

Friday 18th June 2004

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Praise be to **اللَّهِ**.

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness in ourselves and from our bad deeds. Whomever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one will ever guide.

I testify that there is no God but **اللَّهِ** to whom there is no partner

and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيداً ☆ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ، وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً ﴾ (الأحزاب، 1-70)

"O you who believe, fear Allah, and say what is the truth. That He may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive your sins. He that obeys Allah and His messenger has attained the great victory" (S33, A70-1)

أما بعد:

☆ فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ
مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا ، وَكُلُّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ ، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ ☆
(مسلم ، أحمد ، النسائي)

The most truthful of words are those of the book of Allah, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad^(SAAWS), and the most evil of matters are its new innovations, for each innovation is invented, and each invention leads astray, and each will lead to hellfire. (narrated by Muslim, Ahmad and An-Nisaa'I)

The topic of today's Khutbah is **the dress code in Islam**.

I was prompted to address this issue as we may all have heard about the recent incident concerning the Muslim sister in Luton. She took her local high school to court on the grounds that she has been denied her right to education by being denied to wear a full length Jilbab. She claimed that she was denied to express her rights as a Muslim by being denied to dress according to the Islamic code of dress.

Clothing, both physical and spiritual, is one of the blessings of Allah on mankind. We read in Surat Al-A'raaf, verse 26:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

﴿ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيثًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ، ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَدَّكُرُونَ ﴾ (الأعراف، 26)

"O you children of Adam, We have bestowed raiment (clothing) upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you, but the raiment of righteousness, that is the best. Such are among the signs of Allah, that they may receive admonition" (S7, A26)

This translation is in the The Holy Quran, English translation of the meanings and commentary by Abdullah Youssef Ali,

عبد الله يوسف علي

In page 402, in the translated Holy Quran, Youssef Ali gives the following commentary: "the body is pure and beautiful, as long as it is not defiled by misuse: its clothing and ornaments may be good or may be superficially attractive, according to the motives in the mind and character: if good, they are the symbols of purity and

beauty: but the best of clothing and ornament we could have comes from righteousness, which covers the nakedness of sin, and adorns us with virtues."

Clothing in Islam can be classified into three groups. Firstly, that which is necessary for the purpose of cover. Secondly, that which is used for adornment, and thirdly, that which is forbidden. We will look at the issue of dress code in Islam and then we will look at the case of our sister from Luton.

It is clear in Islam that we are required to put on clothing that should cover our modesty, and from a practical point of view, it should also be protective.

عن حكيم بن حزام عن أبيه قال: قلت يا رسول الله عوراتنا ما نأتي منها وما نذر؟ قال ☆ احفظ عورتك إلا من زوجتك أو ما ملكت يمينك ☆ قال إذا كان القوم بعضهم في بعض؟ قال ☆ إن استطعت أن لا يرينها أحد فلا يرينها ☆ قال إذا كان أحدنا خالياً؟ قال ☆ الله أحق أن يُستحيا منه من الناس ☆ حديث حسن، أخرجه الترمذى.

From Hakeem Ibn Hizam, from his father, he asked the Prophet^(SAAWS) about one's modesty, and as from whom do we need to cover our modesty and from whom do we not? The Prophet^(SAAWS) answered "**keep your modesty** except from your wife or what your right hand possess". So he asked what about if the people were mingling together? He answered "*if possible keep it from anyone's view*". So he asked, what about one is on his own. He replied "*God is more deserving of us being shy of him than of people*".

So the message is clear that as Muslims we need **to cover our modesty**.

What about the use of clothing in a decorative manner, that is, to make one look nice and good when wearing it.

عن أبي الأحوص عن أبيه قال: أتيت النبي ﷺ في ثوب دون ، فقال: ألك مال؟ قال: نعم. قال من أى المال؟ قال: قد آتاني الله من الإبل والغنم والخيل والرقيق. قال: فإذا آتاك الله مالا فلير أثر نعمته عليك وكرامته. أبو داود

From Abi Al-Ahwass, from his father, he said that he went to the Prophet^(SAAWS) in a poor dress. He asked me if I had money, and I said yes. He asked where was my money from, so I said Allah has given me from camel, sheep, horses and slaves. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said, if Allah has given you wealth, let his wealth and generosity appear on you. Narrated by Abu Dawood.

