

WOMEN POSITION IN ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE CONCEPT AND
PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND MODEST DRESS
OBSERVANCE

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
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Abstract

Today, women's position in Abrahamic religions is a controversial issue in academia and media. Although there are many similarities among Abrahamic faiths, different interpretations about the creation and role of women are seen in their holy books and traditions. Abrahamic faiths have emphasized on observing modest behaviours for men and women and in this context have recommended women to wear modest dress. The common reasons in these faiths for head covering are piety, obedience of God, obtaining to Modesty virtue and protecting women's immunity that lead toward illegal sex relations in society and protect the stability of the family as sacred scheme. The finding of this study demonstrates that despite of these similarities, some certain reasons in the Judeo-Christian teachings tradition are not applicable in Islam. This research is based on qualitative method that has an inductive approach.

Abstrak

Hari ini, kedudukan wanita dalam agama Nabi Ibrahim menjadi isu kontroversi dalam bidang akademik dan media. Walaupun terdapat banyak persamaan antara agama Nabi Ibrahim, tafsiran yang berbeza-beza tentang penciptaan dan peranan wanita dapat dilihat dalam kitab-kitab suci dan tradisi mereka. Kajian ini pertamanya, bertujuan untuk menyelidiki alasan dan hujah norma dan perilaku sederhana dalam kalangan kaum Yahudi, Kristian dan Muslim, keduanya, bertujuan untuk melakukan perbandingan secara analitikal dalam ajaran-ajaran mereka masing-masing, dan ketiganya, bertujuan untuk menilai hasil dapatan daripada isu ini. Agama Nabi Ibrahim telah memberikan penekanan terhadap pengamalan tingkah laku sederhana untuk lelaki dan perempuan, dan dalam konteks ini, telah memberikan cadangan kepada kaum wanita untuk mengenakan pakaian yang sederhana. Alasan dan hujah Golongan feminis Barat mencadangkan agar pemakaian tudung kepala bagi kaum wanita sebagai suatu lambing atau simbol penindasan, kerendahan dan penguasaan lelaki (patriarki). Walau bagaimanapun, alasan dan hujah yang biasa dalam agama-agama tersebut dengan cara berpakaian sederhana adalah kerana ketaqwaan, ketaatan kepada Allah, mengekalkan keindahan kesopanan dan melindungi kesucian wanita, mengelakkan hubungan jantina yang tidak sah dalam masyarakat dan juga untuk melindungi kestabilan keluarga sebagai suatu skema suci. Biarpun wujudnya persamaan yang banyak, namun beberapa pokok norma kesederhanaan dalam ajaran agama Yahudi-Kristian mengesahkan kritikan golongan feminis, sedangkan

ia tidak wujud dalam agama Islam. Kajian ini adalah berdasarkan kaedah kualitatif yang mempunyai pendekatan induktif. Dapatan kajian memperlihatkan bahawa beberapa ajaran tertentu dalam tradisi Yahudi-Kristian memberikan penekanan kepada kritikan feminis yang menganggap pakaian wanita secara sederhana sebagai suatu simbol penindasan, ketundukan kepada manusia dan penguasaan lelaki yang dalam realitinya tidak mempunyai kaitan dengan agama Islam.

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List of Transliteration¹

Consonants

| | |
|---|----|
| ء | ' |
| ب | b |
| ت | t |
| ث | th |
| ج | j |
| ح | h |
| خ | kh |
| د | d |
| ذ | dh |
| ر | r |
| ز | z |
| س | s |
| ش | sh |
| ص | ṣ |
| ض | ḍ |
| ط | ṭ |
| ظ | ẓ |
| ع | ' |
| غ | gh |
| ف | f |

| | |
|---|---|
| ق | q |
| ك | k |
| ل | l |
| م | m |
| ن | n |
| و | w |

Vowels

| | |
|---------|---|
| Long; آ | a |
| او | ū |
| إى | ī |

¹ Campo, Juan Eduardo (2009). Encyclopedia of Islam. Infobase Publishing, Vol. 1.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. The Hebrew And Judaic Words, Terms And Abbreviations In Chapter 2²

Aggada or Haggadah: Refers to non-legalistic exegetical texts in the classical rabbinic literature of Judaism

Arayot: (literally; Nakedness) The forbidden incestuous sexual connections

Ashkenazi (pl. Ashkenazim): European Jewish, A member of the branch of European Jews, historically Yiddish-speaking, who settled in central and eastern Europe.

Bedeken: Head covering in Yiddish

Beit Yaakov: Orthodox girls

Berakhot: Benedictions

Beth Din (pl. *Batte din*): Rabbinical term for court-house or court.

Chazal: Jewish sages, It is an acronym for the Hebrew "Hakhameinu Zikhronam Liv'rakha".

Chumash or *Humash*: (Literally; The five) The five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, Pentateuch

Cubit: Biblical Term, Unit of Length from the forearm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. A Cubit is equivalent to 1.5 feet. (1 foot: 12 inches: 30.48 cm)

² E. Karesh, Sara, M. Hurvitz, Mitchell (2005). *Encyclopaedia of Judaism*, Encyclopaedia of world religions, Infobase Publishing, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com>.

Dat Moshe: The Law of Moses, Torah-Derived Law

Dat Yehudit: Jewish custom, the law for the Jewish woman

Derekh erez: Polite and proper general social conduct, direction and recommendations about sexual behavior

Ervah or *Ervat*: The area that must be covered, equal in its erotic potential as other private parts: Nakedness

Gemara: A rabbinical commentary on the Mishnah, forming the second part of the Talmud.

Halakha: The Jewish law

Hashem: The Hebrew word which many pious Jews use instead of the yod-hey-vav-hey (YHVH) name, in casual conversations, and literally means “The Name”.

Hinumeh: Scarf

Hupah: Marriage canopy

Kabbalah, Cabala or Qaballah: A mystical Jewish tradition

Kalut Rosh: (Literally; Frivolity) Immodest Sexual Behavior

Kiddushin: Sanctification

Kippah: (Yarmulke in Yiddish) Traditional skullcap of observant Jewish men

Kohanim Gedolim: High priests

Kol Isha: The voice of a woman

Mamzer: The child of an adulterous (a halakhically prohibited relationship)

Maneh or *Mina*: Equal to one-hundred Shekels which was the Jewish currency (equivalent to 100 dollar)

Mashiah: (Literally; an anointed one) The one chosen by God to represent His rulership in Israel and to bear witness to His glory before the nations.

Mechitza (pl.: *mechitzot*): The partition separating men and women in synagogues that adhere to traditional Judaism.

Midrash: (derived from the root, "to study," "to investigate") The Bible exegesis of the rabbis.

Mikra or *Miqra*: Tanakh

Minhag: Custom

Mishna: An authoritative collection of exegetical material embodying the oral tradition of Jewish law and forming the first part of the Talmud

Mitzvoth (pl. *Mitzvah*): Commandment, Duty

Mizrahi: Middle Eastern, North African and Mediterranean, Jewish family living in the Orient, to which belong some well-known rabbinical authors. There are two main branches: one in Constantinople, and the other in Jerusalem.

Nashim: Women

Negiah: (Literally; Touch), Guidelines for physical contact between men and women

Nevi'im: Prophets

Poskim: Rabbinical arbiters: The term in Jewish law for decider rabbinic law

Responsa: (pl. Responsum): Answers parts of rabbinic literature concerned with written rulings

Rabbi (R.) (pl. Rabbis): Hebrew term used as a title for those who are distinguished for learning, who are the authoritative teachers of the Law, and who are the appointed spiritual heads of the community. It is derived from the noun, which in biblical Hebrew means "great" or "distinguished"

Sedarim: The Six Orders of the Talmud

Shas: A Hebrew abbreviation of "Shisha Sedarim"; "Six Orders" of The "Oral Law"

Sheitel: Wig

Shekhinah: Divine Presence

Sotah: A wife suspected of adultery

Tanakh or Tenach: The Hebrew Bible or *Mikra*. Acronym from: Torah (Teaching: the five books of Moses), *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings)

Tannaim: (pl. of *Tanna*): Literally: repeaters or teachers, The Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE

Taryag Mizvot: Rabbinic enumerations of the 613 commandments of Judaism

Tefach: A hand's breadth

Tevet: In the Jewish calendar; the fourth month of the civil and tenth of the religious year, usually coinciding with parts of December and January.

Tichel or *Mitpachat* (Yiddish; *Tikhl*): A headscarf

Torso: Main body

Tosephta: Collection of Tannaitic teachings supplementing the Mishnah tractates

Yeshu 'ah: Divine assistance

Yiddish: A language based on German that is written in Hebrew characters and that was originally spoken by Jews of central and Eastern Europe

Yir'at shamayim: Fear of God

Zuz or Zuza (pl. zuzzim): An ancient Jewish silver coin struck during the *Bar Kochba* revolt and that is small silver coinage.

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2. THE GREEK AND CHRISTIAN WORDS, TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS IN CHAPTER 3

Akatakaluptos: Not completely covered

Capuse: Hood

Cappa: Great cloak

Decalogue: The Ten Commandments that is derived from Greek root; *dekalogos*, translated; "ten words"

Doxav: Glory

Exousia: Authority

Jggevloi: Angles

Katakaluptos: Completely covered

Katakephale: Head covering

Kosmios: Orderly and well arranged, modest and descent

Kefali: Head

Kethoneth: Sleeves

Fuvs: Nature

Pentateuch: (from the Greek term; *Pent Teuchos*) Five-volume or Book

Peribolaivou: Covering

Abbreviations for Bible Versions³

NET: The NET Bible / New English Translation (NT, 1998; First Beta Edition, 2001; Second Beta Edition, 2003; First Edition, 2005)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (NT, 2001)

NLT: New Living Translation (1996)

CEV: The Contemporary English Version (1995)

NCV: New Century Version (1991)

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)

NJB: New Jerusalem Bible (1985)

NJPS: Tanakh (1985), produced by the Jewish Publication Society

NKJV: New King James Version (1979)

TEV: Today's English Version, also known as Good News for Modern Man (1976)

NIV: The New International Version (NT, 1973; OT, 1978)

LB: The Living Bible (1971)

NASB: New American Standard Bible (1971; update 1995)

NAB; The New American Bible (1970)

³ http://help.bible.org/abbreviations_for_bible_versions

NEB: The New English Bible (1970)

JB: Jerusalem Bible (1966)

C. K. Ogden, The Bible in Basic English (1965)

JPS: The Torah (1962), The Prophets (Nevi'im) (1978), The Writings (Kethuvim) (1982), produced by the Jewish Publication Society

J. B. Phillips, The New Testament in Modern English (1958)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (NT, 1946; OT, 1952)

R. A. Knox, The New Testament in English (1945)

AT: The Bible-An American Translation (1927)

TCNT: The Twentieth Century New Testament (1898-1901; rev. 1904)

ASV: American Standard Version (1901)

RV: Revised Version (NT 1881; OT 1885)

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862; rev. 1898)

KJV: The King James Version, known in Britain as the Authorized Version (1611)

**Bible Book Name
Abbreviations ⁴**

Genesis: Gen

Exodus: Exod

Leviticus: Lev

Numbers: Num

Deuteronomy: Deut

Joshua: Josh

Ruth: Ruth

Esther: Esth

Job: Job

Psalms: Pslm

Proverbs: Prov

Ecclesiastes: Eccles

Song of Solomon: Song

Isaiah: Isa

Jeremiah: Jer

Ezekiel: Ezek

Daniel: Dan

Hosea: Hos

Joel: Joel

Amos: Amos

Micah: Micah

Nahum: Nah

Wisdom of Solomon: Wisd of

Sol

Matthew: Matt

Mark: Mrk

Romans: Rom

Corinthians :Cor

Galatians: Gal

Ephesians: Ephes

Colossians: Col

Timothy: Tim

Peter: Pet

⁴Citation Guide: SBL: Abbreviations,
Cedarville University, Centennial Library,
[http://libguides.cedarville.edu/c.php?g=19058
&p=107449](http://libguides.cedarville.edu/c.php?g=19058&p=107449)

4. THE ARABIC AND ISLAMIC TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS IN CHAPTER 4

Al-Habarah :The term used for cloak/veil among upper-class Egyptian women in last century.

Al-Khaba'ith: All evil

Al-khursan al-mubin: Obvious damage in the hereafter

At-Tayyibah: All good and pure

Awrah: A noun derived from the root a-w-r and the verb Aara that means “something shameful to look at”, What must be covered

Effah: Chastity

Falah: The ultimate happiness

Fasad: Disorder and anarchy

Haya': Modesty

Jahilyeeyah: Ignorance era

Jayb: The collar line or bosom

Jilbab: Outer garments

Madhhab: The main legal schools of Islam

Mahr: Dowry

Mahram: Confidant

Non-*Mahram*: Strangers

Qiwamah: Maintenance and protection

Hakim: Ruler

Shari'ah: Islamic law

Sitr: Cover

Sunnah: The oral tradition of the Prophet (saw) scientifically recorded is called *hadith* (pl. *hadiths*).

Tabarroj: Ostentation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Women, comprising almost half of the human population can have important and remarkable roles in the progress of civilization. Obviously, the quality and quantity of these roles depend on their position in society. The views of religions have always been crucial in justifying the status of women in societies. Throughout the centuries, the occupations of wife and mother have been primary vehicles of religious expression and duty for pious women. So, the vast majority of women of all cultures and religions are driven by these roles. Nowadays, along with the development of some phenomena such as humanism, secularism, modernism and feminism, consideration to divine providence and law have weakened. Hence, human actions are now less influenced by reflections on the spiritual and hereafter. Also, political and economic motivations have questioned many cultural traditions in religious communities. In today communication development era, one of the cultural dimensions which have been threatened is the observance of modesty and women's modest dress which are considered divine commands. While, there are mostly common reasons for this practice. Heath writes: “in describing the forms, origins and reasons for veiling in assorted places and times, repetitions naturally and necessarily occur”.⁵

Followers of Abrahamic religions including Judaism, Christianity and Islam make up for more than half of the world’s population today. So, the examination of the cultural dimensions of women’s status in their teachings can clarify the root of many social issues plaguing today’s societies. This is especially so in this communication era, where the view points on equality between men and women

⁵ Heath, Jennifer (ed.) (2008). *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics*. California: University of California Press, p.1.

that has been spread all over the world is based on what the media suggesting. Furthermore, the increase in women participation in different fields has reversed the practices of the traditional system. Through globalization, Western feminism movements have grown in many communities and they have openly criticized the traditional status of women and even the rules of modesty by considering them as patriarchal.⁶

The virtue of modesty is a core component of all world religions, including the Abrahamic religions. In fact, there are many similarities among the principles and minutiae aspects of instruction of divine religions, as found in Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Reflections on these religions' laws would clarify that there are many similar stipulations on praying, fasting, and some guidelines that invite men and women to piety. So, the invitations to virtues such as observing modesty against lust and carnal affairs, which are generally regarded as sins in these religions, are the moral pillars of the followers' lives. Prophets are considered the most virtuous of humans and their clergymen the most pious of followers in these religions. In the tradition of holy women and the prophets' families in these religions, modesty and full coverage were observed; practices that are still, to date, upheld by their true followers.

Abrahamic faiths have stated a variety of views on women position in their scriptures. These views have always played a definitive role in constructing their traditional and cultural attitudes towards women through their histories. Many interpreters have dealt with the issue of women's position in their commentaries on

⁶ For example; Mahoney, M., Yngvesson, B. (1992). The Construction of Subjectivity and the Paradox of Resistance: Reintegrating Feminist Anthropology and Psychology, *Signs*, Vol.18, pp. 44-73. Mann, S.A., Kelly, L.R. (1997). Standing at the crossroads of modernist thought: Collins, Smith, and the new feminist epistemologies, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 391-408. West, Candace, Fenstermaker, Sarah (1995). *Gender and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 8-37. Currie, C. E., Elton, R. A., Todd, J., et al. (1997). Indicators of Socioeconomic Status for Adolescents: The WHO Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey. *Health Educ Res*, Vol. 12, pp. 385-397.

the respective holy books. With regards to the importance of modesty rules in their lives, they have constantly emphasized on the reason for defining the modesty of women's way of dress.

Historically, cultural studies imply that modesty observance and wearing modest covering for women in almost every society was common until recent centuries. However, along with the social changes and extent of influence from modern Western culture, modesty was one of the main issues that had been questioned. It is interesting to note that in contemporary versions, modesty norms have been linked to power, control, and gender oppression.⁷ Traditional feminism tended to use women's physical appearance in public places and the manner of clothes they choose to be seen in publically as an indicator of their freedom and power. Current feminism tends to treat these issues as a critical dialogue with Western colonialism.⁸

Generally, modesty issue is not exclusive to particular culture. Obviously, woman's covering is indeed part of the modesty conduct. Some researches on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim women suggest that those who maintain modesty norms receive benefits in their communities.⁹ Such researches suggest that any

⁷ Ternikar, Farha (2009), Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Analysis of the Muslim Veil *Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 754–763.

⁸ Rapoport, Tamar, El-Or., Tamar (1997). Visibility and Possibilities: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women between the Domestic and Public Spheres, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 20, Nos. 5&6, pp. 665-73.

⁹ See: Falk, Pesach Eliyahu (1998). Modesty: An adornment for life; Halachos and attitudes concerning rules of Tznius of dress and conduct. Feldheim Publishers, Gateshead, England, pp. 228-240. Bullock, Katherine (2003). *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes*, International Institute of Islamic Thought. Herndon, p. 123.

analysis of modesty norms needs to look beyond the superficial conclusion that such women are oppressed.¹⁰

Although the academic literature on women veiling generally refers to the Muslims¹¹, there are so many Jewish and Christian scholars who have written about women veiling as practiced or indoctrinated by their respective faiths.¹² Some of them regard women wearing veil as a religious law and some have supposed it as a custom. Generally, the current academic studies of women veiling have new interpretation from historical and hermeneutic backgrounds and some are even reinterpreting the holy books without any defaults. They consider modest dress as custom not law. Although modesty norms are largely based on religious scripture, the form in which they play out is largely shaped by cultural norms and social factors. While, some of feminists have argued in a sociology compass that the modest dress is a patriarchal tool used to control and oppress women,¹³ the religious feminists try to create a harmony between religious rules and modern lifestyle.

In fact, within Western academic scholarship, a consistent feature in modest dress literature has been a consideration of the veil's origins with the aim of

¹⁰ Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*

¹¹ See: El Guindi, Fadwa (1999). *Veil: Modesty, privacy and resistance*, Oxford: Berg. Ahmed, Leila (1992). *Women and gender in Islam: Historical roots of a modern debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Hoodfar, Homa (2001). *The veil in their minds and on our heads: Veiling practices and Muslim women*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 427–28, Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, Vol. 30, No. 65-88.

¹² See: Wm. O. Walker, Jr (1975). 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's Views regarding Women, *Journal of Biblical*, Vol. 94, No. 1, pp. 94-110. David, Jason (1999). "Because of the Angels": Unveiling Paul's Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 118, No. 2, pp. 295.

¹³ See: Afshar, Haleh (1993). *Women in the Middle East*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op .cit.* Mernissi, Fatima (1991). *The Veil and the Male Elite. A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, Publisher: Addison-Wesley.

situating the practice of veiling historically and challenging the misconception that it is a purely Islamic phenomenon. Furthermore, Gerami affirms that Muslim and Christian women who are involved in fundamentalist strands of these traditions believe that a woman's role is different than a man's role, although they are not necessarily implying that one is less than the other.¹⁴ Actually, the modest dress functions to highlight this gendered difference between men and women. As such this research will examine and show that this practice is embedded in a wider textual and traditional background, predating in Abrahamic faiths within the discursive field.

Observing Modesty and Modest Dress in Judaism

Among the Abrahamic religions, Judaism is considered the oldest religion that has decree and specific instructions on various affairs of life. The Jewish holy book; Hebrew Bible, particularly the chapter of *Genesis*, by stating various stories, expresses issues about the creation and position of women and having fundamental impact on the women's position. The Torah says that it was a woman who instigated Adam towards disobedience and to eat the Forbidden fruit and caused to Fall to earth and eventually human's death.¹⁵ Narrating this in the history of Judaism and Christianity was effective in weakening and subordination of women's personality. In addition, the duty of women in the second story of *Genesis*¹⁶ is to give birth and to obey their men and in some Jewish commentaries, the observation of modesty and the wearing modest dress is seen necessary as a an act of humiliation and to avoid being attractive.

¹⁴ See: Gerami, Shahin (1996). *Women and Fundamentalism: Islam and Christianity*, New York: Garland Publishing.

¹⁵ Gen 2:17

¹⁶ Genesis: The first book of the Old Testament.

In fact, the accounts of modesty are evident in the *Dat Moshe* (Law of Moses) and biblical sources. So, there are some commands to protect chastity in Israelite community and veiling requirement for women especially after marriage.¹⁷ In the Prophet Isaiah's book, God warns that those who do not behave with chastity will be punished. In the Talmud¹⁸, the importance of modesty and using modest dress is evident in *Halacha (Jewish Law) and Aggada*¹⁹, particularly as recorded in the Talmud and Midrash. Therefore, although there are some differences in the quality of adherence of these rules today due to the diaspora of Jewish people, we can obtain the principal basis of the general procedures and methods from the Jewish scripture, the Hebrew Bible or the *Tanakh*²⁰ (Christians called it the Old Testament²¹ and profess belief to it), the Talmud and some early

¹⁷ Schiller, Mayer (1995). The Obligation of Married Women to Cover Their Hair, *The Journal of Halacha*, Vol. 30, pp. 81-108.

¹⁸ *Talmud* (Hebrew: תַּלְמוּד): "The Talmud is the collection of ancient rabbinic literatures on Jewish law and tradition (including the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*). Talmud is an old scholastic term of the *Tannaim*. Terminologically, it is a noun from the Hebrew verb "*limmed*" (to teach) and it means "teaching". Originally, Talmud was written in Aramaic and Tannaitic Hebrew. It is also traditionally called as Shas (ש"ס). A Hebrew abbreviation of "shisha sedarim"; the "six orders" of the "Oral Law" of Judaism. It is made of 63 tractates Jewish. (Jewish Encyclopedia The unedited full-text of the 1906. Retrieved on 4/1/2014 from <http://www.JewishEncyclopedia.com>. ©2002-2011.)

¹⁹ *Aggada* or *Haggadah* refers to non-legalistic exegetical texts in the classical rabbinic literature of Judaism.

²⁰ *Tanakh* is the collection of writings as the holy books of Jewish people. This term is an acronym that derived from the names of the three divisions of the Hebrew scripture: Torah (Instruction, or Law, also called the Pentateuch). Nevi'im (Prophets). and Ketuvim (Writings). (J. Coert Rylaarsdam (2009). *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 12, pp. 33. Retrieved on 4/8/2014 from <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1785796/Tanakh>)

²¹ The Old Testament is a Christian term for the collection of Hebrew Bible that forms the first section of Christian Bibles in contrast to the Christian New Testament. The books included in the Old Testament vary among Christian denominations. Protestants accept only the Hebrew Bible's canon but divide it into 39 books; however Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, Coptic and Ethiopian churches identify a noticeably larger collection. (Barton, John (2001). *Introduction to the Old Testament; Bible Commentary*, Oxford University Press, p. 3.)

Jewish scholars' books. There are various roots and reasons for observance of modesty and women modest dress in the Jewish teachings.

Observing Modesty and Modest Dress of in Christianity

Christianity's attitude to women's position has suffered of duality—the equality of men and women from Jesus's approach and the subordination of women in Paul's approach.

Commonly, the Church has followed Paul's view and the Greek-Roman thought on women's position. They suggest that it was Eve who encouraged Adam to disobey God and state that this sin created sexual lust in Adam. Therefore, they consider the woman as the main factor for the Original sin²² and the greatest temptation, which is sex. This attitude has a direct effect on women subordination through history. Peter considers the woman's perfection in inner ornament and humanity in incorruption clothes and Paul has emphasized on remaining silent, obedience of husbands and modesty observance of women.

Under the Old and New Testament as well as in Greek and Roman Traditions trainings, the Church has been observed to be negligent in protecting

²² In Christian doctrine, traditionally the origin has been ascribed to the sin of the first man, Adam, who disobeyed God in eating the forbidden fruit (of knowledge of good and evil) and, in consequence, transmitted his sin and guilt by heredity to his descendants. (Encyclopedia Britannica, Retrieved on 4/8/2013 from <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/432565/original-sin>)

The doctrine has its basis in the Gospel. Original sin may be taken to mean: (1) the sin that Adam committed; (2) a consequence of this first sin, the hereditary stain with which we are born on account of our origin or descent from Adam. From the earliest times the latter sense of the word was more common, as may be seen by St. Augustine's statement: "the deliberate sin of the first man is the cause of original sin" (De nupt. et concup., II, xxvi, 43). It is the hereditary stain that is dealt with here. As to the sin of Adam we have not to examine the circumstances in which it was committed nor make the exegesis of the third chapter of Genesis. (Harent, S. (1911). *Original Sin. In The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved on 7/4/2014 from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11312a.htm>)

women's positions and rights and the men's tendency was more towards considering women as seductive. In most cases, they did not believe in her right of ownership and education. This excessiveness in damaging women's right in the West, along with the Renaissance that brought about the rethinking of the Church's teaching, generated attention to women's status and today widespread changes, even in natural role of women (as a wife and mother) and also the rules of modesty, can be seen widespread across the world.

According to the viewpoint of Christianity, celibacy is the first sacred practice (also marriage is called "holy matrimony" and is considered a sacred direction) that takes precedence, so without a doubt, for eliminating possibility of stimulation and attraction, this religion calls for women to seriously observe modesty and to avoid embellishing themselves with bodily decoration. The Gospel quotes from Jesus, his disciples and companions in inviting Christian men and women to observe modesty. In the Paul letters, women were advised to wear headgear especially in worship. Holy Mary, the exemplar as a perfect woman in Christianity, has been mostly depicted throughout Christian history in the traditional veil.

Observing Modesty and Modest Dress of in Islam

Islam, despite highlighting the difference between men and women in some cases, has identified the humanistic identity and position for women. In fact, the legislation of women's rights and duties in Islam is founded on their role to give attention to and fulfill the material and spiritual requirements towards the stability of the family and society.

Like all divine religions that keeping modesty as a moral and social virtue has been emphasized as human nature, the observance of chastity and preserving privacy against strangers has a special significance in Islamic laws. The verses about modesty rules are revealed over 10 years of Islamic government after the

migration to Medina and each of these rules was based on the event or phenomenon that God has been expressed its command. All *Madhhabs* (main legal schools of Islam) mandate that women are recommended to be modestly dressed in public.²³ According to the traditional perspective of most Islamic interpreters and *Foghahaa* (Islamic religious jurisconsult), women are required to cover the whole body, except the hands and face, as a modesty rule.

In recent decades, a woman's veil has become the subject of intense scrutiny, particularly in the Islamic context. Some scholars think the veil phenomenon entered Islamic communities from other cultures (during the pre-Islamic period and from Judaism or other cultures).²⁴ Since September 11, 2001, particularly in the U.S. media, Islam has become synonymous with fundamentalism. As such, women's rights in Muslim countries continue to be an area of controversy, and the veil continues to be a symbol of oppression. However, many sociologists and anthropologists in their studies began to ask women themselves about the reason for wearing the veil. From the findings of such studies, it has become clear that not all Muslim women who veiled have been forced to do so by their respective societies, families and especially not by their men.²⁵ Most of these studies such as Read suggest that for many Muslim women, wearing the veil is a choice.²⁶ Wearing modest dress allows women to enjoy more freedom in the

²³ Siddiqui, Mona (2004). 'Veil,' (ed.) J. McAuliffe, *Encyclopedia of the Quran*, Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers. Leaman, O, pp. 412-416.

²⁴ El Guindi, Fadwa (1999). *op. cit.*, Mernissi, Fatima (1991). *op. cit.*

²⁵ Roded, Ruth (2011). The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore and Politics. *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, Spring 5771/2011, No. 21, pp207-209.

²⁶ Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck (2007). The Post 9 / 11 Hjab as Icon, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 253-67, Also see: Williams, Rhys H. Varshi, Gira (2007). Hijab and American Muslim Women: Creating the Space for Autonomous Selves, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 269-97.

public spheres, including secure access to work and education. Also some Islamic feminists have argued that the veil is actually a liberating tool that protects and empowers women.²⁷ As a matter of fact, the basic reasons for wearing modest dress are clearly stated in Quranic verses, which call for women to cover their adornments so as to be modest and to protect themselves. Accordingly, all main commentaries have emphasized the necessity of women's modest dress observation and traditionally, all Islamic schools have consensus on it.

Beside the textual and traditional reasons, today's Muslim women emphasize several other reasons for wearing the veil: to claim their cultural-religious identity, to protect themselves from sexual harassment, to attain respect, to work and study outside their homes securely, and as a mean of resistance to foreign values, and finally as a form of political identification with working-class women who oppose state mandatory de-veiling.²⁸

Overall, the philosophy behind maintaining modesty and modest dress is considered essential in Islam and Judaism for preservation of men and women from lapsing in social communications and to uphold families' stability, especially since marriage and family formation are considered sacred in these religions. However, in Christianity virginity is sacred foremost²⁹ and observing modesty and modest dress is recommended firstly to fulfill abstinence from carnal and worldly affairs and secondly, as a sign of submission to the husband. This research will investigate and compare the reasons of observation of modesty and modest dress by women in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

²⁷ Bullock, Katherine (2003). *op. cit.*

²⁸ Hoodfar, Homa (2001). *op. cit.* Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988). *op. cit.*

²⁹ Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (2004). *De virginibus velandis* (On the Veiling of Virgins). Publisher: OrthodoxEbooks. Chapter III.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite worldwide domination of Western culture, modesty in dress and conduct are still encouraged by most great sages and religious cultures in the world, particularly those of the Abrahamic Religions. In fact, in all interpretations of the holy books of Judaism, Christianity and Islam modesty norms are recommended in behavior and dress of both women and men.³⁰ Feminist researchers indoctrinate that women often adhere to modesty norms due to religious or cultural ideologies and wearing modest dress is a patriarchal tool used to control and oppress women. So, in the recent century, most of the studies on modesty and the veiling of the woman's body purport that the stringent modesty rules reflect the patriarchal oppression of women.³¹

However, the common reason for the observance of modesty and women's modest dress in all Abrahamic religions is piety and devoutness. Even though a global or cross-cultural approach in framing theological analysis modesty is necessary, the modest dress or veil like many other significant symbols has multiple meanings in different cultures.³² So, there is a need to examine the reasons of for veiling in the religions since the practice varies by culture and context.³³ For

³⁰ See: Arthur, L., ed. (1999). *Religion, Dress and the Body*, Oxford, UK: Berg. Also see: Abdullah, A. R. ed. (2004). *Islamic Dress Code for Women*, Global Leader in Islamic Books, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, Anthony, Cara (2009). Modesty in the Service of Justice: Retrieving Tradition and Reversing the Gaze. *Horizons*, Vol. 36: No. 2, pp. 265-84, M. Morin, Karen (2013). Men's Modesty, Religion, and the State: Spaces of Collision, *Men and Masculinities*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 307-328.

³¹ Block, Sima Zalcborg (2011). Shouldering the Burden of Redemption: How the "Fashion" of Wearing Capes Developed in Ultra-Orthodox Society, *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 32-55.

³² Ternikar, Farha (2009), Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Analysis of the Muslim Veil *Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 754–763.

³³ Hoche Sandra (2013). To Veil or Not to Veil: Voices of Malaysian Muslim Women, *Intercultural Communication Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 40-57.

example, *Abdel Azeem* suggests, the veil is sometimes revered as a sign of holiness when worn for the purpose of showing the authority of man by Catholic Nuns, while it is reviled as a sign of oppression carrying an air of backwardness when worn by Muslim women³⁴ when in actuality, it is worn for the purpose of protection by them.³⁵ *Heath* stated that in the West the veil is rarely seen as a sacred or cultural practice, but only as a threatening symbol of political Islam.³⁶ In fact, among the numerous scholarly works on Islamic modest dress³⁷, most tend to ascribe their reflection, rather than describing its meaning in Islam or what Muslim women are really concerned of. In this context, *Bullock* states:

“For many in the Western media, the hijab by and large, stands for oppression and as shorthand for all the horrors of Islam (now called Islamic fundamentalism): terrorism, violence, barbarity and backwardness.”³⁸

Since, misunderstandings on these reasons for modesty conducts among the different religions exist in the media and even in academic discussions, this study

³⁴ Abdel Azeem, sheriff (1994). *Women In Islam Versus Women In The Judaeo-Christian Tradition: The Myth & The Reality*, El-falah publisher, Cairo, Egypt. International Islamic Publishing House Antoinette Clark Wire.

