



Dr. Lubna Kamal

Hijab and Quranic Psychology

Recently, Times of India published a story about Haleema Sadiya, a Hijabi Callisthenic performer. Social Media remained on fire, sympathizing with poor Muslim Women, who liberals feel, are oppressed by Islam since centuries. In an another remarkable instance, new recruit police Constable Zeena Ali has become New Zealand first member to wear a specially designed hijab as part of her uniform. Contrary to Modern Muslim women reject imperialistic savior thinking and sympathy of all sorts. Islam and Quran have empowered us 1400 years back and Women only need to find out their rights and assert them.

However, the effect of wearing the hijab on the perception of Muslim women within a Muslim country is far from understood. Of particular importance is that the hijab is worn as a symbol of cultural identity, piety, and modesty, and Muslim women within a Muslim country are encouraged to wear this head-covering when in public as a means of limiting their physical attractiveness to men. Indeed, the way in which a woman wears a hijab is widely regarded as a public display of the depth of her faith and the extent to which she is intending to restrict her attractiveness. But despite these intentions, the effect of the hijab on how others perceive the facial attractiveness of the person wearing this item remains to be fully determined.

Most non Muslims fail to understand that females taking up hijab nowadays are the educated lot, who no longer can be told what to wear. And the head gear is neither just about to assert their Islamic identity. It's about Psyche and difference in behavioural patterns of the two sexes, which Quran explains very well.



In Psychology Today, Dr Stephen Snyder, MD, states that the erotic minds of men and women are as different as night and day. Men are more visually oriented and they automatically respond to sexually arousing images and attractive body parts. Women's desire tends to be more emotionally driven. There is a great deal of difference between male and female libido too. Most men are preheated i.e. they just feel horny and go after sex. Women warm up to sex slowly, desire being the result and not the cause. In case of women it is not to have orgasm, rather to improve intimacy.

Now keeping these differences in mind lets peep through a male brain when it looks at an attractive woman. Through interplay of various neurotransmitters and Hormones, he gets horny and immediately wants to jump to bed. If these woman isn't available, he either has to repress his feelings, or to masturbates, both of which again may lead to behavioral, psychological and physical issues. If a woman deliberately makes an attempt to show off her assets so as to titillate or seduce a man, the effect of repression is compounded.

Quran has therefore mentioned in Chapter 24, Surah Noor verse 30 that "believing men should lower their gaze and guard their modesty" i.e. to not look at temptatious content, which might lead him to sin. This is the first command, regarding modesty, to a male. This verse clearly implies that women are not subordinate to men. If 100% males were able to follow that, women might not have required wearing Hijab at all. But we know that it is not possible.

Larry Young and Brian Alexander in their book "The Chemistry Between Us: Love Sex and Science of Attraction" states that male fetish to female physical revelation is biological and deeply ingrained in male brain and its associated with the secretion of Oxytocin, the love hormone and Dopamine. Therefore Quran next addresses women in the verse 31 to practice hijab of eyes, to cover their bosom using a khumur and to wear loose outer garment jalabib, so as to conceal their curves and not give undesirous attention to a man so as not to arouse him and not being viewed as an object of desire.

It can be concluded by quoting "there can be no compulsion in religion" verse 256, Surah Al Baqarah, Chapter 2. Women cannot be forced and it's their free will to wear what they want.

About the Author: Dr. Lubna Kamal is Associate professor at State JLN Homeopathy Medical College, Kanpur and Member, Executive Committee, IMPAR, New Delhi.