Here we see that it is not forbidden for a Muslim to wear good quality and nice looking cloths as long as it does not approach what is forbidden.

So, what is forbidden? In a nutshell, men are forbidden to wear silk and gold. They are forbidden to dress and look like women, while women are also forbidden to dress and look like men. Muslims are forbidden to wear garments of fame or vanity, and are forbidden to squander excessively on cloths.

The hadeeth in this relation are as follows:

عن عمر بن الخطاب قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ لا تلبسوا الحرير، فإنه من لبسه في الدنيا، لم يلبسه في الآخرة ☆ البخارى

عن أبي موسى أن رسول الله ﷺ قال ☆ أحل الذهب والحرير لإناث أمتي وحرّم علي ذكورها ☆ النسائي و الترمذى

عن أنس قال: ” رخصَ النبي ﷺ للزبير وعبد الرحمن في لبس الحرير لحكة بهما “ البخارى

The first hadeeth is from Umar^(RAA). He said, the Prophet^(SAAWS) said, do not wear silk, for he who wears it in this life will not wear it in the hereafter. (Al-Bukhari). The second is from Abi Moosa. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said gold and silk have been permitted for the female of my Ummah, and have been forbidden for its males. (An-Nisaa'i and Al-Tirmizi).

In certain circumstances, silk is permitted as defined by the third hadeeth from Anass who said, the Prophet^(SAAWS) has given licence to Al-Zubair and Abdul-Rahman to wear silk as they had a skin condition that caused itching.

عن حذيفة قال: ” نهانا النبي ﷺ أن نشرب في آنية الذهب والفضة، وأن نأكل فيها، ومن لبس الحرير والديباج، وأن نجلس عليه “ البخارى

A further hadeeth by Huzaifa. He said the Prophet^(SAAWS) prohibited us from drinking or eating out of vessels of gold or silver, and from wearing silk and from sitting on silk. (narrated by Al-Bukhari)

عن ابن عباس قال: ” لعن رسول الله ﷺ المتشبهين من الرجال بالنساء
والمتشبهات من النساء بالرجال “ البخارى

From Ibn Abbas, he said, Prophet^(SAAWS) cursed those men that dress and act to resemble women, and those women that dress and act to resemble men. (narrated by Al-Bukhari).

From these previous hadeeths, we have clear evidence as to what is forbidden.

The next hadeeth, brothers and sisters, is important, as it addresses wearing cloths for fame or vanity. That is, when one is wanting to express themselves by the way they dress, whether that is to express power, wealth, etc. (God only knows).

عن ابن عمر قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ من لبس ثوب شهرة ألبسه الله يوم
القيامة ثوب مذلة ☆ حديث حسن، أخرجه أبو داود

From Ibn Umar^(RAA), he said, the Prophet^(SAAWS) said, who ever adorns a garment of fame (or vanity), God will put on that person a garment of humiliation on the day of judgement. (narrated by Abu Dawood).

This is an important hadeeth because it has a clear message to most of us in that we normally associate the garments of fame with those expensive or glamorous garments that people of wealth and power adorn to speak of their wealth and power, and express their vanity. This is quite obvious. However, a less obvious garment of fame, and Allah only knows, is probably that garment that makes a statement. That is to say, the cloths that I am wearing states what I am all about. The cloths I am wearing are to deliver a message about me, and I am wearing them principally to make that statement.

Unfortunately brothers and sisters, we have fallen into this trap. Many Muslim men and women are now recognised to a large extent by their cloths in such a manner. No one in the media, and no one from the Muslim community has addressed this issue yet.

There is no message out there that the Muslim woman is dressing in such a manner not to make a religious statement, but to protect her modesty as Islam has decreed.