³⁵ Hochel Sandra (2013). To Veil or Not to Veil: Voices of Malaysian Muslim Women, *Intercultural Communication Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 40-57.

³⁶ Heath, Jennifer (ed.) (2008). *op. cit.*, pp. 19.

³⁷ Droogsman, Rachel (2007). Redefining Hijab: American Muslim Women’s Standpoints on Veiling. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 294-319. Nevertheless, recently some call for more studies that let Muslim women speak for themselves. (Read, Jen’Nan & Bartkowski, John. (2000). To veil or not to veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiations among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas. *Gender and Society*, 14, 395-417. Marshall, Gul. (2005). Ideology, progress, and dialogue: A comparison of feminist and Islamist women’s approaches to issues of head covering in Turkey. *Gender and Society*, Vol.19, No.1, pp. 104-120.

³⁸ Bullock, Katherine (2003). *op. cit.*

aims to explore and identify the origins of modesty norms and women's modest dress among Jewish, Christian and Muslim women in traditional and contemporary texts. Ultimately this research will develop some analytical comparisons on the reasons for modesty norms in these religions to obtain the common and the different reasons and actual roots of these reasons as ordained by God. Today, a global or cross-cultural approach is necessary in framing a sociological analysis of the veil.³⁹

1.3 Research Questions

The main question that this research attempts to answer is the difference and superiority of Islamic view in stating philosophy of modesty and modest dress.

1. What is the philosophy behind modesty and modest dress in Judaism?
2. What is the Philosophy behind Modesty and Modest Dress in Christianity?
3. What is the Philosophy behind Modesty and Modest Dress in Islam?
4. What are the similarities and differences in the philosophy behind modesty and modest dress in the Abrahamic religions and what is the outcome of this issue?

³⁹ Ternikar, Farha(2009), Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Analysis of the Muslim Veil Sociology *Compass*, Vol 3, No. 5, pp. 754–763.

1.4 Research Objectives

General Objective of this study is exploring Abrahmic religions' teachings in assigning the philosophy of modesty and modest dress according to their holy books to show the superiority of Islamic teaching in considering women deserving position. This can be categorized in the following steps:

1. To examine the philosophy behind modesty and modest dress in the teachings of Judaism by focusing on the Hebrew Bible.
2. To examine the philosophy behind modesty and modest dress in the teachings of Christianity by focusing on the New Testament.
3. To examine the philosophy behind modesty and modest dress in the teachings of Islam by focusing on the Holy Quran.
4. To analyze the similarities and differences in these religions' teachings concerning the philosophy behind women's modesty and modest dress observance and the outcome of this issue.

1.5 Significant of the Study

In recent decades, the human body has been theorized firstly as “a vehicle for the imposition of social, political, and economic forces onto individuals and groups” and secondly as “a vehicle for resistance to these forces”.⁴⁰ Therefore, women's bodily practices not only function as a mechanism that reflects women's position in culture, but also suggest “a powerful resource for negotiating,

⁴⁰ Reischer, Erica, & Koo, Kathryn S. (2004). The Body Beautiful: Symbolism and Agency in the Social World. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33, pp. 297–317.

redefining, and conceptualizing that position”.⁴¹ Over two past decades, the issue of modesty norms and women's wearing modest dress were widely discussed in academic and media discourse. Beside several academic researches on the modest dress in relation to Muslim women⁴², there are also some works about the Jewish women head covering.⁴³

Dressing modestly is seen as a visible marker of distinction between religious and secular women and it has also become an identifying marker between different affiliations or subdivisions within religious communities. As a direct result, modest dress has the potential to generate what religious scholars have called “The power behind the veil”. According to the advocates of this view, the modest dress enables women freedom of movement by neutralizing sexual tension in the public sphere. The common role of Abrahamic religions is to convey the issue of modesty and modest dress in their rules and ethic orders.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 315.

⁴² See: Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op .cit*. Also see: Ghazal Read, Jen'nan, & Bartkowski, John. P. (2000). To veil or not to veil: A case study of identity negotiation among Muslim women in Austin, Texas, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 14, No. b3, pp. 395–417. M. Daly, Catherine (1999). *The 'Paarda' expression of Hejaab among Afghan women in a non-Muslim community*. El Guindi, Fadwa (1999). *op .cit*. Hoodfar, Homa (2001). *op .cit*. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988). *op .cit*. Lorasdağı, Berrin Koyuncu (2009). The headscarf and ‘Resistance Identity Building’: A case study on headscarf-wearing in Amsterdam. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 32, pp. 453-462. Castelli Elizabeth (Ed.). *Women, gender, religion: A reader*. New York: Palgrave. pp. 420–446. Marshall Gul, Aldikacti (2005). Ideology, progress, and dialogue: A comparison of feminist and Islamist women's approaches to the issues of head covering and work in Turkey, *Gender and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 104–120.

⁴³ See: Zalcborg, Sima (2007). Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain: How Hassidic women cope with the requirement of shaving one's head and wearing a black kerchief. *Gender Issues*, Vol. 24, pp. 13–34. Also see: Schachter, Eli (2004). Identity configuration: A new perspective on identity formation in contemporary society, *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 72, pp. 167–199. Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). From Tichels to hair bands: Modern orthodox women and the practice of head covering, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 34, No. 5, pp. 349–359.

1.6 Scope of Study

The scope of this research is the teachings of Abrahamic religions holy books in this practice. The Abrahamic (or Semitic) religions in this study refer to the three great monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam that assert the prophet Abraham (Hebrew: Abraham; אַבְרָהָם; Arabic: Ibrahim; إبراهيم) as their common forefather.⁴⁴ *The Oxford Dictionary* defines Abrahamic religions as denoting any or all of the religions that revere Abraham as the Biblical patriarch.⁴⁵

This study refers to the concept of modesty as sexual modesty. In fact, particularly today, the concept of modesty is so elusive and its definitions tend to be in some cases controversial.⁴⁶ Several contemporary authors have attempted to explain modesty in measurable traits⁴⁷ for the purpose of conducting new empirical studies⁴⁸ or of integrating existing findings⁴⁹. However, some definitions could be faulted for being overly meticulous and prioritizing rigor. Therefore, there is a need

⁴⁴ Preston, Hunter (2007). *Major Religions of the World Ranked by Number of Adherents*, Published by: the Free Software Foundation, Retrieved November 16, 2007. www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Abrahamic_religions.

⁴⁵ Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press, (UK). Retrieved on 1/6/2014 from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Abrahamic>.

⁴⁶ Caryn Scheinberg, Andrews (2011). Defining and Exploring Modesty in Jewish American Women, *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 818-834

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Cialdini, R. B., Wosinska, W., Dabul, A. J., Whestone-Dion, R., & Heszen, I. (1998). When role salience leads to social role rejection: Modest self-presentation among women and men in two cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 473-481.

⁴⁹ P. Gregg, Aiden, M. Hart, Claire, Sedikides, Constantine (2007). The importance of being modest. In C. Sedikides & S. Spencer (Eds.). *The self: Frontiers in social psychology*, New York: Psychology Press, pp. 163-184. New York: Psychology Press.

to negotiate between rigor and coverage in order to develop a good theoretical definition of a phenomenon.⁵⁰

About the meaning of modesty⁵¹ is written in “*the American Heritage Dictionary*”: “reserve or propriety in speech, dress, or behavior.”⁵²

The New Oxford English Dictionary defines modesty as “the quality or state of being unassuming or moderate in the estimation of one's abilities”.⁵³

“*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*” describes modesty as “freedom from conceit or vanity” principally and modest as “placing a moderate estimate on one's abilities or worth; neither bold nor self-assertive”.⁵⁴ “*Webster's New World Dictionary*” also indicates modest principally as “not vain or boastful, decorous, not extreme, unpretentious”.⁵⁵

In overall, “*Macmillan dictionary*” classifies the meaning of modesty as below:

⁵⁰ P. Gregg, Aiden, M. Hart, Claire, Sedikides, Constantine (2008). Everyday Conceptions of Modesty: A Prototype Analysis, *Bulletin Society for Personality and Social Psychology (PSPB)*. Vol. 34, No. 7, pp. 978-992.

⁵¹ The word of “Modesty” comes from the Latin “modestus”. It literally translates as “keeping due measure”. <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/modesty>.

⁵² The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright ©2000, 4th edition Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

⁵³ Pearsall, J. (Ed.) (2001). *The new Oxford dictionary of English*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁴ Mish, C. (Ed.) (1991). *Webster's ninth new collegiate dictionary*, Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

⁵⁵ Guralnik, D. B. (1984). *Webster's new world dictionary* (2nd college ed.). New York: Warner Books.

1. The tendency of not to talk about yourself, your achievements, or your abilities even if you are successful.⁵⁶

2. Behavior, specifically by women, that is designed to avoid causing sexual feelings in people's relationships. (This definition of modesty refers to perceptible propriety in dress, conduct, and behavior consistently)⁵⁷

3. A feeling of being shy or embarrassed about other people seeing your body.⁵⁸

Thus, the word of modesty has been used as a description of behavior in several qualitative studies. Numerous modern qualitative studies have noted that modesty is considered practicing “safe sex”⁵⁹ and a barrier to seeking attention for breast symptoms⁶⁰, breastfeeding⁶¹ in many cultures.⁶²

⁵⁶ P. Gregg, Aiden, Hart, C., Sedikides, C., & Kumashiro, M. (2007). *Lay conceptions of modesty: A prototype analysis*, Unpublished manuscript, University of Southampton, UK.

⁵⁷ See: Mish, C. (Ed.). (1991). *Webster's ninth new collegiate dictionary*, Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster. Pearsall, J. (Ed.) (2001). *The new Oxford dictionary of English*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁸ The online English dictionary from Macmillan Publishers Limited 2009–2013, Retrieved on 4/8/2014 from <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/modesty>

⁵⁹ Flores-Ortiz, Yvette G. (1994). The role of cultural and gender values in alcohol use patterns among Chicana/ Latina high school and university students: Implications for AIDS prevention. *International Journal of the Addictions*, Vol. 29, No. 9, pp. 1149–1171.

⁶⁰ Facione, Lee KA, (1999). Breast cancer screening in relation to access to health services, *Oncology Nursing Forum*, Vol. 26, No. 4. pp. 689–695.

⁶¹ Raisler, J. (2000). Against the odds: Breastfeeding experience of low income mothers. *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp.253–263.

⁶² Caryn Scheinberg, Andrews (2011). Defining and Exploring Modesty in Jewish American Women, *Journal of Religion and Health*, December, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 818-834.

In two recent preconceptions, modesty in women takes precedence over that in men.⁶³ In fact, a person who behaves modestly abstains from extroverted conduct that is supposed to speak of him or her. This expansive view would also include sexual modesty.⁶⁴ So, modesty has been defined as “a mark of sexual purity and respectable womanhood”, while “false modesty”, a term derived in the 1930s, carried connotations of silliness and embarrassment⁶⁵. Nevertheless, a few recent works have yielded various accounts of modesty. For example, in the Driver's account, modesty is a form of ignorance entailing a lack of self-knowledge, and it is odd to say that this ignorance constitutes a virtue.⁶⁶ However, *Shalit* writes that modesty is not a social construct, but a natural response. *Shalit* also went on to say that modesty is not prudery, but a way to preserve a sense of the erotic in our lives.⁶⁷ In fact, modesty is a mode of dress and deportment intended not to encourage sexual attraction in others but, actual standards vary widely. Nonetheless, modesty virtue is not unique to specific cultures. Modesty is a highly-valued attribute in all

⁶³ See: Heatherington, L., Crown, J., Wagner, H., & Rigby, S. (1989). Toward an understanding of social consequences of "feminine immodesty" about personal achievement. *Sex Roles*, Vol. 20, No. 7-8, pp. 371-380. Also see: Rudman, L. A. (1998). Self-promotion as a risk factor for women: The costs and benefits of counter stereotypical impression management. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 74, No. 3, pp.629-645, Wosinska, W, Dabul, A. J., Whetstone-Dion, R., & Cialdini, R. B. (1996). Selfpresentational responses to success in the organization: The costs and benefits of modesty. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 229-242.

⁶⁴ Ahituv, Yosef (2009). Modesty and Sexuality in Halakhic Literature, Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia, *Jewish Women's Archive*. Retrieved on 1/8/2013 from <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/modesty-and-sexuality-in-halakhic-literature>.

⁶⁵ Reagan, L. J. (1997). Engendering the dread disease: Women, men and cancer, *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 87, No. 11, pp. 1779–1787.

⁶⁶ Allhoff, Fritz (2010). What Is Modesty?, *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 165–187.

⁶⁷ Shalit, Wendy (1999). *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue*, Canada: Harper Perennial, p.125.

cultures, even in contemporary Western society,⁶⁸ but the standards of modesty somehow vary by culture or generation. Most discussions on modesty involve clothing. Men and women are subject to different standards of modesty in dress. Besides, historians and anthropologists show that hair has diverse socio-religious and symbolic value in many civilizations.⁶⁹

Therefore, the term “modesty” can be used in several senses. This research however, deals with the particular character traits in relation to sexual modesty, and will talk about modest dress that point towards an observance of certain mores in most of cultures. This usage certainly stands in some relation to the character trait of modesty since being modest might well engender modest dress.⁷⁰

1.7 Literature Review

In recent years, the modesty rules and women’s modest dress, particularly in the Islamic context, has become the subject of intense scrutiny in media and academic level. The main resources of this study are the holy books of the three Abrahamic religions and their primary leaders' viewpoints and traditions. Other relevant scholars’ books and new articles are also reviewed; although a full comparative work on the philosophy behind modesty and women’s modest dress

⁶⁸ Eagly, A. H., Acksen, B. A. (1971). The Effect of Expecting to Be Evaluated on Change Toward Favorable and Unfavorable Information about Oneself, *Sociometry*, Vol. 34, 411, 422. Jones, E. E., Wortman, C. (1973). *Ingratiation: An attributional approach*, Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press. Leary, M. R. (2005). *The curse of the self: Self-awareness, egoism, and the quality of human life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁹ R. Hallpike, Christopher (1987). "Hair", *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, New York: Macmillan, VI, 154-157.

⁷⁰ Allhoff, Fritz (2010). What Is Modesty?, *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 165–187.

has not been found. Indeed, most research on the reasons of modest dress or hijab focuses on post-colonial or post-September 11 understanding of the modest dress as a complicated political or religious symbol. The most important relevant resources are as follows:

The first book is from Heath⁷¹ that is a collection of twenty-one articles on related topics on the veil and modest dressing. Each of these articles signifies the perspective of their respective authors. Some of these articles have tried to explain the importance and wisdom of the modest dress throughout human history, particularly in relation to Islamic practice. Most of the writings are relevant to Muslim women's modest dress and others relate to orthodox Jewish and some others to Christian practices. Also, there are a few essays about the veil and even male head covering as it is observed in India. In some manuscripts, there are some textual and historical documents on women veiling in the ancient civilizations, as well as in medieval Europe. They demonstrate how some churches and orthodox Jews still contribute to the view of the Muslim veil. So, through this collection of essays, veiling is seen not only as a Muslim practice but as a somewhat universal phenomenon.

Furthermore, besides the scholarly academic discourses, these essays also include several personal reports of participant observer studies and illustration of the social problems and changes in the veiling practice. The editor states that 'for' or 'against' veiling is not the point but all are concerned about women's choice and their well-being and rights to full humanity worldwide.⁷²

One of the positive points of these papers is retrieving women's attitudes toward women's covering differ within closed communities, such as the Hasidic,

⁷¹ Heath, Jennifer (ed.) (2008). *op.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 19.

Amish and Muslims communities in comparison to the attitudes of the open societies. Some of them describe the differing levels of veil observance among the women in these religions, which are reflected in varying rules of dress, from “lower,” to “higher”, in their communities.

Among the articles, *Carrel* has good analyses about “meaningful hierarchies of religiosity” among Hasidic women.⁷³ Some permanent traditions which have their roots in religious text play a role in veiling. *Bell* explores the rich history behind the wedding veil such as the traditional practice for the bride to wear a veil. The goal of this great collection is to provide a platform for describing the variety of preconceptions of the veil throughout history, the reasons for it and the degree of it in numerous contexts. Even though the themes of all articles are not focused on the philosophy and reason of modesty and women veiling also, there is not a full scale comparison on the donning of the veil among the Abrahamic religions. Essentially, this book includes some articles with different topics, purposes and objectives in regards to women's veils without any concentrations on any issues, even on its rejection or acceptance.

Abdel Azeem discusses women’s position and rights in Islamic and Judeo Christian traditions in a comparative study. He explained the position of women in these three religions according to their original sources not as practiced by their followers in the world today. Therefore, most of the evidence cited comes from the Bible, the Talmud, and the Quran and the statements of some of the most influential Rabbis, Church Fathers, as well as the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH).⁷⁴

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷⁴ Abdel Azeem, sheriff (1994). *Women In Islam Versus Women In The Judaeo-Christian Tradition: The Myth & The Reality*, El-falah publisher, Cairo, Egypt. International Islamic Publishing House Antoinette Clark Wire.

The book deals with the veil in the final chapter. This chapter highlighted the existence of the law and tradition for modest conduct as common way of life for these religions. So, it argues out important documents about the similarity of wearing modest dress in Abrahamic religions. Even though, this chapter does not deal with the roots and reasons of this law and does not pay to comparing them in theological argument. In addition this discussion is very brief and does not deal with the issues in details.

The next source of literature is *Bullock*. She converted to Islam while researching for her Ph.D. thesis, which she published it later as this book. In this volume, the author investigated the veil roles in Muslim women's lives. She indicated how today there is a powerful mainstream critique, a popular western notion that the veil is a symbol of Muslim women's oppression and being subjugated by men. Actually this pop culture attitude originated from the mass media, particularly the "women and Islam" books and arts. Bullock considers this mainstream attitude relied on Western politicians and feminists who have a bias and need to assert their interests in the Muslim world. She argues that this attitude is the most simpleminded and unsophisticated view about the reasons and meaning of Muslim's modesty rules. She used historical, theological, and anthropological methodology to support and strengthen her debate; through interviews with fifteen Canadian Muslim women who accordingly, declared the veil as liberating rather than oppressive, particularly in a capitalist culture.⁷⁵ She argues that in a consumerism culture, dressing modestly can be experienced as freedom from the domination of the beauty and attractiveness myth and seen as a symbol of an ideal woman.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Bullock, Katherine (2003). *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes*, Canada: International Institute of Islamic Thought. Herndon.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Through her search for the reason and meaning of the modest dress among Muslim women in Canada, she critically examined the western propaganda's perceptions of the veil. She brought respectability to the voice of the observant Muslim women and asserted that the liberty and equality of women are fundamental to Islam itself. Among today's several schools of feminism, she prefers a view she called a 'contextual approach'. Although her work is a good resource for an investigation on the wisdom of Muslim modest dress in today's world, it is not a comparative study. Nevertheless, her arguments are still relevant to this thesis's topic.

Aameri's book⁷⁷ is a comparative study about women's Hijab in Islamic, Judaic and Christian law in Arabic language. The author has presented several reliable textual and historical evidences on the veil and cited many records from contemporary scholars and clergies. Sami answers several misgivings about women veiling in Islam by emphasising on the Quran and the sayings of Prophet. In chapter of "Hijab in Judaism" he explores the veil in early times, and Judaic jurisprudence and history. The final chapter "Hijab in Christianity" explores the importance of clothing and veil in the New Testament among the Church fathers and saints. Sami completes this chapter by investigating the necessity of wearing veil in the mass and in Christian history.

This book uses appropriate and reasonable documents about the commonality of women veiling from the main resources of these faiths and from contemporary academic records. Nevertheless, this study is brief and does not sufficiently address the roots and philosophy of such laws.

⁷⁷ Aameri, Sami (2000). *Al- Hijab shariatullah fi-Islam, Al-Yahudiyah Van-Nasranyiah (الحجاب)* *تشریعة الله في الإسلام واليهودية والنصرانية* Maktabul-Mohtadin Al-Islamiyah le Moqarenatul- Adyan, Retrieved on 4/1/2014 from http://www.qur2aan.com/books/ar_Hijab_Sami_Ameri.pdf

*On the Veiling of Virgins*⁷⁸ is the most significant book written about the importance of modesty and women veiling rules and reasons in early Christianity. The author is Tertullian (AD 160-225), one of the Church fathers of the third century.

This book along with some manuscripts of other early Christian thinkers has been edited and printed in 1885 in a ten-volume set. These writings have been heavily influential on the early Church. The translations of these texts are impartially literal.

Tertullian has explained different reasons and dimensions of wearing the veil in 17 chapters. In the first chapter, he shows that the custom of virgins veiling from the turning-point of their age is exacted by truth. He argues the necessity of modesty and veiling not only for married women but also for virgins (but not girl-children) and widows by offering several reasons in accordance with Genesis (Eve's story), attributing it to sex and calling the Virgin Mary a woman. He emphasises that unmarried women must wear the same headdress as other adult women in church.

This book is considered a primary and valuable resource for examining the subject in the Christian tradition. Nevertheless, this book is limited to Christianity.

R. Henkin⁷⁹ has provided a framework for perception of this religious practice. This book is a collection of articles published in modern Orthodox Jewish journals. In these articles, Rabbi Yehuda analyses the issue of pervasive little-

⁷⁸ Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (2004). *De virginibus velandis (On the Veiling of Virgins)*. Trans: S. Thelwall. Publisher: OrthodoxEbooks, Retrieved on 4/1/2014 from <http://aren.org/prison/documents/religion/Church%20Fathers/III.%20On%20the%20Veiling%20of%20Virgins.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Herzl Henkin, Yehuda (2008). *Understanding Tzniut: Modern Controversies in the Jewish Community*, Urim Publications.

understood area of women's modesty in the Jewish community. In *Understanding Tzniut*, some modest behaviour such as handshaking and dancing have been examined. His most central argument against the religious community's obsessive preoccupation with *tzniut* (modesty) is habituation. Quoting extensive halachic sources, he demonstrates that sexual arousal is culturally dependent despite of this centuries-old halachic discourse among rabbis, where Henkin stages his argument against extreme trends in Orthodoxy. He believes that in communities and cultures where men and women mingle freely, certain strictures can be abandoned. Nonetheless, he is careful to point out that it is forbidden to introduce the mingling of the sexes in communities where it does not already exist. Henkin never fully examines the possibility of how habituation could work in the opposite direction to introduce ever more stringent behaviour - a phenomenon that exists today.

In addition, the argument is too technical and bogged down by the intricacies of Jewish law for the taste of the general reader. Furthermore, it includes chapters that have nothing whatsoever to do with *tzniut*. The discussion is related only to Jewish teachings and is not a comparative study among the religions.

Fuchs⁸⁰ emphasises that head covering is part of the prescribed religious garb of observant Jews, both male and female, but it has been contextualised in different ways on the basis of gender. For women, the usual justification for hair covering has to do with modesty, and it is also taken as a sign that the woman is married. This article deals with a different justification found in a number of responses, particularly by Mizrahi rabbis that are not gender-based: *yir'at shamayim* (fear of God). He suggests that the use of hair covering is a tool for empowerment.

⁸⁰ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), Hair Covering for Single Women: A New Reading of Mizrahi Halachic Rulings. *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, Spring 2012, No. 23, p. 35-59.

This article is one of the best resources regarding this research but it is brief and relevant only to Judaic teachings.

R. Ahituv has several articles about *tzniut* (modesty). One of them⁸¹ examined the concept of modesty in Judaic sources and the laws of modesty and their *halakhic* status. He explored the Jewish approaches to sexuality and the bounds of modesty including in the *kabbalistic* view. He attempts to balance the bounds of modesty between *Halakhah* and today reality regarding to preserve Jewish national sanctity. He concludes that modest behaviour in the sexual realm is mandatory for both the male and the female even in sinful thoughts.

This article has paid attention to the conception and terms of modesty and different scholars' approaches in this regard. Nevertheless, this work is brief and not a comparative study.

Ternikar on the other hand, explored a cross-cultural view on Muslim women veiling, highlighting the differences and similarities between Christianity and Judaism in the article; *Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Analysis of the Muslim Veil*. She argued that modesty norms are not only in behavior but also in dress are always significant in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. She went on to examine the importance of modesty and modest dress among Muslim women and to explore the contemporary reasons for veiling in a cross-cultural context. Finally, she sought to develop some analytical comparisons, emphasizing the similarities that these Muslim women share with their Christian and Jewish counterparts, while hoping to de-Orientalize the practice of veiling.⁸²

⁸¹ Ahituv, Yosef (2009), Modesty and Sexuality in Halakhic Literature. *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. Jewish Women's Archive. (Viewed on August 1, 2013) <<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/modesty-and-sexuality-in-halakhic-literature>>.

⁸² Ternikar, Farha (2009). *Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Analysis of the Muslim Veil*, *Sociology Compass*, Vol 3, No. 5, pp. 754–763.

According to her study, Muslim women maintain modesty norms in North America as well as in other parts of the world, as wearing modest dress provides woman with a sense of identity and religious culture, and offers many women more respect and mobility in certain communities.

She mentioned that some Muslim feminists argued that the veil in fact allows women in Muslim communities more freedom in the public spheres, including access to work and education. Also, she emphasized that veiling is shaped by socio-economic and geo-political factors in many parts of the world. Thus, this work explored how Muslim women in North America negotiate modest norms by exploring cross-cultural research on the origins of veiling and also emphasized that in the United States, the veil is often a 'choice' that rewards women with respect and honor in their religious communities.

The significance of this research is the body of evidence it brought forth from Abrahamic religions in the sociology context for realizing modesty norms in their communities. Also, it asserts the similarities in modesty rules in the traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam that is relevant to this research. But, it is a study that is based on a group of Muslim women in North America and is focused on contemporary reasons of their modest dresses and contemporary scholars' works on the issue historically and sociologically. So, it did not include the textual reasons in the Quran or the other scriptures for the comparison. Furthermore, the differences of these faiths on the issue were not discussed.

1.8 Research Methodology

This research is based on qualitative method that has an inductive approach and its goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophy and reason of modesty norms and women's wearing modest dress in Abrahamic faiths as the great divine religions. This is done to arrive at the common wisdom of God's command

and to reflect on the origin of some of the differences of their reasoning. Although this study employs two types of qualitative research designs i.e. a historical research that describes “what was” in an attempt to recreate the past and an Ethnographic research that develops analytical descriptions of current systems, and understandings of the shared beliefs and practices of a particular group or culture, this study predominantly takes on a textual analysis of the evidence. Generally, the following proposed steps have been considered to meet the objectives of this study:

1-Identifying the main research questions in connection to the objectives

2-Conducting a review of the relevant literature to answer the research questions and support the ensuing arguments

3-Determining the parameters of study; selecting the main methods, sites, and subjects for the research

4-Collecting, documenting, classifying and coding the data

5-Analyzing the data by codifying the common and different data among the religions

This research as textual and attributive review will rely on various resources both primary and secondary such as books, journals, theses, and on-line materials. Among the books, the main and primary sources are the holy books and the important and valid commentary books on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In addition, most of the articles cited and referred to are from ISI indexed journals, which are available in the University of Malay Library. At the same time the following libraries have been sourced for books, ebooks and other Electronic databases in some cases:

- Islamic Library of University of Malaya (UM)
- Library of Gombak, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)
- Library of University of Science Malaysia (USM)

- National Library of Iran
- Library of Iranian Jewish community

The selection of the general topics began with collecting information systematically, in line with the procedures of an investigation. As the first step, a design for the organization of the research and its development regarding to the main objectives of the study has been prepared.

This research go on to recover the related doctrines for the three religions that are then discussed in detail and documented in three chapters (a chapter for every religion), to understand how their teachings have traditionally interpreted the issue of the modesty norms. In every chapter first, as a general inquiry, the position of women in creation, role and duties in society in the respective religion's perspective will be investigated and explained as an introduction of discussion. Then, for clarifying the conception and prevalent terms of modesty and modest dress and their definition in each of the religion concerned, the conception in the holy books and traditions as their origins will be discussed. In this order, a collection the meanings and definitions from dictionaries, lexicons and also valid commentaries of every religion will be provided as well.

Next a “theoretical analysis” as a comparative method will be applied by coding the main and common reasons, since this thesis is seeking to identify and understand the similarities of the teachings from these different religions Comparing the various relevant doctrines from different commentaries might raise many difficulties as it requires a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth insight along with philosophical underpinning on reasons that affect modest behavior.

Since every qualitative research naturally has a subjective bias, analysis of the data will involve a systematic process involving coding, fomulating, clasifying and finally comparing them to ensure that the results are convincing, reliable and trustworthy. For each step in these procedures, particularly in validating the relaibility of the results, interviews with selected clergies will be carried out to

support the analysis. The authenticity and cogency of the research depends upon the validity of the data and the systematic way in which the data is analysed. Accordingly, the research relied on valid early scholarship and traditional books rather than contemporary opinions.

The final section as the conclusion will look into formulating and summarizing the concepts based on the similarities and differences arrived at from the analysis. By juxtaposing the formal analysis with the teachings and traditions of these religions, as well as interpretative analysis, this research will explain plausible re-understanding of the similarities and differences of the modesty conception and meaning of modesty norms in each of the three Abrahamic faiths.

1.9 Organization of the Research

The research is presented in six chapters:

The first chapter is an introduction of the research that illustrated the background, statement of the problem, main questions, objectives, scope, and significance, methodology of the study and also literature review and organization of this writing.

The three next chapters will discuss about the conceptions and philosophy of modesty and modest dress in all Abrahamic religions. In every chapter, firstly the position of women will be examined as introductory. Then, the particular terms and conceptions of modesty and modest dress in every religion will be studied. After that the reasons of modesty observation in their holy book and traditions has been discussed.

Second chapter is related to the oldest Abrahamic faiths i.e. Judaism that is including the following parts: the position of woman in Judaic tradition, the

concepts and reasons of modesty and modest dress according to Hebrew Bible, Talmud and important commentaries.

Third chapter will discuss about the position of woman in Christian teachings and different concepts and reasons of modesty and modest dress in the New Testament.

Fourth chapter discusses about the position of woman in Qur'anic view, and then the conceptions and reasons of modesty and modest dress will be examined in Qur'an.

Fifth chapter will analyze the finding of the research by comparing similarities and differences of their teachings regarding to the position of woman and reasons of modesty and their modest dress. Also, feministic critiques in this regard will be scrutinized.

Sixth chapter as final chapter will include the study by mentioning the summary of the work, findings and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND MODEST DRESS OBSERVANCE OF WOMEN IN JUDAISM

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND MODEST DRESS OBSERVANCE OF WOMEN IN JUDAISM

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is related to the oldest Abrahamic faiths i.e. Judaism and examines the philosophy of observance of modesty and women's modest dress in the religion of Judaism. As introduction, this section discusses the position of women in Judaic teaching briefly and will introduce the certain conceptions and terms of modesty and modest dress in the Judaic teachings and tradition. Then, the reasons of modesty and women's modest dress in Judaic teachings will be examined.

2.1 The Position of Women in Judaism

Among the Abrahamic religions, Judaism with over 3300⁸³ years of existence is considered the oldest religion which has *Sharia* (law) and specific instructions on various affairs of life. The teachings of Torah⁸⁴ as the most important revelation of God to Moses (PBUH) include the story of Genesis that implies the women's status and role.

⁸³ According to the Jewish calendar based on documentation of the Hebrew Bible about 3322 years (until the year 2015 and in Hebrew year 5776) have passed from exit of Israelites from Egypt.

