

Worldly Portent of Face Uncovering and Women's Dilapidation: A Comparative Study in Context with Quranic Injunctions

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ABSTRACT:

Assyrian Text is witnessed that women used veil for face covering with an additional piece of cloth about 13 centuries before the Christ. Then history of mankind displays veil in Egyptian society that was transparent and normally white in color. We found a handful evidences in Greek literature regarding veiling of face. History travels to Anglo-Saxon age and witnessed that women used veil to cover their hair of head. The head covering shows a biological reasoning also. Roman culture was the culture of fantasy, the veils were full of colorful, and multi designed veil arranged by flowers and different beautiful substantial. In Roman, veil developed from only head covering to shoulder covering and then from head to back covering. British regime also enrich the history of veil. There was beautiful designed, decorated with net clothes and covered with beautiful embroidery. The veil was empowered by elite community in England. Later it was popularized as a fashion in colonial communities. Through this thorough historic discussion, it is approved that veil used by women has a long history as the human history. In religious context, Hinduism is understood as the oldest religion on globe, it is found that in Harappan times about 2500 BC, Aryan women used to wear full body covering single cloth from head covering to foot, which was preached in Hindu religious book Vedas also, later the single cloth was known as Sari. And after the introduction of Christianity, Veil was introduced as a compulsory symbol of religion. Veil of whole body with strict rules can be seen in the form of Christian nun. Later, Islam explained veil of women in public as an obligatory sign. Islam is the youngest religion on earth, it was published rapidly and the implication of its rules are practiced prominently. After a thorough historic and religious discussion, it if proved in this article that veil was a compulsory part of human society and religions before Islam had also preached for veiling.

Key Words: Face veil, Women veil, historic veil, religious veil, history of veil.

Introduction:

As we peep through the history of humankind, the earliest witness found that woman used veil (face covering, additionally, to the full body covering dresses) is in an Assyrian text of approximately 13 century Before Christ.¹ It is originated that the respectable women of the community used the veil during public appearance. The

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second evidence found from Egyptian community. After the influence of Islam, women of Egypt used gauze veil, which was transparent and white.² We find some Greek literature, which described that Persian elite class and women of higher status used veil (face covering).³ It is also find that Greek women used linen veil over their heads.

In 1175, Anglo-Saxon and Norman women used veil that covered their all hair of head. Asides this in Tudor regime about 1485, this veil became less important due the popularity of a hood used as overhead veil.⁴

Rome is famous all over the world for its fantasy. It is also seemed in veil collection because Roman women used beautiful veil that was arrange by *Palliolum* (a bunch of flowers stitched with a piece of cloth) over their heads falling on their faces until shoulders.

In England, we found veil of shawl as a fashion all over the British community. In the reign of Empress Elizabeth I, the black crepe veil was especially wore during mourning that is still in practice.⁵ Nuns and nurses used veil from very early time. In the start of 20th century, veil in British colonies got a great variety and popularized in adjacent localities very rapidly.⁶

In 1925, a wave of unveiling started, which had many bases, i.e. political, social mixing up, economical downfall of women after war, etc that is out of discussion of this article. The removal movement of veil prevails all over the world in context with media campaigns of products due to economical aggression, personal affairs matters, Miss-World competitions, Women's extra freedom and huge push towards participation of women in social life.

This movement of removing veil stuck against the Islamic Fundamentalists movement of accepting veil in 1980.⁷ These contradictory situations created heavy waves of discussions about veil and enhance its importance again in world communities.

