrined in the constitution, and does not prevent schoolgirls from wearing a scarf covering the hair and neck.¹¹³

Michele Lemon's piece in the *Globe and Mail*¹¹⁴- who has an MA in Islamic studies from McGill University, discusses her reaction to seeing a woman in Niqaab while she is waiting for a bus: "*I feel I've been punched in the stomach.*"

"I see a premedieval spectre before my eyes ... her oppression, for oppression it is, becomes a symbol of the difficulty all women one faced & a startling reminder that the struggle for equality has not ended. I understand all too well why she wears this hideous costume, but I despise it nonetheless. How could anyone defend the outfit as preserving anything but the low regard and true unimportance of women, all protestations to the contrary? This woman is a walking billboard that proclaims public space is reserved for men...The others at the bus stop titter, & laugh to one another. ...I want to tell them that this is no laughing matter that under that forbidding costume there lurks a defaced human being...I arrive home feeling shell-shocked. I say that people who want to promenade in this country as slaves should not be allowed to do so. It is an affront to the rest of us; to human dignity & respect."

¹¹³ <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/440/li2.htm>

¹¹⁴ Lemon, 'Understanding Does Not Always Lead to Tolerance'

Why Muslim Women choose to wear the *Niqaab*

There are many reasons *Muslim* Women choose to wear the *Niqaab*.¹¹⁵ The main reason is for *Allah's* pleasure. Although under that comes many benefits which I will also list:

- * Most important reason: in pursuit of *Allah's* pleasure.
- * Out of love for Allah
- * Many see it as an obligation, without which they will be sinned.
- * A sense of Islamic identity.¹¹⁶
- * Following the “best generation” - the Mothers of the Believers, the Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم Wives.¹¹⁷
- * Preservation of oneself for ones husband.¹¹⁸
- * Respect for parents. ¹¹⁹
- * Being treated with respect as a thinking human being & not for ones looks. ¹²⁰
- * Cutting down on race issues.¹²¹
- * Safeguarding oneself from prying eyes.
- * Wearing it helps one to lower the gaze.
- * Provides a sense of security and protection.
- * Wearing it can open opportunities for *Da'wah*.¹²²
- * An act of faith
- * An act of modesty
- * A blessing
- * Purity
- * Righteousness
- * Attracts righteous men for marriage
- * Creates a barrier between those who disobey Allah and those who don't
- * Making a point that one is leaving in a democratic community; thus the freedom to dress according to ones beliefs.
- * Gives a sense of nobility
- * Gives the feeling of power and freedom

¹¹⁵ I have not mentioned all of them

¹¹⁶ "...they should be known as (free and respectable women) so as not to be annoyed..." (Surah 33:59)

¹¹⁷ The wives and daughters of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as well as the Companions wives, wore the veil and covered completely. They are the most pious of women who we try to learn to be like, so why would we make an exception in this instance?

¹¹⁸ Men are jealous by nature and do not want anyone else looking at their wife. As a pious and righteous wife, we should want to preserve our beauty from others and share it only with our husband.

¹¹⁹ Our parents (and other family members) feel a sense of pride that we are guided and showing the physical proof of our Islamic identity. When we cover to this degree, our fathers and brothers do not need to worry that we will go astray.

¹²⁰ When we are veiled, no one can tell if we are fat or thin, blonde or brunette, cute or homely or beautiful, or what color our skin is. This is a big blessing, in that they will not see us as an exploitable object or insult us either. People are forced to hear the words we say instead of concentrating on what we look like and missing out on our minds.

¹²¹ When we are covered fully, no one knows for sure even the color of our skin. This protects us from the racist remarks and treatment that is still so prevalent in North America, and elsewhere.

¹²² Muslims and non-Muslims will ask you if you are oppressed etc. and you will have the perfect chance to explain to them that because you cover, you are in fact FREE. This will in turn also give a chance to talk about the freedoms Islam granted women 1400 years ago

Sister Rahmanara Chowdhury, a part-time teacher in Loughborough University is a teacher in Communication. She teaches teenagers 'interpersonal skills, teamwork and personal development' –in Niqaab. The following is her reason for adopting the Niqaab:

'It serves as a reminder that I'm Muslim and it helps me get close to God. Since wearing the niqab, I've become a lot more confident. Once you're covered up, people are forced to judge you not as you look as a woman but on your character.'¹²³

Sisters like 'Hope' (situated in Netherlands) say that she would '*resort to wearing a surgical mask to dress in accordance with her religious beliefs*' and she '*chose to wear the niqab out of her love of God, a love she wants to show the world*', she said. She spent a lot of time persuading her parents that she had not been brainwashed or developed militant tendencies. "*I got attached to the niqab like to a pair of jeans.*"¹²⁴

Obaidi shows pride in her religion and resists foreign interference, she said, by maintaining her *Niqaab* "*Just because this is closed,*" she said, tugging at the black material that covered her face, "*doesn't mean this is,*" pointing to her head. Samia Adham, a statistics professor seated beside her, also in a veil, added: "*This is a choice. We choose to be ruled by Islam. We will make changes, but within our religion and in our own way.*" Khadija Badahdah, a university administrator who holds a doctorate in chemistry from the University of London and wears a veil¹²⁵

Fareena Alam says:

'I think people who wear the burqa are sincere,' she says. 'It is a big step. Often they are the women who really embody the modesty people talk about. Some of the women who wear the burqa are exquisite and they don't want the attention from men. Wearing a burqa is about being modest in your character and the way you treat people and keeping yourself away from the limelight. People who wear the burqa make a great commitment and are more in touch with their spirituality. Many have a genuine connection with God. The burqa not only covers you from the public eye, it keeps you from distractions and gives you a profound consciousness of God.'

¹²³ <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1646389,00.html>

¹²⁴ <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2006/03/07/dutch-consider-burqa-ban-to-muslim-dismay.html>

¹²⁵ http://www.aqoul.com/archives/2006/06/corner_on_niqab.php



Niqaab -the ultimate liberation-

As we have come to see the prevailing misconceptions about the Niqaab have made people use derogatory terms when referring to the Niqaab. We need to educate the masses who blindly follow the media as stereotypes are not good prognosticators of individual thoughts and actions. As *Muslims* it is imperative that we try to answer these questions and doubts. Sadly, whilst surfing online I realised that there is a lack of information with regards to how to give Da'wah to Muslims and Non-Muslims about the *Niqaab*. Below are some of my thoughts and ideas. When going through my research I picked out the terms used by anti-Niqaabists to refer to the *Niqaab*. I then compiled the following table and added replies. 'At the onset should be a note of caution to Muslims: one cannot expect to practice ones religion so publicly and yet become overly offended when people want to question certain aspects. Jack Straw, insincere intentions aside, has addressed an issue which the greater British public at large have been wanting clarification on for a while now – indeed, this is an excellent opportunity for qualified Muslims to debunk the mysteries behind such a visually obvious, mysterious and perhaps even shocking statement of a Muslim woman's identity.'¹²⁶