⁸⁴ Torah (Hebrew: תּוֹרָה) means "Instruction" or "Teaching". (Neusner, Jacob (2004). The Emergence of Judaism, Westminster John Knox Press, p. 57) Torah includes five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The position of women is not easily defined in Judaic teachings. In traditional Judaism as with other Abrahamic religions, the primary role of a woman is wife and mother and as keeper of the household; this is the basis of most of the general parameters of Jewish law. So, throughout the centuries, the occupations as wife and mother have been the major vehicles of devout expression for Jewish women.

Generally, the position of woman in the Hebrew Bible is controversial even within contemporary Israeli secular culture and tradition where the belief that women have a seductive and guilty nature due to Eve's sin is still dominant. They also perceive women as the property of their husbands.⁸⁵ In recent centuries, this issue has always been under feministic critiques.

In the holy book of Jews, the Hebrew Bible, through various stories, contradictory issues about the creation and position of women can be found. The Torah says that it was Eve who instigated Adam towards disobedience and to eat the Forbidden fruit, which caused them to fall to earth. Such narrations throughout the history of the Jews and Christianity were effective in weakening and subordinating women's personality because the duty of women in the second story in the Genesis volume is to give birth and to obey men and also in some Jewish commentaries being modest and wearing modest dress are seen as a sign of shame and as a way to avoid being attractive.

This position of woman has led every Jew to read these three blessing prayers everyday: "Blessed is God who created me a Jewish and not a woman, illiterate and ignorant."⁸⁶ However, there were women during the Israelite prophets'

⁸⁵ Kamir, Orit (2006), *The king's daughter: Honor is interior, An invitation to Israeli feminism, Democratic Culture*, No, 10, pp .409–475.

⁸⁶ Epstein, I (1948). *The Babylonian Talmud Kodashin, Translation, Soncino Press, England: London, Vol. 1, Menahoth, 43B*

era who hold less humiliating and pious positions such as advisers and arbitrators. Jewish women are portrayed differently in some commands and orders in comparison to men and are sometimes exempted from observing some of the orders which are in the form of commands during particular designated times.⁸⁷ They are exempted rather than prohibited from obeying these commands but the women who so desire, are allowed to do more *Mitzvoth* (duties).⁸⁸ More importantly, in Judaic teachings, a woman can achieve merit and perfection by observing modesty, and to limit their duties to housekeeping and encouraging the husband and children to learn the Torah. However, the cultured women in Israelite tribes have been portrayed in the Torah to have been involved with the social services, while modesty has mostly been one of their important characteristics.

Most of the recent academic literatures on head covering are concerned with Muslim women⁸⁹ and only a few works have been written about Jewish women. Due to the diaspora of Jewish people today, there are some differences in the quality of adherence to the rules on head covering. Nevertheless, the underlying base of the general procedures and methods can be obtained from the Jewish's

⁸⁷ Talmud, Mishna Kodashin, *op. cit.*, 7:1.

⁸⁸ Tali & Yehoshua Grunstein (2013), The Bat Mitzva files, Beth Israel Synagogue, (Tevet of 5765). Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from <http://www.lookstein.org/resources/batmitzvabook.pdf>

⁸⁹ See: Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, Vol. 30, No. 65–88. Lorasdağı, Berrin Koyuncu (2009). The headscarf and 'Resistance Identity Building': A case study on headscarf-wearing in Amsterdam. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 32, pp. 453–462. Daly, Catherine M. (1999). *Arthur, Linda* (Ed.). *Religion, Dress and the Body*, Oxford: Berg. El Guindi, Fadwa (1999). *op. cit.*, Ghazal Read, Jen'nan, & Bartkowski, John. P. (2000). To veil or not to veil: A case study of identity negotiation among Muslim women in Austin, Texas. *Gender & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 395–417. Hoodfar, Homa (2001). *op. cit.* Castelli, Elizabeth A., and Rosamond C. Rodman (2001). *Women, gender, religion: A reader*. New York: Palgrave. pp. 420–446. Marshall Gul, Aldikacti (2005). *op. cit.* Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op. cit.*

scripture (Hebrew Bible), the Talmud and also from some Jewish scholars' books and articles.

2.2 The Conception of Modesty and Modest Dress in Judaism

Generally, the Hebrew Bible reproaches immodesty, but no explicit command to cover the head or body can be found, except for some verses that imply so. In the Talmud, besides some recommendations for the observance of modesty and wearing modest dress in public, there are many rules in relation to these cases. Accordingly, several Judaic sources prescribe modesty for both men and women. Based on Jewish tradition, a man's head covering is as a sign of humility before God and an external display of piety and *Yir'at shamayim* (fear of God). Alongside the obligation that revolves upon men, there is also an obligation for women to cover their hair or even all the body, in different roots and philosophy, at both the symbolic and the practical levels.⁹⁰ In fact, since ancient times, the head covering was characterized as the attire of Jewish women.⁹¹ Meanwhile, in the recent centuries, along with social changes in the western communities, the head covering has become a controversial issue, particularly, in relation to its root as a "*Torah-derived*", or "*Jewish Law*" (seems to be a Jewish practice stemming from the people, i.e., what we have described as custom). So,

⁹⁰ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). From Tichels to hair bands: Modern orthodox women and the practice of head covering, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 34, No. 5, pp. 349–359.

⁹¹ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). Hair Covering for Single Women: A New Reading of Mizrahi Halakhic Rulings. *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, Spring 2012, No. 23, p. 35-59.

recently, it has been at the center of debate in the Jewish world, not only about the extent to which it is required, but also about the types of covering.⁹²

A. *Tzniut*

According to Orthodox Judaism as derived from various sources in the *Halakha* (Jewish law),⁹³ the Jewish notion and standards of modesty in dress and behavior that is particularly relating to women is known as *Tzniut*. Usually, in Judaic culture, modesty is called *Tzniut*, *Zeni'ut* or *Tseni'ut* (Hebrew: צניעות).⁹⁴ This term is used in two meanings: humility and also the character of being modesty; mostly it has been used with regard to the rules of dress for women. In fact, *Tzniut* is important not only in aspects of clothing but also extends to behavior. Today, in academic debates *Tzniut* as the Jewish standards of modesty in dress and conduct is often the focus.⁹⁵ This section examines the *Tanakh* and Talmudic teachings regarding this concept of *Tzniut* so as to clarify the discussion on its meaning. The concept of *Tzniut* has a great influence within Orthodox Judaism and sometimes within Conservative Judaism. The conceptual definition of *Tzniut*, with reference to the *Tanakh*,⁹⁶ contains two expressions related to its root, but neither of them is explicitly connected with sexual modesty. The verb *tzana* (to be humble)

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Herzl Henkin, Yehuda (2003). Contemporary Tseni'ut, *Tradition*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 1-48.

⁹⁴ The *Sephardi* pronunciation is “*Tzniut*” and *Ashkenazi* pronunciation is “*tznius*”. (Online Encyclopedia Retrieved on 4/8/2013 from <http://www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Tzniut>)

⁹⁵ Herzl Henkin, Yehuda (2003). *op. cit.*

⁹⁶ *Tanakh* or Hebrew Bible is an acronym derived from the names of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible: Torah (Instruction, or Law, also called the Pentateuch). Nevi'im (Prophets). and Ketuvim (Writings). TaNaKh.

exists in Prov 11:2 and "walk humbly" in Micah 6:8. The prophet *Micah*, as an example of the expansive view of modesty states:

“He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice and to love goodness, and be tzanua (modestly) in walking with your God (והצנע לכת עם א-להיך).”⁹⁷

Micah considers modesty as one of God's commands: "be *tzanua* in walking with your God". R. Willig (1947) also referred to the same evidence:

“Hashem⁹⁸ (God) had spoken to Moshe: Tznius (modesty) is beautiful, as it says in (Micha 6:8); "to walk humbly in (before) your G-d⁹⁹.”¹⁰⁰

Also, in the Babylonian Talmud¹⁰¹, there is an injunction at Micah 6:8 to walk humbly with your God" as referring to modesty and discretion in dress and

⁹⁷ Micah 6:8

⁹⁸ *HaShem* is the Hebrew word which many pious Jews use instead of the *yod-hey-vav-hey* (יהוה–YHVH) name, in casual conversations, and literally means “The Name”. (Hillel, ben David (Comments submitted to: Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian Greg Killian) (2014). Retrieved on 4/8/2014 from <http://www.betemunah.org/>.)

⁹⁹ G-d: A way of avoiding writing a name of G-d in some Jewish literature, to avoid the risk of the sin of erasing or defacing the Name.

¹⁰⁰ Willig, Mordechai (2010). Modesty: A Timeless Principle, Copyright © by The Torah Web Foundation. Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2010/parsha/rwil_bamidbar.html,

¹⁰¹ The Babylonian Talmud is a collection of study teachings based upon the Hebrew Bible and oral commentaries of Jewish learning. Most of the Rabbis cited in the Talmud lived from 20 B.C. to 450 A.D.” In fact, name of two works which have been preserved to posterity as the product of the Palestinian and Babylonian schools during the *Amoraic* period, which extended from the third to the fifth century C.E. One of these compilations is entitled "*Talmud Yerushalmi*" (Jerusalem Talmud) and the other "*Talmud Babli*" (Babylonian Talmud). Used alone, the word "Talmud" generally denotes "*Talmud Babli*," (online Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) Retrieved on 6/20/2015 from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10729-Talmud>)

behavior.¹⁰² In fact, humility is an utmost ideal within Judaism.¹⁰³ Furthermore, Moses (PBUH) is considered as "exceedingly humble, more than any man in the world"¹⁰⁴., The Talmud also states that humility is one of the characteristic traits of the Jewish people,¹⁰⁵ as evident in the fact that Moses (PBUH) is considered as "exceedingly humble, more than any man in the world". As mentioned earlier, the concept of *Tzniut* has a dual meaning in the moral manners literature (especially in the Kabbalistic¹⁰⁶ thought) with a few differences in the nature of modesty in men and women.¹⁰⁷

Wisdom is also linked with *Tzniut*. In the Proverbs of Solomon it is stated: "...but wisdom is with the modesty (*zenu'im*"; חכמה צנועים ואת)."¹⁰⁸ There is only 1 sentence on Wisdom and *Tzniut*, where is the discussion on Wisdom and *Tzniut*? The next paragraph is about humbleness.

¹⁰² Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 49b

¹⁰³ Eidelberg, Paul (1996). *Judaic man: toward a reconstruction of Western civilization*, Book Description: The Caslon Company, New Jersey, p.193.

¹⁰⁴ Num 12:3

¹⁰⁵ Talmud, Tractate Yevamot 79a

¹⁰⁶ The Kabbalah (also *Cabala*, *Kabala*, *Kaballah*, *Qaballah*, etc.) is a mystical Jewish tradition that teaches that the elect of God shall know both Him and the universe and will be raised above common knowledge to a spiritual level where they will understand the secrets of Holy Writ and creation through symbolic interpretation. Kabbalists affirm that the elect shall discover in the ancient texts whatever they choose, and they have the right to assert that the things they discover had been in the sacred scriptures from the beginning. ("Kabbalah" Gale Encyclopedia of the Unusual and Unexplained (2003). Retrieved on 12/4/ 2015 from <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3406300163.html>)

¹⁰⁷ Ahituv, Yosef (2009). Modesty and Sexuality in Halakhic Literature. *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. Jewish Women's Archive. (Viewed on August) Retrieved on 1/8/ 2013 from <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/modesty-and-sexuality-in-halakhic-literature>>.

¹⁰⁸ Prov 11:2.

Another appearance of *Tzniut* is assumed to be in relation to humbleness. Nevertheless, the rabbinic literature has made expansive use of this term with sexual connotations, although it still has not led to its meaning. So, *Tzniut*, in its broad sense is considered as a mode of ethical conduct related to humility. Therefore, a person who behaves modestly abstains from exhibitivemanners when speaking of themselves. This extensive view also includes sexual modesty.¹⁰⁹

Falk (1896-1986), elaborates on *Tznius* as a "woman's ultimate distinction", as it relates to her purity, humility and righteousness.¹¹⁰ He explains the two meanings of *tznius* and writes that this word literally, means "hidden" and is used to describe two attributes that are seemingly totally different. For refinement of dress, conduct and also for the trait of unpretentiousness and humility; the opposite of which is arrogance and pride.¹¹¹ The same occurs in the English language where the word "modesty" is used to describe people possessing both these traits, which appear to be unconnected and are two very different attributes.¹¹² Therefore, *tzniut* includes several instructions in modest conduct such as the prohibition of *Negiah*¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ahituv, Yosef (2013). *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ Falk, Pesach Eliyahu (1998). Sefer 'Oz Ye-hadar Levushah: Modesty: An adornment for life; Halachos and attitudes concerning rules of Tznius of dress and conduct. Feldheim Publishers, Gateshead, England., pp: 228-240.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Weinstein Sepinwall, Sharyn (2002). *Women of Valour: Literacy as the Creation of Personal Meaning in the Lives of a Select Group of Hassidic Women in Quebec*, Ph.D. Thesis from the Faculty of Education, McGill University, Canada, p. 43.

¹¹³ *Negiah*: literally "touch," is the concept in *Halakha* that forbids or restricts physical contact with a member of the opposite sex (except for one's spouse, children, siblings, grandchildren, parents, and grandparents). (Even HaEzer 21:7 and Beis Shmuel 14; Yaakov Fuchs, Yitzchak (1985). *Bas Yisrael, Halichos*, Targum Press, English edition, Vol. 1, pp. 108-109.)

(physical contact or touch between men and women), *Kol Isha*¹¹⁴ (the voice of a woman) and other immodest sexual behavior that is referred to as *Kalut rosh*" (literally, frivolity).

B. *Derekh erez*

Another word linked to the meaning of the concept of modesty is the term "*Derekh erez*" that also has a dual meaning in the rabbinic literature. In addition to demonstrating polite and proper general social conduct, it also expresses direction and recommendations about sexual behavior. Even though, the term *Tzniut* prevailed when referring to sexual connotation, over time this meaning began to be taken over by the term *Derekh erez*.¹¹⁵ Also, the rabbis use the word *Kalut rosh* when referring to immodest sexual behavior. This term has been used by the Talmud in its account of the separation of men from women at some Jewish celebrations.

The Oral Law¹¹⁶ tradition is the source of all the legal restrictions relating to modesty and the obstructions restrictions against *Arayot* (literally nakedness) is the forbidden incestuous sexual relationships; also applied in a more general sense to

¹¹⁴ According to Talmud: Berakhot 24a, Kiddushin 70b and Sotah 48a of *Shmuel*'s statement: "Kol b'isha *Ervah*," the voice of a woman is *Ervah*, as it is written, "Sweet is your voice, comely your appearance." (Song of Songs 2:14)

¹¹⁵ Ahituv, Yosef (2013). *op. cit.*

¹¹⁶ The Torah has two parts: The "*Torah Shebichtav*" (Written Law). which is composed of the twenty-four books of the *Tanakh*, and the "*Torah Sheba'al Peh*" (Oral Law). Originally the Oral Law was not transcribed. Instead it was transmitted from father to son and from teacher to disciple (thus the name "Oral" Law). According to Jewish tradition, the Oral Torah was passed down orally in an unbroken chain from generation to generation until its contents were finally committed to writing following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, when Jewish civilization was faced with an existential threat. (Howard Schwartz, *Tree of souls: the mythology of Judaism*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. lv)

all forbidden behavior of sexual nature).¹¹⁷ The word of *Arayot* is used in the Torah as below:

“None of you shall come near anyone of his own flesh to uncover nakedness”.¹¹⁸

Another basic verse in which modesty has been recommended is:

“When you go out as a troop against your enemies, be on your guard against anything untoward.”¹¹⁹

Several explanations use this verse as a general Biblical base for modest and reserved behavior as well as a caution against sexual provocations. This general recommendation includes different prohibitions, such as gazing at a woman or even her clothing, and looking at coupling animals (BT Avodah Zarah 20a–b).¹²⁰

Today, modern Orthodox women cover their hair in a variety of ways; with scarves (*Tichels*¹²¹ in *Yiddish*¹²²: *Tikhl*), *kerchiefs*¹²³ (*bandanas*), *Shaitels* (wigs), hats, berets and baseball caps.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Lev 18:6

¹¹⁹ Deut 23:10

¹²⁰ Ahituv, Yosef (2013). *op. cit.*

¹²¹ *Tichel*: also called a *mitpachat* (Hebrew מִטְפָּחַת *mitpahat*). a headscarf worn by married Jewish women in compliance with the code of modesty known as Tzniut. (Retrieved on 4/2/2013 from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/tichel>)

¹²² *Yiddish*: A language based on German that is written in Hebrew characters and that was originally spoken by Jews of central and eastern Europe

2.3 The Importance of Modesty and Modest Dress

Observance in Judaism

According to traditional Jewish beliefs, the most holy and important resource is the Torah, more specifically the “Written Torah”¹²⁵ that is also called the *Pentateuch*¹²⁶, *Humash*¹²⁷ and *Tanakh*. Sometimes they are referred to as what the Christians called it -- the Old Testament. First we will examine this issue in the Torah and the most important commands in it.

The Ten Commandments¹²⁸ of the prophet Moses (PBUH), also known as the Decalogue¹²⁹, are a set of fundamental principles relating to ethics and worship

¹²³ *Kerchief*: (from the French *couvre-chef*, "cover the head") also known as a bandana is a triangular or square piece of cloth tied around the head or around the neck. (www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Kerchief)

¹²⁴ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

¹²⁵ Written Torah: It contains five books: *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*. The *Nevi'im* comprise eight books subdivided into the Former Prophets, containing the four historical works *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings*; and the Latter Prophets, the oracular discourses of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the Twelve (Minor) Prophets—*Hosea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Jonah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*. (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Last Updated 9/22/2013). Retrieved on 3/3/2015 from <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1785796/Tanakh>)

¹²⁶ *Pentateuch*: This term comes from the Greek term *Pent teuchos* meaning "five-volumed" (book). (Dictionary.com Unabridged, Based on the Random House Dictionary, Random House, Inc. 2013.)

¹²⁷ *Humash* (in Sephardic Hebrew: *khoo-mah-sheem*; Ashkenazic Hebrew: *khoo-maw-shim*): means Pentateuch. (Dictionary.com Unabridged, Based on the Random House Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2013.)

¹²⁸ In biblical Hebrew, the Ten Commandments are called; עשרת הדברים (transliterated *Asereth ha-D'bhārîm*) and in Rabbinical Hebrew; עשרת הדברות (transliterated *Asereth ha-Dibroth*). both means as "the ten words", "the ten sayings" or "the ten matters". (Rooker, Mark (2010). *The Ten Commandments: Ethics for the Twenty-First Century*. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group. p. 3.)

in Judaism and Christianity. The Decalogue appears twice in the Torah - in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy. According to the story in Exodus, Moses (PBUH) received the Ten Commandments at the end of his forty days sojourn on Mount *Sinai* (or *Horeb*) and God inscribed them on two stone tablets.¹³⁰ The Ten Commandments cover the entire range of religion and morals. The observation of *Weinfeld* (1925 - 2009) is shared by a number of scholars who identify that this Ten Commandments has traditionally been understood as a law in itself.¹³¹ The Decalogue includes some instructions to worship only God, to keep the *Sabbath* and prohibitions against murder, theft and adultery. Traditionally, the Jewish read these verses before the Lord three times in a year.¹³² The significance of modesty observance is identified in the seventh and tenth commandments:

7. "You shall not commit adultery."¹³³

10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, manservant or maidservant, ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."¹³⁴

¹²⁹ *Decalogue*: means the Ten Commandments that is derived from Greek root; δεκάλογος, dekalogos, translated (in accusative), deka logous, "ten words" (Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert (1940). *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.)

¹³⁰ Exod 34:28 and Deut 10:4

¹³¹ Weinfeld, Moshe (1990). The Uniqueness of the Decalogue and Its Place in Jewish Tradition, Ben-Zion Segal, ed. *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, Jerusalem: Magnes, Hebrew U, No. 4.

¹³² Hegg, Tim (2007). The Public Reading of Scripture in the 1st Century Synagogue, torahresurce, pp. 1-16. A. Burton, Keith (1998). The Decalogue as Essential Torah in Second Temple Judaism, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Vol. 9, No. 1-2: 310-317.

¹³³ Deut 5:18 and Exod 20:14

¹³⁴ Deut 5: 21 and Exod 20: 17

Both commands signify the observation of modesty in the presence of strange men and women. This observation is recognized to be very important, as it has been ordered strictly in two out of the fundamental Ten Commandments of God to lead the Jewish people.

Generally, covet or desire brings disappointment, mental enslavement, and despair; it can lead to anger, hatred, and aggressive behavior. These teachings show that love is the key to life. So, this should remind that the neighbor and friend, whose happiness must be as dear to you as your own. Thus, in this commandment respect for man, which dictated the preceding commandments, is symbolized in love of the neighbor.¹³⁵ There are many recommendations for chastity and modesty in the Torah; 613 of which called for *Mitzvot*. The Jewish scholars believe through these Laws, God shows His interest in all aspects of man's life through Wisdom and Knowledge. Since God's Law is given for their good, its regulations, both negative and positive are for their protection and prosperity. So, the Talmud states that there are 613 commandments in the Torah (Tractate Makkot 23b²⁴⁸); Positive Commandments (do's) and 365 Negative Commandments (do not's).¹³⁶ Several great Jewish scholars have compiled a complete listing of these commandments. Nevertheless, there is no single definitive list that explicates the 613

¹³⁵ Jacob, Benno (1923). The Decalogue, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Published by: University of Pennsylvania Press. New Series, Published by: University of Pennsylvania Press, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 141-187.

¹³⁶ The 613 commandments (Hebrew: תרי"ג מצוות: *taryag mitzvot*, "613 Mitzvot") is the number of *mitzvot* listed in the Torah, first are codified by Rabbi Simlai in Talmud Makkot 23b. Although there have been many attempts to codify and enumerate the commandments contained in the Torah, the traditional view and the most accepted list is based on Maimonides' enumeration. In the introduction to the first book of the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides lists are mentioned. The 613 commandments are "positive commandments", to perform an act (*mitzvot aseh*). and "negative commandments", to abstain from certain acts (*mitzvot lo taaseh*). These principles of Biblical law are referred to collectively as the "Law of Moses" (Torat Mosheh, תורת משה).

commandments. Prophet *Isaiah* has summarized these 613 commandments into six and prophet Micah has summarized them into three commands as below:

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”¹³⁷

Even though the Bible offers little information on modest attire, only signifying that some covering might have been worn, as was customary throughout the ancient Near East. In the Rabbinic Era, this practice was obligatory. Classical rabbinic sources demonstrate great concern for the practice. Nevertheless, there is no uniform opinion as to whether hair covering is *Pentateuchal* or a custom. By the Middle Ages, hair covering was uniformly observed by Jewish women, while the modern age saw a grass-roots rebellion among women leading to the use of the wig as an alternative to hair covering. The rabbinic opposition was eventually overcome. Gradually, there was widespread disregard for the practice of hair covering itself. Nevertheless, for Jews who were religiously oriented, the problem of how to avoid hair covering within the realm of *halakhah* had to be confronted. There were a few rabbis who tolerated the lapse of the custom with the understanding that society had changed and it was no longer considered immodest to keep one's hair uncovered. Most, however, were determined to protect the *halakhah* from invasion and change.¹³⁸ The term *Tzniut* indicates modesty in dress and behavior in Jewish standards particularly among Orthodox communities; they widely considered it an obligatory law. There are various suggestions and interpretations on how much, when and where the hair needs to be veiled.

¹³⁷ Micah 6:8

¹³⁸ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). To Cover or Not to Cover: That is the Question Jewish, *Hair Laws, Through the Ages*, Retrieved on 4/8/2013 from <http://www.bibleandjewishstudies.net/articles/haircovering.htm>

2.4 The Philosophy of Modesty and Modest Dress in Judaism

All traditional Jewish sources indicate agreement on the wearing of modest dress for women in public places. In fact, a central feature of observance in Jewish women lives is hair covering.¹³⁹ Today, hair covering has become a visible marker of differentiation between religious and secular women and has also become a distinction factor among various affiliations or subdivisions in the religious communities. Feminist authors, on the other hand, have strived to interpret it in the first sight as an oppressive element and sign of subordination, while some more modern Jewish women who comply with these principles ascribe several other meanings to the act of head covering.

The ensuing sections will try to shed light on the philosophy of modest dress based on traditional and modern Judaic sources. The discussion will focus on the reasons for women's *Tzniut*, although the concept covers more than just head covering (covering all main parts of the body) in many of the *halakhic* rules. The use of head covering is one of the prescribed religious attire for Jewish men and women but by different reasons based on gender basis. Generally, the reasons which are mentioned about women veiling are:

2.4.1 Piety and Fear of God (*Yir'at shamayim*)

According to Jewish tradition, head covering, as a fundamental sign of an observant Jewish, is considered the external display of piety and fear of God (in

¹³⁹ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

Hebrew *Yir'at shamayim*). It is meant to be used as a reminder that the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) is omnipresent.¹⁴⁰

Despite the command that both Jewish men and women are to cover their heads, this practice varies in perspective for both genders, at the symbolic and the practical levels.¹⁴¹ As matter of fact, a specific time when Jewish women are required to cover their head is at prayer time, which is derived from two reasons: one of them is shared for men and women.

2.4.1.1 Head Covering as a Pious Practice for Both Men and Women

Primarily, head-covering is meant as a pious action of the God-fearing (Hebrew: *Yir'at shamayim*) and gradually became a major indication of observant Jewish men.¹⁴² As the Talmud states:

“Covering your head would let the fear of heaven to be upon you”.¹⁴³

The prescribed age for Orthodox Jewish men to cover their head is at three or four years old, that is mostly starting with a hat called *Kippah* or *Yarmulke*¹⁴⁴ as a reminder that God or heaven is above them. To them, therefore, it is a means of honoring God. In this approach, there is equality between men and women as they

¹⁴⁰ Ashkenazi, Shlomo (1980). *Mora shamayim ve'eimat shamayim*, *Me'orot*, No.1, pp. 76–78.

¹⁴¹ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

¹⁴² Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

¹⁴³ Shabbat, 156b.

¹⁴⁴ *Kippah* in Hebrew and *Yarmulke* in Yiddish is the traditional male skull cap. (E. Karesh, Sara, M. Hurvitz, Mitchell (2005). *Encyclopedia of Judaism*, *Encyclopedia of world religions*, Infobase Publishing, p. 273).

are being evaluated on equal basis in relation to God.¹⁴⁵ Hence, R. Yosef (1920-2013) argues that as the head covering indicates fear of God, an acceptance of the yoke of heaven indicates an element of equality in the pious position of men and women.¹⁴⁶

The Talmud says that nobody should walk four *cubits*¹⁴⁷ without covering the head, and stressing that “The *Shekhinah* is above the covered head.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, traditionally, Jews believe that the head covering serves as a reminder that the *Shekhinah* is the Omnipresent God. So, the obligation to cover one’s head when reciting for instance, a *Berakhah*, becomes a basic practice of spiritual life.¹⁴⁹

*Mizrahi*¹⁵⁰ rabbis’ articles which have dealt with this justification in a number of *Responsa* (answers) are not gender-based but only that it done out of fear of God.¹⁵¹ Generally, the main character of the attire of both Jewish men and women has been the head-covering since ancient times.¹⁵² Although, this obligation

¹⁴⁵ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁶ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁷ Cubit: Biblical term, unit of length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. A *Cubit* is equivalent to 1.5 feet. (1 foot =12 inches= 30.48 cm)

¹⁴⁸ Talmud, BT Kodashin, 31a.

¹⁴⁹ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁰ *Mizrahi* =(Jewish) Family living in the Orient, to which belong some well-known rabbinical authors. There are two main branches: one in Constantinople, and the other in Jerusalem. The name "Mizrahi" signifies "an Oriental," and is used as a surname by many Persian Jews who have settled in Turkey. (online Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) Retrieved on 6/20/2015 from <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10894-mizrahi>)

¹⁵¹ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

¹⁵² See: Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*, 25p. Also see: Schachter, Eli (2004). Identity configuration: A new perspective on identity formation in contemporary society. *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 72, pp.

is mostly left upon men, there is also an obligation for women to cover their hair, which stems from different legal sources.

R. Hedaya writes that generally there is no dispute over the legal requirements for head covering for either men or women when studying the Torah or when invoking God's name. Also, since girls are supposed to study the Torah with their heads covered, parents and teachers are obligated to warn them. Anyone who behaves otherwise shows disrespect for the fundamentals of the religion. Thus, the sacred obligation promotes upon headmasters and principals of *Beit Yaakov* (Orthodox girls) schools to take up the gauntlet and direct their students to cover their heads while praying, reciting *Berakhot* or reading the Bible.¹⁵³ He also expresses some mystical reasons for his inclinations, implying that hair in kabbalistic literature is relevant to the divine attribute of strict judgment, and hence the need to cover it. R. Hedaya states two sorts of expressions for women's head-covering. Firstly, the kabbalistic explanation refers to hair based on the concept of divine justice. Secondly, a *halakhic* statement includes the same viewpoint as stated by R. Yosef and will be compiled in the second part of this explanation. In this context, the R. Hedaya quotation indicates the absence of distinguishing elements between men and women or boys and girls in terms of head covering. Hence, the forbiddance applies to both in an equal way.¹⁵⁴ Alongside this root of prohibition for both men and women (the external display of piety or fear of God), women are also obligated to cover their hair, but based on a different legal source.¹⁵⁵

167–199. Weiss, Susan (2009). Under Cover: Demystification of Women's Head Covering in Jewish Law, *Nashim, A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*. Spring 2009, No. 17, pp. 89-115.

¹⁵³ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

2.4.1.2 Modesty Observance as a Root of Spiritual Life

Most of the Jewish scholars believe that the demand for stringent modesty standards in Jewish culture branches is from the view that women essentially are a temptation that threatens men's spiritual world. So, women must bear these customs to ensure that the men behave morally.¹⁵⁶ Evidence of this can be found in the story of *Kimchis* (or *Kimhit*). This outstanding woman earned the privilege of seeing seven of her sons who all became *Kohanim Gedolim* (high priests). When asked what notable deed she did to merit having such children she answered: "The hair of my head has never been seen by the ceiling beams of my house "(BT Yonia 47a). Thus, even when she was willing to comb her hair she would avoid exposing her hair properly. For instance, she combed her hair under a shawl that lay loosely over her head. This was the behavior of outstanding women of *tznius* and of course it is not expected of the average woman.¹⁵⁷

The core idea of reducing hair exposure to the possible minimum is to be learnt from *Kimhit* (or *Kimchis*), and her ways should be emulated as much as possible.¹⁵⁸ The rabbis praised pious women such as *Kimhit*, the mother of several high priests, who had taken care not to expose their hair even in the house.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the *Kimhit* narrative plays an ultimate role in her act of head covering as belonging to a tradition that has awarded the woman who covers her hair with God-fearing

¹⁵⁶ See: Marmon, Naomi, Hartman, Tova (2004). Lived regulations, systemic attributions: Menstrual separation and ritual immersion in the experience of Orthodox Jewish women. *Gender & Society*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 389–408. Also see: T. Hartman (2007). *Feminism Encounters Traditional Judaism: Resistance and Accommodation*, Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, pp. 45–61. Block, Sima Zalcborg (2011). *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁷ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Yoma. 47a; Lev. R. 20:11

sons and other good things. In addition to that, through partially exposing and showing some of her hair, a woman harms herself, her husband and her children, as all rabbis agree. In fact, in order to look more attractive, women would leave some of hair uncovered and as *Zohar*¹⁶⁰ mentioned, it is evident that when hair is uncovered in order to attract attention, there would be consequently greater harm and damage:

In this relation, R. Chizkia said, 'the man who let his wife to expose the hair on her head, to leave it uncovered would be the cursed. Covering the hair as one of the modesty performance should be observed even in the home (i.e. not just in public). Poverty would descend upon her home as the result of the woman who leaves some of her hair uncovered for exhibition, and her children would not accomplish the prominence they could have reached, and actually, an impure spirit would dwell in her home. Exposing the hair within her house! If this much in effect is the indoor exposure, imagine the damage caused by exposing her hair outdoors.... A woman should, therefore make sure that not even a single hair has been left uncovered even when she is indoors, and all the more when she goes outdoors.¹⁶¹

Swidler writes that shame would fall on a man who lets the hair of his wife to be seen ... a woman who exposes her hair for self-adornment brings poverty to her home and family.¹⁶² Even the more lenient point of view (that maintains that she is not halachically (by law) duty-bound to have her hair covered in privacy) agrees

¹⁶⁰ Zohar: A medieval mystical work, consisting chiefly of interpretations of and commentaries on the Pentateuch: the definitive work of Jewish cabala. (Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/zohar>)

¹⁶¹ Falk, Pesach Eliyahu (1998). *op. cit.*

¹⁶² Swidler, Leonard J.(1976). *Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism*, Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, pp.121

that it would be an extremely praiseworthy act of *tznius* for a woman to cover her hair at all times (even in bed). Kabbalah states that ‘Great Damage is done by Exposing Hair. However, the view that such an important *Chazal* (teaching of the sages) stated by *Zohar* is not more widely known.¹⁶³

Block when discussing the Ultra-Orthodox Society relates how R. Rabinowitz (1920-2015) had asked his granddaughter to start wearing a cape in *Toldot Aharon* and promised the followers an experience of the miraculous for the first hundred women who use the cape while on earth. Many women who were in need of divine assistance (*yeshu‘ah*) started wearing capes and later experienced miracles. Block, writes of how some recently pious women who were seeking ways of becoming more devout and religious, believe that there is a powerful force embodied in wearing *capas*.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, *Sered* quotes some elderly Jewish women informants in Jerusalem:

“We must cover our hair all the time because God can see it. We must cover our hair, especially in front all the way to the forehead. God gives everything, food and everything, so, we must wear a kerchief.”¹⁶⁵

Berman (1939) adds that women's veiling is a pious sign that assists to affirm the “ongoing quality of their covenant with God” and thus, affirming their identities as observant Jewesses.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Block, Sima Zalberg (2011). *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ Sered, Susan Starr (1992). *Women as Ritual Experts*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 72.