Religious Concept;

In Hinduism:

Indian people wore cotton clothes commonly. It was Indian surface, in Harappan times, around 2500 Before Christ, where cotton was cultivated. From the period of Aryan in India, women used to wear Saris all over the India. Sari is the word of Sanskrit language, which means 'a cloth'. Sari is also mentioned in the religious books of Hindu like Vedas of about 600 Before Christ.⁸

After the invasion of Islam, it was the period around 1000 After Death of Christ, when the fashion of Persia entered into the India. Then Indian men started to use Pajama, which is sewed clothes of two legs in the place of *Deotee*, which was only a rectangle piece of cloth, being rapped around the waist. Besides this, women of India started to use Churidar trousers.⁹

In Christianity

In many traditional Eastern Orthodox Churches, and in some very conservative Protestant churches as well, the custom continues of women covering their heads in church (or even when praying privately at home).¹⁰ In 1960, it was commonly practiced that women wore scarf cap to cover their heads during ceremonies of Roman Catholic

Church. It is also find that Traditional Catholics churches also maintained these practices. In Eastern Orthodoxy and in the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church, both nuns and monk use a veil called an Epanokamelavkion.¹¹ In Greek, kamilavkion, epanokamel-avkion and kamilavkion were used for religious practices.¹² In the Russian tradition, clergy of all ranks wear a Kamilavka. The Patriarch of Moscow wears a white Koukoulion, a conical head covering with a monastic veil.¹³

In Islam

Islam declared that Muslim man and woman should wear modest dress as revealed in Qura'n and preached by Muhammad Prophet Sallallohu Alahe WaAlehe Wasalam.

In Germany, Turkish migrants may wear the headscarf as a sign of pride and rejection of assimilation.¹⁴ After the revolution in Iran, government of Iran ruled out that women in this country have to wear loose fitting coats or cloaks over their daily clothes during the public procession.¹⁵ First Quranic version is explained as below:

"قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَرَىٰ لَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّ اللَّهِ حَسْبًا لِّمَا يَصْنَعُونَ" ¹⁶

"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, Allah is All-Aware of what they do."¹⁷

"قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ مِنْهُنَّ جُيُوبَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِزَابَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيَّ عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَصْرَبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتَوَوُّؤًا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيَّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ" ¹⁸

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.) and to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their rights hands possess or old male servants who lack vigor, or small children who have no sense of the same of sex. A let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful."

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا"

"And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification."

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِئِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا"

“O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.”

Islam gives clear verdictions to Muslim men and women to observe veil and full body covering dresses in community. Qura’s and Sunnah provided clear verses and preaching regarding veil. History of humanity tells that Iranian, Judaists and Christs had women’s veil practices in their societies before Islam.¹⁸ It is found that veil, especially women’s veil, generally full body covering dress and especially face covering, is derived from the preaching of religion and sayings of holy prophets.

About the tradition and verdictions of Jude religions and society, it is observed that if a women following Jesus religion disobeyed the law of veil, then it is the right of her husband to divorce her with paying the right that she had.¹⁹

Present World Phenomenon Regarding Veil:

Europe

Frantini, Franco declared in 2006 from the plate form of European Commission, that he did not favour a ban on the Burqa.²⁰ Tony Blair, Prime Minister of Great British said in 2006, about veil that "mark of separation"²¹

Turkey

Turkey declared itself as a secular state. Intellectual thinkers of Turkey made a definition of secularism so the state ban veil in educational institutions. Due to this ban, thousands of women protested and have been arrested due to no taking off their veils.²² The ban was first in place during the 1980 military coup, but the law was strengthened more in 1997.²³ The ban has been highly controversial since its implementation,²⁴ On February 7, 2008, the Turkish Parliament passed an amendment to the constitution, allowing women to wear the headscarf in Turkish universities.²⁵

This amendment faced again a sheer protest from the communities of secularists. So in June 2008, Court of constitution of Turkey again imposed the ban.²⁶

Belgium

In Belgian, face covering veil and full body covering including face and hand like Burqa is ban by the municipalities.²⁷ It is just due to identification of persons in public places. The Chamber Committee of Belgian constituted the ban on 31 March 2010 that now women can wear Burqa in public places national widely.²⁸

Denmark

In Denmark, a decision was put force that judges of courts are not allowed to wear any religious symbols like star, moon, crucifixes, head scarves or kippahs during court session, which can be effected on their decisions.²⁹

France

Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France, announced on 22 June 2009 that burqas are "not welcome" in France, commenting that "In our country, we cannot accept that women be prisoners behind a screen, cut off from all social life, deprived of all identity,"³⁰