C O M M E N T S	<p>Niqaab takes away a woman's freedoms and rights</p> <p>Strongest visual indication & symbol of women's oppression in the world/ degrading /cruel/ implies that their worth is less than Western women/ shows men are the owners of women/ against woman's humanity/ infringement on personal freedom/ against woman's humanity/ hides her personality/ imposes limitations e.g. physical constraints/ Contains psychological repression/ Negative impact on women's rights/ an attempt to impose 2nd class citizen status on women/ not British/ hassle for women/ limits movements & obscures senses/ can't see outside world with ease/ insult to everyone who believes in equal rights/ fabric prisons which isolate/ prison imposed by the frailties of men/ makes people inferior which grows into inferiority complexes/ used to please men/ forced by family, husband etc/ poses organisational problems in school/ inferior/ victimised/ turns one into introvert/ 'antithesis' of democracy/</p>
R E P L I E S	<p>When we analyse the above comments, we realise they are all pretty much saying the same thing. Mainly that the <i>Niqaab</i> is:</p> <p>Oppressive (a) <i>By wearing Niqaab she in fact has less rights than 'Western women', both in freedom and citizenship, which in turn makes her an inferior in society.</i></p> <p>With regards to the West the priority of competing rights is a complex issue. Even today, after years of debate, <u>there is still no definitive agreement</u>, for example, on the right of a smoker to light up in public in relation to the right of</p>

¹²⁶ Words taken from Brother Abu Eesa Niamatullah's article on the Niqaab (with few changes): <http://www.jimas.org/niqab.htm>

the public not to inhale the smoker's fumes. None the less, the basic principle of liberal society, to paraphrase John Stuart Mill¹²⁷, is that individuals should be free to do what they choose so long as it is not detrimental to others. Voltaire noted this attribute of the English three centuries ago, when he wrote:

"If there was just one religion in Britain there would be despotism. If two, there would be civil war. But as there are 30, they all live at peace with each other."

In truth many Sisters in *Niqaab* have been brought up in the West, yet they are not referred to as 'Western' because they do not adopt the Western ideas but Islamic values. But this does not mean that they have less rights, in truth it is the right to freedom of religion is upheld by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 18 states:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance'. Similar religious freedoms are contained within the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.¹²⁸

The truth is the issue is about rights, but not of taking the *Niqaab* off- but of keeping it on. Such comments are nothing but sheer bigotry & racism through the back door. By accusing *Niqaabis* of not holding the same rights, they are in fact saying that the *Niqaabi* will never be on equal footing and acceptance in this society. It is disturbing to find that the misogynist attitude of white middle-aged men (the like of Jack Straw) of privilege dictating what *Muslim* women should do has gone unchallenged by champions of women's rights. By telling a Muslim Woman to remove her veil is unconstitutionally burdening the constituent's free exercise of her sincerely held religious belief. When women are dictated to take of an item of clothing why doesn't this arise commotion? This is the antithesis of rights, when someone wants to wear the *Niqaab* they

¹²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stuart_Mill

¹²⁸ ICCPR

¹²⁹ Al-Bukhari & Muslim

¹³⁰ Surah Noor verse 30

¹³¹ the Niqaab is not compulsory in the Arab Gulf countries either.

¹³² <http://www.google.com/search?q=niqab+issues&hl=en&lr=&rls=GGGL,GGGL:2006-31,GGGL:en&start=10&sa=N>

¹³³ <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1646389,00.html>

¹³⁴ <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1646389,00.html>

¹³⁵ <http://mychristianblood.blogspot.com/archive/2006/03/07/dutch-consider-burqa-ban-to-muslim-dismay.html>

¹³⁶ <http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,9830,1685189,00.html>

¹³⁷ Fareena Alam, editor of Q-News, her article was published in The Guardian:

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1653211,00.html>

¹³⁸ A prominent Islamist writer and activist

¹³⁹ <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/440/li2.htm>

¹⁴⁰ <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1646389,00.html>

¹⁴¹ http://www.aqoul.com/archives/2006/06/corner_on_niqab.php

should have the freedom to do so. How can women in *Niqaab* freely voice their opinions when their MPs refuse to talk to them with their Niqaabs on? How can they freely interact in a society in which there isn't an acceptance for who they are. It may come as thought provoking but the real question is: who is taking away their rights? The Niqaab or the people, who have a lack of acceptance for who they are?

(b) *Niqaab shows that she is coerced into wearing it, is 'owned' and is merely doing it to please men. Thus she is victimised.*

This statement is based on a lack of knowledge on the kind of life women in the West adopt with the *Niqaab* on. Most people have fallen prey to the misconstrued idea that the Niqaab is a symbol to show total male domination over a female and a woman wearing it is forced, oppressed and suppressed. In reality this is far from the case; those who have interacted with *Niqaabis* in the West know well that:

*they are indeed women who have adopted the Niqaab out of a matter of *choice* and religious conviction. If one understands the Islamic faith they will come to realise that actions are done solely for *Allah's* pleasure. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

"Actions are (judged) by motives (*niyyah*), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration (*hijrah*) was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated."¹²⁹

*many have *Niqaabis* have faithful husbands, who in turn also safeguard themselves for their wives. They don't 'cage-up' their wives and go partying. Rather it is a two way process, a beautiful relationship of trust and safeguarding oneself for ones spouse. She does it by covering her beauty for his eyes, he does it by sporting the beard, wearing loose clothing. It should not be forgotten that the injunction of lowering the gaze is given first to the man in the Qur'aan. The Niqaab helps safeguard against those who do not undertake this command.

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.). that is purer for them. Verily, Allāh is All-Aware of what they do.¹³⁰

Further, by living in West their (Muslim men) attitudes towards their women differ worlds apart in comparison to the very much exaggerated Eastern representations.

* The Niqaab is not compulsory attire in the West¹³¹. Therefore it logically follows that a woman in Niqaab does so, predominantly, out of her own self-

liberating personal choice. There are no 'rigid fundamental police' & the law of the country does not enforce it, yet women are increasingly adopting the face veil

One devout Muslim woman who wears the Niqaab said:

"For me, the way I cover-up is a matter of conscience, guided Insh'Allah by much reading, study and by my own self image. I spent long enough as an adult in the modern world before finally accepting the need for decent concealment to know that I can affect men because of the physical blessings that Almighty Allah has granted me. As I would feel much guilt were I even to risk leading a man from the One True Path, I prefer to hide away my physical aspect and, Insh'Allah, to allow my mind and my actions to be the elements upon which I am judged as a Muslimah and as a human-being."¹³²

*many actually go against their families' wishes, to wear the Niqaab. Commenting on this, Andrew Anthony, the writer of the Article '*The Big cover-up*' published in the Observer in 2005,

Their own mothers did not wear the veil but in the post 9/11 era, many young Muslim women in Europe see covering themselves as an act not of self-erasure but of power and freedom."¹³³

Within this article he gives the example of a part-time teacher in Loughborough University in who wears the Niqaab and says:

'Whatever lies behind the growing popularity of fundamentalist dress code, women like Chowdhury are proof that it is not necessarily familial or communal coercion... In a niqab, she told me, she elicits more respect from her students. 'They apologise if they swear in front of me. That's not usual.'