¹⁶⁶ Berman, Saul (1973). The Status of Women in *Halakhic* Judaism, discussing the need of Jewish women for religious symbols, *Tradition*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 5-28,

In this context, some rabbis such as Isserles (1520-1572) require women to have head covering even at home: “it is considered modest for a woman to not show her hair even in her own home.”¹⁶⁷ Sirkes (1561–1640) in his “*Bayit hadash*” also says:

“Complete uncovering of the hair is forbidden, even if she remains in her own courtyard.”¹⁶⁸

In addition, R. Moshe Schreiber (1762–1839), known as the *Ḥatam sofer*, ruled that this is the case even within the home.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless there is some disagreement about the practice¹⁷⁰, for example, R. Moshe Feinstein (1895–1986) disagrees.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, there is a proverb from the observant woman: “I try to cover my hair at all times so that even the four walls will not see my hair.”¹⁷²

Therefore, women modesty observation and moral behavior in Jewish society is considered not only very effective on men’s spiritual life but also as high spiritual level for women to live according to God’s way.

¹⁶⁷ Moses Isserles, *Darkei Moshe* (1572). *Even ha’ezer* 115:4.

¹⁶⁸ Joel Sirkes, *Bayit hadash* (1639). *Even ha’ezer*, Cracow, 115:4.

¹⁶⁹ Sofer, Moshe, sofer, *Ḥatam* (1958). *Orah hayim*, New York, p. 36. His ruling on women’s hair covering draws on kabalistic ideas explained in the Zohar, Parshat Naso, that liken women’s hair to the divine attribute of judgment.

¹⁷⁰ See: Shapiro, Marc (1990). Another example of ‘Minhag America’. *Judaism*, Vol. 54. No. 39, pp. 148–154. Gordon, Samuel (1997). *Head covering for women: A look at the sources*. In F. K. Zisken (Ed.). *The Pardes reader*, Jerusalem: The Pardes Institute, pp. 35-42. Broyde, Michael. J, Krakowski, Lilli (1991). Further on women's hair covering: An exchange. *Judaism*, Vol. 157, No. 40, pp. 79–94. Herzl Henkin, Yehuda (2003). *op. cit.*

¹⁷¹ Feinstein, Iggerot Moshe (1986) (above, note 29). I, *Even ha’ezer* 58.

¹⁷² Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

2.4.1.3 The Reason for Women Head Covering during Prayer

As already mentioned, *Haggadic* traditions with regard to the story of Eve and her sin interpret the custom of hair covering as a sign of women's feeling of shame and guilt for Eve's sin.¹⁷³ The *Midrash*¹⁷⁴ states that Eve's attractiveness is what had stimulated Adam to succumb to temptation. Subsequently, it is her obligation to cover herself modestly. Specifically, *Tanakh* regards her hair to be a symbol of a sexually alluring factor that would make men powerless to resist.¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, in traditional Judaism, a woman's hair is considered *Ervah*¹⁷⁶ (nakedness) and as an erotic stimulus so, during prayer times it must be covered.¹⁷⁷ Fuchs explains that in *halakhah*, the head hair of a Jewish woman and also other parts of her body are generally defined as *Ervah* and during particular activities, such as prayers, it is prohibited to expose any form of *Ervah*.¹⁷⁸ The *Shulchan arukh*,¹⁷⁹ for example, decrees that it is forbidden to recite the *Shema* (Hear, [O] Israel) while facing a woman who is inconsistent in covering her hair.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁴ *Midrash* (from the root, "to study," "to investigate"): The Bible exegesis of the Rabbis which had a moralizing or edifying tendency must be distinguished from that which was of a legal nature: the former is known as *Midrash Haggadah*; the latter, as *Midrash Halakah*. Exegesis from an ethical or devotional point of view admits of more freedom than hermeneutics aiming at the determination of legal maxims. (online Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) Retrieved on 6/20/2015 from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10805-midrash>)

¹⁷⁵ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ According to Berachot, 24a

¹⁷⁷ Gordon, Samuel (1997). *Head covering for women: A look at the sources*. In F. K. Zisken (Ed.). *The Pardes reader* Jerusalem: The Pardes Institute. pp. 35–42. Herzl Henkin, Yehuda (2003). *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁸ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁹ The *Shulchan Aruch* (Hebrew: שולחן ערוך) literally: "Set Table" has been known by some Jewish scholars as "the Code of Jewish Law" (6 Volume Set in English). The *Shulchan Aruch* has been

Nevertheless, Talmudic passages concerning hair covering do not emphasize on the Eve story, even though the women's hair is viewed as being sexually tempting.¹⁸¹ In fact, rabbis retained that the traditional forbiddance for women in terms of displaying their hair was only to prevent the specific feminine attraction and the resulting stimulation that propel men into unholy thoughts. The wig too, they claimed, could evoke the same feelings as the women's own hair. R. Katzenellenbogen, during the 16th century, encouraged women to accept the teachings of their leaders, even when they sometimes proved unpleasant.¹⁸² So, he decrees that hair must be covered totally, while others allow revealing a *Tefach* (a hand's breadth) of hair.¹⁸³

Thus, according to rabbinic principles, recitation of blessings or prayers in the presence of a married bareheaded lady is prohibited. Also, some have stated that single girls too, must cover their heads while reciting the *Berakhot* (blessing), praying, reading the Bible or invoking God's name. Despite this, some contemporary rabbis have pointed out that women are expected to pray with no obligation in head covering.¹⁸⁴

authored by *Yosef Karo* (1488 - 1575) in 1563. (Kantor, Mattis (2005). *Codex Judaica*, NY; Zichron Press.)

¹⁸⁰ Karo, Yosef (2005). *Shulhan arukh*, hayim Orah 75, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). *op. cit.*

¹⁸² Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). *op. cit.*

¹⁸³ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁴ El-Or, Tamar (1997). Visibility and Possibilities: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women between the Domestic and Public Spheres, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 20, Nos. 5/6, pp. 665-73.

2.4.2 The Attractiveness of woman: Temptation of Eve as a Fundamental Reason for Hair Covering

Judeo-Christian teachings consider the Eve story as a fundamental character and identity all women. As a matter of fact, it has regarded that the true nature of women was revealed through Eve's creation, words and actions.¹⁸⁵ So, myth, mainly in religious stories, has a primary role in shaping what is referred to today as "gender ideology".

Concerning the reason for the creation of Eve¹⁸⁶ (*Hawwa*; Ge'ez or *Hiywan*, "the living one" or "the source of life", from the Semitic root *hyw*¹⁸⁷) from Adam's rib (Gen. 2:22) R. *Joshua* indicated that in the Talmud it is stated:

“God hitbonen (looked and thought) from which part of the man’s body the woman should be created. He said: I will not create her from the head, so that she will not raise up her head; not from the eye, so that she will not be curious; not from the ear, so that she will not be an eavesdropper; not from the mouth, so that she will not be talkative; not from the heart, so that she will not be jealous; not from the hand, so that she will not be touching everything; not from the foot, so that she will not be a runabout; but from the rib, which is a concealed place within man: even when man stands naked, it is concealed. For every part of her that He created He said to her: “Modest woman,

¹⁸⁵ L. C. E. Witcombe, Christopher (2000), *Eve and the Identity of Women*, Sweet Briar College, An earlier version of this essay appeared originally in: *Images of Women in Ancient Art*.

¹⁸⁶ Eve’s name as Adam's wife has occurred only four times in the Bible; the first is in Genesis 3:20: "And Adam called his wife's name *Hawwah*; because she was the mother of all living." In *Vulgate* she appears as "Hava" but in the New Testament as "Eva".

¹⁸⁷ *American The American Heritage*® Dictionary of the English Language, 4th edition Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=Eve&submit.x=48&submit.y=16>

modest woman.” Notwithstanding all this, God said (Prov 1:25): “You spurned all my advice”.¹⁸⁸

It can be seen that Eve is considered the first woman in Jewish rabbis' point of view¹⁸⁹, as embodiment of the qualities of all women and generally femininity in the *Talmud*. They have tried to state the gender differences using a portrayal of different creation of woman, and also as being a result of the Sin. Eve's punishment is examined at length in the dicta of the rabbis, in order to express women's sufferings within the first three months of pregnancy, during the birth, in instances of miscarriage, the pain of raising children, that of menstrual periods and other afflictions.¹⁹⁰ Overall, the rabbis have explained the custom of women's hair covering through three reasons regarding to the Eve story:

2.4.2.1 Hair covering a Sign of Shame from the Sin

Principally, the ancient biblical explanation of the need for clothing has centered on human shame. Also, the custom of hair covering has been interpreted by rabbis as a sign of woman's shame and feeling of guilt for Eve's sin¹⁹¹.¹⁹² In fact,

¹⁸⁸ Freedman, H. (1961). *Midrash Rabbah*, The Soncino Press, England London, *Midrash Gen. Rabbah* 18: 2.

¹⁸⁹ Although, some resources has considered her as the second women created. *Lilit* is the name of the first woman that some refer it to the verse in Genesis. So, in rabbinic legend she is Adam's first wife, is supplanted by Eve, and becomes an evil spirit. (Mish, C. (Ed.). (1991). *Webster's ninth new collegiate dictionary*, Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster. Retrieved on 19/6/2015 from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lilith>)

¹⁹⁰ Kadari, Tamar (2009). *Eve: Midrash and Aggadah. Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. 20 March 2009. Jewish Women's Archive. (Retrieved on 21/8/2013 from <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/eve-midrash-and-aggadah>>.

¹⁹¹ Gen 17:8.

¹⁹² Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). *op. cit.*

instead of the *sotah*¹⁹³ imagery employed so heavily in *halakhic* sources, haggadic traditions rely on an equivalent typology by employing the figure of Eve.¹⁹⁴

Blaming women for seduction of men finds fuller expression in “*Fathers*” according to R. *Nathan* (ARN¹⁹⁵):

“She disgraced herself, so she is ashamed in the presence of people.
Apart from that, Eve caused her daughters to cover their heads.”¹⁹⁶

2.4.2.2 Head covering: Women Cursed to Garb as Mourner Forever

The Talmud asserts that ten curses were given to Eve that seven of them¹⁹⁷ were learned from Gen. 3:16.¹⁹⁸ Among these curses is the following: “When she goes out to the marketplace her head has to be covered like a mourner.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ *Sotah*: A wife suspected of adultery. (Grushcow, Lisa J. (2006). *Writing the Wayward Wife: Rabbinic Interpretations of Sotah*. Brill, p. 1.) The name *sotah* is derived from Num. 5:12 based on the word שטה to stray.

¹⁹⁴ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993). *From veil to wig: Jewish women's hair covering*. *Judaism*. Fall 93, Vol. 42 Issue 4, p. 465.

¹⁹⁵ ARN is acronym of: **A**vot de-**R**abbi **N**athan (Hebrew: אבות דרבי נתן). usually printed together with the minor tractates of the Talmud, is a Jewish aggadic work probably compiled in the geonic era (c.700–900 CE).

¹⁹⁶ ARN B. 9:25; later, ARN B. 42:117 discusses the ten curses pronounced on Eve according to his exegesis. Among these curses is the following: “When she goes out to the marketplace her head has to be covered like a mourner.”

¹⁹⁷ “And to the woman [God] said, ‘I will make most severe your pangs in childbearing; in pain shall you bear children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ ” (Gen 3:16) Talmud asserts that Eve was given ten curses, seven of which are learned from Genesis 3:16:

1-2 “I will make most severe” these are the two drops of blood that aggrieve a woman, the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginity;

To these seven, three more curses were added:

“The woman is garbed like a mourner, since she must cover her head; she is banished from the company of all men, since she may be married to only a single husband; and she is imprisoned, since she is always at home”.²⁰⁰

The *Midrash* takes this context in expressing that women walk before the bier at funeral processions, with a cover over the head, to apologize for Eve's having brought death into the world.²⁰¹

3-4 “your pangs” is the anguish entailed in raising children; “in childbearing” is the pain of impregnation; “in pain shall you bear children” is the pain of giving birth;

5- “yet your urge shall be for your husband” is the heartache felt by a woman when her husband sets out on a journey;

6-7 “and he shall rule over you” is the distress of woman, who desires intercourse only in her heart, while the man can explicitly demand it. Urinating in this fashion is modest, and in intercourse the female does not exert herself like the male; furthermore, the husband courts the woman until she is willing to marry him (BT Eruvin 100b). Talmud states that righteous women “were not included in the decree upon Eve,” that is, the difficulties entailed in pregnancy and childbirth do not apply to them (BT Sotah 12a).

¹⁹⁸ Kadari, Tamar (2009). *op. cit.*.

¹⁹⁹ ARN B. 42:117

²⁰⁰ BT Eruvin 100b

²⁰¹ B. Ber. 5 1a. This custom is no longer followed in ultraorthodox Hasidic circles. Women are discouraged from attending funerals altogether because, it is said, the Angel of Death will dance before her. Women are expected to prepare food and bring it to comfort the bereaved. (Bronner, Leila Leah (1993). *op. cit.*)

2.4.2.3 The Seductiveness of Eve as a Cause for Hair Covering

Eve's attractiveness is considered by the *Midrash* implicitly for having contributed to her seduction and the temptation of the man. As a result, modestly covering her hair has become her responsibility, and her hair is regarded as a sexually alluring factor whereby men are weak to resist.²⁰²

Even though Talmudic passages do not mention the Eve story in dealing with hair covering, the notion remains that women's hair is sexually enticing. Talmud emphasizes on the reason that one must not recite the *Shema* prayer in front of a man with uncovered hair.²⁰³ Therefore, women must cover their heads in order not to distract men while praying.²⁰⁴

So, for the rabbis, Eve's sin, , is not only limited to her violation of the divine mandate and causing Adam to sin, but also includes causing their expulsion from the Garden of Eden and the loss of eternal life that had been promised to Adam and Eve. According to R. *Nathan*, Eve dishonored herself and caused her daughters to be ashamed and therefore must cover their heads in the presence of people.²⁰⁵

These explanations of Eve's sin offer fundamental reasons for what leads humans to sin. The use of Eve's sin as a paradigm for human wrongdoing limits her personal guilt. To sum up, the Judeo-Christian conception of women has been

²⁰² Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). *op. cit.*

²⁰³ B. Berakhot 24a.

²⁰⁴ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993). *op. cit.*

²⁰⁵ ARN, B.Ber.51a

poisoned by the belief in the sinful nature of Eve and her female offspring.²⁰⁶ Overall, Eve's sin justifies the root of the importance of modesty as a way of preventing women's attraction that makes men to sin.

In conclusion, the Judeo-Christian preconception of women in this explanation of head covering has been affected by the belief in the sinful nature of Eve and her daughters.²⁰⁷

2.4.3 Hair Covering as a Sign of Matrimony

The story of Isaac's (son of *Abraham* (PBUH)) and *Rebecca's* (or *Rafaqa*) marriage was narrated in Genesis:

“Rebecca also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel. And asked the servant: "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" "He is my master," the servant answered. "So she took her veil and covered herself."²⁰⁸

Hacham Davidi Khansari²⁰⁹ (1922-2006), a former priest of the Iranian Jewish community, considers the veil a necessity in Jewish Law, according to

²⁰⁶ Abdel Azeem, sheriff (1994). *Women In Islam Versus Women In The Judaeo-Christian Tradition: The Myth & The Reality*, El-falah publisher, Cairo, Egypt. International Islamic Publishing House Antoinette Clark Wire, p. 6.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Gen 24:64-65

²⁰⁹ *Hacham Uriel Davidi Khansari* was a famous Jewish (Judeo-Khansari) religious leader and theologian, who was born in Khansar (Iran) and died in the Neve Yaakov section of Jerusalem, Israel, where he had spent the last 12 years of his life. (Yitzchaki, Chaim (2008), *The Story of Hacham Uriel*, Retrieved on 4/4/2013 from www.persianrabbi.com (originally published in Mishpacha Magazine).

this statement of the Torah.²¹⁰ The use of the burqa was unequivocally expressed as the attire for who was to become the wife of Isaac, son of Abraham (PBUH). This shows the widespread use of face veil among Israelite women. Most commentators commend *Rebecca* for her modesty in veiling herself.²¹¹ *Bronner* comments: "Thus the betrothed *Rebecca* covers herself upon first sight of her intended husband," She argues however that veiling was not necessarily a sign of the transition from maidenhood to the married state, although the Ancient Near Eastern sources suggest otherwise.²¹²

Traditionally, every culture has a cult and ceremony for marriage and weddings. A Jewish married woman covers her hair as a symbol that she is married and also belonging to her husband because a *halakhic* marriage sets the status of a woman as man's property.²¹³ This practice as a consequence symbolizes a change in marital status and has become a reminder of one of the basic patriarchal laws.²¹⁴ Throughout the Jewish history, this story of *Rebecca* has led to the tradition of the veiling of the bride in Jewish communities. The practice of the groom or his family who veiled the bride as in the *Bedeken*²¹⁵ ceremony today is cited in many Ancient Near Eastern sources.

²¹⁰ Hamami Lalezar, Younes (2012). The Jewish clergy and thinker of "The Tehran Jewish Committee", Tehran, Iran, Interview by the writer on 21/9/2012.

²¹¹ Adelman, Rachel (2011). From Veils to Goatskins -The Female Ruse in Genesis, *The Journal of the Society for Textual Reasoning*, Vol. 6, No 2.

²¹² Bronner, Leila Leah (1993). *op. cit.*

²¹³ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ "Covering" in Yiddish

Some rabbis allowed different degrees of flexibility in modifying the traditional wedding ritual (as it is today performed in Israel and throughout the Orthodox Jewish world). It comprises the following steps: Before the wedding ceremony itself, the groom signs the *Ketuba* (or *Ketubah*)²¹⁶, an agreement on delineating his financial obligations toward his spouse.²¹⁷ (Only the groom signs and the bride does not need to do so. This practice has become an issue that is often criticized by women because it implies that women are the property of their husbands). Then he covers her face with a veil (just as *Rebecca* did in the story in the Torah). He turns and walks to the *hupah* (marriage canopy), accompanied by the wedding guests, and awaits the bride there. This ritual is called a “*Double Bedeken*,” the traditional *Bedeken* in the *Ashkenazim*^{218, 219}.

Interestingly, there are numerous feminist critics who are against this traditional wedding ritual, and they specifically target the *kiddushin* (*sanctification*) as an acquisition action or a kind of dough-offering oppression.²²⁰ In addition, the

²¹⁶ *Ketuba* or *Kethubah*: The formal contract in a Jewish religious marriage that includes specific financial protection for the wife in the event that the husband dies or divorces her. (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. (1979). *Collins English Dictionary*, Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition 2009 ©, HarperCollins Publishers.) Bloch (1815-1909) writes about this Hebrew term: A marriage contract, containing among other things the settlement on the wife of a certain amount payable at her husband's death or on her being divorced. (Bloch, Moses (1890). *Das Mosaisch-Talmudische Eherecht*, Budapest *idem* , Aus einem Briefe Elkan N. Adlers, ib.)

²¹⁷ *Ashkenazim*: A member of the branch of European Jews, historically *Yiddish*-speaking, who settled in central and eastern Europe. Retrieved on 4/8/2015. <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=Ashkenazim&submit.x=43&submit.y=14>

²¹⁸ Koren, Irit (2005). The Bride's Voice: Religious Women Challenge the Wedding Ritual, *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, No. 10, p. 29-52. 24p.

²¹⁹ Koren, Irit (2005). *op. cit.*

²²⁰ For feminist perspectives on the traditional wedding ritual, and specifically on the legal and cultural implications of *Kodashin* as an act of acquisition, see: Aranoff, Susan (2000). Two Views of Marriage, Two Views of Women: Reconsidering Tav Lemetav Tan du

covering of the bride with the veil has been interpreted as symbolically rendering her invisible. The circling of the groom strikes as indicating that he is at the center, while the bride is at the margins. Also, the seven blessings, recited by men only, do not give women a voice in this part of the ceremony.²²¹ This issue is considered as the first time the patriarch has appeared center-stage since the traumatic scene of his binding.²²² Also, this *Mishna*²²³ view of marriage is recognized as first and foremost as the transfer of ownership of a woman's sexuality.²²⁴ Actually, the *Mishna*'s framers listed the different types of property along with the wife so as to indicate both formal and substantive analogy between the acquisition of the woman's sexuality and the acquisition of chattel. Thus, the traditional text's view of the woman's sexuality (but not necessarily the woman herself) as chattel is further expressed in the unilateral ceremony of espousal, whereby the man recites a formula to the woman, who is forbidden to make any reply. Even if she were to speak, her words would have no effects.²²⁵

Milemetav Armelu, *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues*, No. 3, pp. 199–227. Wegner, Judith (1988). *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah*, New York: Oxford University Press. Okin, Susan (2000). *Marriage, Divorce, and the Politics of Family Life*, Cohen, Tova (ed.). *Marriage, Liberty and Equality: Shall the Three Walk Together?*, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, the Jewish Women's Research Center.

²²¹ Koren, Irit (2005). *op. cit.*

²²² See: Adelman, Rachel (2011). From Veils to Goatskins -The Female Ruse in Genesis, *The Journal of the Society for Textual Reasoning*, Mar2011, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 6.

²²³ *Mishna* is the first part of the Talmud.

²²⁴ Koren, Irit (2005). *op. cit.*

²²⁵ Wegner, Judith (1988). *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah*, New York: Oxford University Press, (note 8). pp. 66–72. In Wegner's view, what is acquired is the woman's sexuality, not the woman herself. Even if the bride were to speak, her words would have no effect, since she is not legally capable of acquiring her groom's sexuality in the way that he is capable of acquiring hers.

Overall, some rabbis such as Epstein (1887-1949) assure that the custom of veiling a Jewish bride was a mark of “ownership or mastery”. Throughout Jewish history, marriage was associated with the wearing of the wedding veil as a sign of belonging to the husband as his property.²²⁶ Also, it is considered as women's dependent status, subordination to the husband.²²⁷

2.4.3.1 The Necessity of Latency and the Veiling the Married Woman

In Judaism, similar to other divine religions, being hidden and secure of women at home is an accustomed behavior:

“Man usually goes forth to the marketplace and gains wisdom from people, while the woman customarily stays at home.”²²⁸

In this context, the Talmud mentioned that a Man's wife is his house.²²⁹ And is praised for it: “A man's wife is praised by being identified as his "bayit"; his home.”²³⁰ In the Talmud, married women are required to be hidden and cover their head in public (exposing their hair was considered to be an indecency).²³¹ Today, in

²²⁶ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

²²⁷ See: Sanday, Peggy Reeves (1982). *Female power and male dominance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Also see; Eilberg, Schwartz, Howard, & Doniger, Wendy (Eds.) (1995). *Off with her head: The denial of women's identity in myth, religion, and culture*. Berkley: University of California Press. Also see: Nussbaum, Martha (1999). *Sex and social justice*. New York: Oxford University Press. Arthur, Linda (1999). *op. cit.* Okin, Susan Moller (1999). *Is multiculturalism bad for women?* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Polhemus, Ted (1978). *The body reader, social aspects of the human body*, New York: Pantheon Books.

²²⁸ Gen. Rabbah 18:1

²²⁹ Mishnah Yoma 1:1

²³⁰ Shabbath 118b, Yoma 2a

many Orthodox Jewish circles, women wear head coverings such as a hat, a snood, or a *Sheitel* (wig) after marriage.

2.4.3.2 Missing the *Ketuba* for the Sake of Lack of Head Covering

There are several rules of modesty and modest dress mentioned in the Talmud that can show the great importance of this issue in Judaism. For instance, a Jewish man can divorce his wife for the sake of immodesty. In the Talmud, these women are put away without receiving *Ketuba*:

“...and a wife that transgresses the *dat Moshe*²³² (Law of Moses) and *dat Yehudit*²³³ (Jewish custom). What (conduct is such that transgresses) the Law of Moses? If she gives her husband untitled food, or has connection with him in her uncleanness, or does not set apart dough-offering, or utters a vow and does not fulfill it. And what (conduct is such that transgresses) Jewish custom? If she goes out with her hair unbound, or spins in the street, or speaks with any man”.²³⁴

²³¹ Matt, Daniel C., ed. (1993). *Walking Humbly with God: The life and writings of Rabbi Hershel Johan Matt*, Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, pp. 173-177.

²³² *Dat Moshe* means "the law of Moses," and it refers to guidelines directly from the Torah. The only aspect of modesty that fits in this category is that a married woman must cover her hair. It is derived from Num 5:18, where the text implies that, for a married woman, uncovered hair is a disgrace. Since it is mentioned in Torah, it becomes permanently institutionalized, i.e. not subject to change. (Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1248044/jewish/Who-Decides-What-is-Modest.htm)

²³³ *Dat Yehudit*, is "the law of the Jewish woman," It refers to the accepted standard of modest dress in the Jewish community." (Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1248044/jewish/Who-Decides-What-is-Modest.htm)

²³⁴ B.Ketubot 72a-b.

“If a woman walked bareheaded in the street, her husband could divorce her without repaying her dowry.”²³⁵

In the “Jewish practice” what are deemed to be a wife's transgressions against are numbered as below:

1. Going out with uncovered head
2. Spinning in the street
3. Conversing with strange men

So, according to the Talmud in *Ketubot*, a woman who chooses to uncover her hair is considered to be of questionable character, and she forfeits her right to her *Ketuba*. Flaunting these signs of possession supported firm consequences within *Mishnaic* law. So, the act of uncovering her hair in public by a married woman is seen as a transgression against her husband. Some rabbis have even encouraged the husband of such women to divorce them²³⁶, and would brand him as evil if he does not.²³⁷ The necessity of hair covering for woman of marital status can be demonstrated according to several evidences in the Talmud:

A woman claimed her *ketuba* and says: "You married me as a virgin, and my *ketuba* is therefore 200 *zuz*²³⁸." And he says' , "Not so, rather I married you

²³⁵ Ketubot 7:6.

²³⁶ Tosefta Sotah 5:9.

²³⁷ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

²³⁸ A *Zuz* or *Zuza*: (Hebrew-זוז; plural *zuzzim*) was an ancient Jewish silver coin struck during the Bar Kochba revolt and that is small silver coinage. This piece is not named in the Scriptures, but is put in most of the tables of Jewish money. It was the fourth part of a shekel, and is referred to in 1 Samuel, ix. 8. Value, 14 cents and 5 mills. (Boss Snowden, James (1864). *Money Terms*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, p. 57.)

as a widow, and thus owe you only a *maneh*."²³⁹ If there are witnesses that she went out with a *hinumeh* (scarf) and her hair was down (around her shoulders), her *ketuba* is 200 *zuz*.²⁴⁰

In the Hebrew Bible, there is a story in the book of *Ruth* (or *Rus*) that is related to the era of Israelite empires (900-1250 BC). In this story, *Ruth* starts gleaning in the farm of a person called *Boaz* who was a rich and godly man. She asks *Boaz* to cover her up with his garment²⁴¹ and thereby takes her as his spouse. So, a husband's sexual property right of the wife is demarked by her head covering. Some authors seek to challenge the concept of the *halakhah* and to instead view and treat women as their husbands' chattel. These rationalizations have a rich textual historical background and are often called up by scholars. Since the Middle Ages, Ashkenazi rabbinic literature have steadily retained the hair covering of married women as a *halakhic* obligation.²⁴² Although most of Jewish couples deny this property rights to declare that their relationship is based on equality and mutuality today, such ancient vestiges expressions of property still play a central role in the modern Jewish State of Israel.²⁴³

²³⁹ *Maneh* or *Mina*: Equal to One-Hundred Shekels which was the Jewish currency. This term was used for silver as well as gold. The weight of it was equal to sixty *shekels*: therefore, the *Maneh* of silver was of the value of \$34.80. (Boss Snowden, James (1864). *Money Terms*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, p. 57.)

²⁴⁰ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

²⁴¹ Ruth 3:9

²⁴² See; Frimer, Dov (1980). *Grounds For Divorce Due To Immoral Behavior (Other Than Adultery) In Jewish Law*; Ph.D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University Of Jerusalem. Broyde, Michael J., Krakowski, Lilli, Shapiro, Marc (1991). Further on Women's Hair Covering: An Exchange, *Judaism*, 40/1 (Winter 1991). pp. 79-94; and Schiller, Mayer (1996). *op. cit.*

²⁴³ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

2.4.4 Sexual Modesty as a Virtue

The common justification for *Tzniut* that today has been limited to the concept of Jewish women's hair covering is for protecting sexual modesty as a virtue. R. Ahituv has demonstrated this modesty through the story of *Ruth*.²⁴⁴ The recorded words and actions are the examples of modesty as understood in the Hebrew Bible. *Boaz* advises *Ruth* with friendly words, as an elderly man rather than a master:

My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.²⁴⁵

In this book there is another phrase which shows the general introduction of veiling among Israelite women:

“He also said, “Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out.” When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her. Then he went back to town.”²⁴⁶

R. Ahituv mentions *Ruth* as an exemplar for *Tzniut* and writes that *Ruth* the *Moabite*, who took care of gleaning the sheaves in a modest manner because it is stated: “she gleaned the sheaves standing, and the fallen, sitting”²⁴⁷. Rashi (1040-1105) says: “and she did not bend to take them, out of modesty”. *Boaz* took her as a

²⁴⁴ Ahituv, Yosef (2013). *op. cit.*

²⁴⁵ Ruth 2:10

²⁴⁶ Ruth 3:15

²⁴⁷ According to; BT Shabbat 113b

wife because he saw her modest behavior.²⁴⁸ Also, R. Willig considers the exemplary status of *Ruth's* modesty, in both her dress and behavior. He writes that other women bent down and gathered (grain), thereby revealing the legs and highlighting the shape of the body. But *Ruth* sat down and gathered, lowering her entire body in a modest way. All the women flirted with the farmers, but she behaved modestly. So, he married her, and she merited to be the mother of royalty, the ancestress of *David*, and ultimately, the *Moshiach*^{249, 250}.

Therefore, this statement of *Tanakh* considers modesty as a praised virtue and explains its manifestation in the different dimensions of *tznius*, which includes separate seating, and entrances for women by using *Mechitza*^{251, 252}. In fact, Jewish law has deliberated these points of Israelites conducts as a paradigm.