Germany

No woman can drive if she is wearing Burqa or Chador covering her face throughout the country. The Transport Ministry of the Federal Government of Germany also confirmed that this ban is already in practice.³¹

Italy

There are many municipalities that imposed the ban on Burqa in Italy due a strong campaign was launched by the anti-Burqa associations.³²

Kosovo

Although, a huge protest by the 5,000 peoples were processed but Kosovo government notified ban on headscarf in schools in 2009.³³

Netherlands

In November 2006, Rita Verdonk, the Minister of Immigration and Integration, announced that government is going to ban on face covering clothing.³⁴ After the election of 2006, new Assembly did not take any decision about ban on veil or release on ban.³⁵ A February 2007 opinion poll indicated that 66 % support a ban and 32 % oppose it.³⁶

Norway

There is currently no ban on Islamic dress in Norway, but Progress Party proposed a ban on Burqa and Niqaab in public places in Norwegian Parliament.³⁷ Labour Party also supported the ban before the final proposal was approved.

Minister of Justice Knut Storberget had earlier claimed there to be a "great danger"³⁸ that a general ban on "wholly covering clothing" could conflict with Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.³⁹

Spain

In Spain, there is no law, which restricts clothing under Islamic phenomena. There are some city governments like Barcelona and adjacent have imposed ban on veils for face covering in public.

In Spanish Parliament, there were 183 members, who opposed the proposal of ban on Burqa in contrast with 162 members in favour.⁴⁰ A 2010 survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that a clear majority of Spanish people supports banning the Burka.⁴¹

United Kingdom

In England, a heavy and vital controversial debate about veil started in 2006 when Lord Jack Straw and Secretary for Justice of State initiated a national level discussion. It

was really forced when Straw commented forcefully about veil saying “Yes. It needs to be made clear I am not talking about being proscriptive but with all the caveats,”⁴² After this critical situation, a wave of controversial debates started all over the country. Public filed cases in the courts of law. An important and popular case was of Shabina Begum. In this case, Judicial Committee verdict that there is freedom of manifestation of one’s religion could not be restricted.”⁴³

Another very important case was of Ayesha Azmi. She was a teacher at a school. She wanted to use veil in school during duty but the school forbid her to use the veil (face covering) during duty. She filed a case in the court of Employment Tribunal. Minister was also summoned, who favoured the school. This case was put before the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, for comments. He said the veil is a “Mark of separation”. Furthermore the Minister of the government, Woolas, fired this case saying that the teacher should be dismissed. He commented that if the teacher is using veil (face covering), she is “denying the right of children to a full education”. At end, the school dismissed Azmi.⁴⁴

A survey institution in England named, YouGov, conducted a survey about veil (face covering) during the public procession. In the result of this survey, it was declared that 67% people of England viewed that face veil in public is outlawed.⁴⁵

In this detailed discussion, it is evident that people of England, deny to accept the face veil only. The full body covering dress or upper additional clothes was not prohibited or unacceptable. This face covering is only unacceptable because of problem in identification and a fear that more people should not follow this practice in public so that publically identification would not be problem.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan was eye-catching country in previous decade. Under the government of Talibaan, Burqa for women was compulsory. In Afghanistan, veil is obligatory from the time of existence. It is tradition, culture and stamped by religion in Afghanistan.⁴⁶ In this issue, general statesmen and politician criticize Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan that he was compromising on veil issue especially and related women’s rights and lulling the insurgents about it.⁴⁷

Albania

Women are not restricted in Albania to wear or remove veil.

Bangladesh

Veil practice is commonly seen in rural areas. Some areas in urban localities are also observed. The government of Bangladesh has not particular laws about veil. Veil is also not encouraged by the government not rejected. It is totally upon the people of Bangladesh that they observe veil of face or full body in public.

Egypt

Egypt has a rich history regarding veil. From ancient times, Egyptian women used veil not only for full body but also on face also. The Egyptian people introduced different

Type, style and fashion veil.

New York Times published that in Egypt, there are “90% women who use headscarf.”⁴⁸ Aside this Egypt has also a daring history to remove veil in public also.