There is certainly, as he mentioned, a rise in the number of sisters who are donning the Niqaab:

Where once the sight of a fully hidden woman was restricted to a few traditionalist communities, nowadays it is not unusual to see the niqab on high streets throughout the major cities of England and in a number of smaller towns. Just a decade ago, this form of enshrouding was seen as an unambiguous sign

of female oppression and feudal custom, but now it is frequently referred to as an expression of religious identity, individual rights and even, in some cases, female emancipation.¹³⁴.

Sisters like 'Hope' (situated in Netherlands) say that she would '*resort to wearing a surgical mask to dress in accordance with her religious beliefs*' and she '*chose to wear the niqab out of her love of God, a love she wants to show the world*', she said. She spent a lot of time persuading her parents that she had not been brainwashed or developed militant tendencies. "*I got attached to the niqab like to a pair of jeans.*"¹³⁵.

Niqaab imposes restrictions on her that are inhumane

Niqaab is emancipation from the shackles of male frailties. Today, in a consummative society, wear the worth of women has submerged to low levels (as can be seen on billboards and advertisements to sell make-up products) women increasingly adopt the face-veil to free themselves. She is treated as a human being and not a sex object.

(a) *physical & communicative restraints e.g. stops her from acquiring a sound education*

* What is worrying is the idea that women in Niqaab can't acquire sound education with the Niqaab on. Many non-Muslim teachers in the UK have noted that they have no problems whatsoever in communicating with Muslim women who wear the *Niqaab* and it does not prevent them from communicating in anyway whatsoever. Even though they find the *niqaab* strange, in terms of communication it is something which they do *not* really notice when as the eyes and voice are enough. Just as many girls in *hijaab* attend educational institutions so do women in *Niqaab*. The *Niqaab* is an extension from *Hijaab* to *Niqaab* and actually is very similar. (although colours and styles may vary)



extension →



One can still see, hear, feel, speak and communicate. Expressions can be picked up by body actions and the language of the eyes. Indeed one might possibly excuse Jack Straw for his rather ignorant assertion that not being able to make full use of a woman's cheeks and lips during conversation could inhibit better and deeper understanding. One social commentator has suggested that Mr. Straw would do well to take a few lessons from his blind constituents in how they are able to move forward with their inter-human interaction. What is ironic is that, centres of education should be a symbol of new and innovative thought, institutions by which old prejudices should be slowly worked away by the intermingling of different faiths. But sadly, this does not hold true as a renowned university and from the foremost, namely 'Imperial University' banned the *Niqaab* and thus set a dangerous precedence indeed. The reason put forward was that it was '*part of the renewed efforts to improve security after the*

*summer bombing in London*¹³⁶ Fareena Alam wrote in an article:


"...By referring to the London bombings to explain the need for greater security, they fail to mention that none of the 7/7 attackers covered their face, hid behind a niqab or even a hood. While the college's statement embraces diversity, it would have served its own interests by acknowledging the current sensitivities around Muslim religious dress. A consultation with campus Muslim organizations would have made the announcement less susceptible to the ensuing hyperbole and alarm. For most, the choice of religious dress reflects a spiritual commitment. Most Muslim women don't fixate about it; they just make their decision and get on with it"¹³⁷

Banning the Niqaab in centres of education is going against the very law of the country, which is supposed to be known for its secular values. Under Article 9 of The European Convention of Human Rights everyone has the right to freedom of religion unless it is in the interest of public safety and health. Surely, wearing a *Niqaab* in classroom does not pose a threat to both the teacher and the students. Especially for those who view the *Niqaab* to be an integral part of their belief, identity and an obligation- are not these bans an infringement on religious freedom? Do we see ignorance of Islamic beliefs creeping into the West's 'civilised' society? Indeed, people choose and decide what they want to wear and be. This is one of the ideals that the secular society ideally should embed within it, the freedom for people to create public spaces in which to be and wear what they wish. Sisters such as 'Safynaz Kazem'¹³⁸ say that

'...just as the minister attacks Islamic garb for failing to conform to school uniform requirements, he should also make sure that "girls who go to school in miniskirts, tight skirts, make-up and jewellery" should be punished for the same reason...'¹³⁹

* The assumption that women in Niqaab are not educated is notorious. Many Women in Niqaab are very educated and professional Muslim women are emphatic in their preference for the *Niqaab*. Sister Rahmanara Chowdhury, a part-time teacher in Loughborough University is a teacher in Communication. She teaches teenagers 'interpersonal skills, teamwork and personal development' -in Niqaab. The following is her reason for adopting the Niqaab:

'It serves as a reminder that I'm Muslim and it helps me get close to God. Since wearing the niqab, I've become a lot more confident. Once

	<p>you're covered up, people are forced to judge you not as you look as a woman but on your character.¹⁴⁰</p> <p>Their barriers are secularists who hate those who adopt the <i>Niqaab</i>. Such secularists provoke & insinuate public hatred by their comments instigating hatred. Two examples have just passed us of: Samia Adham, a statistics professor seated beside her, also in a veil & Khadija Badahdah, a university administrator who holds a doctorate in chemistry from the University of London¹⁴¹</p> <p>* With regards to communication- a lot of work these days is largely via correspondence over the phone, mail and the Internet. Most people do not use video-phones, so in order to say that it is an issue of communication is flawed. Furthermore, GPs are already accused of discriminating against people on the basis of their appearances and judging people based on their looks, which affects the type of medical treatment they receive and these are not people who are covering their faces. In truth, women in Niqaab go shopping, go to institutions of education, interact with friends and live a quite normal lifestyle.</p>  <p>(b) she is in a fabric prison which isolates & hides her personality</p> <p>If we look into the lives of the many sisters that do wear the Niqaab we notice that this is not something to eliminate their existence, in reality it is a sign of faith that blossoms. It gives zest to their faith, it enhances their spirituality, it expressed their personality, it imprisons the vain desires of men, all enhancing her fine personality. The <i>Niqaab</i> does not hide a woman's personality; it helps her get judged by their personality and intellect and not by their beauty, facial features & sexuality.</p> <p>We come to see that <i>Niqaab</i> doesn't stop women from participating in society but it's the society itself which doesn't accept them.</p>
<p>C O M M E N T S</p>	<p>2. Emotions felt when the <i>Niqaab</i> is seen</p> <p>Absurd/ Ridiculous/ Silly outfit / alien/ saddening/ awful/ Repulsive/ needs to go back home/ People look with pity & contempt</p>