The following are verses from the Holy Quran testifying to that effect:-

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا، وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ، وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَىٰ الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ غَوَارِثِ النِّسَاءِ، وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ، وَتَوَّابُوا إِلَىٰ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾
(النور، 31)

"And say to the believing women **that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments** except what (ordinarily) appear thereof; **that they draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty** except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male attendants free of sexual desires. Or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women; **and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments.** And o you believers! Turn you all together towards Allah in repentance that you may be successful." (S24, A31)

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ أَذْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴾ (الأحزاب، 59)

"O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, **that they should cast their outer garments over their persons** (when out of doors): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (S33, A59)

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفرُ الله لي و لكم

2nd Khutbah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ . الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا . أَمَا بَعْدُ :

عن ابن عمر قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ من لبس ثوب شهرة ألبسه الله يوم
القيامة ثوب مذلة ☆ حديث حسن، أخرجه أبو داود

From Ibn Umar^(RAA), he said, the Prophet^(SAAWS) said, who ever adorns a garment of fame and vanity, God will put on that person a garment of humiliation on the day of judgement. (narrated by Abu Dawood).

In view of what the Holy Quran and hadeeth state about the dress code in Islam, let us now address the issue of our sister from Luton. Again, let us remember that the media claims that she took her local school to court for not allowing her to specifically wear the Jilbab in an expression of her freedom to practice Islam.

What are the problems. Well, this incident raised a number of issues that affects us all as Muslims living in this country:-

1. There are issues relating to how Islam and Muslims are viewed in this society.
2. Issues relating to the basic rules and guidelines in Islam.
3. Issues that deal with the Islamic code of dress.
4. Issues that relate to the conduct of Muslims in a non-Muslim society.
5. And issues that relate to the manner in which a Muslim deals with adversity.

As Muslims, we are now under the media's microscope. Every action is highlighted, and in fact, it is more usual that every bad action by Muslims is highlighted. All of us are ambassadors of Islam, and any action taken by myself or by any other Muslim in the name of Islam, directly or indirectly, will reflect on all of us, whether we like it or not. Furthermore, as Muslims, the media expects us all to face the consequences of these actions, as in the public's opinion, all Muslims are alike.

The potential consequences of the actions taken by our sister and her advisors are not different. As an example, on the Tuesday morning, before the announcement of the judgement by the court, Radio 5 live had a full hour's discussion and asked people to respond to the question as to whether England should adopt a similar attitude to that

of France. Suddenly, the discussion went from that of wearing the Jilbab by a particular Muslim to that of the general wearing of the Hijab by all Muslims. It was an open day for all those who had a grudge against Islam and Muslims to give a free, one sided opinion.

To balance the opinions, the broadcast had a female guest speaking on behalf of the Muslims. During the broadcast, a number of Muslims and none Muslims gave their views. How was the Muslim expert chosen and what qualifications did she have I do not know, but clearly she was not fully knowledgeable. Some of the responses that were expressed on national radio were very worrying.

It was also clear that a number of Muslim brothers and sisters that phoned in were not entirely knowledgeable about the Islamic code of dress either. Furthermore, they publicly disagreed with each other in a manner not befitting Muslims, and their referencing of their opinions was not solid.

On a more sinister note, the debate in itself fuelled yet again the anti-Islamic sentiments. People were saying that this is a clear picture of what Islam has to offer this society. We were again portrayed as people who are intolerant, people who are demanding, people who can only see one side of the argument, people that are not willing to integrate, and people who want to make a statement. The picture painted yet again is that of how demanding and selfish Muslims are. Unfortunately brothers and sisters, this picture was allowed to be painted by us, by Muslims.

Let us now ask as to whether not being allowed to wear the Jilbab stands against the clear orders of Islam. Is it the same as asking Muslim women to take off their Hijab. I am afraid opinions are split on that. My own interpretation is that the dress code in Islam is that to cover modesty, and the description is clear. It should be modest, not decorative, not tight, not see through and covers the body showing only the hands and face. The word used in the Quran was translated by Youssef Ali as an outer garment, a long gown covering the whole body, or a cloak covering the neck and bosom. I could not find in the time to prepare the khutbah as to whether there are specific hadeeths to define exactly what this outer garment should be. If one however looks at the Muslims across the world, it is very clear that there is no uniformity in the dress design, but there is uniformity in that they cover modesty. As such, we Muslims should ask what Fatwa did our Muslim bothers and sisters obtain from the European Council for Fatwa and Research regarding this specific issue. This authority is made out of numerous scholars from various backgrounds and living in different European countries, and are able to give sound advice based on evidence. Indeed I have a recently published book of Fatwas from this authority. One should ask, was the issue of the Jilbab addressed by scholars acting on behalf of the Muslim Ummah. This is a valid question that we should ask, as the consequences of the actions of our Muslim brothers and sisters are being faced by all of us.

