

garment in front of their face and cover themselves up with the rest of it. (Tafseer Baidhāwi, Vol. 6 P. 168).

These quotations clearly show that right from the time of the Companions of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) down to the eight-century (A.H.) the one and the same meaning has been attached to this verse, that has been given above. Then from the Ahādith also we come to know that after the revelation of this verse, Muslim women of that period had started wearing the veil, and the practice of moving about with the uncovered face had been discarded.

In Mu'tta and other collections of Hadith by Abu Dā'ud, Tirmizi, etc. it has been related that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had forbidden the women to wear the veil over the face and gloves on the hands while in Ihrām. But this did not mean that women should make an open show of their faces during the course of Hajj. From other Ahādith we learn that the wives of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the common Muslim women concealed their faces from other people even without the veil during the Hajj. According to Abu Dā'ud, Ā'isha (R.A.) says: "We, the women, were with the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), in Ihrām, and the riders passed by us. So,

when they appeared before, us, we drew our outer-garments from the head in front of the face, and when they rode past us, we uncovered our faces."

According to Mu'tta of Imām Mālik, Fatimah, daughter of Munzir says: "We used to cover our faces with the outer-garment while in Ihrām. Once Asma (R.A.) the daughter of Abu Bakr (R.A.), was with us, but she did not prohibit us from this."

According to a tradition related by Ā'isha (R.A.) in Fathul Bāri, Kitābul Hajj: "A woman dressed in Ihrām should draw her outer-garment over her head in front of her faces."

A person who considers carefully the words of the Qur'ānic verse, their well-known and generally accepted meaning and the practice during the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), cannot dare deny the fact that the Islāmic Shar'iah enjoins on the woman to hide her face from other people, and this has been the practise of the Muslim women ever since the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself.

The Muslim women living at the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to whom the Qur'ān was revealed had made the veil a regular part of their dress outside the house, and even at that time it was called Naqāb, the veil.

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WHAT IS HIJĀB?

The foremost among the attractive places in the body of a woman is her face. The woman, who succeeds in hiding her face from men, is able to guard her chastity. The beauty of such a woman is never misused to cause the fire of immorality in society. Through Hijāb, the opportunity for immorality is totally eliminated.

If a woman covers the beauty of her body from head to foot, she is in Hijāb. If for any legitimate object or need, a woman goes out in such a robe of Hijāb, there is no harm in it since female factors of attraction which serve as stimuli for rousing human passion, are completely hidden behind such Hijāb. Therefore, Islām has laid down very strict injunctions regarding the observance of Hijāb.

There are some who present themselves as the protagonists of Hijāb and declare: *“Who says that Hijāb is not necessary? It is absolutely essential, because, if it were not there the morality of women will be spoilt.”* And in the very next breath they say, *“While Hijāb is absolutely essential, it is not necessary to cover the face.”*

What a shocking statement! To these innocent people, Hijāb means nothing more than merely the dress with another long piece of cloth!

The face is the target of the spectators. By advocating for a ‘Hijāb with open face’ they are delivering a deathblow to the very

fundamental Hijāb system which they pretend to uphold. To these people we say; **A Hijāb, which does not cover the face is no Hijāb at all. It is a deliberate fraud on the very system!**

THE NAQĀB (VEIL)

Allah Ta’āla mentions in the Qur’ān:

“O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters and the women of the Muslims to draw their outer-garments close round them, it is expected that they will thus be recognised and not molested.” (33:59).

This verse especially enjoins the covering of the face. This may be done either by drawing a part of the outer-garment in front of the face, or by a veil, or in some other way. The Qur’ān says that when the Muslim women go out thus covered, they will be considered as respectable women, and not as lewd ones, and therefore nobody will think of molesting them.

All the commentators of the Qur’ān have given this same meaning to this verse.

Ibn Abbās (RA), commenting on this verse says: *“Allah has enjoined on the Muslim women that when they go out of their houses under some necessity, they should cover their faces by drawing a part of their outer-garment over their heads.”* (Ahkāmul Qur’ān, Vol. 3 P. 457).

Imām Muhammad bin Sireen (R) asked Ubaidah bin Sufyān bin al-Hārith (R) how one should follow and practise the command of covering the face. Ubaidah (R)

put on an outer-garment himself and gave a demonstration by covering his forehead and nose and an eye, leaving only the other eye uncovered. (Ahkāmul Qur’ān, Vol. 3 P. 457).

Allāmah Naishāpuri (R) says in his ‘Gharā’ibul Qur’ān’: *“In the beginning of the Islāmic era, women used to come out in a shirt and loose robe only as the women of the days of ignorance did. The dress of the respectable women was not any different from that of the women of inferior status. Then they were enjoined to put on the outer-garments and cover the head and face so that people might recognise that they were respectable women, and not immodest ones.”* (Ahkāmul Qur’ān, Vol. 3 P. 458).

Imām Rāzi (R) says: *“In the days of ignorance, women of the Arab nobility and the slave-girls moved about freely and they were teased by the evildoers. Allah enjoined on the respectable women to cover themselves up with the outer-garment, and said, “...it is expected that they will thus be recognised and molested.”* This may have two meanings; first, they will be recognised as respectable women from their dress, and will not be teased. Second, it will be known that they are not promiscuous. (Tafseer Kabir, Vol. 6 P. 591).

Qādhi Baidhāwi (R) says: *“...To draw their outer-garment close to them,”* means that they should draw a part of their outer-