2.4.4.1 Protecting the infallibility and modesty of girls

The Torah offers many commands that stresses on the importance to always protect a girl's purity. God's commandments to Prophet Moses (PBUH) highlighted in Leviticus:

²⁴⁸ Ahituv, Yosef (2013), *op. cit.*

²⁴⁹ Mashiah: (an anointed one) The one chosen by God to represent His rulership in Israel and to bear witness to His glory before the nations (comp. II Sam. vii. 8-11, 14; Isa. lv. 4; Ps. lxxxix. 4, 21-29). (Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10729-messiah>)

²⁵⁰ Willig, Mordechai (2010), *op. cit.*

²⁵¹ *Mechitza* (Hebrew: מְחִיצָה, pl. mechitzot): The partition separating men and women in synagogues that adhere to traditional Judaism. (E. Karesh, Sara, M. Hurvitz, Mitchell (2005), *op. cit.* p.318.)

²⁵² Willig, Mordechai (2010), *op. cit.*

"Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness."²⁵³

Elsewhere there are reminders about the worthlessness and abomination of the property that comes out of adultery, and God does not consider that acceptable as payment for any vow:

"No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the Lord your God to pay any vow, because the Lord your God detests them both."²⁵⁴

R. Falk, on the other hand, writes of women in general, he states that without regard to their marital status, covering all parts of their *torso* (main body) in public (in the presence of strangers) is a must.²⁵⁵ These are some evidences that in those days, the unmarried girl, like her married counterpart, may have covered her hair:²⁵⁶

A. The Song of Songs statement

In the Song of Songs this passage is quoted from Solomon:

"Your eyes are like doves behind your veil."²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Lev19: 29

²⁵⁴ Deut 23: 18-17.

²⁵⁵ Falk, Pesach Eliyahu (1998), *op. cit.*, pp. 228-240.

²⁵⁶ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013), *op. cit.*

²⁵⁷ Song 4:1.

The verse shows that the girl had a veil over her hair, although she is considered to be unmarried.²⁵⁸

B. The betrothed *Rebecca*

The betrothed *Rebecca*²⁵⁹ herself dressed modestly upon first sight of her intended husband.²⁶⁰

Maimonides²⁶¹ ruled that according to both the *Dat Moshe* (the Law of Moses) and *Dat Yehudit* (the Law of Jewish), head covering is an obligation for going out and sometimes even two head covering. His analysis shows that this rule appears to apply to all women, unmarried and married, young and old.²⁶² Also, the *Bayit ḥadash* recommends that regarding to the account of *BT Ketubot 72a*, the biblical obligation of women's hair covering can be taken to apply to all Jewish women (married or formerly married).²⁶³ The *Shulḥan arukh* shows that there is no any difference between married and unmarried woman:

²⁵⁸ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013), *op. cit.*

²⁵⁹ Gen 24:65.

²⁶⁰ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013), *op. cit.*

²⁶¹ *Moses ben Maimon* [known to English speaking audiences as *Maimonides* and Hebrew speaking as *Rambam*] (1138–1204) is the greatest Jewish philosopher of the medieval period and is still widely read today. The *Mishneh Torah*, his 14-volume compendium of Jewish law, established him as the leading rabbinic authority of his time and quite possibly of all time. His philosophic masterpiece, the *Guide of the Perplexed*, is a sustained treatment of Jewish thought and practice that seeks to resolve the conflict between religious knowledge and secular. (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, First published Tue Jan 24, 2006; substantive revision; Wed Jun 12, 2013.)

²⁶² Today, among Jewish of Yemen, it is still customary for unmarried women to cover their hair. This may have been due to the community's literal interpretation of Maimonides. See: R. Kapach, Yiḥiye (1963), *The Customs of Yemen*, Jerusalem, p. 187.

²⁶³ Sirkes, *Bayit ḥadash*, *Even ha'ezer* 21:2, at the incipit Lo.

“Single or married Jewish women ought not to appear in public with their uncovered hair.”²⁶⁴

Nevertheless, some authorities have different views. R. Yosef (1920) remarks on the possibility of this interpretation, and rejects it.²⁶⁵ In fact, the source for this position is BT Ketubot 15b, which addresses the question of how a woman who was still in divorce proceedings demonstrates that the marriage was her first, and she is therefore entitled to a larger marriage settlement: “If witnesses saw her under her wedding canopy with her hair uncovered, her *ketubah* is worth 200 [zuz].” In other words, uncovered hair at her wedding constitutes visual proof that she was never married before, since only single women do not cover their hair.²⁶⁶

R. Frankel (1704–1762), a prominent commentator on the Jerusalem Talmud deals with the concept of *Dat Yehudit* and concludes that the obligation to go out wearing a hair covering applies equally to married and unmarried women. R. *Frankel* explains that unmarried women are obligated to cover their hair in public, whereas married women must cover their hair everywhere and all the time, even at home.²⁶⁷ Apart from this, another differentiation point is that, although modesty concerns about all women, it has greater and more serious repercussions on married women, due to the issue of seduction, which often may lead to adultery.

Therefore, most of authorities believe in not requiring hair covering for unmarried women when appearing in public, even unkempt hair. In fact, for single women being attractive in their appearance is seen as value in traditional societies,

²⁶⁴ Even ha'ezer 21:2

²⁶⁵ Yosef, Ovadia (1986), *Yabia omer* (above, note 32), VI Even ha'ezer 5.

²⁶⁶ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

because marriage is a desideratum.²⁶⁸ Thus, although protecting modesty as a virtue is important for all females, the exception of unmarried women in some authorities is just so they can acquire a husband.²⁶⁹

2.4.4.2 Immodesty as a Factor of Promoting Infidelity in the Community

In addition to the evidential phrases quoted above, failure to protect the modesty of girls is considered as the cause of corruption; and evidence for this prevails in some sources:

"Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness."²⁷⁰

Another phrase implies the same:

"For a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. Like a bandit she lies in wait, and multiplies the unfaithful among men."²⁷¹

In the statement, it is emphasized that the corruptions of girls make the Earth full of wickedness because adultery causes infidelity and the prevalence of treachery in society. In the second statement, lack of adherence to the rule of modesty and chastity in women and men will eventually led to immorality and corrupted manners that offer the field of other corruptions. Rashi comments on this

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Hamami Lalezar, Younes (2012), *op. cit.*

²⁷⁰ Lev19:29

²⁷¹ Prov 23: 27-28

verse: for, if you do so, the Land itself will cause its fruits to go astray (קִזְזָה), producing them elsewhere and not in your Land. Thus, the verse states²⁷², “and you defiled the Land with your harlotries (בְּזִנוּתֶיךָ). So, the rains were withheld²⁷³.”²⁷⁴

2.4.4.3 Avoiding Lustful Looking at Strangers

In Job book, God prophet, is mentioned the explanation of his many experiments and standing the pains and tribulation. Regarding to his condition, he used to talk to god as follows:

I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. For what is man's lot from God above, his heritage from the Almighty on high? Is it not ruining for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong? Does he not see my ways and count my every step? If I have walked in falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit- let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless- if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled, then may others eat what I have sown, and may my crops be uprooted. If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, then may my wife grind another man's grain, and may other men sleep with her. For that would have been shameful, a sin to be judged, It is a fire that burns to Destruction; it would have uprooted my harvest.

In Job prayers, the following issues about respecting to chastity are considerable:

- 1- Considering lust looking to girls as sin

²⁷² Jeremiah 3:2-3

²⁷³ Torath Kohanim 19:77

²⁷⁴ Isaacides, Salomon (as known Rashi) (1994), *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary*, Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated. Trans, Yisrael Isser Zvi, Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Vol. 3, pp. 347–86.

- 2- Sending heaven visitation to those who look unclean to passers.
- 3- If a man be charmed by another man's wife, he deserves to be punished.
- 4- The result of disturbing a foreign woman is hell fire and this matter eliminates all man's spirituality.

In this part, this point that is the impact of lust looking and non-compliance with lust stained chastity meets with passers, causing spiritual annihilation and loss of hereafter provisions is remarkable.

2.4.4.4 The Punishment for Adultery in the Torah

Adultery is considered as a major sin in all Abrahamic religions. In Jewish law, adultery is as one of the most obscene sins.

A. The Punishment for Adultery in the Torah

The Law of Moses (PBUH), decrees the death sentence for both the adulterer and the adulteress (Lev 20:10). So, when a woman commits the despicable act of adultery, after having proven guiltiness, deserves the death punishment, but in the absence of sufficient evidence, the husband can divorce her without having to pay the *Ketubah* in the presence of *Beth Din*²⁷⁵. In this case, two places in the Torah mentions so:

“No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male

²⁷⁵ *Beth Din* (; pl. *batte din*): Rabbinical term for court-house or court. In view of the theocratic conception of the law, which pervades Biblical legislation and is strictly carried out by rabbinical Judaism, including both civil and religious law, the *bet din* is not only a civil, but also a religious authority. (Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) online Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) Retrieved on 6/20/2015 from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10729>)

prostitute into the house of the Lord, your God, to pay any vow, because the Lord your God detests them both.”²⁷⁶

If a man is found sleeping with another man’s wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel. If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death, the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man’s wife. You must purge the evil from among you.²⁷⁷

“If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife -- with the wife of his neighbor -- both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.”²⁷⁸

This rule was later modified by the Talmudic law, that circumstantial evidence was sufficient to justify legal procedure if the wife had been cautioned by her husband against intimate association with the suspected man.²⁷⁹ Of course this crime can be committed only by and with a married and also betrothed woman as the unlawful intercourse of a married man with an unmarried woman is not technically Adultery in the Jewish law.²⁸⁰ The punishment for this crime was stoning to death at the place of public execution. If a priest's daughter commits this act:

²⁷⁶ Deut 23:17-19

²⁷⁷ Deut 22:22-25

²⁷⁸ Lev 20:10-11

²⁷⁹ Talmud, Sotah, i. 2

²⁸⁰ According to; Lev 18:20, Num. 5:12, 13, 19

“If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire.”²⁸¹

Moreover, adultery obscenity and immodesty are reasons of providing for cases where an illegal child that is born of the foul act in the Torah. *Mamzer* as the child of an adulterous connection is forbidden to marry with a Jew or Jewess²⁸² and may never be married legally as Jews.²⁸³ The children of adultery and also their children should not be included in the groups of believers because it is mentioned that:

“No one born of neither a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation.”²⁸⁴

Also, according to the Hebrew Bible, adultery causes spiritual death of the libertine. Solomon also speaks of this issue in his advices to his son against evil woman in proverbs:

"Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."²⁸⁵

"Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell."²⁸⁶

"For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead."²⁸⁷

²⁸¹ Lev 21: 9

²⁸² Kid. iii. 12

²⁸³ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

²⁸⁴ Deut 23:2

²⁸⁵ Prov 7:27

²⁸⁶ Prov 5:5

Therefore, sexual sins, lead to death and hell.

B. Blaming the Suspected Wife of Adultery (*Sotah*²⁸⁸); *Parah*

In Jewish teachings, women suspected of disloyalty (who revealed her hair to the strangers) were subject to the following punishment:

“After the priest has had the woman stand before the Lord, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse.”²⁸⁹

So, according to traditional Jewish teachings, if a woman was suspected to have shown her hair to a strange man, she will be punished i.e. she will be disgraced by removing her veil by temple priest and showing it.²⁹⁰

Some Jewish scholars claim that essentially, hair covering is based upon this command that the priest is to *parah* the hair of the suspected adulteress (*Sotah*). But the word *parah* is understood differently by rabbis whereas what the priest was doing exactly is to the *sotah's* hair, are not uniformed. The first view was that, the word *parah* means loosening the *sotah's* hair. However, the second opinion supports the contradictory belief that it refers to uncovering her hair. The Talmudic passages just explain it to mean "uncovered".²⁹¹ There is a minority of the manuscripts that provides an explanation that encompasses both meanings of the

²⁸⁷ 2:18

²⁸⁸ Sotah: A wife suspected of adultery.

²⁸⁹ Num 5:18

²⁹⁰ Hamami Lalezar, Younes (2011), *op. cit.*

²⁹¹ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993), *op. cit.*

word *parah*. This view states that just as she had spread her sheets for her lover, the priest takes the covering from her head and puts it under his feet; just as she had braided her hair for her lover, the priest dishevels it.²⁹²

Furthermore, Fuchs discusses that biblical obligation is derived from the law of the *Sotah*.²⁹³ According to some interpreters, this indicates that women normally had their hair covered, and even the priest would not have been able to uncover it. However, the majority of *Tosephta* manuscripts say that the priest should uncover her head.²⁹⁴ Meanwhile, the verse "*Uparah*" teaches us that the proper *Derech* (practice) is to cover their hair. Indeed, Rashi (Ketubot 72a), writes in his second explanation to the source for hair covering from the verse "*Uparah et Rosh Haisha*", that it is not the *Derech* of the daughters of Israel to go outside with uncovered hair.²⁹⁵

Bronner, on the other hand, writes that although there is uncertainty about the meaning of the word *Parah*, whether "uncover", or "loosen", with *Ketubot*'s emphasis, and based on the biblical verses dealing with the *Sotah*, hair covering is pentateuchal and *Dat Moshe and this interpretation* eventually became widely accepted.²⁹⁶ So, it teaches the daughters of Israel that they should cover their heads (M. Sota 1:5).²⁹⁷

²⁹² Bronner, Leila Leah (1993), *op. cit.*

²⁹³ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

²⁹⁴ T. Sotah, A. Hoffer (1928), Which Disheveling [Uncovering] of Hair for Women is Biblically Prohibited?, *Hagofeh Lehakhmat Yisrael*, Vol. 12, pp. 330-335.

²⁹⁵ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013), *op. cit.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993), *op. cit.*

C. God's Behest for Punishment for Immodest Conduct of Israelite Women

The prophet Isaiah is one of the Israelite prophets who lived around 700 BC. Isaiah's book basically has been written for warning to the guilty people. Giving up obscene behavior and life stained with sin are mentioned in this book from God to the Israelite people. Moreover, God asked them to also return to Him and if they do not so, they will suffer the pain and destruction soon. Isaiah, with particular literary skills, describes the sins of his people. In the Messenger Isaiah's book, God promises to Judge elders and men and expresses the reasons for some cases in addition to looting the poor by the tribe's elders as follows:

The Lord says, Because the women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the Lord will make their scalps bald, In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, the earrings and bracelets and veils, the headdresses and ankle chains and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, the signet rings and nose rings, the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding.²⁹⁸

Gravett comments that these verses of Isaiah harshly condemn the Jewish women for their arrogance and seductiveness.²⁹⁹ Overall, this part of Isaiah's book

²⁹⁸ Isaiah 3: 16-26

²⁹⁹ Gravett, Sandie (2004), Reading rape in the Hebrew Bible: a consideration of language, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Vol. 3, No. 28, p. 293.

firstly has explicitly stated the words mask, hat, veil and burqa, which indicate the use of common covering among Jewish women. Secondly, he mentioned that it is the immorality of Jewish women that was to be blamed. Thirdly, as for voluptuous women and their Immorality, he reminds all that they have been promised punishment. Therefore, Jewish women during Isaiah's time have been criticized as being:

- 1 - Haughty and arrogance
- 2 - Walking along with outstretched necks which implies a lack of obedience (and not docile and modesty)
- 3 – Flirting with their eyes
- 4 - Tripping along with mincing steps
- 5 – wearing ornaments that jingle on their ankles

Certainly, flirting of eyes³⁰⁰, tripping along with mincing steps and ankles adorned with jingling anklets even at home do not refer to a wife who does so for her husband, this passage blamed and condemned those who behave this way in public. In other words, Exhibitionism, coquetry and adornment of women have been cautioned as contradictory to modesty observance while the use of the mask and the burqa were common in Jewish tradition even though, God promises to punish them because women have not used them in the proper manner.

Also, in the book of the prophet *Jeremiah* God addressed the sinful Israelites:

³⁰⁰ Cheyne (1841 – 1915) translates, "ogling eyes." Both actions indicate the desire to attract men's attention, and are shameless and immodest. Walking and mincing as they go; i.e. taking short steps in an affectedly childish way and Making a tinkling with their feet. This meaning is generally accepted, though not very certain. It has been suggested that the anklets which they wore (ver. 18) had silver bells attached to them. (Kelly Cheyne, Thomas (2012). *The Book of Isaiah: Chronologically Arranged, And Emended Version, With Hist. And Crit.* Nabu Press. ver. 16-26.)

"You have defiled the land with your prostitution and wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute; you refuse to blush with shame."³⁰¹

Due to the obscene acts of the Jews, God considers them deserving vengeance:

Why should I forgive you? Your children have forsaken me and sworn by gods that are not gods. I supplied all their needs, yet they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of prostitutes. They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife. Should I not punish them for this?" declares the Lord.³⁰²

D. Fines and Penalty for Uncovering Women Head

In Jewish laws, some fines are considered for those who remove the veils of women as punishment. Dr. Brayer in his book writes:

"During the Tannaitic³⁰³ period the Jewish woman's failure to cover her head was considered an affront to her modesty. When her head was uncovered she might be fined four hundred zuzim for this offense."³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Jeremiah 3: 2-3

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 5: 7-10

³⁰³ Tannaim (Pl.of Tanna, "repeaters", "teachers"): the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. (Scharfstein, Sol, Gelabert, Dorcas (1996), *Understanding Jewish History: From the patriarchs to the expulsion from Spain*, KTAV Publishing House, p. 116.)

³⁰⁴ M. Brayer, Menachem (1986). *The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature: A Psychosocial Perspective*, Hoboken, N.J: Ktav Publishing House, p. 139.

2.4.5 Preserving Modesty of Men and Women by Emphasis on Marriage

Marriage and establishing family is considered sacred in all Abrahamic religions including Judaism. Marriage is called *Kiddushin* (sanctification) and is a great religious obligation, as God had concluded in the creation of Adam: "It is not good for a man to be alone".³⁰⁵ It was also the first command that God gave to Adam, the human father: "He blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and increase in number."³⁰⁶ The Talmud emphasized on its implementation as well.³⁰⁷ The *Midrash* states:

"Any man who has no wife lives without goodness, without help, without joy, without blessing, and without atonement." Without help, as it is said (Gen 2:18): "I will make a fitting helper for him" [and the woman who was created as a help for Adam]. Without joy, as it is said: "and you shall rejoice with your house"³⁰⁸ ["house" means wife; consequently, the wife brings joy]. Without blessing, as it is said [Ezek. 44:30]: "that a blessing may rest upon your home." Without atonement, as it is said [Lev 16:11]: "to make expiation for himself and his household."³⁰⁹

Some *Midrashim* have considered the first mating of Adam and Eve as the reconnection of a creature that was divided in two, or as a man who has found what

³⁰⁵ Genesis 2:18.

³⁰⁶ Gen. Rabbah 17:2.

³⁰⁷ See: Marston, Justin (2000), Jewish Understandings of Genesis 1 to 3, *Science & Christian Belief*, Vol. 12, No. 2 pp.127–150, p.137)

³⁰⁸ Deut 14:26.

³⁰⁹ Gen Rabbah VIII 1.

he had lost.³¹⁰ These teachings in praising marriage believe that an unmarried man deprives himself of many benefits. Man is portrayed as one who requires a spouse to bolster him and assist him³¹¹, both mentally and physically in various affairs. These dicta have also a religious and spiritual perspective: a person cannot observe all the commandments of the Torah, such as the obligation to be fruitful and multiply or that of atonement, without a wife.³¹²

In fact, in the Judaic teachings marriage is natural in purpose, but with divine origin. They consider it as a divine institution in a twofold light: firstly, as a means for breeding the human race and secondly, as an ideal state for the advancement of life's devoutness and pureness, whilst prizing chastity above all other virtues. Prenuptial connections between men and women are truly condemned. Not only was harlotry forbidden on the basis of Biblical commands, but also the association of sexes in private.³¹³ In fact, the regulated husband and wife sexual relationship were raised to the dignity of a positive command. So, all Israelites' prophets and seven prophetesses³¹⁴ have followed the order of marriage including the great prophets such as Noah, Abraham and Moses. Therefore, as the converse of Christianity and some eastern religions that seek holiness in full modesty, chastity and celibacy and consider marriage as a necessary evil to retain

³¹⁰ Kadari, Tamar (2009). *op. cit.*

³¹¹ As in the English word "woman" is derived from "man" – "wif- mam" in Old English. Also, in Hebrew term, in Genesis 1:23 Eve is called "woman" (*Ishshah*) because she was taken out of man (*ish*) that implies to subordinating of women. (Stage, Evelyn & Frank (1949). *Woman in the World of Jesus*, US, Philadelphia, the Westminster press, p. 18.)

³¹² Kadari, Tamar (2009). *op. cit.*

³¹³ Lev 19:29, and Deut 23:18

³¹⁴ Seven of the 55 prophets who are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible are women. (Isaacides, Salomon (1938). *Rashi commentary* New York: Jewish Publication Society, commentary on Genesis 29:34.)

generations, Judaism knows marriage as a natural and primary need. It is also identified as a holy order *Kiddushin* and it is counted as a basis of public modesty.

In addition, head covering protects the marriage and family. Goldman says that the head covering protects the marriage because when it is known that the woman belongs to her husband, other men will avoid improper contact with her.³¹⁵ Also, Seigelshifer writes that the head covering of women which is applied upon marriage marks a part of her body as dangerously erotic and her status of belonging to a man and being out of reach to all others.³¹⁶ Today, the head covering separates the sexual values of Orthodox Jewish women from those of the more promiscuous modern women.³¹⁷

2.4.6 Considering Women's Hair as Their Adornment (Which Must be Concealed (As *Ervah*))

Primarily, the Bible considers ladies' hair as an adornment. A woman's hair attraction is stated in Solomon's Song of Songs poetically: "Your hair is like a flock of goats from Gilead."³¹⁸ As result, protecting women's sexual modesty is one of the primary justifications in women hair covering,³¹⁹ with the objective of preventing men from having sinful thoughts. Those who forbid the use of wigs in

³¹⁵ Goldman, Tehilla (2006). "Dealing with It," in Lynne Schreiber, *Hide and Seek*, Urim Publications, p. 141.

³¹⁶ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

³¹⁷ Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.*

³¹⁸ Song 6:5

³¹⁹ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

comparison to other head coverings, claim that the wigs resemble women's natural hair and can be easily taken as natural hair (adornment) and "ervah".³²⁰

2.4.7 Hair Covering of Jewish Woman as a Myth

Barthes³²¹ (1915 - 1980), expresses that legitimation; reification, unification and dissimulation are generated from the myth of head covering and the obscure hidden power which hair covering signifies.³²² Thus, hair covering has become a powerful myth with different messages to be conveyed. To Barthes, Myth is also described as a sort of speech-written or pictorial case that conveys messages. He defines myth as a "second-order semi logical system".³²³ Women's hair covering in the twenty-first century like *Einstein's* brain and the French detergent advertisements is pictorial speech that has become mythical in the *Barthesian* sense.³²⁴ According to Picard, clothing as a kind of adornment, decoration and symbolization is the most widely accepted theory among anthropologists.³²⁵

As such, hair covering has become a powerful myth that conveys various gratifying messages, such as marital honesty, community commitment and religious

³²⁰ Yosef, Ovadia (1986), *Yabia omer*, Jerusalem, V, Even ha'ezer 5. This source offers one of the most radical attacks on the use of wigs. Most Sephardic followed Ovadia Yosef's ruling and prohibited the use of wigs. (Hamami Lalezar, Younes (2012), *op. cit.*)

³²¹ Barthes (1915 - 1980) was a French literary theorist, philosopher, linguist, critic, and semiotician.

³²² Barthes, Roland (1984). *Myth Today, Mythologies*, trans by Annette Lavers, New York: Hill and Wang, pp. 150-155.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

³²⁴ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

³²⁵ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

loyalty. Jewish women's hair covering becomes a *Barthesian* myth which includes various seductive and mostly alluring meanings.³²⁶

A. Secluding and Remaining behind the Curtain of the Matriarch Sarah as a Paradigm and Myth for All Jewish Women

The Torah, by quoting the story about angels' coming to *Abraham* (PBUH) implies *Sarah's* absence in the presence of three male guests and those men ask *Abraham* about *Sarah*:

“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him. “There, in the tent”, he said. Then the Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son. Now, Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him.”³²⁷

R. Ahituv adds on this issue:³²⁸

“Talmud praises the Matriarch (Sarah), who remained in the tent during the visit by the angels upon Abraham, “to inform you that the Matriarch Sarah was modest”.³²⁹

So, in Jewish tradition, one of the praised items for women is considered as *Yichud* (a secluded situation) and in this context, the following ruling of Maimonides is well known:

"It is shameful for a woman to be constantly out, out of doors or in the community. A husband should prevent his wife from doing so, and not

³²⁶ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

³²⁷ Gen 18: 9-15

³²⁸ Ahituv, Yosef (2013), *op. cit.*

³²⁹ BT Bava Mezia 87a

allow her to go out, except for once or a few times every month as needed, for it is not comely for a woman but that she sits in the corner of her home, as it is written: “all glorious is the king’s daughter within the palace”³³⁰.³³¹

B. Characteristics of the Competent Woman as an Origin of the Myth of Modesty

In the teachings of Judaism, the perfect woman is one who has spent her godly life with individual and familial enhancement. In the Proverb book, quoting from Prophet Solomon, a competent woman is introduced in the following words:

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. ...She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.³³²

³³⁰ Psalms 45:14

³³¹ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

³³² Prov31:1-30

Women are highly praised in the Torah, as the housekeeper woman who maintains her dignity and esteem in contrast to the apparent beauty of the women who do not perform their duties who are considered valueless. Also, in this book it is stated:

“...like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.”³³³

“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.”³³⁴

“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tear hers down.”³³⁵

Thus, a righteous and pious woman who is worth far more than rubies is the woman:

- 1- Who garners full confidence from her husband
- 2- Whose works and services to her family would be her entertainment
- 3- whose virtues and merits manifest in family life
- 4- Since she fears the Lord, she would be better than all the girls
- 5- whose wisdom and perfect character builds the house

In fact, the glamorous beauty of a woman is vain before God and, piety in the end is to be praised. What the homes of a nation are, the nation is; and it is a woman’s high and beautiful function to make the homes, and within her power lays the terrible capacity for marring them. She, much more than the king, is the fountain

³³³ Prov11:23

³³⁴ Prov12:14

³³⁵ Prov14:1

of honor.³³⁶ The *Tanakh*, has mentioned some outstanding women that enable us to distinguish and find out the god-wanted paradigm by considering and reflecting on their perfections. Indeed, the *Tanakh* has not demonstrated to prophecy of them, while the Talmud has pointed out their prophecy. The Israelite prophetesses are seven:

- 1- ***Sarah*** (*Abraham*'s wife, called "Mother of Israel" and mother of *Isaac*)
- 2- ***Miriam*** (daughter of *Emran* (or *Emram*) and sister of *Moses* and *Aaron*)
- 3- ***Deborah*** (wife of Lapidot, 12th BC),
- 4- ***Anne*** (mother of prophet *Samoel*)
- 5- ***Abigail*** (*David*'s wife)
- 6- ***Hulda*** (wife of prophet *Shalom*)
- 7- ***Esther*** (Jewish queen of Iran, wife of *Xerxes* (*Khashayar shah*) in 5th B.C.)

2.4.8 Hair covering as the Manifestation of Jewish Women's Identity (Unification)

Generally, clothing serves three purposes: covering, protection, and also identification.³³⁷ Through symbols construction of unity (like a flag or emblem) the

³³⁶ Prov11:16. See: Nicoll, William R. (2013)"Commentary on Prov31:1". "Expositor's Bible Commentary". Retrieved on 4/4/2013 from <http://www.studylight.org/com/teb/view.cgi?bk=pr&ch=31>.

³³⁷ Fabiyi, James (2013), *Hold the Fort - Overcoming Temptations*, Author House, p. 255.

individuals would be embraced in a collective. Thus, the tendency of Jewish women would be their association with the community by covering their hair.³³⁸ Bleich writes that as Jewish men who could visibly announce their tribal affiliation with a *Yarmulke*, women need a recognizable sign of identification with their people.³³⁹ Therefore, her hair covering is specifically used as identification of her place in the Jewish world and in some perverse way as the external markers of a woman's religious behavior.³⁴⁰ Consequently, the women's head covering is the religious characteristic of a Jewish family and the women of that family would be classified accordingly.³⁴¹

In modern Orthodoxy, an identity marker point and criteria among groups would be the head covering, which has absolutely come to symbolize piety.³⁴² They would not need to search for historical origins, legalistic essences or relations of domination. Weiss emphasizes that: “no justification would be required for head-covering, no rationalization; women do not cover their hair to bridle their sexual excesses or to declare their sexual modesty. Their hair covering is about tribal affiliation. It is the Jewish woman's *Yarmulke*. She would be covering her hair as it is part of her personality and who she is. As her identification, she covers her hair, as saris are for Hindus and kimonos for Japanese.”³⁴³ In addition, married women in Orthodox would cover their hair. The ways of the community would be the criteria

³³⁸ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

³³⁹ Devorah Bleich, Chaya (2006). The Woman's Yarmulkah, in Lynne Schreiber, *Hide and Seek*, New York, Jerusalem: Urim Publications, p. 135.

³⁴⁰ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

³⁴¹ Berkovic, Sally (1999), *Straight Talk*, New York: Ktav, p. 54.

³⁴² Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011), *op. cit.*

³⁴³ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

on how Jewish women should cover their hair. Hats would be worn by Settlers. Wigs would be used by Ultra-Orthodox. Both wigs and hats are used by Hasidic women.³⁴⁴

A symbol of group belonging for men would be their head covering, the same as for women. Here various levels of religiosity would also be shown by this accordingly (the larger the *Kippah*, the more observant the wearer).³⁴⁵ A correlation can be found among a woman's social identity and the manner of hair covering according to Goldman's study on *Hasidic* women in New York. Consideration of a woman as part of a group with greater religious commitment was identified by a kerchief, as opposed to a wig.³⁴⁶ As Berman says; women's veiling is a pious sign that assists to affirm the "ongoing quality of their covenant with God" and affirming their identities as observant Jewesses.³⁴⁷

In conclusion, in relation to God, as hair covering has become the external principal (symbol) for men, it can promptly become an efficient symbol for women as well.³⁴⁸ Hair covering acts as a primary tool of identification and classification of social status in today's world for Orthodox women, and it can be considered as an effective tool of affiliating oneself with this social group or community.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ See: Goldman Carrel, Barbara (1999). *Hasidic Women's Head-Coverings: A Feminized System of Hasidic Distinction*, in Linda .B. Arthur (ed.), *Religion, Dress, and the Body*. UK: Oxford University Press.

³⁴⁵ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011), *op. cit.*

³⁴⁶ Goldman Carrel, Barbara (1999), *op .cit.* p. 160

³⁴⁷ Berman, Saul (1973), *op. cit.*

³⁴⁸ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

³⁴⁹ Goldman Carrel, Barbara (1999), *op .cit.* p. 160.

2.4.9 Hair Covering as a Symbol of Women's Empowerment (Nobility and Resistance)

Throughout Jewish history, as Brayer says, woman veiling was not only regarded as a sign of modesty, but was also symbolized and known as a state of luxury distinction rather than modesty. The veil personified the status and superiority of noble ladies. Furthermore, it implied lack of accessibility of a woman as a sanctified possession to her husband.³⁵⁰ He also writes that self-respect and the social status of women were identified via their veil. This is the reason why prostitutes in the old Jewish society sometimes were not allowed to cover their hair as it was a sign of nobility. As result, prostitutes would wear a special headgear to gain a respectable look.³⁵¹

He adds that the nineteenth century was the last period when Jewish women in Europe used to wear veils because their lives got integrated with the dominating secular culture at that time. The European life style's external pressure forced many women to go out with uncovered heads. Some Jewish women found wigs as the more convenient means of hair covering rather than the traditional veil. Nowadays, pious women mostly cover their hair only in the synagogue.³⁵² Some Jewish sects, such as the Hasidic, still use the wig as head-covering.³⁵³ Recently some Jewish scholars have considered hair covering as a means for women's today to be in authority. Fuchs, meanwhile, argues that the use of hair covering is a tool for

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 136 -7.

³⁵¹ W. Schneider, Susan (1984), *Jewish and Female*, New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 237.

³⁵² Ibid., pp. 238-239.