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In truth, it is such emotionally driven comments and ignorance (that are further instigated by the likes of Jack Straw) that force Muslim women into their homes under a real oppressive veil, a veil of hostility & fear. In reality it is comments like this that brings forth the real truth- that under the false pretence of 'promoting integration' they are severing community relations.¹⁴² What is the best way to react to something you are not aware of? With insults, self made-up claims, self conceived ideas and far off examples? The best approach to religious differences is to read, discuss and understand, not criticize and ban. Even if something comes across absurd/ridiculous/ silly/alien and repulsive. In reality, majority of those who are ignorant or have misunderstood Islaam feel this way; they associate the Niqaab with violence, oppression, coercion and suppression. Not only the common public but the politicians, celebrities and tabloids are affected with this ignorance.

It's interesting, too, that those who feel intimidated or threatened in the presence of a woman wearing the veil don't appear to be concerned by the sight of a nun's habit,



Hasidic garb

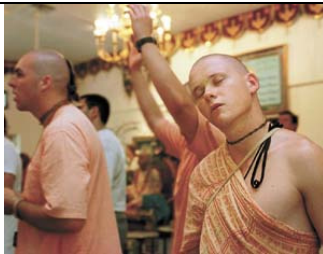


side locks, Sikh turbans,

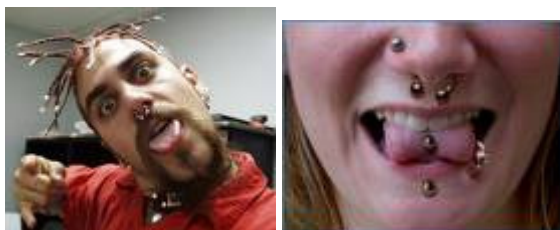


the shaved heads and orange robes of Hare Krishna devotees,

¹⁴² Abu Eesa Niamatullah (words changed slightly)



those who pierce their tongues, lips, and brows,



those who tattoo themselves all over,



those who walk the streets in hooded gangs.



'You don't have to love it to acknowledge someone else's freedom to wear it.'¹⁴³

Needs to go back home

The debate over "integration" has been quite revealing. While filling the air with talk of belonging and citizenship, the most common reaction to Muslims' complaints has been "if you don't like it, go back where you came from". In a recent article on BBC's website they quote a middle aged woman saying:

"Well done, Jack. If they don't like it, they should go home,"¹⁴⁴

In a racist email to a group it said:

"Whatever you think you are, you are not

¹⁴³<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,1653211,00.html>

¹⁴⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6048896.stm

¹⁴⁵<http://copwatch.net/forums/showthread.php?s%3d6031b552d3661f15e41f44c06e8d1947%26amp;threadid%3d16704%26amp;goto%3dnextoldest>

	<p>welcome in our country any more."¹⁴⁵</p> <p>It is ironic that while we miss no opportunity to criticize the tribal system for its imposition of uniformity over its members, the most popular phrase heard in the Niqaab saga has been: "when in Rome do as the Romans do". The notion of the free individual suddenly vanishes; all that remains is the authority of society, its norms and customs. Yet majority of those who adopt the <i>Niqaab</i> were born and brought up in this country, hold British passports, speak English as their first language & some have no country on this earth other than this one. A question posed is: does wearing <i>Niqaab</i> take away our British identity? Or is it by wearing mini skirts and bikinis that we are regarded as Western. Is there a certain dress code that all Westerners have to abide by? Yet, we are proud of not being 'totalitarian'.</p>
C O M M E N T S	Medieval
	Backward/ Medieval- physical manifestations of outdated traditional practices / A Mummy
R E P L I E S	The <i>Niqaab</i> is referred to as 'backward', 'medieval' etc But it shouldn't be forgotten that yesterday's foreign practices often become today's commonplace realities. <i>Hijab</i> used to be considered utterly strange but today, it is generally accepted, despite lingering social prejudice in most Western countries. Of course, France is the exception to this rule. Customs that are initially viewed as odd have and do become part of a culture with time. For example, the most popular food in England today isn't Yorkshire pudding - its Indian curry. ¹⁴⁶ Half a century ago, eating curry in Britain would probably have been considered ridiculous, possibly even disgusting. In reality, just because something was yesterday's practice can't mean it can't be applicable today. Just like walking; man walked yesterday and man walks today- so lets walk forward.
C O M M E N T S	Denotes wrong values
	Carries severe negative repercussions/ Values implied by outfit is repulsive & insulting/ Increases cleft between natives & foreigners/ threatens public order/ barbaric/ sinister
	What threatens public order is the likes of Tony Blair, who made a clear breach of the ministerial code by supporting Aisha Azmi suspension. The ministerial code requires ministers to uphold the administration of justice. The media in no way is enhancing the cleft between natives and foreigners. It is the media that

¹⁴⁶http://www.britainusa.com/sections/articles_show_nt1.asp?d=4&i=41112&L1=&L2=&a=28719

R E P L I E S	<p>carries severe negative repercussions by making profit & political advancement by the defamation of <i>Muslims</i> and their faith- this is what is connoting wrong values, not the <i>Niqaab</i>. Isn't it strange how the Newspapers carry pictures of <i>Niqaabis</i> beside hostile stories displayed advertisements over the page of naked men & women posing together? Whose values are wrong? What threatens public order? What implies values that are repulsive and insulting? Lashing out at religious practices and intolerance are not values to be proud of. These clefts are worked on by politicians, stereotypical writers and the like with their calculated and incessant propaganda. The destructive potential of Islamophobic advances should not be underestimated. The Third Reich historian William Shirer recalls that, despite people's distrust of Nazi propaganda, its steady doses of falsification and distortion in the long run affected even well-meaning and decent Germans. Will we not then learn from history? What carries severe negative repercussions is turning on the minorities, pushing them into the corner, surrounding them with suspicion, repressive measures and policies, which in turn gives reign to bigotry and prejudice. Such defamation has made <i>Niqaabis</i> and <i>Muslims</i>, as a whole, a fair game for racists and bigots. The risk is that anxiety is being aired without clarity either as to the problems or the solutions. Where is this political opportunism taking us? Into the dark tunnel of national strife. The corrosive effect of the political and media onslaught against British <i>Muslims</i> is having its impact on all sections of society. What is claimed to be an assertion of free speech and democratic rights is rapidly becoming the demonisation of a community. Not only is it dangerous for the media to vilify and demonise an entire community, even if they are only 3% of the population as British <i>Muslims</i> are; so too it is pure brinkmanship for ministers to fan these flames. By their nature politicians are an opportunistic breed. Yet they must have a sense of when to pull back from the abyss. If they claim that Muslim extremists are the source of all the ills in British society, then let them recognise that secular extremism is not the solution.</p>
C O M M E N T S	<p>4. It is dangerous</p> <p>Dangerous/ threatens public security/ Nuisance/ Most sinister garment / since the IRA balavlovas¹⁴⁷/ <u>Terrifying sight</u>/ Could be a crook hiding a gun</p>
R E P L I E S	<p>In truth the <i>Niqaab</i> is not dangerous. What is dangerous and threatens public order are derogatory comments about the way people practice their faiths. The political and media onslaught on Muslims testifies to this fact. This onslaught has fuelled not only verbal but alarmingly surged physical attacks on Muslims. Are Muslim women in <i>Niqaab</i> attacking places of worship by mobs and firebombs? Are <i>Niqaabis</i> widely known to be crooks hiding guns? Or are they known to be law abiding religious women with a conviction to please their Lord?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"The woman who covers her face is the most</p>

