Modesty and Veil in Divine Religions

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Chastity, modesty, and piety are promoted by all divine religions. From the viewpoint of psychologists tendency to covering is an inborn drive. This very issue causes women to preserve their hijab and values. Today hijab is one of the principal and logical options of women in various societies. One of the reasons for women’s choice of hijab in the communities where unconditional relations are common is to have immunity and to preserve themselves from the evil looks of promiscuous men. The more chaste a woman, the more will she be respected, and the more safely and securely will she be in society. In this article we are going to have a glimpse at Purity and hijab in divine religions. In divine religions, concerning hijab we read:

O Prophet! Tell your daughters and the women of the faithful to draw closely over themselves their Chadors when going out. That makes it likely for them to be recognized and not be troubled, and Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. (The Holy Qur’an Al-Ahzab 59)

“Tell the faithful men to cast down their looks and to guard their private parts. That is more decent for them. Allah is indeed well aware of what they do. And tell the faithful women to cast down their looks and to guard their private parts, and not to display their charms, except for what is outward, and let them draw their scarves over their bosoms, and not display their charms except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband’s fathers, or their sons, or their sister’s sons, or their bother’s sons, or their husband’s sons, ….And let them not thump their feet to make known their hidden ornaments. Rally to Allah in repentance, O faithful, so that you may be felicitous.” The Holy Qur’an, Al-Nur, 30,31

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies, the heart of her husband doth safely trust in
her so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellent them all. Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain. But a woman feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

Old Testament of Solomon 31/10-13

“You have heard that it was said by them, of old time, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart…..” New Testament St. Matthew 5/27,28

Zoroastrianism is based on three tenets “Good Thought, Good Deed and Good Word”. As Zoroastrian priest Azar-Bad-Mehrsepand said, “...and you shall not choose an evil man to your accompaniment.”

Hijab in Religions

The religion of Islam establishes its rules basically on the human being’s nature. Islam emphasizes not only the respecting chastity for both male and female, but also protects the limitations in the relationship between intimates and non-intimates. Wearing hijab for a woman is obligatory in contact with strangers.

On the other hand, Islam prohibits going on extremes in relationship between males and females. It doesn’t recommend giving up sexual desires, only calls its female followers not to do undisciplined deeds.

Women were not particular about covering their bodies completely in the ignorance age, and they tied the scarves at the back of the heads so their ears, necks and chests were revealed.

There are lots of narrations from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Imams (AS) about the importance of hijab and chastity in Islam. All of the Islamic schools of thought agree on the importance of wearing hijab by women and have a unique opinion on the issue.

Hijab in Judaism

The history of respecting piety and hijab by the women of Jewish prophets and noblemen is seen clearly in Torah and Talmud as disregarding piety resulted in affliction on them. Historians emphasized on propagating hijab among Jewish women during history. According to Jewish rules disregarding public piety caused tortures, and hijab was one of the necessities of married women.

Renaissance, social evolution in Europe and running away from religion in western countries weakened rituals including virtues hijab. Jewish women impacted by social scenes of renaissance era some of them quitted their hijab and like Hassidic sect wore wigs for covering their necks.

Hijab in Christianity

Christianity certifies hijab as a usual affair like Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Christian religion not only changed the ritual rules of Judaism about hijab, but also went a step forward and made celibacy a holistic job contrary to having family and marriage in Jewish religion. Women evoked severely to respect virtues principles and avoid toileting in order not to provide manifestation of sexual desires.

Christian trainings verily emphasizes on leaving all worldly desires and lusts. Manifestation of monastic life dates back to 4th and 5th centuries, so nuns serving people with complete modesty dress and hijab. After Renaissance, the role of religion faded away. Then respect towards religious rites and wearing hijab were declined and Industrial Revolution accelerated these changes. In recent centuries regarding hijab and modesty have lost their importance among Christians, because of the reason is manifestation of secularism and modernism.

Hijab in Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism puts a great emphasis on women’s modesty and respect. Covering faces and hiding hair were common acts among Iranian women especially aristocratic families which distinguished them from lower class families.

The main principles of this religion are; ‘Good Thought, Good Deed and Good Word’ so it invites people to chastity and piety.

There is almost no picture of women in ancient Iranian paintings and carvings. Although women were heads of family and good housekeepers but their honorable personality and piety were respected, and protected from any single injuries by covering their bodies.