

Is Women's Head-Covering a Law from the Koran or a Man-made Law?

By Dr. Nader Pourhassan

Women's head covering is a man-made law and has no root in the books of God, the Bible and the Koran. I will examine the question by first showing what the Koran and the Bible (in specific, the New Gospel) has to say about these man-made laws in general.

Most of the laws in today's world of Islam are man-made and have no basis in the Koran. This was also the case concerning the Jewish religion at the time of Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke to the religious leaders concerning man-made laws:

Bible-Matthew 15:3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? ... **6** ..." Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

And even 600 years after Jesus Christ, the Jews kept following the man-made laws, and that prompted the Koran to talk about this in detail:

Koran 2:101 Now that a messenger from God has come to them, and even though he proves and confirms their own scripture, some followers of the scripture (Jews and Christians) disregard God's scripture behind their backs, as if they never had any scripture.

The Koran gives specific examples of some of the man-made laws that were circulating among the Jews. The ordinary Jews thought of those laws as God's laws, which the Koran spoke against:

Koran 3:93 All food used to be lawful for the Children of Israel, until Israel imposed certain prohibitions on themselves before the Torah was sent down. Say, "Bring the Torah and read it, if you are truthful."

The Koran specifically lays the blame on the shoulders of the religious leaders, and Jesus Christ did the same. These are the same religious leaders that enforce the rule of women's head-covering. Please note the verses from the Koran and the Gospel in regards to this sinful act:

Koran 2:78 Among them are illiterates who do not know the scripture, except through hearsay, then assume that they know it. **79** Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say: This is from God, so that they may take for it a small price; therefore woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.

Koran 2:169 He only commands you to commit evil and indecency, and to say about God what you do not know.

Koran 7:162 But the evil ones among them changed the word from that which had been given them so we sent on them a plague from heaven because they were wicked.

Koran 3:77 As for those who trade away God's covenant, and their obligations, for a cheap price, they receive no share in the Hereafter. God will not speak to them, nor look at them, on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. They have incurred a painful retribution. **78** Among them are those who twist their tongues to imitate the scripture, that you may think it is from the scripture, when it is not from the scripture, and they claim that it is from God, when it is not from God. Thus, they utter lies and attribute them to God, knowingly.

Bible-Luke 11:46 And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers (religious leaders)! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. **47** Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. **48** In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. **49** Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' **50** that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, **51** from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. **52** "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

With the above verses clearly showing that God forbids His followers from following any commandment but His, let us examine the validity of the law that forces women to wear head coverings.

Examining the laws of the Koran and the Bible regarding the head covering will yield zero verses where God commanded women to cover their heads; however, both books speak of God's commandment concerning adultery and covering one's nakedness.

Let us first look at the verses that forbid adultery in the Koran as well as in the Bible.

Bible-Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery.

Koran 17:32 You shall not commit adultery; surely it is an indecency, and an evil behavior.

Both books have many more verses condemning adultery (**Koran** 4:15, 24:3-15, 24:26, ..., **Bible**-Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:18, Proverbs 5:1-7, ...). So let us examine both books about what they have to say regarding this sinful act:

Bible-Leviticus 20:10 'The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. **11** The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. **12** If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood shall be upon them. **13** If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. **14** If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. **15** If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. **16** If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood is upon them.

Koran 4:22 Do not marry the women who were previously married to your fathers - existing marriages are exempted and shall not be broken - this surely is indecent and hateful, and it is an evil way. **23** Prohibited for you (in marriage) are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, the sisters of your fathers, the sisters of your mothers, the daughters of your brother, the daughters of your sister, your nursing mothers, the girls who nursed from the same woman as you, the mothers of your wives, the daughters of your wives with whom you have consummated the marriage - if the marriage has not been consummated, you may marry the daughter. Also prohibited for you are the women who were married to your genetic sons. Also, you shall not be married to two sisters at the same time - but do not break up existing marriages. God is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

The above verses clearly forbid the marriage of a man with a certain group of women. So to prevent the first type of adultery, you just don't marry with that group of women. However, to prevent the second type, the Bible and the Koran talk about coverings for men and women so they don't fall to temptations of the evil act of adultery. The Bible gives the reasoning why the Children of Israel were forbidden from this act of adultery:

Bible-Leviticus 18:26 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you **27** (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), **28** lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. **29** For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people.):

So to keep the member of a society from committing an act of adultery, both the Koran and the Bible state God's commandment regarding covering nakedness, which applies to men and women:

Bible-Leviticus 18:4 You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. **5** You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord. **6** None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his **nakedness**: I am the Lord. **7** The **nakedness** of your father or the **nakedness** of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her **nakedness**. **8** The **nakedness** of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's **nakedness**. **9** The **nakedness** of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their **nakedness** you shall not uncover. **10** The **nakedness** of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their **nakedness** you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own **nakedness**. **11** The **nakedness** of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father — she is your sister — you shall not uncover her **nakedness**. **12** You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father. **13** You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. **14** You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. **15** You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your daughter-in-law — she is your son's wife — you shall not uncover her **nakedness**. **16** You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your brother's wife; it is your brother's **nakedness**. **17** You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her **nakedness**. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness. **18** Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her **nakedness** while the other is alive.

This sacredness of covering nakedness is also explained in the Koran:

Koran 23:5 And who guard their **private parts**,

Koran 24:31 And say to the believing women ... and guard their **private parts** ...

Koran 33:36 Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the men who guard their **private parts** and the women who guard their **private parts**...