¹⁴⁷ the *Niqaab*, in one form or another, pre-dates the IRA, never mind their balaclavas, by millennia. Secondly, why did the IRA wear the balaclavas? To disguise, as they were criminals and terrorist; this is an unfair and judgmental comparison.

harmless individual in society. She doesn't drink; she doesn't smoke and does not cause society any problems."¹⁴⁸

In reality who is the criminal? Who threatens public order and security is a nuisance and what is more terrifying? Since the comments made by Jack Straw *Masjids* and Islamic centres in Preston and Falkirk have been attacked by mobs and firebombed. Other examples include (the full article was published in the Independent¹⁴⁹):

*A 49-year-old mother's *Niqaab* was snatched from her face at a bus stop in Liverpool by a tall man in his 60s.¹⁵⁰

*A Sister in *Niqaab* (in Mr Straw's Blackburn constituency) was verbally abused by three youths.¹⁵¹

*A Sister in *Niqaab* was verbally abused in Hackney, east London.

The attacks on Muslims are clear proof that it is not the *Niqaabis* who should be feared. If they were carrying guns and arms wouldn't they have taken out their guns and shot at those who attacked them? The *Niqaab* is not about militancy or oppression. Rather it is about love for God, personal piety and a focus on spiritual self-development. In addition, while the *Niqaab* is often coupled with a life that is more sheltered, it should be remembered that in Catholicism, a number of nuns continue to live a cloistered lifestyle in order to better devote themselves to God. Westerners should consider that context is very important when trying to understand the practices of others, be they Muslim or of other faiths. For anyone to use the *Niqaab* as an excuse for their inability to develop a relationship with someone is not only ignorant, but rather pitiful at the same time. To then incite the community to react against innocent women, creating in the very least a tense atmosphere for a woman in *Niqaab* and at the very worst physical abuse and attack (as has been witnessed in recent times), only goes to prove the hypocrisy our 'tolerant' and 'multi-cultural' country is drowning in. If we look at statistics¹⁵² how many women in *Niqaab* are committing crimes? According to the article "one in three 17-30-year-olds is now classed as a heavy drinker, bingeing on four or more drinks in one session at least once a fortnight", which translates to liver damage, premature death, cancer, heart problems, an escalation in anti-social behaviour, lost working hours and puts those women at risk of sexual assault. This trend affects one in out of every three young women and yet British politicians, including Prime Minister Tony Blair, seem more concerned about the handful of British women who have chosen to don the full veil, which poses no danger to either themselves or to the public at large.

Truly one can not be dictated as to how they dress- and religious convictions should not be attacked- especially when they do not harm anyone. *Niqaabis* are not associated with crime or trouble. They are religious women minding their own business, for this reason one will find that the people interested in security hardly ever make an issue out of it. It should be noted that even in countries where it is worn on a larger scale, it is not deemed as a security risk. Thus,

¹⁴⁸ Na'ima B Roberts in her book: 'From My Sister's Lips.'

¹⁴⁹ <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article1870842.ece>

¹⁵⁰ Friday 6 October also mentioned in an article in *This is London* (7 October 2006 CE)

¹⁵¹ Friday 6 October

¹⁵² <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/uk-united-kingdom/crime>

	<p>associating Niqaab with violence is based on ignorance and malice.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Can you notice the difference?!</p>
<p>C O M M E N T S</p>	<p>5. Not from <i>Islaam</i></p> <p>Extreme interpretation/ Kiss of death to Da'wah in the West & impediments to Da'wah/ recoils people from Islaam/ <u>Unrepresentative of Islaam</u> /<u>Overwhelmingly reinforces every conceivable Western prejudice about Islaam</u></p>
<p>R E P L I E S</p>	<p>As has been established, Niqaab is an authentic part of Islaam thus to hide it is counterproductive to <i>da'wah</i>. The <i>Sahabah</i>¹⁵³ did not spread <i>Islaam</i> by concealing the practices they learned from the Messenger <small>صلى الله عليه وسلم</small>. Furthermore, just because of ones inadequacies at explaining the beauty of <i>Niqaab</i>, one can not reject it. Non- <i>Muslims</i> know that <i>Niqaab</i> is a visible sign of <i>Islaam</i> (although they may not admit it). When seeing a Sister in <i>Niqaab</i> the non-<i>Muslim</i> may question in his/her mind:</p> <p>Why she is wearing that?</p> <p>Does her religion oppress her? What is this religion? Why does it make her hide her face? Maybe I could find a book about this religion? Or let me search their holy book and see if it tells men to oppress their women.</p>

¹⁵³ But the question needs to be addressed: is something that is either fardh or musthabb in the deen not good for us. The truth is this is a means of Shaytaan to dishonor us, insinuating false promises just as he done to our father & mother (Adam and Eve). If we look at the Sahabah and Sahabiyaat, we find that their hearts were from the purest, yet they covered to such an extent. Let us imagine how that environment must have been. A city full of best Muslims ever to live on this earth. Yet even in such an amazing conditions the Muslimahs felt it necessary to wear Niqab. Doesn't this shows us the need for it in times of greater fitnah, such as is prevalent today. Who can argue against the fact that a womans face carries much beauty and temptation. Today, when drugs, alcohol, fornication and the like are rampant- where do we stand saying there is more chance of people lowering their gaze, as was in the time of the Sahabah. Niqaab is a means of protection against unwanted advances. The more the pious men you have in a society the less likely something bad will happen. If the society is full of almost 99 percent Muslims and they are all very pious, then the risk of fornication and adultery and rape is going to be far less. Yet if the Sahabiyaat wore Niqab in such societies. Then in today's Muslim societies which are full of Muslims who jump at the chance for fornication and adultery then it only seems right that if the Sahabiyaat felt it necessary to wear Niqab in their pious society then Muslim women need to wear it for sure in Non-Muslim countries were the majority do not even believe in Islam and the morals are to get a seduce as many women as possible and then sleep with them. The more a women covers the less the chance of men trying to seduce her- as there is nothing to see.