³⁵³ Wright, Alexandra (1994). "Judaism", in Jean Holm and John Bowker (eds) *Women in Religion*, London: Pinter, pp. 128-129.

empowerment.³⁵⁴ Actually, with the rise of the feministic movement and consumerism culture the study of the body has changed. The saying “Who is strong? One who conquers his urges”³⁵⁵ states the basic rabbinic approach toward the body.³⁵⁶

Block writes that according to the viewpoint of the cape-wearers women, this practice actually enhances their personal freedom in public, authorizing them to perform more freely. Moreover, they would feel better about themselves with their heads covered; it gives the women a feeling of religious superiority and belonging to a group that is acting properly, as opposed to others that are not, and it even stirs some of the people around them to think more highly of them. They use their external appearance to highlight their separate, unique identity and to represent what distinguishes them from the general society. Through this way, women can enhance their own power, acquire a position of their own and play a central role in preserving the identity of the group they belong to, as a counter-culture in the culture war being fought between them and the outside world.³⁵⁷

Beyond that, head covering, perceived as a symbol of religious commitment and fealty to a religiously committed population group, allows for legitimization of the feminine voice. Choosing this view might transform it into a tool of religious and social empowerment, in that it grants women access to the position of power in a religious society, which demands religious commitment and devotion. With the rise of cultural studies, interest in the body has focused on the critique of its

³⁵⁴ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

³⁵⁵ Mishnah Avot 4:1

³⁵⁶ See: Boyarin, Daniel, *Conduct, Unheroic* (1997). *The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley: University of California Press, and; Biale, David (1992). *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, New York: Basic Books.

³⁵⁷ Block, Sima Zalberg (2011), *op. cit.*

domination and exploitation by the capitalist establishment as a means of control.³⁵⁸ As a result, according to some Jewish scholars, hair covering has been considered as a tool for women's nobility and empowerment against secular and consumer culture and to act more freely with a feeling of religious superiority and unique identity.

2.4.10 Modesty Rules in *Dat Moshe* (Law of Moses) and *Dat Yehudit* (Jewish Custom)

R. Willig writes that the principles of modest behavior, for men and even more so for women, do not depend on the periods. They are divine principles derived from *Hashem's* choice. Thus, the Torah principles are eternal, although the details are subject to change. Even in changing times, the Torah has established some specific gender parameters over women's public roles and functions, which cannot be included in the category of communally dependent details. Even if sincerely motivated, it attempts to impose external values on the *halachic* system; interpreting and applying timeless *halachic* values are unacceptable.³⁵⁹

As Bronner writes, *Mishnah* says that the duty to cover hair is a *Dat Yehudit* rather than a *Dat Moshe* that is Torah-derived, whereas "Jewish Law" seems to be Jewish practice stemming from the people, i.e., what we have described as custom. Thus, the *Mishnah* apparently considered hair covering to be a matter of Jewish custom. Conversely, the Talmud declares it to be a *Dat Moshe*. Furthermore, it is interesting that the term *Dat Yehudit* is used only in connection with women's

³⁵⁸ Fuchs, Ilan (2012), *op. cit.*

³⁵⁹ Willig, Mordechai (2010), *op. cit.*

behavior, leading some to define the term as "customs specifically relating to women's modesty."³⁶⁰

2.5 Conclusion

Overall, the position of women is a very controversial issue in Judaic traditions, even although within the Israeli secular culture and tradition, there is still confession about the seductive and guilty nature of women. Also, they have recognized the belonging of a woman to her husband as property as clear-cut.³⁶¹ This preconception regarding women position is always under the critiques of feminism.³⁶²

Modest behavior in the sexual realm is mandatory for both the male and the female.³⁶³ The conception of modesty entitled of *Tzniut* as a symbol has several meanings.³⁶⁴ This section of the research has firstly indicated the reason of modesty and modest dress in Judaic teachings, which is piety and God-fearing. By

³⁶⁰ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993), *op. cit.*

³⁶¹ Kamir, Orit (2006), The king's daughter: Honor is interior, An invitation to Israeli feminism. *Democratic Culture*, No, 10, pp.409–475.

³⁶² See: Catherine, Akca, Gunes, Ali (2009) *Male Myth-Making: The Origins of Feminism*. *Nebula* Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 1-15. Rogers, Katharine M. (1966). *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Davies, John (2000). Is Genesis 1-11 irredeemably sexist? CTM, Ridley Hall - Genesis 1-11 - External Essay, pp. 1-10. Miles, Geoffrey, (Ed.). (1999). *Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology*. London: Routledge. Greene, Gayle, and Kahn, Coppelia. (1991). *Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Woman*, In: *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*. Eds. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn. London: Routledge, pp.1-36.

³⁶³ Ahituv, Yosef (2013), *op. cit.*

³⁶⁴ Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*

juxtaposing the textual and socio-historical analysis, it can be clearly said as a conclusion that head covering as a sign of marital status obviously is a sign of man domination in Jewish law, although the idea of head covering as an act of oppression would be rejected by the myth of holiness.³⁶⁵ One of the key rationalizations made to justify head covering is that it protects the woman's sexual modesty.³⁶⁶ If some sources do not required the single women to cover their hair it is because of providing the opportunities for obtaining husbands.³⁶⁷

Generally, according to rabbinic literatures, hair covering would not be considered as a sign only to show the level of modesty as a virtue but also of a wife belonging to a particular man. In addition to that, the veil had to be worn whenever she was in mixed company or went out in public³⁶⁸ and at prayer. Furthermore, women's deep identification along with the spiritual meanings indicated to modest dress would be the reflection of head covering; to bring redemption development of different codes of fashion and secularism and also the feeling of belonging to a specific identity and group. Besides, women would consider themselves responsible for the spiritual state not from the family perspective only but of the entire Jewish people.³⁶⁹

In relation to the veil being law or custom in Jewish religious practice, the *Mishnah* apparently considered hair covering to be a *Dat Yehudit* (a matter of

³⁶⁵ See: Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

³⁶⁶ Weiss, Susan (2009), *op. cit.*

³⁶⁷ Hamami Lalezar, Younes (2012), *op. cit.*

³⁶⁸ L.J. Archer (1990), Her Price is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement, Vol. 60 (Sheffield: JSOT Press) pp. 212 and 247-248.

³⁶⁹ Block, Sima Zalberg (2011), *op. cit.*

Jewish custom). However, the Talmud offers biblical base for the practice of hair covering and asserts it to be a *Dat Moshe* (a Torah-derived law).³⁷⁰ In feminism research, as a consequence of marriage, the act of covering the head or hair, reminds women of basic patriarchy, because, from then on, they will lose their independent position and will belong to or are subordinated to the men's authority (their fathers or husbands).³⁷¹ Therefore, the hair covering indicates a woman's sexual modesty in respect to her husband's right and her application of God's Law.

³⁷⁰ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993), *op. cit.*

³⁷¹ See: Arthur, Linda (1999). *Religion, dress and the body*. Oxford: Berg. Also see: Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard, & Doniger, Wendy (Eds.). (1995). *Off with her head: The denial of women's identity in myth, religion, and culture*. Berkley: University of California Press. Nussbaum, Martha (1999). *Sex and social justice*. New York: Oxford University Press. Weiss, Susan (2009). *op. cit.* Polhemus, Ted (1978). *The body reader, social aspects of the human body*. New York: Pantheon Books. Sanday, Peggy Reeves (1982). *Female power and male dominance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Turner, Bryan (1996). *The body and society*. London: Sage Publications.

CHAPTER THREE

**THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND
MODEST DRESS OF WOMEN IN CHRISTIANITY**

University of Malaya

CHAPTER THREE: THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND MODEST DRESS OF WOMEN IN CHRISTIANITY

3. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine the philosophy of observance of modesty and women's modest dress in the religion of Christianity. As introduction, this section will discuss the position of women in Christian teaching briefly and will introduce the certain conceptions and terms of modesty and modest dress in the Christian teachings and tradition. Then, the reasons of modesty and women's modest dress in Christian instructions will be examined.

Christianity emerged from Judaism and Jesus (PBUH) was himself Jewish. Theologically, Christianity sharing some teaching of Judaism considers certain additional doctrine. Although Christians consider the Hebrew Bible as a part of their holy book and agree with the view presented therein including the status of women, there are certain fundamental principles³⁷² that are causes for substantial differences between Christian and Judaic theologies regarding women. Christianity's approach itself has suffered from duality; the equality of men and women based on Jesus's approach and subordination of women on Paul's attitude. Traditionally, the Church has followed Paul's opinion.

3.1 The Position of Women in Christianity

Theologically, there has been a dual Christian attitude toward women. Although Jesus preached the equality of men and women, Paul preached the

³⁷² See: Knight III, George W. (1977). *The New Testament teaching on the role relationship of men and women*, Michigan: Baker Book House.

inferiority and subordination of women.³⁷³ The Gospels often talk about Jesus' dialogue to women in public against the social norms of that time. Jesus did not accord any difference between men and women in speech and behaviour.³⁷⁴ His mother, Mary, is considered a perfect woman. Accordingly, Christian Egalitarianism³⁷⁵ believes in a biblical base for gender equality in the leadership of the Christian church and Christian marriage.³⁷⁶

³⁷³ In fact, often, *Paul* has been called as the founder of Christianity. (See: Robbins, Jeffrey W. (2005). *The Politics of Paul, Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 89-94.)

In the tradition of Christianity, several principals of Christian theology have innovated by him. So, Paul is regarded as the great interpreter of *Jesus'* mission, who explained, in a way that *Jesus* himself never did. Paul claimed that his interpretations were not just his own invention, but had come to him by personal inspiration. The information about Paul has been given by himself in his letters and what has been given in Acts, in which *Paul* plays the chief role. He claimed that *Jesus* is Son of God unlike the early Christians like The *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* who considered him as a human being who came to inaugurate a new earthly age, as prophesied by the Jewish prophets of the Bible. (MacCoby, Hyam (1987). *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*, New York: Harpercollins, summary of Chapter of The Problem of Paul)

In this context, 'Pauline Christianity', as an expression, first came into use in the 20th century among scholars who proposed different strands of thought within Early Christianity, wherein Paul was a powerful influence. (Lietzmann, Hans (1950). *History of the Early Church*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Vol. 1, p. 206.)

³⁷⁴ Mc. Donald, Margaret (1999). Reading Real Women through Undisputed Letters of Paul, in; *Women and Christian Origins*, ed., Oxford: University Press, p. 204.

³⁷⁵ Christian Egalitarianism: (derived from the French word *égal*, meaning equal or level) is a Christian form of the moral doctrine of egalitarianism. It holds that all human persons are created equally in God's sight-equal in fundamental worth and moral status. Christian egalitarianism holds that all people are equal before God and in Christ; have equal responsibility to use their gifts and obey their calling to the glory of God; and are called to roles and ministries without regard to class, gender, or race. (Padgett, Alan G. (2002). What Is Biblical Equality?, *Priscilla Papers*, Summer 2002, Vol. 16, No. 3.) In fact, Equalitarianism within Christianity, is a movement based on the theological view that not only are all people equal before God in their personhood, but there are no gender-based limitations of what functions or roles each can fulfill in the home, the church, and the society. According to Christian Egalitarianism, gender equality in Christian church leadership and in Christian marriage is biblically sound. Christian Egalitarianism holds that all people are equal before God and in Christ. All have equal responsibility to use their gifts and obey their calling to the glory

Nonetheless, the Church traditionally has followed Paul's view and Greek-Roman thought regarding the status of women. From advent of Christianity, organised Christians have understood the scripture as proposing a gender-based hierarchy. According to this hierarchical doctrine, women have been positioned under the authority of men. In this regard, the most important text in the New Testament is Paul's explanation of Paul about the natural order of headship; God, Christ, man, woman. In Christian teachings, the principal of Trinity presents an analogy to the relationship of male and female as divine design. Paul in his letter to Corinthians considers three authoritative lines, namely that Christ is the authority (head) over every man, man is the authority (head) over a woman, and God is the authority (head) over Christ.³⁷⁷ This view is believed by traditionalists and Complementarians³⁷⁸ to be biblically authorised. In addition, Paul emphasised that women should remain silent, modest, and wise and obey their husbands:

“Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.

of God. God freely calls believers to roles and ministries without regard to class, gender, or race. (Padgett, Alan G. (2002). *What Is Biblical Equality?* Priscilla Papers, Summer, 16:3)

³⁷⁶ Marriage (also called Holy Matrimony) is a sacred vow between a man and woman in Christianity. *Jesus* underscored the importance and sacredness of lifelong marriage in his own teachings. He stated that God had created mankind as male and female, (Gen 1: 27; 2: 24) and that in marriage "the two will become one flesh'. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate". (Mat 19: 3-6)

³⁷⁷ Grenz, Stanley J. Kjesbo, Denise Muir (2010). *Women in the Church, A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*, Downers Grove IL, Inter Varsity, pp.13-35.

³⁷⁸ Complementarianism: is a theological perspective of some Christian scholars. They believe in men and women having different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, religious leadership, and elsewhere. This view for Christian complementarian is biblically-prescribed, these separate roles preclude women from specific functions of ministry within the Church. (Blomberg, Craig, Markley, Jennifer Foutz (2010). *Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*, Baker Academic, p. 53.)

For, Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”³⁷⁹

Solomon in Ecclesiastes says:

“I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.”³⁸⁰

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) writes about the status of women:

Regarding to the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influences; such as that of a south wind, which is moist, as the Philosopher observes.³⁸¹

Today, Christian attitudes about women noticeably vary significantly more than before. Since 1970s, more moderate opinions emerged known as the Christian Egalitarianism and Complementarianism perspectives about women. Christian egalitarians often consider a verse of the Bible as a “fanfare of freedom” for three oppressed groups throughout history: racial minorities, slaves, and women.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ 1 Tim 2:11-14.

³⁸⁰ Eccl 7:26.

³⁸¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (2006). Q. 92, art.1, Reply Obj. 1, p. 622. Retrieved on 3/5/2015 from <http://www.basilica.org/pages/ebooks/St.%20Thomas%20Aquinas-Summa%20Theologica.pdf>.

³⁸² Missler, Chuck (2000). *Christian views attitudes and beliefs about women*, Koinonia House Online. Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2000/285>.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”³⁸³

Some egalitarians assert Gal 3:28 as, “the Magna Carta³⁸⁴ of Humanity”,³⁸⁵ and the most important text that supports biblical equality.³⁸⁶ They believe that Jesus eliminated discriminatory systems. Although some Complementarians have accepted that the main interpretations of the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments) propose a male-priority according to hierarchy and gender roles, they believe in being “equal but different”.³⁸⁷ In such a way, male priority is presented as a requirement in the Bible, despite having defined male and female’s with complementary roles. Peter, the first of the apostles, recognised the perfection of women in inner ornament and humanity in fine clothes.³⁸⁸

The New Testament by emphasising the story of Genesis clearly states that the first who seduced was Eve and after she seduced Adam, he ate from the fruit of

³⁸³ Gal 3:28

³⁸⁴ Oxford dictionary defines it as: “1- A charter of liberty and political rights obtained from King John of England by his rebellious barons at Runnymede in 1215, which came to be seen as the seminal document of English constitutional practice. 2- A document establishing important rights or principles in a specified area”. (Oxford dictionary, Oxford University Press. Print Publication Date: 2010. Published online: 2010. Current Online Version: 2013. Retrieved on 6/5/2014 from www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Magna-Carta)

³⁸⁵ Jewett, Paul K. (1975). *Man as Male and Female: a study in sexual relationships from a theological point of view*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 142.

³⁸⁶ M. Groothuis, Rebecca (1996). *Good News for Women: a Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, p. 25.

³⁸⁷ Ware, Bruce (2011). *Summaries of the Egalitarian and Complementarian Positions on the Role of Women in the Home and Christian Ministry*, Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, Print. Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from http://www.cbmw.org/images/articles_pdf/.

³⁸⁸ Peter advises Christian women in his first epistle: "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes." (1 Peter 3:3-4)

the Forbidden Tree. The Church in its interpretation of Torah as part of the Bible says that this sin caused the formation of sexual lust in Adam.³⁸⁹ Augustine (AD 354-430.) the bishop of Hippo in North Africa according to the creation story says that man and women are created in the image of God.³⁹⁰ He believed that the nature of woman's creation was not like men and the woman is God's image along with her husband.³⁹¹

Therefore, the Church considers woman as the main factor for the first sin and the greatest temptations that is sex. Hence, Paul emphasizes on being single as preferable situation than marriage.³⁹² Even though Christians believe in the status of women based on the Torah's account of creation, the Bible gives a high degree of honour to a faithful and God-fearing woman by saying, "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband."³⁹³ The symbolic pinnacle of man's earthly aspirations is considered the crown.³⁹⁴ In addition, it expressed that, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord she shall be praised".³⁹⁵ Furthermore, it is stated, "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a

³⁸⁹ Brachtendorf, Johannes (1997). Cicero and Augustine on the Passions, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, Vol. 43, pp. 289 -308.

³⁹⁰ Augustinus, Aurelius (1936), *Über den dreieinigen Gott*, München Kösel, p. 177.

³⁹¹ Brachtendorf, Johannes (1997). *op. cit.*

³⁹² 1 Cor 7:7-8, 1 Cor 7: 33, 34

³⁹³ Prov 12:4

³⁹⁴ Miller, Roman (1991). "...Let Her Be Veiled." *An in-depth study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, Torch Publications Eureka, MT, Chapter 2, Retrieved on 28/5/2015 from <http://www.ephrataministries.org/book-veiled2.a5w>,

³⁹⁵ Prov 31:30

prudent wife is from the Lord.”³⁹⁶ The actual value of faithful women placed by God can be pointed out from these scriptures.

Nevertheless, generally, under trainings of the Old and New Testament and Greek and Roman Traditions, churches were negligent of woman’s characteristics and rights and considered the man’s tendency to women as the woman’s seducing and practice of magic.³⁹⁷ In most cases, they did not believe in her right to own property and her right to education. Such beliefs led to a renaissance and rethinking about the Church’s thought in the West, leading to renewed efforts to restore the rights and dignity of women.

3.2 The Conception of Modesty and Modest Dress in Christianity

Christian scholars in explaining modesty first refer to Hebrew biblical resources (especially in interpretations on Micah 6:8³⁹⁸) through which they emphasise that modesty is humility in person and dress. They have demonstrated via 1 Peter, 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians in the New Testament to show that

³⁹⁶ Prov 19:14

³⁹⁷ Peter, Broedel Hans (2003). *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief*. Manchester University Press; Manchester: pp. 170–73. Rider Catherine (2006). *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages*. Oxford University Press; Oxford, pp. 97–99. Michael, Bailey (2002). The Feminization of Magic and the Emerging Idea of the Female Witch in the Late Middle Ages. *Essays in Medieval Studies*. Vol.19, pp. 125. Valerie, Flint (1991). *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*. Clarendon Press; Oxford: p. 231.

³⁹⁸ Micah 6: 8: “What does the Lord require of thee? But to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly [modestly] with thy God.”

modesty and appropriate conduct are not compatible with showy and too much attention to appearance.³⁹⁹ Even though we read in the Bible:

“But the Lord said to Samuel: “...for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”⁴⁰⁰

Jesus emphasises on proper action even when looking:

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”⁴⁰¹

Hence, modesty is defined in different actions and is not equal to clothing, but how and what we wear can be immodest or modest. To understand its exact meaning, we must refer directly to the language of the Gospels.

A. Modesty

Although the word ‘modesty’ has not been mentioned in Genesis, the principle of modesty is established through literal events. For example, God covered Adam and Eve and established a moral attitude that is reinforced through several verses in the Hebrew Bible and Gospel. The term ‘modesty’ is used three

³⁹⁹ See: B. Hurley, James (1981). *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, pp. 254-271. Also see: Martin, Troy W. (2004). Paul's Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11: 13-15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 123, No.1, pp. 75-84. Courtais, Georgine De (2006). *Women's Hats, Headdresses and Hairstyles: With 453 Illustrations, Medieval to Modern*, Courier Dover Publications, p. 130. Murphy-O'Conner, Jerome (1980). Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 42, pp. 488-489. B. Hurley, James (1973). Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b-36, *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 35, pp. 193-200.

⁴⁰⁰ 1 Samuel 16: 7.

⁴⁰¹ Mat 5: 27-28.

times in the epistles of Peter and Paul and is considered to be divinely arranged. The apostle Peter teaches Christian ladies:

Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.⁴⁰²

He persists that wives obey their husbands. Thus, Christian ladies are instructed to adorn themselves with a meek and quiet spirit. Peter explains this attitude by labelling godly women.⁴⁰³ Paul also addressed this description:

"I desire that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion."⁴⁰⁴

To understand the exact meaning of the related words, we need to examine them in their Greek roots and the different versions of the Gospel. Crank writes in this regard that “modest apparel”⁴⁰⁵ or “proper clothing”⁴⁰⁶ is translated from the

⁴⁰² 1 Peter 3: 3-7

⁴⁰³ Crank, David (2002). *op, cit.*

⁴⁰⁴ 1 Tim 2: 8-10 RSV

⁴⁰⁵ 1 Tim 2:9 in King James Bible (KJV) states: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."

⁴⁰⁶ The same verses in the New American Standard Version (NAS): “Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or

Greek words, “*Kosmios katastole*”. “*Kosmios*” means orderly and well arranged, modest and descent. “*Katastole*” refers to a garment, derived from the verb meaning “to send or let down, to lower” (*Kata* =down, *Stello* =to send), thus referring to a long flowing dress.⁴⁰⁷ Generally, the passages of 1 Tim and 1 Peter argue that immodesty partly outcomes from inappropriate and luxury dress and adornments. Therefore, both of Peter and Paul want Christian ladies to dress appropriately.

B. *Katakephale* (head covering)

The most important verse in this relation is in Paul’s first epistle to Corinthians. In this verse he emphasises *Katakephale* (head covering) and women refraining from unveiling the head:

“But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered (*Akatakalyptos*) dishonours her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ...Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?”⁴⁰⁸

Literally, the term ‘covered’ means ‘lower the head’ which is translated from the Greek root of *Katakephale*. “*Katakalyptos*” means “completely covered”

pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.”

⁴⁰⁷ Crank, David (2002). *op, cit*.

⁴⁰⁸ 1 Cor 11: 6,13.

and “*Akatakalyptos*” means “not completely covered”.⁴⁰⁹ In this phrase “With her head unveiled”, “unveiled” is a translation of “*Akatakalyptos*”.⁴¹⁰

Paul’s notorious dispute in 1 Corinthians about women’s head covering in public worship is often criticised for its complexity and logical confusion.⁴¹¹ There are several traditional and modern commentaries about this account. Some contemporary interpreters have tried to develop new meanings from this doctrine. To do so, they must begin with precisely understanding the terms used in Paul’s.

Accordingly, as Martin writes in his article, Paul trains Christian women to cover their head because it is considered a part of women’s genitalia. This means that Paul wanted women to cover their head in public worship and to dress modestly when around men.⁴¹² Even though Martin proclaims there is no modern scholar who agrees with the fundamental notions Paul promoted regarding the veil, everybody agrees with preventing showing genitalia in public worship.⁴¹³ Massey states that the Meaning of *Katakephale* asserts that when head commonly used with an object indicates a kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹ Nyamaah, Emmanuel, Matilda Nsiah, Alice (2013). Christianity And Culture In Ghana: A Study Of The Church Of Pentecost’s Decree On Head Covering And 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, AIIC 2013*, 24-26 April, Azores, Portugal, Proceedings, p.155

⁴¹⁰ W. E. Vine (1940). *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, p. 174.

⁴¹¹ Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op, cit*.

⁴¹² Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op, cit*.

⁴¹³ *Ibid*.

⁴¹⁴ Massey, Preston. T. (2007). The Meaning of *κατακαλύπτω* and *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16, *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 4, pp. 502-523 .

C. Veil and Chapel Veil

The definition of the word veil according to *Webster* is, “a length of cloth worn by women as a covering for the head and shoulders and, especially in Eastern countries, for the face”. Blanket, mask, and robe were synonyms of the veil used in the 13th century.⁴¹⁵ Coffman (1905-2006) in his “Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians” writes that this term has the meaning of “veil” which when used in this passage five times refers to a large loose mantle which women wrapped around their heads and faces, leaving only the eyes visible, and sometimes only one eye.⁴¹⁶ Brown writes that Paul required women to cover their hair with a material head covering.⁴¹⁷

In summary, Paul’s expression could be that Christian women should have long hair and also wear head covering at least in churches. Accordingly, the practice of prayer veiling as a devotional covering, chapel veil or mantilla has long existed as a tradition throughout Christian history.

D. Mantilla (or Mantle)

One of the concepts that should be examined in relation to modest dress is mantle. This word is used in the Bible in different meanings. The Old Testament mentioned mantle as a garment of some prophets such as Elijah and Elisha. According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, this term has accrued

⁴¹⁵ Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *The Veil: Symbol and State Identity, Iran and France*, International Relations Master’s Program, University of Massachusetts Boston, John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, p.16.

⁴¹⁶ Coffman, James Burton (1999). *Coffman commentaries on the old and new testament*. Retrieved on 6/20/2015 from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/>.

⁴¹⁷ Brown, A. Philip (2011). *A Survey of the History of the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 II*, Aldersgate Forum, Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from http://www.discipliningnewconverts.org/web_documents/OtherArticles/2011-10-25

five times about Elijah's mantle (1 King 19: 18, 19; 2 King 2:8,13,14). Furthermore, it is found as a plural once (Isaiah 3:22), where it refers to an upper wide tunic with sleeves (*Kethoneth*).⁴¹⁸ In King 2:13-14, the mantle is considered the passing from Elijah the prophet to Elisha (his successor) symbolises the passing of prophetic authority. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* categorised the meaning of the mantle as:

- 1- The garment with which Jael covered Sisera (Judges 4:18)
- 2- Authorized version rendered "coat", "cloak" and "robe" (1 Samuel 15:27; 28: 14 ; Ezra 9: 3 Ezra 9: 5)
- 3- Apparently some article of a ladies dress (Isaiah 3:22)
- 4- The sole garment of the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:13 1 Kings 19:19, 2 Kings 2:8 2 Kings 2:13 2 Kings 2:14)⁴¹⁹

Although there are variations of the meaning of mantle in the Bible, the leading notion is clothing like a cloak or other article of covering. In biblical times, a mantle was usually a large, loose garment made of animal skin, probably sheepskin. According to the Bible, a mantle was known as a prophet's official garment or a sign of a prophet calling from God (1king 19:13).⁴²⁰ Christians believe God has regarded a mantle as a call upon every believer in Jesus Christ (1 peter 4:10-11), as priests believe that their mantles are their God-given spiritual gifts. The covered head is God's chosen emblem to remind all of His children some

⁴¹⁸ Orr, James, M.A. (1915). Entry for 'Mantle'. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. D.D. General Editor. Retrieved on 3/5/2015 from <http://www.studydrive.org/encyclopedias/isb/view.cgi?n=5735&search=span>

⁴¹⁹ Smith, William (1901). "Entry for 'Mantle,'". "Smith's Bible Dictionary". Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from <http://www.classic.studydrive.org/dic/sbd/view.cgi?number=T2830>>.

⁴²⁰ The prophet Samuel wore a mantle (1 Samuel 15:27). The prophet Elijah "threw his cloak around [Elisha]" as a symbol of Elijah's ministry being passed on to Elisha. So, the prophet's mantle was an indication of his authority and responsibility as God's chosen spokesman (2 Kings 2:8).

fundamental facts which He has intended for their happiness and His glory.⁴²¹ Traditionally, Christians call the women's veil as mantle. In this context, head coverings requirement of the priesthood are unambiguous: every priest was expected to wear a headdress of fine linen and the high priest was to wear his head-covering continually.⁴²²

F. Habit

It is a long, loose garment worn by a member of a religious order (nuns in long brown habits, black veils, and sandals).⁴²³ As Elizabeth Kuhns writes, the nun's habit is one of the most familiar religious symbols in the world. As she writes, "Habit refers to the ensemble of clothing and accessories that make up this religious dress. From this garment, a woman is recognised as a person who determined to serve her life to God."⁴²⁴ Sullivan in *Consuming Fashion* writes that the nun's habit that looks like a satanic uniform has reacted to moral and social transition throughout history.⁴²⁵ Eichner mentions that habit is a sign of "obedience, poverty, and chastity-forever".⁴²⁶ Nuns' habits are in a variety of shape and colour

⁴²¹ Shank, Tom (1992). *An in-depth study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, Torch Publications, North America.

⁴²² Exod 28: 4, 37-38: 39.28; Lev 16.4: 21.10 lxx: Ezek 44.18; Zech 3.5.

⁴²³ Oxford dictionary. University of Oxford Press, Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/habit>

⁴²⁴ Kuhns, Elizabeth (2003). *The Habit: A History of the Clothing of Catholic Nuns*, Doubleday, New York, p. 8.

⁴²⁵ Sullivan, Rebecca (1998). Breaking Habits; Gender, Class and the Sacred in Dress of Women Religious, In: *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body*, Editors: Brydon, Anne, Niessen, Sandra, Oxford and New York: Berg, p. 109.

⁴²⁶ Eichner, Maura (1963). A Nun Changes Her Habit, *Catholic Digest*. Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from http://www.sturdyroots.org/PDFs/CF/CF_EichnerHabitpdf.pdf

depending on the church or sect. It usually consists of a tunic, belt, *Capuse* (hood), *Cappa* (great cloak) and *Scapular* (a kind of apron).⁴²⁷

In conclusion, throughout Christian history, wearing of a variety of coverings by Christian women was common particularly at churches and during worship. Even though in recent centuries, cultural changes have led to remarkable deviations in this matter. In this context, Kraybill writes that at worship, in parts of the Western World, many women started to wear bonnets in lieu of head coverings, and later, hats became predominant. He adds:

“The Roman Catholic Church used chapel veils until the mid-1960’s. However, eventually, in the North America, this practiced started to decline.”⁴²⁸

Overall, there was no change in scholars’ thought against women veiling in church until the 20th century, even though chapel veils or mantillas are still mostly used by catholic women especially in formal audience with the Pope.

3.3 The Importance of Observing Modesty and Modest Dress Observance in Christianity

The Christian tradition like Judaism has emphasized on modesty and observing modest dress for women as a part of modest behaviour. Unlike the Old Testament, that has no explicit command on female's modest dress or head coverings, although there are enough relevant scattered texts to grant us an

⁴²⁷ C. Sheehy, Mary (1989). *The Dominican Habit*, Retrieved on 21/6/2014 from www.dominicanidaho.org/formation/.../dominican.habit.history.pdf

⁴²⁸ Kraybill, Donald B. (2010). *Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brean, Hutterites, and Mennonites*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press (JHU Press), p. 103.

informed picture, the New Testament explicitly comments in this regard.⁴²⁹ In the Christianity, observing modesty norm is imbedded in religion more so than in the tradition. In the Christian tradition, attention to modest dress of women was common affairs approved by early Christian scholars. According to Christian attitudes, celibacy is considered sacred⁴³⁰, thus in the interest in eliminating the possibility of stimulation and attraction, Christianity invites women to avoid unnecessary decoration. In addition to underlining the issue of modesty, in Christianity the head covering is considered as a divine order and a symbol of submission to God's government, especially during times of public worship.⁴³¹

Observing modest dress by Christian women has constantly been approved throughout Christian history. Many images on the walls of the catacombs⁴³² depict Christian women veiled while the men are bareheaded. The church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-220) and Tertullian (AD 160-215) in their commentaries of Jesus, Peter and Paul have emphasised on the issue of modesty and modest dress. In addition to the large body of Christian teachings about dress in the earlier centuries, protestant reformers and many church leaders have encouraged

⁴²⁹ Certainly, for the Levitical priesthood, the Old Testament delivers numerous explicit stipulations regarding head-coverings, and there are also a small number of texts that refer to the general head-coverings of both men and women. (See: Keener, Craig S. (1993). *Man and Woman*, in R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid and G.F. Hawthorne (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, Leicester: IVP, pp. 583-92.)

⁴³⁰ Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (2004). *De virginibus velandis* (On the Veiling of Virgins). Publisher: OrthodoxEbooks. Chapter III.

