

Why is My Hijab, Your Problem?

Aisha Aijaz



I am a woman, not a sexualized commodity; I am a human being just like you are.

I am a Hijabi and Hijab is my identity and my ideology.

I wasn't a Hijabi by birth, nor did it come from an oppressing 'Mullah' father or brother. Oh no! No one can force me to do something which I do not want to do. It only came when I came to explore the message of God which I had been reading since childhood in Arabic and never knew what it meant as it's not my first language. It started to make sense when I decoded it into a language which I could understand; Thanks to those scholars who made it a mission of their lives to transliterate the word of God for our convenience.

The importance of observing hijab for me suddenly became connected to my belief in God and the question I asked myself often.

"I believe in God and His word, I love the Prophet (SAW) and for me the characters and dress code of Aisha and Fatima (Peace be upon them) were role models, then how come whenever I see a Hijabi, I relate it to backwardness."

All these claims don't fit into one frame and there began the war of ideas in me:

"You tell me Hijab is backward and you still are a proud non-apologetic Muslim, it can't be true!"

It's a part of my personality just like a **Jewish kippah** and **Christian and jewish 'hijabs'**, my message of peace that I wear with pride. It's about letting the world know, not to mess around with me as I (try to) keep my chastity and obey my Lord.

I am no slave of the corporate capitalistic industry which is bent upon publishing a naked woman to sell everything from a cigarette to a racing car.

It gives me liberation; freedom from being judged on a scale of inches, skin colour and figure details. I am free from the shackles of man, eyes of the evil world who evaluate women according to the

length of her skirt and depth of her neckline; intelligence and character being secondary. (Ask a competent man who was rejected by a multimedia company in an interview and her beautiful and sexy but dumb counterpart got the job)

With this piece of cloth on my head, I feel empowered as a woman. But a section of our society seems to have a problem with it. Some self-proclaimed Pakistani liberals labelled Hijab as a "dinner table napkin" or "solution of a bad hair day", what is the world scared of, I wonder? Think!

If you think my hijab tapered my IQ and threw me into the desert of Arabia some 1400 years behind, I seriously doubt yours. Remember how the prehistoric man lived?

What was the killer of **Marwah Al Sherbini** scared of? Was this 32-year old, **three month pregnant pharmacist**, a loving wife and a mother of a two year old, a threat to the world? Oh, mind you she was called a whore, a terrorist and stabbed 18 times in the German court and killed.

Was **Shaima Alawadi** a hazard? The loving mother killed and turned into a pool of blood in her house in America with a note next to her saying: "*Go back to your country, you terrorist.*", was she a terrorist? No; her killers were! Racists and myopic terrorists scared of a defenceless woman with a piece of cloth on her head.

Are Hijabis the biggest threat in the French and other European societies that are banning hijab? Think!

Oh you thought I don't have a choice? No! I have one and hijab is my choice just as obeying Allah and disobeying in rebellion is my birth right due to being a human being and I choose the former.

And in case you didn't notice, some very successful **women in the West** are turning to Islam and **opting for covering their bodies** with modesty and have found peace.

I quote **Yvonne Ridley**, a journalist who reverted to Islam after she explored the Quran as a promise she made to Taliban, her captors in Afghanistan.

'My dress tells you that I am a Muslim and that I expect to be treated respectfully, much as a Wall Street banker would say that a business suit defines him as an executive to be taken seriously. And, especially among converts to the faith like me, the attention of men who confront women with inappropriate, leering behaviour is not tolerable.'

Think rationally and decide! Why is my Hijab, a problem for the world!

(With Thanks of The News/Daily Jang London)