

THE PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE DRESS FOR A MUSLIM WOMAN

1. As regards the dress for Muslim women, Allah says in **Q (24:31)**;

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their chastity; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what is apparent of; that they should draw veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers ... and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments...”

The prophet PBUH said; *“When a girl reaches the menstrual age, it is not proper that anything should remain exposed except this and this. He pointed to the face and hands.” (Abu Dawud)*

2. From the above verse, Islam holds women in very high esteem and the Islamic rules of covering are intended to protect and guard her dignity and honour.
3. A Muslim woman is asked never to display her beauty or figure or appear in an undressed manner to people she can get married to, except her father, husband, near relatives and the like.
4. In all, the prophet’s wives and those of the believers are enjoined to dress in a proper manner so as to avoid any danger of attracting evil minds towards them.
5. In order for them to be protected from the bitter anger of Allah and to minimize temptation from the opposite sex, the following dress rules have been prescribed for them:
6. A woman must cover the whole of her body except the hands and the face. However, the extent of the covering depends on the environment e.g if the woman is in her house or her father’s house with people she cannot marry, she can dress in a simple way.

When going outside to the public or to meet a visitor or to perform prayer, she is supposed to cover the whole of her body except the hands and the face.

7. She must put on loose clothes so that the swells of her body are not exposed i.e he should avoid tight dresses that can reveal her natural beauty like bust line, buttocks, thighs, breasts, waist and others.
8. She must not put on thin or light clothes that can expose the colour or beauty of her body skin. The dress should be thick and relatively dark to avoid attracting the opposite gender.

The Prophet PBUH said; *“In the later generation of my Ummah, there will be women who will be dressed but naked ... curse them because they are truly cursed.”*

9. The dress of a woman should not resemble that of a male costume. The prophet PBUH is reported to have cursed women who dress like men e.g putting male trousers, shirts, caps and jackets.

10. Her dress should not resemble the costume for non-believers. This requirement is derived from the general rule of sharia that Muslims have their distinct personality and they differentiate their practices and appearance from those of unbelievers.

11. In addition, her dress should not be a dress of fame, pride and vanity so as to attract the admiration of others. Fancy dresses are forbidden in Islam.

The prophet PBUH said; *“Whoever wears a dress of fame in this world, Allah will cloth him in a dress of humiliation on the day of judgement ...”*

12. The overall appearance of a Muslim woman must be average so as not to be too beautiful or attractive to avoid capturing the attention of the opposite sex.

13. Women are also asked to lower their gaze and to avoid lustful looks on people of the opposite sex. This is intended to protect and preserve their beauty.

14. A woman is permitted to put on silk and jewelry or ornaments. They are also free to put on gold.

15. A woman is allowed to braid their hair as long as it is to bring beauty or admiration of her husband.

16. Women are allowed to dye their hair but it is undesirable for them to put holes in their tongues or eye bows or tattoos on their bodies.

17. Any addition of hair, real or artificial, to one’s hair such as wearing wigs, braids, hair pieces and the like is not allowed. The prophet PBUH termed it as false or forged hair.

18. Muslim women are not allowed to put on long-heeled shoes because while walking, they can stamp their feet and attract the attention of the opposite sex.

Allah says in **Q (24:31)**; *“... and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments...”*

19. It is not allowed for a Muslim woman to remove her eye-bows and replace them with pencil colours unless it is done to please her husband and if he approves it.

20. The dress for a Muslim woman should not be perfumed. This prohibition applies both the body and the clothes.