	<p>Some are so intrigued by the <i>Niqaab</i> that they actually become interested in <i>Islaam</i> as a direct result of seeing fully covered <i>Muslim</i> women. One non-<i>Muslim</i> woman wrote about her impressions of the <i>Niqaab</i> in our local newspaper after crossing paths with a veiled woman on a busy city street. The writer was struck by the confidence with which the Muslim woman walked, seeing all that was around her, but not being seen by others, secure in the knowledge that no man could make a lewd comment to her about her shapeless body and invisible face. She confessed a twinge of jealousy as she contemplated her own short skirt and tight blouse, realizing in a split second that, no matter how much she tried to convince herself otherwise, society's men were probably not judging her solely for her intellectual and professional capabilities. She now felt embarrassed in front of the Muslim woman who must've, she imagined, felt somewhat sorry for a "liberated" western woman like herself who could not even make it from one end of the street to the other without fear of harassment.¹⁵⁴</p>
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Contradictions

The attack on Niqaab goes against the very ideals and moral fabric that the West seeks to establish. We are supposed to imbed within ourselves the values of tolerance, fair play and parliamentary democratic freedoms- notable those of free speech and respect for all religions. This society is said to be:

Totalitarian

Yet a totalitarian society does not crush the individual out of existence and trample over his/her rights and freedoms.

Not a traditional society

Yet a society that is traditional suffocates its member with the authority of the tribe, its dated norms, rigid customs and smug chieftains.

Not a communist system

Yet a communist system has rationalized instruments of surveillance, force and coercion.

Liberal

Yet liberal values are surely flexible enough to take this Niqaab in stride; they favor gradual reform, especially political reforms that extend democracy, distribute wealth more evenly, and protect the personal freedom of the individual.¹⁵⁵

Multicultural

Yet a multicultural society advocates or encourages the integration of people of different countries, ethnic groups, and religions into all areas of society

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.weneedtounite.com/respect.htm>

¹⁵⁵ http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_/liberal.html

Conclusion

From the research I have conducted two points become increasingly clear:

1. There is sufficient evidence that Niqaab is apart of the Islamic identity.
2. There is severe hatred and ignorance in the West with regards to the Niqaab.

The truth

The truth is that undoubtedly *Niqaab* is apart of *Islaam* & (as has clearly be proven). The attack on *Niqaab* is an attack on *Islaam*. The truth is that the nature of *kufir* is to first attack the foundations of

Islaam. When it is unsuccessful in doing that then it concentrates on the branches. Niqaab is one of the branches of *hayaa* and as mentioned previously *hayaa* is one of the branches of *eeman*. The recent events that have unfolded, due to the comments made by Jack Straw & his like, made way for the 'sensitivities' and Islamophobic mindsets to be exposed from the masses. Such comments are defined as 'freedom of expression' but in fact this fancy word is coined to hide the bitter truth- that it is the 'freedom to insult' *Islaam*. In the name of 'debate' it is a war on the Islamic identity and the Islamic way of life. The truth is they wish to render void this unique symbol in the lives of the *Muslim Women* and strip them naked. The Eurocentric mindsets & Western Intellectual Imperialism is dominating the media and public opinion. In turn this is making it a struggle for *Muslim Women* to adopt the *Niqaab*- an expression of faith. We should contemplate over the fact that Jack Straw is well acquainted with the *Muslim Community*. In his constituency of Blackburn between 25% and 30% of the population are Muslims for nearly 30 years. He indeed has, without any apology, in a provocative manner, insulted *Muslims*. It is unbridled comments, such as his, made by politicians and people in power, which influence public hatred for *Islaam*. There is no doubt that this is attack on *Islaam*, as Tony Blair said:

"And then, there's a second issue, which is about Islam itself and how Islam comes to terms with - and is comfortable with - the modern world."¹⁵⁶

Jack Straw, and his like are hiding behind the term 'debate' when in reality it is a means employed to advance their prejudices.

What is also sinister is the way in which the 'Straw-man's argument' claims to merely aim to 'facilitate debate on the issue of the necessity of *niqaab* in Britain' and this is false. If anyone was sincere in talking to the Muslims about the issue then why did he not approach Muslims about the issue instead of airing the issue to the tabloid press in the UK, which is not exactly the best way to 'facilitate discussion' with Muslims! So in keeping with the recent implication of Muslims with all that is evil in the West, ranging from accusations that *Islaam* was spread by the sword and discussions about Muslim ghettos, Muslims have been accused by a senior British government minister of being the main culprits in eroding 'community cohesion.' He knows that his position commands influence and as a result he has certainly used it to this effect.¹⁵⁷

Thus, in truth, the term 'debate' by Jack Straw has been misconstrued; in reality he and his like, are venting their prejudices, double standards and unexamined assumptions. It is a means by which one provokes and justifies insulting the *Niqaab*-an act of faith.

Probably not much more than 1 per cent of Muslim women wear it and the majority of them in Britain do so out of religious conviction, not compulsion...

¹⁵⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6058672.stm

¹⁵⁷ http://salafimanhaj.com/pdf_page.php?pdf=32

For those of us who are trying to overcome conservative barriers within Muslim communities, this current climate makes that job more difficult, not less. These constant attacks are creating a siege mentality.¹⁵⁸

The Banning of Niqaab in many Western parts of the world is further proof for what has just been stated. In reality this attack spreads far and wide. Even left wingers (in Italy) are agreeing that the assault on the *Niqaab* is:

“an ignoble act of persecution”¹⁵⁹

The *kuffaar* are becoming much bolder in revealing what is truly in their hearts about *Islaam*. Indeed, *Allaah* knows better than us their real aims and objectives:

“O you who have believed, do not take as intimate confides those other than yourselves (i.e. believers), for they will not spare you (any) ruin. They wish you would have hardship. **Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is far greater.** We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason.”¹⁶⁰

“They wish you would disbelieve as they disbelieved so you would be alike.”¹⁶¹

What we *Muslims* look towards is that which counts- *Allah's* pleasure, societal acceptance does not enter the equation. We do envisage living in harmony and understanding with Non-Muslims but not at the expense of our religious identity and beliefs; there is no obedience to the creation and disobedience to the creator.