⁴³¹ Nee, Watchman (1975). *An in-depth study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, Richmond, Torch Publications, North America, Retrieved on 3/5/2015 from <http://truthinheart.com/EarlyOberlinCD/CD/Doctrine/BeVeiled.htm>

⁴³² Catacombs: a series of underground passages and rooms where bodies were buried in the past. The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press Retrieved on 3/5/2015 from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/catacomb>

modest clothing.⁴³³ Nevertheless, today, except in certain religious groups such as most Amish, Mennonite communities, and Pentecostals that still observe modesty norms, many churches have failed to teach this subject. However, until the 1950s, many Christian women have covered their hair in churches. After Vatican II⁴³⁴, the Catholics churches declared that the head covering is optional.⁴³⁵ Today, most Christians seem to follow the fashions that typically lead to immodesty, meanwhile, only a minority of Christians try to dress modestly.⁴³⁶ Despite the debates about this issue among contemporary Christian academics, there are still several theologians who believe in the importance of the veil and modesty

3.4 Philosophy of Observance of Modesty and Modest Dress in Christianity

The New Testament includes some statements from Jesus and his apostles inviting Christian followers to observe modesty, and also wearing modest dress for women as a part of modest behaviour. In addition, Paul has attempted to explain the reasons for covering the head of women in the context of his ontological doctrine in his epistles.

⁴³³ Crank, David (2002). Clothing & Modesty, *Magazine Unless the Lord*, Vol. 3 No. 2.

⁴³⁴ Vatican II, The popular name for the Second Vatican Council, an assembly of all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church held from 1962 to 1965. The bishops ordered a large-scale liberalization and modernization of practices in their church. (vatican ii. (n.d.). The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition. Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from Dictionary.com website: [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vatican ii](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vatican%20ii))

⁴³⁵ Lewis, John Thomas (1947). *The Posture in Prayer and Covered and Uncovered Heads in Worship*, Birmingham, AL, p. 14.

⁴³⁶ Crank, David (2002). *op, cit.*

3.4.1 Avoiding Lustful Looking at Strangers and its Influence on one's Spiritual Life and Punishment in the Hereafter

The Gospel quotes Jesus as inviting Christian men and women to behave modestly. Matthew quotes Jesus (PBUH):

“You have heard that it was said, do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”⁴³⁷

Some Jews assumed that God has condemned ‘physical adultery’, as the seventh commandment of Decalogue is: “You shall not commit adultery.”⁴³⁸ However, Jesus expresses that ‘mental adultery’ is also sinful. The ‘thought’ that produces adultery is as sinful as the ‘act’ itself.⁴³⁹ Since, there is no sin in word or deed, which was not first in the heart they all come out of man, and are fruits of that wickedness which is in the heart, and is wrought there.⁴⁴⁰ As Jesus (PBUH) says:

“For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander”⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁷ Mat 15:19

⁴³⁸ Deut 5:18 and Exod 20:14

⁴³⁹ As it is implied in the Tenth Commandment: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house..." (Exod 20:17).

⁴⁴⁰ Henry, Matthew (1706). Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible, Matthew Henry's six volume Complete Commentary. Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/>

⁴⁴¹ Mat 15:19

This expression by Jesus (PBUH) about the importance of avoiding from looking at passers was mentioned in the Gospel as the root and origin of adultery sin and refers to punishment in the Hereafter. He continues:

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.⁴⁴²

He says in another passage:

Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.⁴⁴³

Here, the phrase “Woe to him who is causing slip” demonstrates the heavy duty upon everybody to others and in public, threatening to enter the hell. Jesus may use the ‘eye’ in this statement since the ‘eye’ is usually associated with ‘lust’. As John says: “...the lust of the eyes...”⁴⁴⁴ The ultimate aim of these teachings is that everyone becomes cleansed, free of all sins, and achieves eternal life:

⁴⁴² Mat 5: 27-30

⁴⁴³ Mat 18: 10-7

⁴⁴⁴ 1 John 2:16.

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁴⁴⁵

Also, Paul, in his epistle writes that improper deeds lead to spiritual death.⁴⁴⁶ Coffman, in his commentary regarding Paul’s expression about immodest women, “But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives”⁴⁴⁷ writes that she is dead while she lives and may yet live many years before their funerals are held.⁴⁴⁸

3.4.2 Avoiding Apparent Adornment

Peter who is considered the leader of the disciples, in one of his epistles says to female followers:

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husband’s so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in Gods sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their

⁴⁴⁵ Rom 6: 22- 23.

⁴⁴⁶ “But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” (Mat 8:21)

⁴⁴⁷ 1 Tim 5:6.

⁴⁴⁸ Coffman, James Burton (1999). *op. cit.*

hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.⁴⁴⁹

In this section of the letter, Peter is writing about personal holiness and how a Christian woman is to behave. The first epistle of Paul to the Timothies offers some instructions about church teachings and how to deal with different controversial and false teachings. He recommends certain particular directions concerning Christian women.⁴⁵⁰ He writes:

I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.⁴⁵¹

So, there are two aspects to Christian modesty. The first is to avoid being an occasion of sin. The second, more positively speaking, is to be instilled with the spirit of modesty inspired by a deep love for the virtue of chastity,⁴⁵² leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

⁴⁴⁹ Peter 1: 3-6

⁴⁵⁰ Crank, David (2002). *op, cit.*

⁴⁵¹ Tim 2: 9-13

⁴⁵² Hart, Robert T. (2015). *Those Who Serve God Should Not Follow the Fashions*, Fifth Edition

3.4.3 Modest Dress as a Symbol of Modesty and Monasticism

Throughout Christian history, dressing modestly has been as a symbol of purity and modesty for believing and faithful women. From the advent of Christianity the women believers have always been depicted in their veil and expected to follow this practice as an accepted tradition of Judaism. In this context, also one of the symbols of monasticism formed from the third century of Christian history is having modest dress particularly for women.

3.4.3.1 Holy Mary as a Perfect Woman and Symbol of Virginity and Modesty

In the Christian tradition, Mary as the holy woman in Christianity (and also in Islam), the queen of heaven and earth by grace⁴⁵³ and the Christians' comforter is considered a focal symbol of women.⁴⁵⁴ Mary, who is the sample of a perfect woman, is a virgin according to the Catholic Church. However, the Protestant Church knows her as a spouse because the Bible speaks about her husband, Josef, and Jesus's brothers. The Encyclopaedia of the Bible notes that the Church has officially declared four facts about St Mary:

- 1- Mother of the God
- 2- She preserved her virginity
- 3- Immunity from the original sin

⁴⁵³ De Montfort, Grignon, Marie, Louis (1956). *Trued Evotion To the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Translated from the original French by Francoise de Castro, Adapted by Eddie Doherty, Bruklyni, Montfort Publications, Bay Shore, New York, used with permission, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁴ Cox, Harvey (1985). *op. cit.*, p.182

4- Physical and spiritual ascent to heaven.⁴⁵⁵

Cox in his book introduces Mary as the woman of Christendom who has been the virginal mother, royal benefactress and the cosmic lady bountiful.⁴⁵⁶ According to Cox, during the classical Christian centuries, the Virgin Mary served as a model.⁴⁵⁷ Christians believe that Lucifer lost through pride and Eve lost through disobedience, although Mary lived in obscurity⁴⁵⁸, she achieved obedience, humility and modesty.⁴⁵⁹ Researches indicate that most traditional depictions of the Virgin Mary show her veiled and mostly in the blue mantle.⁴⁶⁰ For instance, Deshman (1941-1995) illustrated her as a myth and model of humanity, she leans her head forward meekly and the only sign of queenly glory is her crown. A letter attributed to St. Jerome (347-420) but actually written by Radbertus (785-865) singled out modesty and servitude as the chief virtues of Mary and the reason of her queenship.⁴⁶¹

In the Cathedral of Chartres considered the significant place of extensive source of the Virgin cult in 13th century France⁴⁶², often the illustrations of Eve and

⁴⁵⁵ Hocks, James (1381). *Qamoos Ketab Moqaddas* (Encyclopedia of the Holy Bible). Iran: Tehran, Asatir, pp. 406, 423.

⁴⁵⁶ Cox, Harvey (1985). *Seduction Spirit A Touchstone book*, Simon and Schuster, p.182

⁴⁵⁷ George Kochuthara, Shaji (2007). *The Concept of Sexual Pleasure in the Catholic Moral Tradition*, Gregorian Biblical Book Shop, p. 361.

⁴⁵⁸ De Montfort, Grignon, Marie, Louis (1956). *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁴⁶⁰ Piccarreta, Luisa (1930). *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will*, Retrieved on 4/8/2015 from http://luisapiccarreta.co/?page_id=2868, p.4

⁴⁶¹ Deshman, Robert (1989). Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and Medieval Art, *Word and Image*, Vol. 5. No.1, p. 33-71.

⁴⁶² L. Fischer, Elizabeth (2005). *The Virgin of Chartres: Ritual and the Cult of the Virgin Mary at the Thirteenth-Century Cathedral of Chartres*, A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Mary are considered opposites. Eve is unclothed and cowering, while Mary is depicted graceful and garbed in a flowing robe.⁴⁶³ In most portraits she is covered from head to foot, and wears a veil.⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, Mary is in a knee-length dress with short wide sleeves over a gown with long tight sleeves.⁴⁶⁵ Overall, Mary's clothes, the simple, loose robe (mostly in blue) was popular during many parts of the Middle Ages⁴⁶⁶ and she is depicted as wearing a headdress underneath her crown.⁴⁶⁷ *Emmerich* (1774-1824) described her vision of the Virgin Mary: "Mary lets the veil fall over her face and crossed her hands (but not her fingers) before her breast."⁴⁶⁸ This dress is timeless, and appears to fit the biblical conception.

3.4.3.2 Observance of Modest conduct as a Symbol of Monasticism

As early as second century, there were small groups of Christians that renounced marriage and possessions, and lived in remote places. Nevertheless, Christian monasticism probably started in the deserts of Egypt in the late-3rd and 4th centuries.⁴⁶⁹ Since then monastic groups formed their order and practice. One

requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Art History, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, p. 5.

⁴⁶³ Piccarreta, Luisa (1930). *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁶⁵ Norris, Medieval (1999). *Costume and Fashion, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.*, p. 97.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 147.

⁴⁶⁷ Piccarreta, Luisa (1930). *op. cit.*, p.38.

⁴⁶⁸ Emmerich, Anne Catherine (2006). *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Baronius Press Ltd, p. 75.

⁴⁶⁹ Jones, Robert (2009). A Brief History of Western Monasticism, Acworth, Georgia, International Bible Society, <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/monastic/monastic85x11.pdf>

of these orders was wearing loose simple garb for men and women. Today, due to the universal mission of the Catholic Church, the image of the nun is a familiar icon. Habit as part of a nun's clothes, serves as a universal representation of holiness and has defined the catholic sisters for nearly two thousands year.⁴⁷⁰ The term '*nun*' refers to members of the religious order, who are generally involved in monastic activities and who take solemn vows⁴⁷¹. The term *sister* refers to members of religious congregations. They work in active apostolates and take simple vows. *Mother* is used to indicate the superior of a religious community.⁴⁷²

As Judaic versions, in Christianity, the exposure of a woman's hair to a man's sight is considered a sexual violation.⁴⁷³ In this regard, the tradition of Catholic nuns of shaving off all their hair was initially for the sake of this understanding of erotic allure of a woman's hair, because nuns as the brides of Jesus reflected the embodiment of purity.⁴⁷⁴ Perfect sisters seek virginity, grant chastity, modesty, and humility. The veil has been a protection of privacy and symbol of modesty.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁰ Kuhns, Elizabeth (2003). *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁴⁷¹ In Roman Catholic canon law, a solemn vow is a vow: "a deliberate and free promise made to God about a possible and better good" (Code of Canon Law, canon 1191. Retrieved on 3/5/2015 from http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P4E.HTM).

⁴⁷² Kuhns, Elizabeth (2003). *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴⁷³ D'Angelo, Mary Rose (1995). Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels: Women's Heads in Early Christianity, *Off with Her Head: The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, Ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 64-131.

⁴⁷⁴ D'Angelo, Mary Rose (1995). *op. cit.*

⁴⁷⁵ Emmerich, Anne Catherine (1970). *op. cit.*, p. 142.

Depictions of nuns' icons indicate the veil or mantle was in use from the early times of Christianity. The original monastic mantle or wimple was simple material, in black or grey, depending on what at hand. Kuhns in her *The Habit: A History of the Clothing of Catholic Nuns* writes that the habit is a definitive element, depicting the roles of nun in the Catholic Church and caring for the society's needs. She says:

“The nun’s habit is one of the most widely known and recognizable religious symbols of our time, an icon deeply embedded in our cultural consciousness...”⁴⁷⁶

During the Middle Ages, married women in Byzantine and Christian women in Europe commonly wore veils rather than covering their faces with a variety of styles of kerchiefs, headgears and wimples⁴⁷⁷, yet, nuns had their own characteristic veil. So, the veil of a nun characterises her as a woman determined to devote her life fully to God. Habit scholar Sullivan says that while it might appear as a static uniform, it has reacted to social and moral changes throughout Christian history.⁴⁷⁸ In the 1960s and 1970s, most religious sisters abandoned wearing the habit, for the sake of universal sensation. Kuhns also says that from the clothing seen in an eleventh-century monastery to the garb worn by nuns on picket lines during the 1960s, habits have always been designed to convey a specific image or ideal. The habits of the Benedictines and the Dominicans, for example, were specifically created to distinguish women who consecrated their lives to God. The brown Carmelite habit was rarely seen outside the monastery wall. When many religious abandoned habits in the 1960s and '70s, it stirred a debate that continues today.⁴⁷⁹ Most nuns say they preferred to transfer to secular

⁴⁷⁶ Kuhns, Elizabeth (2003). *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁷ De Montfort, Grignon, Marie, Louis (1956). *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

clothes for better service. She writes that these sisters believe that secular clothing allows them to be approached as a “who” rather than a “what.” Although public identifyability has long been a practice and law of the Church, they feel that the benefits gained from shedding the habit more than justify the change of attire. Some religious women have retained a symbolic ring or pendant, while others appear quite indistinguishable from laywomen, lipstick and jewelry included. But while it may seem that these sisters have become “invisible” on the streets and in parishes, they believe their actions are speaking louder than any physical symbols. And one nun notes, “They can still tell who we are. Our hair is too short, our skirts are too long, and our shoes are too flat.”⁴⁸⁰ Nevertheless, in the Eastern Orthodox Church, monks and nuns still attire the solid black mantles (*Kalimavkion* and *Cylindrical* hat). Sokolof writes that even when an orthodox monk or nun dies, they are vested in their religious habit.⁴⁸¹

3.4.4 Paul’s Doctrine for the Philosophy of Women’s Head covering

In first epistle of Paul to Corinthians, Paul expresses certain reasons for women veiling that are not seen elsewhere in the Bible:

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.² Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.³ But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.⁵ But every woman that prayeth

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 8

⁴⁸¹ Sokolof, Archpriest D. (2001). *A Manual of the Orthodox Church's Divine Services*(3rd ed.). Jordanville, NY: Printshop of St. Job of Pochaev, Holy Trinity Monastery, p. 165

or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.⁶ For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.⁸ For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.⁹ Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.¹⁰ For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.¹¹ Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.¹² For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.¹³ Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?¹⁴ Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?¹⁵ But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.¹⁶ But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.⁴⁸²

These verses have some structures that render it one of the most problematic and controversial passages in the New Testament.⁴⁸³ For this reason, it has been subjected to various commentaries throughout Church history. Lewis (1932-2004) in his *The posture in Prayer and Covered and Uncovered Heads in Worship* says the variety of commentaries on this passage that critical understandings of this

⁴⁸² 1 Cor 11:2-16

⁴⁸³ The difficulty of this passage first is its length (A. Brown, Philip (2011). *op. cit.*) and also various subjects. See; Padgett, Alan (1984). *Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Vol. 20, pp. 69-86. P. Shoemaker, Thomas (1987). *Unveiling of Equality: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Vol. 17, pp. 60-63. Fee, Gordon (1987). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 492.

passage are as numerous as the number of scholars who have tried to discuss it.⁴⁸⁴ Brown in a significant survey shows that how the dominant understanding of the issue that Paul requires women to have head covering with both long hair and a head covering developed.⁴⁸⁵ He divided the history of interpretations in the following three eras:

A- Early and Medieval Commentators (AD 120-1500)

The majority of existing interpretations of these periods indicates that Paul obliges women to have a material head covering.⁴⁸⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 130-202), the earliest church father, interpreted it as women's requirement to cover her head. Clement of Alexandria (AD 153-217), the second church father, emphasised on it in his writing on 1 Cor 11:2-16; "The Instructor".⁴⁸⁷ Tertullian (AD 160-220), a theologian in Carthage, has extensively dealt with this issue in his work *On the Veiling of Virgins*. He maintains lengthily that not only married women but also all women are to be veiled and have long hair according to 1 Cor 11:2-5.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ Lewis, John Thomas (1947). *The Posture in Prayer and Covered and Uncovered Heads in Worship*, Birmingham, AL, p. 14.

⁴⁸⁵ Brown, Philip A. (2011). A survey of the history of the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 II, *Aldersgate Forum*, Retrieved on 14/1/2014 from www.disciplingnewconverts.org/web_documents/OtherArticles/2011-10-25

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ "The Instructor" is a guide for the formation and development of Christian character and for living a Christian life. (Coxe, A. Cleveland (2009). *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Publisher: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Vol. 2, p. 167. Retrieved on 6/16/2014 from <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1968>>)

⁴⁸⁸ See: Coxe, A. Cleveland (2009). *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 446. Also see: Vol. 7, pp. 687-89.

Such interpretations were followed by other medieval commentators such as Ambrosiaster⁴⁸⁹ (mid-late 300s), a Latin commentator, and Augustine⁴⁹⁰ (AD 354-430), Ambrose (AD 330-397), Pelagius⁴⁹¹ (AD 355-435) and Theodoret of Cyrus⁴⁹² (AD 393-457). None of these early theologians suggested anything different from this common commentary because the western medieval interpretations usually refer to the early church fathers, leaving little to no room for alternative interpretations.⁴⁹³

In the Eastern Church, John of Damascus (676-749), Photius (820-886) and Theophylact (1090–1110) followed this interpretation. For instance, John of Damascus briefed 1 Cor 11:2-16 with “women are not permitted to pray or prophesy uncovered”.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸⁹ See: Lewis Bray, Gerald (2009). *The Translator’s Introduction in Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians*: Ambrosiaster, trans. and ed. Ancient Christian Texts, Downers Grove: bIVP Academic, p. xvi.

⁴⁹⁰ Schaff, Philip (1887), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Serie 1, Vol. 1. Translated by J.G. Cunningham. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Letter 245, series 1, Vol. 1, p. 588. Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102245.htm>.

⁴⁹¹ See: Bray, Gerald Lewis (1999). *1-2 Corinthians (Ancient Christian Commentary On Scripture)*. InterVarsity Press.

⁴⁹² *Theodoret of Cyrus* has a brief comment on 1 Cor. 11:3-8 on having the heads covered at praying to God. (Migne, J.-P. (1866). *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)* (MPG) 82, Paris: Migne, p. 312.)

⁴⁹³ Brown, Philip A. (2011). *op.cit.*

⁴⁹⁴ Clarke, Adam (1838). *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co., p. 132.

B- Reformation, Post-Reformation, and Wesleyan Commentaries (AD 1500-1850)

There is no essential alteration in this passage's interpretation in the writings of Martin Luther⁴⁹⁵ (1483-1846), John Calvin⁴⁹⁶ (1509-1564) and John Collings (1623-1690).⁴⁹⁷

C- Modern Commentaries (AD 1850-present)

Overall, interpreters differed little from previous interpretations until the mid-twentieth century.⁴⁹⁸ The first writer to offer a new commentary was Isaksson.⁴⁹⁹ After him, the number of scholars who arrived at the same interpretation although independently, increased.⁵⁰⁰ Nevertheless, there are still many contemporary supporters for the traditional interpretation.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁵ Luther, Martin, Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut T. Lehmann, Joel W. Lundeen (1958). *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p. 152.

⁴⁹⁶ Calvin, Jean (1996). *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, translated by John W. Fraser, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 231.

⁴⁹⁷ Smith, William, Mee Fuller, John (1893). *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, part 1, London: John Murray, pp. 656, 658-59.

⁴⁹⁸ For example see: Alford, Henry (1873). *The Greek Testament*, Boston: Lee, Shepard, and Dillingham, Vol. 2, p. 566. Hodge, Charles (1857). *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New York: R. Carter, p. 207, 248.

⁴⁹⁹ Isaksson, Abel (1965). *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple, A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19:3- 12 and 1 Cor. 11:3-16*, Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, esp. pp.166-68.

⁵⁰⁰ See: Horsley, Richard A. (1998). *1 Corinthians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentary, Nashville: Abingdon, 153-54. B. Payne, Philip (2006). Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *Priscilla Papers*, Vol. 20, No. 3: 9-18.

⁵⁰¹ For example see: E. Garland, David (2003). *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, p. 506. Fee, Gordon (1995). *The First Epistle to the*

3.4.4.1 Women Veiling: a Sign of Submission to God's Governance

The first reason for women's head covering in public is based on God's order of headship. This principle is stated several times in Paul's letters⁵⁰²:

But I want you to understand that the head (κεφαλή) of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head...¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.⁵⁰³

In this passage, Paul declares God's order.⁵⁰⁴ He argues for maintaining the head covering that is rooted in the principle of headship. According to this passage, women should submit to this divine order and wear the head covering. The key term "head" (κεφαλή) as used in Hellenistic Greek has two meanings. Waltke in this regard says that the word head is an intentional double entendre in Paul's argument. The use of the word "head" in the first verse metaphorically talks about "headship"

Corinthians, Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 232.

⁵⁰² For instance: Eph 5: 22-24, 1 Cor 11: 1-34, Col 3:18, Eph 5: 23.

⁵⁰³ 1 Cor 11:2-16

⁵⁰⁴ Finney, Mark (2010). Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11. 2-16 in its Social Context, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 2010 Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 31-58.

i.e. authority. However, in the next verses the word “head” is used both in the literal sense of head (i.e. a part of body) and the metaphorical meaning of headship.⁵⁰⁵

Paul is declaring a theological justification about headship to appeal to the behaviour of the Corinthian church regarding their head covering. As Gill writes, Paul encourages covering the head to maintain the value schemes in the secular Roman community.⁵⁰⁶ All the early and medieval scholars and some contemporary authors like Fee⁵⁰⁷, Keener⁵⁰⁸, Bruce⁵⁰⁹, Collins and Thiselton⁵¹⁰ proposed that the Paul’s passage is speaking about material cover or veil for women during prayer.

Nevertheless, there is no consensus on the sense of the word *Katakephale*. Although this word has been translated traditionally as woman’s veil or head covering, most modern authors have interpreted this word as loose, loosened, unbound or unkempt and wearing the hair down.⁵¹¹ However, these views would not be consistent with the usage of the word, nor the logic of the passage since in another place *Katakephale* has been used is Esther 6:12, when Haman was mourning publicly in honour of Mordicai. The book of Esther says, “But Haman

⁵⁰⁵ Waltke, Bruce K. (1978). 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16: An Interpretation *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 135, No. 537, pp. 46-57.

⁵⁰⁶ W.J. Gill, David (1990). The Importance Of Roman Portraiture For Head-Coverings In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 245-260.

⁵⁰⁷ Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *op. cit.*

⁵⁰⁸ Keener, Craig S. (1993). Man and Woman, in; R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid and G.F. Hawthorne (eds.). *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, Leicester: IVP, pp. 583-92.

⁵⁰⁹ Waltke, Bruce K. (1978). *op. cit.*

⁵¹⁰ See: Thiselton, Anthony C. (2000). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵¹¹ Nyamaah, Emmanuel, Matilda Nsiah, Alice (2013). *op. cit.*

hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered”. The phrase of “having his head covered” is the word *Katakephale* and means having a garment on the head.⁵¹²

In a nutshell, when a woman covers her hair, she is standing before God according to God’s order. God wants women to covers their heads in order to manifest His Will and government on earth.⁵¹³ As Nee writes in *An in-depth study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, the meaning of head covering is a woman’s acceptance of her appointed status and His government.⁵¹⁴

3.4.4.2 Head Covering as a Sign of Women’s Submission and Headship of Husbands

“But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his Kefáli (head)...”⁵¹⁵

As mentioned, the argument of Paul for maintaining the practice of wearing a head covering is rooted in the concept of headship. According to his statement, in the context of submitting to God’s orders, women should accept male⁵¹⁶ headship. Finney expressed that another reason of women’s head covering is submission to

⁵¹² Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *op. cit.*, p. 507.

⁵¹³ Nee, Watchman (1975). *op. cit.*

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ 1 Cor 8-10

⁵¹⁶ The NASB uses “man” and “woman” while the ESV uses “husband” and “wife.” Most commentaries approved that it is limited to a husband and wife.

the husband and his headship.⁵¹⁷ The principle of headship is stated in Paul's epistles several times:

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.”⁵¹⁸

The verse 11:3 is the first usage of “head” in Paul's epistles. As Gill says, the headship of husbands is clearly taught in Paul's passage that God reveals His established order. Wearing the veil says something about the wife's place in society and lack of it at an assembly would have been a poor reflection on her husband. Wives in secular Corinthian society usually wished to honour their husband, and to be seen to have done so.⁵¹⁹ Traditionally, the church has interpreted Paul's passage as identifying a hierarchical order in which the man is said to be over the woman in leadership, as Christ is said to be over man.⁵²⁰ Traditionalists summarise Paul's

⁵¹⁷ Finney, Mark (2010). *op. cit.*

⁵¹⁸ Eph 5:22-24. Other places are for instance in:

1- 1 Cor 11:1-34: “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.”

2- Col 3:18: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord”

3- Eph 5:23: “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”

⁵¹⁹ W.J.Gill, David (1990). The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Covering in Corinthians 11:2-2-16, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 245-260.

⁵²⁰ W. J. Gill, David (1990). *op. cit.*

teaching about the expected relation of a wife to her husband as her subordination without necessity of ontological inferiority.⁵²¹

Nevertheless, there is a modern discussion on the explanation of the “head” with different meanings.⁵²² This contemporary argument in English-speaking scholar communities started with Bedale’s discourse at an opening *salvo* in 1954. His investigation is used as a classic support for the recent notion of *Kefáli* (κεφαλή) that is translated to “source” or “origin” rather than “head”⁵²³ although Bedale’s conclusion was moderately undemonstrative and was not so far from the traditional perspective.⁵²⁴ After him, many revisionist scholars have seriously challenged the traditional commentaries by more egalitarian explanations for women’s role at home, church and the world.⁵²⁵ Although a search of this word did not reveal such new meanings. The meaning of the word from the Greek-English dictionaries is as following:

⁵²¹ See: Gray, Phillip A. (2009). Do the Structure and Semantics of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Support the Subordinationist Interpretation? *Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, New Testament*, Vol. 9322, A. Summer.

⁵²² W. J. Gill, David (1990). *op. cit.*

⁵²² Gray, Phillip A. (2009). *op. cit.*

⁵²³ Bedale, Stephen (1954). The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles, *Journal of Theological Studies* Vol. 5, pp. 211-15.

⁵²⁴ Gray, Phillip A. (2009). *op. cit.*

⁵²⁵ *ibid.*

1- Thayer in his classic lexicon lists the following definitions for *Kefáli*: “Metaphorically, anything supreme, chief, and prominent; of persons, master, lord....”⁵²⁶

2- Newman considers it as, “Lord, head (of superior rank, etc.).”⁵²⁷

3- Trenchard defines it as, “Head (of superior rank), uppermost part, extremity, end, point...”⁵²⁸

4- Mounce defines it as, “The head, superior, chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate, 1 Co. 11.3; Ep. 1. 22”⁵²⁹

5- The last source that is mentioned here is *Reading New Testament Greek: Complete Word Lists and Reader’s Guide* that has brought two meanings for this word: “Head, superior.”⁵³⁰

Therefore, there is no “source” in the list of these meanings for *Kefáli* and none of these lexicons have mentioned any synonym of “source” as a possible meaning as emphasised by Gray.⁵³¹ One of the results of the verses 4, 8-11 is

⁵²⁶ Thayer, Joseph Henry (1974). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti*, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, Fourteenth Printing edition s. v. κεφαλή.

⁵²⁷ Newman, Barclay M. Jr. (1971). *United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, London: United Bible Societies, p. .

⁵²⁸ Warren, C. Trenchard (2003). *A Concise Dictionary of New Testament Greek*, ed., s. v. κεφαλή, Cambridge University Press; Bilingual edition, p. .

⁵²⁹ Mounce, William D. (1993). *The analytical lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. Zondervan Publishing House.

⁵³⁰ Scott, Brandon Bernard, Dean, Margaret et al., (1993). *Reading New Testament Greek: Complete Word Lists and Reader’s Guide*, Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksons Publishers Inc., p. 12.

⁵³¹ Gray, Phillip A. (2009). *op. cit.*

considering women's head covering as a sign of matrimony. As Gill writes, the authority that is the veil implies on wives' positions in society and lack of it at an assembly would have been a poor reflection on husbands.⁵³² In these verses, the subjection of a wife to her husband is interpreted as subjection and obedience to the Lord. As Paul emphasizes on it:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord”⁵³³

A wife is compelled to look to her husband for all her desires, because God punished all women for Eve's sin and her responsibility on temptation of Adam to eat from Forbidden tree and states:

"To the woman also He said: ... and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee."⁵³⁴

She is to live under his authority. The godly spouse finds her place in her family.⁵³⁵ She has an entirely different role. She is fulfilling her God-appointed role in life. Disposition, not position, is important with God.⁵³⁶ The wife is commanded to be in subjection to her husband out of respect for the authority of God.⁵³⁷ So, observing head covering is considered a sign of her acceptance of her submission to

⁵³² W.J. Gill, David (1990). *The Importance Of Roman Portraiture For Head-Coverings In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 245-260.

⁵³³ Col 3:18

⁵³⁴ Gen 3:16.

⁵³⁵ I Tim 2:15

⁵³⁶ Best, W. E. (1986). *Woman-Man's Completion*, Houston, Texas: W. E. Best Book Missionary Trust. P. 107-8

⁵³⁷ Best, W. E. (1986). *Woman-Man's Completion*, Houston, Texas: W. E. Best Book Missionary Trust.

her husband's authority, glory, honour and headship and also God's order. Mcgarvey says that the subordination of women to their husbands is meant for the purpose of making the family a viable and successful unit and does not reject/disapprove the equality of both male and female "in Christ". This verse states equality in, "headship of the man over the woman to the leadership of God over Christ."⁵³⁸

So, through the Christian history always married women have used head covering after their marriage as a sign of her submission. In this context, Western women have traditionally worn white bridal veils on their wedding day. Sometimes the veils covered the face through the ceremony. Until the 19th century, wedding veils came to symbolize the woman's virginity and modesty. The tradition of a veiled bride's face continues even today especially in Christian or Jewish culture.⁵³⁹ So, Paul's words may underlie part of the tradition of veiling in the marriage ceremony.⁵⁴⁰ A veil over the hair rather than the face forms part of the headdress of some orders of nuns or religious sisters; this is why when a woman who becomes a nun is said "to take the veil".⁵⁴¹ In medieval times married women normally covered their hair outside the house, and a nun's veil is based on secular medieval styles, reflecting the nun's position as "bride of Christ".

⁵³⁸ Mcgarvey, John William (1892). *Commentary on Acts*, Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, p. 103.*op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁵³⁹ Ingrassia, Catherine (2007). "Diana, Martha and Me". In *Curran, Colleen. Altared: bridezillas, bewilderment, big love, breakups, and what women really think about contemporary weddings*. New York: Vintage Books. pp. 24–30

⁵⁴⁰ Ephe 5:22-24.

⁵⁴¹ Baker, Roger, Burton, Peter (1994). *Drag: A History of Female Impersonation in the Performing Arts*

Cassell lesbian and gay studies list, NYU Press, , p. 142.