Let us go back to this hadeeth:

عن ابن عمر قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ من لبس ثوب شهرة ألبسه الله يوم
القيامة ثوب مذلة ☆ حديث حسن، أخرجه أبو داود

From Ibn Umar^(RAA), he said, the Prophet^(SAAWS) said, who ever adorns a garment of fame and vanity, God will put on that person a garment of humiliation on the day of judgement. (narrated by Abu Dawood).

Brothers and sisters, we need to be very clear about the way we dress. In our minds and hearts, the one and only issue that defines the way we dress is to cover our modesty as decreed by Islam. It should **NOT** be a statement that we are Muslims. If the people around us wish to take it as such, then so be it, but we ourselves should be careful not to dress up to make a statement. Our intentions and actions should always **be for the sake and for the pleasure of Allah**. Our minds and hearts should be very clear on that. When a sister puts on her hijab, it for Allah's sake, and not to say look at me I am a Muslim, and when she wears the Jilbab it should be for the same reason.

So, what about the issue of conflict and how are Muslims asked to deal with conflict. Our sister was allowed to wear a hijab and she was allowed to wear cloths to school that cover her modesty according to Islam, as other Muslim girls attend the same school. The other Muslim girls and their families saw no conflict. Are they right or wrong. Only Allah knows. But again, what about the issue of conflict.

عن عائشة قالت: " ما خَيْرَ رسولِ الله ﷺ بين أمرين إلا اختار أيسرهما ما لم يكن إثماً، فإن كان إثماً كان أبعد الناس عنه " مسلم

From A'isha^(RAA), she said when ever the Prophet^(SAAWS) had to make a choice between two options, he chose the easier one except when it was sinful, for if the easier option was sinful, he was the furthest away from that. (narrated by Muslim)

We as Muslims are allowed to take the easier option if there is no sin in that. The Prophet^(SAAWS) did that as a mercy for the Muslim Ummah. We as an Ummah face adversity daily, and we are allowed to take the easy option. Even in Salat (prayer), the pillar of Islam where there is no compromise on Salat, we are given a licence in situations of adversity.

﴿وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا﴾ (النساء، 101)

"When you travel through the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers, for fear the unbelievers may attack you" (S3, A101)

Allah has granted us licence out of mercy and we are asked strongly to take the favours granted to us by Allah. We should take example of what the Prophet^(SAAWS) had asked us to do.

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمُ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا , وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ﴾ (الحشر، 7)

"And take what the messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you, and fear Allah" (S59, A7)

Is it therefore reasonable to suggest that it is not wearing the Jilbab that is important, but it is the covering of modesty? As a Muslim one should interact with the rest of society to deliver the message of the flexibility of Islam to cope with all environments and societies, and the clear message of mercy of Islam on Muslims and non-Muslims alike, as long as we do not sin. Is it therefore sinful not to wear the Jilbab, but to wear the Hijab with other cloths that have the same effect, that is cover modesty, or is it not? From the evidence that is available, I do not have a clear message that not wearing the Jilbab, but wearing the Hijab and covering modesty as decreed by Islam is indeed sinful.

Even though I think that what has happened in Luton was not to our advantage, specially after the case was rejected by the court, we need to remember, brothers and sisters, that we have a duty to each other, and that we as Muslims discuss these issues **to get to the truth** and to act by the truth, and not to criticise for criticism sake. Our sister in Luton remains our sister in Islam, and our duty is to support, protect and advise all sisters and brothers in Islam.

﴿ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ، يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ، أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾ (التوبة، 71)

"The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, pay Zakat and obey Allah and His messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise" (S9, A71)

Last, let us not forget the verse that should define us as true Muslims and Believers:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

"You were the best of peoples, evolved for mankind. Enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah" (S3, A110)