The Prophet ﷺ said the following statement:

“There is no obedience if it involves sin, rather obedience is with regard to that which is good and proper.”¹⁶²

“There will come a time of patience when the one who adheres steadfastly to his religion will be like one who holds a burning coal.”^{163 164}

¹⁵⁸ Salma Yaqoob in the Morning Star: <http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/>

¹⁵⁹<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=4§ion=0&article=52008&d=26&m=9&y=2004&pix=world.jpg&category=World>

¹⁶⁰ Aali-Imraan (3): 118

¹⁶¹ an-Nisaa (4): 89

¹⁶² Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 7257; Muslim, 1840

¹⁶³ Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2260; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, 957.

What more does *shaytaan* want other than for mankind to lose their sense of honour and causing their *aura* to be naked? In reality, this battle on covering is not a new one, it started in *Jannah*. It is clearly visible in the history of mankind that *shaytaan* tried to get men and women to uncover that which Allah ordered them to cover, for this reason we need to stand aware that *shaytaan* is ever waiting to take whatever he can.

O Children of Adam! Let not Shaitân (Satan) deceive you, as he got your parents [Adam and Hawwa (Eve)] out of Paradise, **stripping them of their raiment's, to show them their private parts.** Verily, he and Qabîluhu (his soldiers from the jinns or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them. Verily, We made the Shayâtin (devils) Auliya' (protectors and helpers) for those who believe not.¹⁶⁵

O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves (screen your private parts, etc.) and as an adornment, and the raiment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allâh, that they may remember (i.e. leave falsehood and follow truth).¹⁶⁶

Reports state that since Jack Straw's comments on the *Niqaab*, more and more young women are adopting the *Niqaab* in protest – a predictable reaction. It is this sheer strength of numbers combined with a sense of religious brotherhood shared by all *Muslims* that concerns British politicians. Their comments concerning the *Niqaab* are simply a manifestation of those underlying fears.

Nadeem Siddiqui tells me he is selling more veils than he did before his local MP made his controversial remarks.

Mr Siddiqui is the largest seller of veils in the area.

"I used to sell two or three a week but now I am selling five to six. They are mainly being bought by young, British-born Muslim women," he said

¹⁶⁴ **Al-Qaari said: The apparent meaning of this hadeeth is that just as it is impossible to hold on to a burning coal except with intense patience and great difficulty, at that time no one will be able to adhere to his religion and the light of faith except with great patience**

¹⁶⁵ Quran 7:27

¹⁶⁶ Quran 7:26

Mr Straw's intervention and the ensuing political storm have changed all that.

It now appears that British Muslims are less willing to publicly criticise those tiny minority of women who wear it.

A recent statement issued by nearly 30 Islamic groups, including one of the largest Muslim organisations - the Muslim Council of Britain, tells Muslims to "remain united, regardless of their differences of opinion in the wearing of the veil ... and to defend the veil with all their ability".

At the Hijab Centre in Blackburn they recently had a visit from an eight-year-old girl, Mr Siddiqui recalls.

"She wanted to buy a veil and she was arguing with me for 15 minutes. I told her she was too young to be wearing one and in the end we convinced her to wear the hijab.

"The girl's mother didn't even wear a hijab and she told me that she had spent three days convincing her that she doesn't need one

(Taken from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6117480.stm>)

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ

نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

They intend to put out the light of Allâh (i.e. the Religion of Islâm, This Qur'ân, and Prophet Muhammad Sal-Allaahu 'alayhe Wa Sallam) with their mouths. but Allâh will complete his light even though the disbelievers hate (it).

I pray this piece of work is a means by all that read it come to understand the beauty of Niqaab, its lofty status and the modesty that shines forth from it. May Allah, the Most High, gives us Istiqamah on this path, sincerity towards his deen & love for all that is from it, just like the Niqaab is undoubtedly apart of it. May Allah rid the Muslimeen from any hatres or animosity towards it

And Allah knows best.

Appendix

APPENDIX ONE- NON MUSLIM WOMEN WEARING THE NIQAAB

Nuns in Niqaab¹⁶⁷¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ <http://flickr.com/photos/55147766@N00/87771627/>

¹⁶⁸ <http://flickr.com/photos/55147766@N00/87771626/>



Wedding veil



Hindu women also wear a veil, a practice that highlights the fact that veiling is not exclusively Muslim. Traditional and orthodox Hindu women, such as this one, will cover their heads and at least partly obscure their faces in the company of unrelated adult males. Sometimes veiling is accomplished with a loose end of the woman's sari, and sometimes it is done with a scarf-like fabric known as the dupatta.¹⁶⁹



Jewish Women

The Jewish marriage ceremony of the Bedeken here, the groom brings down the veil over his bride's face, reminiscent of Rebekka's covering her face with her veil upon seeing Isaac before marriage as per Jewish Scripture. The veiling symbolizes her duty to live up to Jewish ideals of modesty and reminds others that in her status as a married woman she will be absolutely unapproachable by other men.

Jana will then enter the room to a Russian wedding piece called *les flots de la Volga* (the waves of the Volga- Europe's largest river) with her face covered by a veil accompanied by both her mother and father. She will stand a short distance from the chuppah and wait for Daniel to step down from under from the chuppah to lift the veil from her face.

¹⁶⁹ http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/lifestyles/links/veils_05.html



The wearing of a veil has been given a number of interpretations which can be summarised as follows: - It is the symbol of the married woman; - It is the symbol of a new unapproachability to others; - It represents modesty; - It is considered a way for the groom to confirm that the person he is in fact marrying is his bride! (story in the book of Genesis about Jacob marrying Leah instead of Rachael because he was tricked by his father into doing so) ¹⁷⁰



¹⁷⁰ www.beneden.com



Until the end of the Edo period in 1867, brides wore a *wataboshi* hood which was supposed to conceal the bride's face to everyone except the groom. The *wataboshi* are still used at traditional, non-Western style weddings in Japan.¹⁷¹



Wataboshi: dancers performed before royalty and therefore they would hide their faces out of modesty. Now it is worn by dancers at many festivals all over Japan. Hikosa Zukin another piece of headgear seen at the same festival.

APPENDIX TWO- DIFFERENT STYLES AND WAYS TO WEAR THE NIQAAB

¹⁷¹ <http://www.seiyaku.com/customs/veil/veil.html>



Afghani Burqa



Saudi Style



Pak Chador



Some Niqaab cover eyes and may be flung back to show eyes



Again, the way it is worn depends on what one feels comfortable with, how women predominantly wear it etc. The aim is the same.