It was 1923, when Hoda was the first woman, who removed her veil in public. This was the start of this removing veil movement.⁴⁹ Gradually, Egyptian community embraces women unveiling situation.

In 1958, United Press printed an article with the headlines “The veil is unknown here”⁵⁰ Religiously, Salafist are very active in Egypt. So government is not forcing to remove veil or adopt it in public.⁵¹ An important fatwa declared by the Head of the Al-Azhar University, Egypt, Muhammad Tantawi got a crucial status in Egypt. He declared that face-covering veil is not an Islamic prediction. It is just cultural element. Islam does not preach face covering in public but full body covering. He virtually pointed out a girl student to remove her face veil during a class session.⁵²

Government put a ban on face-veil during exams especially in 2009, this is just for identification of student.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, there is not obligatory but totally optional that women wear hear-covering or not.⁵³ There is a common thinking in Indonesia that when a girl wears Hijaab in public, she is considered as “a good Muslim girl”.⁵⁴ The girls in Indonesia used veil in public with the concept that low mental approached men in public would not tease them. There is only one province, Aceh, where Shariah laws are active. They passed Shariah law No. 18/2001.⁵⁵ In this province, the veil is mandatory.

Iran

Iranian government has passed law about veil in public. No woman can walk through public without full body covering clothes or head covering. The Qameez (long shirts down to hips) and pants are come for both male and female but extra for female, they use an over-coat of thick stuff that are commonly loose-fitting and a headscarf.⁵⁶

Internationally, there is an impression that Iran has modern veiling system, which is very broad meaning in applying. One the other hand, a head of Islamic Movement from Turkey visited Iran and said that veil in Iran is "catastrophic".⁵⁷ His comments were that no woman are abiding the veil law, i.e. wearing of Burqa or Chaadar.

So there are contradictions of two thoughts about veil. Is veil mean wearing of Burqa or having long cloak or mean wearing such clothes, which cover all body ups and downs from the sight of public? This discussion has sufficient evidences in next chapters.

Jordan

Jordan is an Islamic State. In 1980, the use of headscarf increased notably. It is surveyed that 60% women are using headscarf.⁵⁸ This increases and decreases of use of veil elements in public in not religious effect. It's just fashion or culture or need of time. The religious affect this that what is being used and is it covering head or body or not?

The Jordanian women are using colorful and stylish headscarf with western style of clothes. So this is a new phenomenon that head is covered and body is seen able for its ups and downs.

Kuwait

Kuwait is also an Islamic country. In October 2009, Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Awqaf circulated a Fatwa that Hijaab is compulsory for Muslim women.⁵⁹ This Fatwa received a heavy support from the members of Parliament concerning to Islamist and Salafist groups.⁶⁰

Lebanon

Lebanon is an Islamic State. Veil practice in Lebanon increased in 1980, when Israel invaded in it.⁶¹ Lebanon has a liberal approach but its foundations are purely Islamic. The women of Lebanon are not frequently using Niqaab but they use regular Burqa and Hijaab in public.⁶²

Malaysia

Malaysia is an Islamic country. The women of Malaysia are using veil clothes, which is called Tudung. Tudung is compulsory in public especially in Masjid not only for Muslim women but also for non-Muslim women.⁶³

Headscarves are allowed in schools, colleges and universities and other government departments. Aside by this, full face Niqaab is forbidden due the difficulty of identification. Supreme Court of Malaysia decided a case with the comments that Niqaab veil "has nothing to do with the constitutional right to profess her Muslim religion."⁶⁴

Morocco

In Morocco, Law forbids the veil. The government ruled that headscarf is not permitted in public places especially with face covering veil.⁶⁵

Pakistan

Pakistan is an Islamic State with the ideology and declaration in its Constitution as an Islamic State. There is not law or ruling about enforcing Hijaab or Burqa, although Hijaab is known as a symbol of modesty and chastity in society.