Koran 70:30 And those who guard their **private parts**,

The above clearly indicates that the nakedness (referenced in the Koran as the private parts) must be covered. This started with Adam and Eve sinning in the Garden, and therefore their nakedness was revealed, and they covered it with the leaves of a fig tree:

Bible-Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they **were naked**; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Koran 20:120 But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, "O Adam! shall I lead thee to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?" **121** In the result, they both (Adam and Eve) ate of the tree, and so **their nakedness** appeared to them: they began to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the Garden: thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced.

As a suggestion to avoid temptation, which might lead to adultery, the Koran and the Bible suggested modest clothing for men and women. However, both books also give another solution to adultery, and that is not to allow your eyes to look at each other's nakedness and lust over it.

Bible-Proverbs 11:6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the unfaithful will be caught by their lust.

Koran 24:30 Say to the believing men to subdue their eyes, and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely God is Aware of what they do. **31** And say to the believing women to subdue their eyes and guard their private parts ...

Now eyes that sin are explained in more detail in the book that is known as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament books and the Koran (fulfillment of the Koran is explained in www.christianmuslim.org), the New Gospel of Jesus Christ:

Bible-Matthew 5:27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' **28** But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **29** If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Bible-Matthew 6:22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. **23** But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

It is ironic that the Koran never says anything about women's head covering, but actually states that God made clothing for man and woman to cover their nakedness as Adam and Eve did when their nakedness (of their private parts) was revealed to them. Please note the verses from the Koran regarding clothing:

Koran 7:26 O children of Adam, we have provided you with garments to cover your shame (private parts), as well as for luxury. But the best garment is the garment of righteousness. These are some of God's signs, that they may take heed. **27** O children of Adam, do not let the devil

deceive you as he did when he caused the eviction of your parents from Paradise, and the removal of their garments to expose their shame (private parts). ...

Please note God's commandment is not to commit adultery. And in order to avoid this act of adultery, covering the nakedness of the private parts and not lusting was what God commanded. Much emphasis has been placed on the above statement, but yet nothing is stated about women's head covering!

With all the evidence from the above verses, the religious leaders of Islam take the below verses from the Koran and use them to justify their man-made law that ranges from women should wear head coverings to women should cover their whole body except their eyes. Please note the following verses from the Koran, which religious leaders think orders women to wear head coverings.

Koran 24:32 And say to the believing women to subdue their eyes and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their covering over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful.

Koran 33:59 O prophet, tell your wives, your daughters, and the wives of the believers that they shall lengthen their garments. Thus, they will be recognized (as righteous women) and thus they will not be given trouble; God is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

The above two verses have convinced all the Muslim religious leaders of the world that they should make women cover their heads, and that if women refuse to do so, they will go to hell.

It is astonishing that the Koran, with over 6,000 verses, and the Bible, with over 27,000 verses, lacks even a single law about women's head covering. However, both books have hundreds of verses stated that going to heaven is only possible if one has faith in God and does "good deeds." Why is the head covering so important? Muslim religious leaders claim a woman cannot go to heaven without applying this law very carefully. However, the Koran has a different condition for going to heaven. For instance, the Koran has over 70 verses that state the following:

Koran 22:56 The kingdom on that day shall be God's; He will judge between them; so those who believe and do good will be in gardens of delight.

The Bible is full of verses like the above, and Jesus Christ makes a strong statement regarding this:

Bible-Mark 12:29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. **31** And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Bible-Matthew 7:12 "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

But yet religious leaders overlook all this, and even though you cannot find anywhere in the whole Koran or the Bible where God commands women to "cover their head," they still persist in believing that their father's traditions must be upheld. Moreover, when God speaks of good women, He does not mention anything about their head being covered as a good quality, please note:

Koran 60:12 O Prophet! when believing women come to you pledge to you that they will not set up any idols besides God, and will not steal, and will not commit adultery, and will not kill their children, and will not fabricate any falsehood, and will not disobey you in what is good, accept their pledge, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Koran 33:35 Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember God much and the women who remember-- God has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.

Let us see if the Bible talks about good women in the way that suggests women should cover their heads.

Bible-Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain.

12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.

13 She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar.

15 She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants.

16 She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard.

17 She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms.

18 She perceives that her merchandise is good,

Please note how easily a sixth grade educated person can interpret the above verses. But yet today, a man or woman belonging to these religions (even if they have the highest level of education) will reject all the reasoning they possess and obey their religious leader's falsehood in the place of God's words. This is done simply because they are used to the laws that they were raised with, and they are institutionalized.

It is worthwhile to note that interestingly enough, the only place the Bible talks about putting anything on the head is not for women, but for men, and not all men, but the priest:

Bible-Exodus 29:4 "And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. **5** Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. **6** You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban.

Please let it be known that I am not saying a woman who covers her head is wrong to do so. All I am saying is that this law is not mentioned in God's scriptures. If a woman chooses to cover her head, that is her choice and her right, but if she does not, we must stop marking her as an unholy woman. At mosques where God is praised, a modestly-dressed woman without a head covering should be respected and allowed.

After the Iranian revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini, the fanatics would chant: "Death to women without head coverings." They even made up sayings (Hadith) of well respected ladies, saying that she has said: "The best and greatest ornament for women is their head covering." There are many false sayings like this. For example, another one claims that if one hair of a woman's head is shown, that is a dagger in a heart of the martyrs of Islam.

More made-up stories are those that say: "Prophet Mohammad saw women hanging from their hair in hell and were tortured; when he asked their crime, the angel answered, "These are women who never wore their head coverings."

It is these types of misinformation that close the door to healthy dialogue against manmade laws.

May God bless all humankind and keep him or her from the ignorance that close-mindedness brings, and may God give the courage to all of us to stand up for the truth, especially when it is the commandment of God.