*left: Male and female pilgrims (Burton 1892, II, op. p. 139).
right: A late nineteenth century photograph of an Indonesian pilgrim with her
faceveil draped over the back of her head*



A late nineteenth century pilgrim's faceveil and headcover from Indonesia (RMV 370-2992 and 370-2991 respectively; photograph by courtesy of the RMV; photography by B. Grishaaver)



APPENDIX THREE- POEM ON NIQAAB

The Niqaab is so superb

You think I'm oppressed
 Under distress
 You think I hate this dress?
 That I'm getting forced and under duress?
 Into what issue do you digress
 You're so into what says the press
 You think I'm in a mess
 You're in a pre-conditioned nest
 Following the West
 Not understanding for society this is the best
 Forget the rest
 Join the protest
 Adopt this dress

-The Niqaab is so superb-

Wearing it is a pleasure to me
 It makes me feel pure like the fitra always wanted to be
 When you see me why do you flee?
 Come put some thought to it:

-The Niqaab is so superb-

Many in the West upon it do frown
 It makes it dangerous for me to walk with it on around town
 Everyone saying take it down
 Hot is the weather in this time of the year
 Yet I reply
 Do not this niqaab belie
 On this I rely against those men so sly
 Trying to look at this face of mine
 Thus why do you wine?
 When I am so happy following the commandments of the divine
 Following the mothers of the believers
 Thus, of the niqaab, I will not become of the leavers

-The Niqaab is so superb-

'Ninja' they say
 But you think I will take it off? -nay!
 I ask you- if I may-
 Will you listen to me one day?
 Please understand this shining ray
 I'm not trying to keep you at bay
 I want you to understand that

The Niqaab is so superb--

I love this face cover
 I don't waver
 So ponder
 For much much longer
 Oh sister, May Allah, the almighty, make you in Islaam stronger
 Why don't you understand I wonder?
 Understand it inshAllah you'll become fonder
 This face cover,
 Of it I am a lover
 You may not wear it
 But don't hate it
 Understand it

The Niqaab is so superb--

Their hatred fills the air and they Rape
 Animalistic apes
 Gagging the sisters with Tape
 They want to fill our hearts with fear
 Fear In the hearts they try to make
 But sisters keep wearing it for Allah's Sake
 In summers heat we bake
 But to Allah's call do we wake
 Our sincerity towards this religion is not fake
 Off our faces the niqaab they want to take
 But we keep it on so we swim in Jannahs Lake
 So awake!
 For this deen take every Ache

The Niqaab is so superb--

Their staring we ignore
 Because we remember who we are doing it for
 To get easily into Jannahs door
 With our sisters in Jannah we want to tour
 Thus we do not of wearing the niqaab bore
 We let the hearts of the kuffar, in hatred, make their hearts sore

Thus sisters wear it more and more mentally breaking their Jaw

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Glossary

AhluSunnah wal-Jamaa'h: (Arabic, أهل السنة والجماعة) This Arabic phrase means "the adherents to the *Sunnah* and the community". The phrase proclaims their adherence to the *sunnah*, or code of conduct they believe to have been established by Muhammad (salallahu3'lyhiwaslam), as recorded in the *hadith*.

Ameen: *Muslims* use the word "ameen" not only after reciting the first chapter (*Al Fatiha*) of the *Qur'aan*, but also when concluding a prayer or *duaa*, with the same meaning as in Christianity.

Aura: That which should be concealed from all others (excluding husbands and in times of necessity) according to Islamic law. I.e. private parts.

Ayaat: Verses (of the *Qur'aan*)

Baatin: Hidden/ concealed.

Burqa: An all-enveloping tent-like outer garment worn by some Muslim women in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northern India. Now it is little seen outside Afghanistan. It is worn over the usual daily clothing and removed when the woman returns to the sanctuary of the household.

Chador: An outer garment worn by some Iranian women when they venture out into public; it is one possible way in which a Muslim woman may follow the Islamic hijāb dress code. A chador is a full-length semi-circle of fabric open down the front. It is thrown over the head and held shut in front. A chador has no hand openings or closures but is held shut by the hands or teeth or by wrapping the ends around the waist

Da'wah: Calling people towards Islaam, either directly or indirectly.

Deen: Religion/ way of life.

Dhaahir: Apparent

Eeeman: Faith

Fardh: Incumbent/ Compulsory.

Fitnah: Generally regarded as very difficult to translate. It is often used to refer to civil war, disagreement and division within Islam and specifically alludes to a time involving trials of faith, similar to the Tribulation in Christian eschatology. The word also implies meanings including schism, secession, upheaval and anarchy.

Hadeeth Plural: **Ahaadeeth:** traditions relating to the words and deeds of Muhammad ﷺ.

Hayaa': Shyness/ bashfulness

InshAllah: if Allah wills

Islaam: monotheistic religion based upon the *Qur'an*, a scripture which Muslims believe was sent by God through the prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Jahiliyyah: the times of ignorance/ ignorance of *Islaam*.

Jannah: Paradise

Jilbaab plural: **Jalaabeeb:** A long, flowing, baggy overgarment worn by some Muslim women. There is debate over whether or not this includes the face.

Khalaf: Those Muslims who came after the first three generations of the Muslim predecessors.

Khimaar: The word used in the *Qu'raan* for a headscarf or face- veil (there is a debate over whether it refers to only the headscarf or the *Niqaab* as well)>

Kuffaar: disbelievers (in *Islaam*).

Kufr: disbelief (in *Islaam*).

Madinah: The first Islamic State, to which the Prophet ﷺ migrated, resided and passed away in. His grave is also in *Madinah*.

Masjid: The place of worship for *Muslims*.

Muslim: one submits to *Allah* and follows the Islamic faith.

Muslimah: a female who submits to *Allah* and follows the Islamic faith.

Mahram plural **Mahaarim:** unmarried kin with whom sexual intercourse would be considered incestuous, a punishable taboo. Anybody (whom a woman is not allowed to get married to) from opposite sex that have reached puberty is considered as *mahram*. Theoretically, a woman's *Mahrams* form the group of allowable escorts for a *Muslim* woman when she travels. One must not stay with a non-*mahram* in seclusion where none of their *mahrams* is present

Mustahabb: recommended

Niqaab: face-veil

Niqaabi: one who wears the face-veil

Qur'aan: the last revelation from *Allah*

Sahabah: the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Salaf: the three generations of pious Muslims that came after the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Shariah: The term means "way" or "path"; it is the legal framework within which public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Muslim *principles* of jurisprudence. *Shariah* deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business law, contract law, sexuality, and social issues.

Shaytaan: the satan.

Sunnah: It literally means "trodden path", and therefore, the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ means "the way of the Prophet ﷺ". This includes his sayings, actions and approvals.

Surah: A chapter of the *Qur'aan*

Tabarruj: wanton display, flaunting oneself in contradiction to the Islamic rulings on dress and modest behaviour.

Thiyaab outer garment

Ulama: Scholars- those possessing knowledge.

Zeenah: Beauty and adornment.