In rural areas of Punjab, approximately in many parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhawa, and Azad Kashmir, women wears Burqa and Chador.⁶⁶ Face covering is also permitted but it is not allowed or favoured in government institutions.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is known as the center of Islamic world and has a quite vital place among the Muslim World. The Saudi Niqaab usually leaves a long open slot for the eyes; the slot is held together by a string or narrow strip of cloth.⁶⁷

The women in Saudi Arabia use loose fitting clothes and additionally open sleeve Abayah to cover their entire body from head to toe. They normally remained open their faces but a little number of women used to cover their faces also, which is permissible.

Syria

Syria is also an Islamic country. The Minister of Education, Government of the Syria announced that full-face veils are ban in colleges and universities except other Hijaab are permitted. She further announced that this type of veil counter the secularism and the educational principles of Syria.

Tunisia

Tunisia is also banning face-covering veil since 1981. Government of Tunisia announced that the employees who insist to wear the face covering Niqaab will lose their jobs. Tunisia encouraged their female and male community to "wear modest dress in line with Tunisian traditions"⁶⁸

In 2006, Tunisia government enforced this rule by the police. Police stopped the women in streets and ask them to remove their Niqaab and also discourage them to wear it again. Government clarified that headscarf is a form of sectarian so it is being prohibited in the country.

Cyprus

Cyprus is a Christian country. Muslims and other religions are also living there. Muslim and Cypriot females use headscarves. Women use Mandili, a kind of head-covering veil during outside home activities.

In 1769, Cypriot women covered their faces, during outside processions, with a corner of their headscarf, adjusting it across their nose and mouth. In Cyprus, men also cover their heads with Keffiyeh, which is a "form of turban." It is also written by Heodotus as their "oriental" customs compared to Greeks.⁶⁹

Many universities of Cyprus tried to adopt the regulations regarding ban of veil but Higher Education Council of Cyprus commented that they are not obliged to follow these regulations.

Israel

Israel is a Jesus country. It is totally based on religious foundations and movements. In 2010, a bill to ban the face-covering veils in Israel was proposed by some Law formers and women's right activists.

Hanna Kehat, criticized this ban proposal saying "'". Fashion also often oppresses women with norms which lead to anorexia."⁷⁰ Eilat Maoz commented about the ban as "a joke" that would constitute "racism". This situation clears that in Israel, veil is permitted and practices and clearly understand it as a positive and right element of society.

Palestinian Areas

In Palestinian Areas, which is not restricted in a very little area, where Hammas is administrating, have a clear version about veil. They said that women should follow the Muslim tradition strictly such as to cover her face.

Their vision is that women should be beaten if she do not follow the rules of government. In this Gaza Strip, women can wean dress of herself choice but that must be under cover of Islamic traditions and preaching.

Canada

Canada is a secular country with a maximum number of populations is Christian. Approximately major religions are being practiced in Canada. Regarding veil practice, the Muslim Canadian Congress said the “garments covering faces are not concern to Islamic veil, it is pre-Muslim Arabic tradition.”

Farzana Hassan pursued saying that “Qura’n does not insist women to wear face-cover”.⁷¹ On the other hand, Asmahan Mansour, a soccer player was expelled from the team during a match when she was wearing a headscarf.

United States

Mona Cheren, a commentator of National Review said, “a ban on Islamic clothing is considered presumptively.”⁷² Barak Obama, President of United States of America, spoke to Muslim World in Cairo, in June 2009, "to avoid dictating what clothes a Muslim women should wear".He also commented that "hostility" towards Muslims in "the pretense of liberalism".⁷³

A survey done by Pew Global Attitudes Project searched out that majority of US citizens are opposing the ban on Islamic clothing.

Mexico

Mexico is a mix-populated country. Government of Mexico did not impose any ban on veil. Muslim women wears clothes as they like such as Hijaab and Chador etc.

Results:

History of veil depicts that Greek, Iranians, Judaists and Hindus had a long tradition of veiling. Presently, almost all countries of the world have no objection or judicial restriction to cover body from head to toe. Some countries ban the veil for face covering, which is also not compulsory in all religions of the world even in Islam a great number of adherents do not believe it compulsory to veil the face.

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