3.4.4.3 Head Covering as a Sign of husband's Authority (Power)

“For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.⁹ Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.¹⁰ For this cause ought the woman to have power (authority) on her head”⁵⁴²

Paul discusses the authority (*Exousia*) that is the veil, which is worn on the women’s head. The translation of (ἐξουσίαν; *Exousia*) in most commentaries is ‘a sign’ (or symbol) of authority.⁵⁴³ Since the veil cannot, by itself, possess authority, most interpreters have considered it as a sign of authority i.e., the veil is a sign for something else.⁵⁴⁴ Gordon considers it as a sign that a woman is under her husband’s authority and gives her a right to lead the congregation in worshipping.⁵⁴⁵

In fact, the verses 8-10 emphasis on the Creation and demonstrates that man's headship over woman was in the mind of God from the very beginning. Basically, the word “woman” means female of the man because she was taken out of the man. Thus, woman’s position in life is revealed. She is not only a helper for man but a helper like himself. She has a secondary and dependent place.⁵⁴⁶ Verse 8

⁵⁴² 1 Cor 11.

⁵⁴³ For example; NASB, NJB and NKJ.

⁵⁴⁴ R. Gorelik, Robert (2009). *The Captive Woman Understanding What The Bible Says About Women*, Eshav Books, Tustin, Ca , Printed in US, Retrieved on 22/6/2015 from www.Eshavbooks.Org.

⁵⁴⁵ Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *op. cit.*

⁵⁴⁶ Best, W. E. (1986). *Woman-Man’s Completion*, Houston, Texas: W. E. Best Book Missionary Trust, p. 8.

declares man's priority in the process of creation.⁵⁴⁷ The different roles are clarified in the creation version⁵⁴⁸ where Adam is made directly from the dust of the ground and Eve is created through the man. Eve was derived from Adam: And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones⁵⁴⁹, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.⁵⁵⁰ So, the principle of man headship dates back to creation. Eve was created from Adam and for Adam, to be a helper to him. Also, men are to initiate, to lead, to provide and protect their wives as their head.⁵⁵¹ Because Adam was the source of Eve, men are divinely assigned the role of headship over their women (11:8). Unlike 1 Corinthians 11, Paul's argument in 1 Tim 2:12 is based directly on creation. In other words, Paul's appeal to the creation of Adam before Eve demonstrates the different roles God established based on creation.⁵⁵²

Therefore obviously, "woman being from man" rises from Genesis 2.21-23⁵⁵³ and "woman being for man" root is Genesis 2.18 that God states: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him".⁵⁵⁴ These two sentences are reflections of Gen 2:23 and 18. Likewise, Paul appeals to the creation

⁵⁴⁷ Ruth, Merle () The Significance of the Christian Woman's Veiling, Christian Light Publications

⁵⁴⁸ Gen. 2: 18-24.

⁵⁴⁹ Gen 2: 23.

⁵⁵⁰ R. C. H. Lenski, (1937). The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, p. 44.

⁵⁵¹ See: Ephesians 5:22-33.

⁵⁵² Merkle, Benjamin L. (2015). Should Women Wear Head Coverings?, The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Bible & Theology, August 26.

⁵⁵³ It says: "And from the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made him a woman, and brought her unto the man."

⁵⁵⁴ Gen 2:18

order in 1Tim⁵⁵⁵ and maintains that a woman must not have authority over a man.⁵⁵⁶ So, the creation of Adam and Eve in verse 8 support the idea of authority.⁵⁵⁷ Coffman in his commentary writes about the topic “*man as the head of woman*” that in these verses, the great thing in Paul’s view is eternal priority submission of the wife to her husband.⁵⁵⁸ He declares that the facts of creation expose that:

“... (1) Woman was taken out of man, (2) she was given to man, (3) she was created for man, and (4) she was intended to be the glory of man. The scandalous behaviour of the Corinthian women had contravened God’s purpose in all of these things, hence the mention of them here.”⁵⁵⁹

Watson emphasised that man is first, woman is second and woman’s requirement of head covering is somewhat related to this asymmetry.⁵⁶⁰ Keener added that an uncovered woman was considered as a prostitute or a young woman who looks for a husband. He recommends that the most important feature of woman’s beauty is her hair that should be reserved for her husband.⁵⁶¹ For Finney, Paul’s argument implies that suitable head covering is culturally connected to the headship of Christ over man and the headship of man over woman.⁵⁶² Paul makes a

⁵⁵⁵ 1Tim 2:11-13

⁵⁵⁶ Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *op. cit.* p. 517.

⁵⁵⁷ Matt Slick 1 Cor. 11:3, the word "head" does not mean authority

⁵⁵⁸ Coffman, James Burton (1999). *op. cit.*

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁰ Watson, Francis (2000). The Authority Of The Voice: A Theological Reading Of 1 Corinthians 11.2–16. *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 46, pp. 520-536.

⁵⁶¹ Keener, Craig S. (1998). Veils, Kisses, and Biblical Commands. *Christianity Today*, Vol. 42, No.12, pp. 90-91,.

⁵⁶² Finney, Mark (2010). *op. cit.*

similar statement regarding the creation of Adam and Eve to prove the subordination of the woman to the man in 1 Tim 2:12-13. He writes:

“And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”⁵⁶³

Although the wearing of the veil does not trace its origin to the creation of Eve, the principle of male headship does. Here, Paul points to the origin of mankind to defend the principle of male headship and the practice of head covering by women. In Ephesians (5: 23-24), Paul teaches that the husband is wife’s head as Christ is the church’s head and both wives and church should submit to the respective heads. In this passage, he is using “head” as a sacrificially-loving authority.⁵⁶⁴ Thus, women’s authority is head covering to create an origin that fixes her to male sensual desire to discover her real humanity within the divine-human discourse.⁵⁶⁵ Brauch in his *Hard Sayings of Paul* writes that Paul, using the word “*Exousia*” rather than “head covering”, seems to propose that by woman veiling and thus conforming her appearance to nature and custom.⁵⁶⁶ As Gill writes, the authority that is the veil implies on wives’ positions in society and lack of it at an assembly would have been a poor reflection on husbands. His encouragement to women veiling should be realised as encouragement to maintain some value system of the secular roman society.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ Brian Schwertley, *Head Coverings in Public Worship*

⁵⁶⁴ Finney, Mark (2010). *op. cit.*

⁵⁶⁵ Watson, Francis (2000). *op. cit.*

⁵⁶⁶ Brauch, Manfred (1989). *Hard Sayings of Paul*, Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, pp. 150-151.

⁵⁶⁷ W.J. Gill, David (1990). The Importance Of Roman Portraiture For Head-Coverings In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 245-260.

Nevertheless, some recent Christian scholars such as Bruce⁵⁶⁸ and Collins⁵⁶⁹ suggested that “authority” in this passage is woman’s own authority over her head.⁵⁷⁰ In addition, Mercadante believes that this word’s sense changes with culture. Previously it meant ‘authority over the woman’ but at present it means ‘the woman’s own authority’, because today she is considered a full individual in her human rights.⁵⁷¹

3.4.4.4 Head Covering of Woman as a Sign of men's Glory

“A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8... But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.¹⁶”⁵⁷²

Another reason for the obligation of head covering is because women reflect man’s glory. Here, Paul’s focus is on glory (*Doxav* in ancient Greek), because both man and woman are created in the image of God.⁵⁷³ Paul clarifies his claim on

⁵⁶⁸ Bruce, F. F. (1978). *1 and 2 Corinthians: New Century Bible*. London: Oliphants.

⁵⁶⁹ Collins, Raymond F. (1999). *op. cit.*

⁵⁷⁰ Nyamaah, Emmanuel, Nsiah, Alice Matilda (2013). Christianity And Culture In Ghana: A Study Of The Church Of Pentecost’s Decree On Head Covering And 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, AIIC 2013*, 24-26 April, Azores, Portugal – Proceedings, pp. 155-161.

⁵⁷¹ Mercadante, Linda (1978). *From hierarchy to equality: A comparison in past and present interpretation of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 in relation to the changing status of women in society*. Vancouver: G M-H Books, p. .

⁵⁷² 1 Cor. 11:8

⁵⁷³ Gen 1: 26-27 clearly demonstrates that mankind was created in the image of God as both male and female.

women being the glory of man by mentioning the order of creation order whereby woman has been made from and for man.

Kistemaker and Datiri in their commentaries emphasise that a woman brings glory to her man when she submits to him just like a man that brings glory to Christ through his submission. Hence, Paul states in 1Cor 11-12 that man and woman are interdependent in the Lord.⁵⁷⁴ As Calvin's commentary writes, Paul appeals to human's constant creation relationship to debate for spiritual interdependent like his debate with Galatians: "There is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."⁵⁷⁵ In this order, his interest looks to be within physically-based submission of women to men and mutual spiritual relationship of the submission to Christ.⁵⁷⁶ The church has directly been remained under these two relational realms.⁵⁷⁷

Paul says a woman's head shaving is disgraceful to her, because her long hair is her glory⁵⁷⁸ and hair covering is her man's glory.⁵⁷⁹ By uncovering the head she disgraces her head i.e. her husband. Watson in an article about the word "*Doxav*"(glory) in verse 7 explains that seems that there is a semantic slippage between the two occurrences of *doxav* in v.7. Man is the glory of God as the

⁵⁷⁴ Kistemaker, Simon J. (1993). *1 Corinthians, New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, p. 378; Datiri, Dachollom (2006) *1 Corinthians, In Africa Bible Commentary*, Edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo, 1377–1398. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 1390.

⁵⁷⁵ Gal 3:28

⁵⁷⁶ Ephesians 5:21; Calvin, John (1999). *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* Vol. 1. Translated by John Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, pp. 353-354.

⁵⁷⁷ King, Vernon (2013). *The Chiastic Key To 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

⁵⁷⁸ 1 Cor 11:15

⁵⁷⁹ Finney, Mark (2010). *op. cit.*

manifestation of God which should not be concealed, but woman is the glory of man in a rather different sense. In v.15 Paul describes long hair as woman's glory, and in this context *Doxav* is used to refer to the object of one's pride and joy. ... Man as the manifestation of God should not cover his head, but woman as the object of man's erotic joy, love and devotion should cover her head. Paul assumes a construal of erotic attraction as an asymmetrical phenomenon of male initiative and female response, and he also assumes that this phenomenon is a potential hindrance to participation in the divine-human dialogue articulated by the woman who prays or prophesies. She is to cover her head so as to deflect the look that would otherwise undermine her ministry.”⁵⁸⁰

Regarding “woman being from and for man,” Watson writes that a woman is considered as an object of erotic attraction while man and woman are interdependent in the Lord. They share in the practice of prayer and prophesy; female head covering is intended to ensure preserving this interdependent into covert eroticism.⁵⁸¹ Some scholars believe that verses of 1 Cor imply that a veil is the covering of a married woman's head, while she also has long hair as ‘her glory’.⁵⁸² Since a woman has her origin in man and therefore reflects his glory, she should wear a veil in worship to conceal the ‘glory of man’ and take a position to reflect ‘the glory of God’ in praying and prophesying.⁵⁸³ This verse explains the structure of reflective glory by clarifying God's creative order and objective.

⁵⁸⁰ Watson, Francis (2000). *op. cit.*

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² See; Connor, Murphy-O (1988). 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (CBQ). Vol. 50, pp. 265-274.

⁵⁸³ R. Gorelik, Robert (2009). *The Captive Woman Understanding What The Bible Says About Women*, Eshav Books ,Tustin, Ca , Printed in US, Retrieved on 23/6/2014 from www.Eshavbooks.Org

3.4.4.6 Women's Head Covering as Honour of the head

“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head”.⁵⁸⁴

Paul's argument for retaining the veil's tradition streams from honour and propriety, which originate from the principle of the aforementioned headship.⁵⁸⁵ Paul's instruction seems to run parallel with the concept of honour whereby the woman is to bring honour to her metaphorical head, i.e. the man. As Watson writes, a humiliated and disgraced man can bring little honour to God in the look of the first-century. On the contrary, a woman with proper attire, takes honour along to a man, in such a social situation she symbolises the glory of the man (v.11:7). Therefore, observation of this tradition brings honour to every symbolic head, while non-observation brings shame, disgrace and dishonour.⁵⁸⁶ Wives in secular Corinthian society typically desired to honour their husbands and to be seen doing so.⁵⁸⁷

3.4.4.7 Wearing Head Covering or Chapel Veil during Prayer

But it is considered dishonouring if a woman prays or prophesies with her hair uncovered; it is the same as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her

⁵⁸⁴ 1 Cor 11: 4-5

⁵⁸⁵ Thiselton, Anthony C. (2000). *op. cit.*, pp. 820, Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *op. cit.*, p. 499.

⁵⁸⁶ Finney, Mark (2010). *op. cit.*

⁵⁸⁷ W.J. Gill, David (1990). The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 245-260.

hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head Judge for yourselves: Is it correct for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14⁵⁸⁸

In these verses, the two verbs, 'pray' and 'prophecy' imply that the context is one of public worship. However, as Lipscomb writes, through the history of Christ and the apostles no example is seen about publicly women's lecture or prayer leading unless in private and in the circle of her family,⁵⁸⁹ it was prohibited for women to speak in church according to Paul's teachings.⁵⁹⁰ Watson believes that Paul requires woman to conceal herself in some measure at prayer or prophecy because it is shameful to be uncovered then. She thereby differentiated herself from men and Paul seeks to modify the male-female relationship in the divine order at prayer⁵⁹¹ since the veil is meant to protect Christian women and men at worship.⁵⁹² Tertullian regarding these verses writes:

"Behold two diverse names, Man and Woman 'every one' in each case: two laws, mutually distinctive; on the one hand (a law) of veiling, on the other (a law) of baring."⁵⁹³

⁵⁸⁸ 1 Cor, 11: 6,7,14

⁵⁸⁹ See: Lipscomb, David (1889). *Civil Government*, Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, p. 163; also see: Coffman, James Burton (1999). *op. cit.*

⁵⁹⁰ See: 1Cor 14:34, 35, 1, Tim 2:12.

⁵⁹¹ Watson, Francis (2000). *op. cit.*

⁵⁹² Nyamaah, Emmanuel, Matilda Nsiah, Alice (2013). *op. cit.*

⁵⁹³ Tertullian, Quintus Septimius Florens (1885). *On The Veiling Of Virgins*, cited in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Cleveland Cox, ed., The Christian Literature Publishing Co., Chapter VIII , IV:32.

Therefore, Paul's concern is that the unveiled woman who prays or prophesies may become the object of men's erotic gaze and women observe proper relationship with men at public worship as a divine order. Nevertheless, as it has already mentioned, fundamentally, women veiling implies their submission and obedience to their husbands as a sign of his headship. Nonetheless, in the Epistle of Paul, the covering finds a different meaning at prayer time. While a woman is in prayer and her attention is on *exousia* (Glory to God), there is a temporary deterioration of man's superiority and domination. Thus, her head covering becomes a symbol of obedience to God. So in church, a woman's head covering is regarded as a symbol of her authority to perform her devotion to God publicly.⁵⁹⁴ In addition, Paul mentions other points regarding the necessity of women's head covering at prayer:

A. Head Covering as Women's Nature

Paul in this letter to the Corinthians also demonstrates the following reason for women's head covering during prayer:

Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?¹³ Does not the very nature (*Fuvsĩ~*) of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?¹⁴ For, long hair is given to her as a covering (*Ajnti*; *peribolaivou*).¹⁵⁵⁹⁵

In these verses, Paul is deploying his explanation to 'nature' (*Fuvsĩ~*). Barrett proposes that nature is a:

⁵⁹⁴ See: Hooker, M.D. (1964). Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 11:10, *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 10, pp. 410-16.

⁵⁹⁵ 1 Cor, 13-15.

“...correspondence with things as they are found truly to be, without artificial change...The idea is not an abstruse theological one; Paul is thinking of the natural world as God made it, rather than (in the Stoic manner) of Nature as a quasi-divine hypostasis.”⁵⁹⁶

As Moffatt wrote:

“...When she is praying to God in the company of men, nature being regarded as supplying the norm even for such attire.”⁵⁹⁷

This explanation has often troubled most interpreters in understanding the phrase ‘*as covering*’ (*Ajnti; peribolaivou*). Barrett defines *Peribovlaion* as “an article of clothing that covers most of the body.”⁵⁹⁸ As Martin expresses, the term in the verse¹⁵ is considered key for explaining the issue of the veil from nature. This part of the verse is commonly translated, “For her hair is given to her instead of a covering (*Peribolaivou*).”⁵⁹⁹ However, as Barrett says, it is not related to a wrapping of the long hair around the head and also this verse cannot refer to long hair of woman as substitute for a veil, so that would be senseless to this verse’s meaning.⁶⁰⁰

Moffatt writes about this verse:

⁵⁹⁶ Barrett, Charles K. (1968). *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London: Adam and Charles Black, p. 256.

⁵⁹⁷ Moffatt, James (1959). *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, p. 155.

⁵⁹⁸ Barrett, Charles K. (1968). *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁵⁹⁹ Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op. cit.*

⁶⁰⁰ Barrett writes that the Roman practice of worshipping was enabled by long garments that could be pulled up over the back of the head to the ears, leaving the face unobstructed. (Barrett, Charles K. (1968). *op. cit.*, p. 10)

“The implication is that as nature has provided woman with a head-dress of hair, she is intended, not of course, to consider this as a substitute for further covering, but to wear a head-dress when she is praying to God in the company of men, nature being regarded as supplying the norm even for such attire.”⁶⁰¹

In this verse, Paul rhetorically asks the readers to judge for themselves whether it is proper for women to pray uncovered. (v. 13) He asserts that nature itself teaches long hair is a glory for women (vv.14-15). In fact, the traditional head covering concern is based on a sense of propriety and nature. There is variety of approach in this issue. As Datiri⁶⁰² believes, ‘nature’ is not a reference to the created-order but to cultural mores. Many societies do not share with the people of Corinth in this sense.⁶⁰³ In addition, lack of information about the defined nature of the Corinth community increases the difficulty of understanding Paul’s language.⁶⁰⁴

Datiri believes:

“Paul appeals to their judgment about what behaviour was considered natural, within the limits of the place and period in which he was writing”.⁶⁰⁵

Nevertheless, Hering writes that this passage of Paul brings forward a serious difficulty because:

⁶⁰¹ Moffatt, James (1959). *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁶⁰² Dachollom Datiri has been inaugurated as the seventh President of COCIN of the Church of Christ in Nigeria in 2013.

⁶⁰³ Datiri, Dachollom (2006). *1 Corinthians in Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 1391.

⁶⁰⁴ Brown, Philip A. (2011). *op. cit.*

⁶⁰⁵ Datiri, Dachollom (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 1391.

“...if a woman’s hair can be used as a head-covering and even as a garment provided by nature, why the veil? ...Civilization should to some extent complete the work of nature by following the direction indicated by nature.”⁶⁰⁶

For a deeper understanding, Martin explains that the conception of hair clarifies why prepubescent girls were not required to garb the veil like adult women. Before puberty, the hair of a girl does not differ from a boy and has not a genital function but after puberty, this state changes.⁶⁰⁷ In this context, Tertullian draws an analogy between prepubescent children and Adam and Eve who were undressed before becoming aware of genital differentiation and then he notes, “They each marked the intelligence of their own sex by a covering”.⁶⁰⁸ Another important point is the word covering (*Peribolaivou*) that Paul used in the v. 15 is regarded to long hair as natural covering and according to the nature. However the word head covering (*Katakephale*) that used in the v. 11 implies a veil or external head covering.

Overall, it can be concluded that as Watson writes, Paul wants to say that as a woman expresses the word of God to the congregation or the word of congregation to God, her appearance may obstruct the reception of her word; or so Paul fears. In describing the uncovered female head as a source of shame, equivalent as such to hair cut short or shaved off altogether, the shame Paul has in

⁶⁰⁶ Héring, Jean (1962). *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock, London: Epworth, p. 110.

⁶⁰⁷ Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op, cit.*

⁶⁰⁸ Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (2004). *op, cit.* pp.11[ANF 4:34]

mind is that of physical nakedness. This shame is the consequence of self-exposure to the male gaze.⁶⁰⁹

B. Women's Head Covering at Prayer "Because of Angels"

The phrase 'because of angels' (*Dia; tou;~ ajggevlou~*) is another reason of this argument in this verse.⁶¹⁰ Paul says:

"It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels."⁶¹¹

St. Irenaeus (120-202 A.D.) in his translation of 1 Corinthians 11:10 writes:

"A woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels."⁶¹²

The subject of angles in the Gospel, particularly in Pauline writings, has been debated by several interpreters and scholars.⁶¹³ Generally, Paul's literatures

⁶⁰⁹ Watson, Francis (2000). *op. cit.*

⁶¹⁰ See: Dibelius, Martin (1909). *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Gttingen,

⁶¹¹ 1Cor, 11:10

⁶¹² Irenaeus, (1885). *Against Heresies*, Book 1, 8:2, cited in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Cleveland Cox, ed., The Christian Literature Publishing Co., I:327.

⁶¹³ See: Benoit, Pierre (1983). Pauline angelology and demonology. Reflexions on the designations of the heavenly powers and on the origin of angelic evil according to *Paul*, *Religious Studies Bulletin* 3, pp.1-18. Bietenhard, Hans (1951). *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Sptjudentum*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Tbingen. Wink, Walter (1984). Naming the powers: The language of power in the New Testament. *The powers*, Vol. 1, Fortress, Philadelphia. Caird, George Bradford (1956). *Principalities and powers: A study in Pauline theology*, Clarendon, Oxford. Schlier, Heinrich (2007). *Mächte und Gewalten im Neuen Testament*. Johannes Verlag. Dibelius, Martin (1909). *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Gttingen. Carr, Wesley. (1981). *Angels and principalities: The background, meaning and development of the Pauline phrase hai archai kai hai exousiai*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Miranda,

about the nature of angels⁶¹⁴ have been disputed by scholars. According to this verse, Paul mentioned the angels as one of motivations for teaching of ‘to keep control of their heads’ for Christian women in Corinth.⁶¹⁵ Nevertheless, the details of this explanation are ambiguous, because of its cryptic expression.⁶¹⁶ The commentaries of references to angels in v. 10 are uncertain.⁶¹⁷ Thus, it has not freely managed to present itself without difficulty.⁶¹⁸ These *Ajggevloi* (angels) are considered as spiritual beings by most interpreters. Overall, two main theories of the commentaries that have dominated scholarly literature since twentieth century as to why women should cover their heads because of the angels can be classified as below:

1- Paul believed the angels are good and are concerned for the created order and involved with human affairs. They watch what happens on the earth and

Osmundo A. (1961). *The work and nature of angels according to the New Testament*, DTh **dissertation**, United Microfilms Inc., Princeton.

⁶¹⁴ Paul has spoken about the angels in his epistles several times: Gal1:8, Gal3:19, Gal 4:14, 1 Cor 4: 9, 1 Cor 6: 3, 1 Cor 12: 31b–14:1a, 2 Cor 11: 13–15, Rom 8: 38.29.

⁶¹⁵ See: Collins, Raymond F. (1999). *op. tic.*, p.411. Also see: Thiselton, Anthony C. (2000). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the Greek text*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids. (NIGTC.). pp. 838–839.

⁶¹⁶ As Tolmie writes, there are many instances for interpreting this cryptic expression in the scholars’ literatures. (Tolmie, D. Francois (2011). Angels as arguments? The rhetorical function of references to angels in the Main Letters of Paul, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 1, 8 ps.) For example: Wearing a Veil (B. Martin, Dale (1995). *The Corinthian Baby*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, pp. 229–249); long or short hair (Gielen, Marlis (1999). *Beten und Prophezien mit unverhülltem Kopf?*, *ZNW*, No. 90: 220–49); hair properly bound (Klauck, Hans-Josef, and Rudolf Schnackenburg (1984). *1. Korintherbrief:[für Rudolf Schnackenburg zum 70. Geburtstag]*. Echter-Verlag.); combination of long or short hair and wearing a veil. (Conzelmann, Hans (1981). *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, KEK 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 224)

⁶¹⁷ Tolmie, D. Francois (2011). *op. cit.*

⁶¹⁸ Kistemaker, Simon J. (1993). *op. cit.*, p. 376. Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *op. cit.*, p. 522.

are present at public worship of God. Uncovered women display disrespect to the angels by unsettling the created order. Accordingly, a woman declares I am in submission and in divine order by wearing head covering. So, Paul argues the role of guardian or watcher angles over the natural order,⁶¹⁹ or their role as witnesses to creation⁶²⁰ as it is mentioned in the Old Testament.⁶²¹ Regarding this point, most of the places in the Gospel are about these good angels (i.e. Gal 1:8; 3:19; 4:14; 1 Cor 11:10; 13:1; 2 Cor 11:14).⁶²²

2-Paul discusses fallen angles lustfully desirous earthly women. Tertullian suggests that the reference is about evil angles.⁶²³ Four cases in the New Testament are indicated or implied this sense: 1 Cor 4:9; 6:3; 2 Cor 12:7; Rom 8:38. Accordingly, Paul believed the angels are evil and will lust after women if they do not cover their heads. In addition, head covering is a barrier of obedient women from tempting, harassing and deceiving, because it was woman that was targeted before and after the Fall.⁶²⁴ In summary, according to Paul, one of the reasons that women should wear their head covering is the presence of the angels.

⁶¹⁹ Foerster, W. (1973). ejxousiva [Authority], *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, No. 2, pp. 562-574.

⁶²⁰ Collins, Raymond F. (1999). *op. tic.*

⁶²¹ *Rashi* writes on Daniel 10:7: "Our Sages of blessed memory said that although a person does not see something of which he is terrified, his guardian angel, who is in heaven, does see it; therefore, he becomes terrified. (Tanach with Rashi (2012). *The Book of Daniel, Chapter 10*, Judaica Press, Retrieved on 16/5/2012 from Chabad.org

⁶²² Also Pope Francis says: "We all have an angel" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, No. 41, 10 /2014)

⁶²³ In the late second century, for first time, Tertullian suggests this issue that can be accordant with Gen 6.1-4, in: (Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens (2004). *De virginibus velandis (On the Veiling of Virgins)*. Trans: S. Thelwall. Publisher: OrthodoxEbooks, Retrieved on 4/1/2014 from <http://aren.org/prison/documents/religion/Church%20Fathers/III.%20On%20the%20Veiling%20of%20Virgins.pdf>. p. 62.)

⁶²⁴ Botkin, Daniel (1995). *The Validity and Value of the Woman's Headcovering*, East

Summary of this Doctrine of Paul and the Opinions of Christian Scholars

The most important source of Christian teaching that states the philosophy of head covering of women is Paul's first epistle to Corinthians. Paul in this passage has dealt with disagreements on covering the head among Corinthian Christians.⁶²⁵ First, verse 8 explains the divine order in that woman was made out of man. This order provides the priority to man in creation. Second, verse 9 clarifies the divine creative purpose whereby woman has come out of man to be for him and his glory. Paul discusses Corinthian women that follow the veil tradition because it brings glory to their men. He concludes that their hair has being cut off (vv. 5-6) is disgraceful, and therefore they should be veiled (v.6).⁶²⁶

Regarding this verse that Paul says: "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."⁶²⁷ He follows a new set of arguments from nature and from the custom of 'the churches of God'. The Pulpit Commentary has paraphrased Paul's words:

"If you Corinthians prefer these abnormal practices in spite of reason, common sense, and my arguments, you must stand alone in your innovations upon universal Christian practice".⁶²⁸

Peoria, Illinois: Gates of Eden, p. 11-14.

⁶²⁵ Lewis, John Thomas (1947). *The Posture in Prayer and Covered and Uncovered Heads in Worship*, Birmingham, AL. p.14.

⁶²⁶ Finney, Mark (2010). *op. cit.*

⁶²⁷ 1 Cor 11:2-16

⁶²⁸ Woodrow, Ralph (2013). *WOMEN'S HEAD COVERINGS*, Evangelistic Association, Inc., P.O. Box 21, Palm Springs, CA.

So, these doctrine is considered as the principals and practic that will not changed forever by culture and costoms. Generally, as Brown concludes, the church fathers and church historic view requires women’s additional covering. He counts several reasons in regard to disagreements and conflicts in understanding Paul’s language. Among them, the ambiguity of Paul’s language is emphasized, particularly by recent scholars. For instance, Fee says that Paul’s instruction about headship, glory, nature and angles is considered to be a universal tradition of head covering. This passage is a notorious and pragmatic version.⁶²⁹ Furnish notes that there is no doubt that Paul means to offer a scriptural basis for his directions on women’s hairstyle while praying or prophesying, but his explanation is obscure and unsatisfactory, at least to modern commentators.⁶³⁰ Likewise, Massey after a complicated argument pronounces that no longer can fully solve this issue because Paul offers different opinions for ‘this custom’.⁶³¹ Generally, the head covering is reflective of glory to God’s creative order on headship which is according to the nature in the presence of the angels.

Minnick has classified the diverse positions held by interpreters on the head covering principle in his *Teaching Regarding Head covering* in three main groups. Each group has some segments with their own beliefs.⁶³²

1- The women should cover their hair

Fee⁶³³, Keener⁶³⁴, Bruce⁶³⁵ and Thiselton⁶³⁶ suggest that in this passage Paul is talking about extra cover or veil for the woman during worship. They believe that

⁶²⁹ D. Fee, Gordon (1987). *op. cit.* p. 492.

⁶³⁰ Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op. cit.*

⁶³¹ Massey, Preston. T. (2011). *op. cit.* Also see: Fee, Gordon (1987). *op. cit.*,

⁶³² Minnick, Mark (1995). “*Teaching Regarding Headcovering*” *Sermon preached on 2 Corinthians 11:3-16*, Greenville, S.C.: Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, December 17, Tape Number 2792.

1 Cor 11:13-15 become more reasonable as Paul is not saying that long hair replaces a veil. On the contrary, covering is an extension of long hair. In addition, women's long hair is an indication that she needs to have veiling.⁶³⁷

2- The Covering of Women is their Long Hair

Another position held by most modern commentaries includes the following three views:

- a. Some believe that women's hair must be longer than men's to be a proper head covering (according to the v. 14-15⁶³⁸).
- b. Another view according to v.6, 15⁶³⁹ is that hair of women must remain uncut to be their head coverings.
- c. Others say that this passage demonstrates that hair of women must be well decorated to be its covering.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³³ D. Fee, Gordon (1987). *op. cit.*

⁶³⁴ Keener, Craig S. (1993). *op. cit.*

⁶³⁵ Bruce, K. Waltke (1978). *op. cit.*

⁶³⁶ Thiselton, Anthony C. (2000). *op. cit.*,

⁶³⁷ See; Foh, Susan T. (1989). A Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman Is the Man, in; *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. B. Clouse and R. G. Clouse, Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, pp. 86-87. Bruce, K. Waltke (1978). *op. cit.*, D. Fee, Gordon (1987). *op. cit.*, p. 529.

⁶³⁸ "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man has long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

⁶³⁹ "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered"

⁶⁴⁰ See: Murphy-O'Conner, J. (1980). Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, No. 42, pp. 488-489. Also see: B. Hurley, James (1973). Did Paul Require Veils or the

They consider the literal meaning of the word (that is usually translated as “covered” in v. 14-15) as “down from head” and they think the hair should be appropriately prepared such as putting it up instead of being free-flowing.⁶⁴¹

3- There is No Requirement for a Women’s Veiling Today

Commentators believe that nowadays, the issue of wearing head covering is no longer relevant to our culture.⁶⁴² Since, head covering has already been a cultural propriety in past centuries and this culture has changed today though, its principal still stands.⁶⁴³ For instance, Thiselton indicated that in Roman Corinth, all decent ladies used a veil, and going out unveiled for a woman was not safe.⁶⁴⁴

Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b-36, *Westminster Theological Journal*, No. 35, pp. 193-200. B. Hurley, James (1981). *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, pp. 254-271.

⁶⁴¹ For example see: Klauck, Lindemann, A. (2000). *Der erste Korintherbrief*, Mohr (Siebeck). Tbingen. (HNT 9/1.). pp. 241. Also see: Klauck, Hans-Josef, and Rudolf Schnackenburg (1984). *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79. While, some researchers attribute this idea among Christians to other factors like, pagan contemporary culture. (Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op. cit.*, p. 264)

⁶⁴² Some scholars such as: Nathan, (Nathan, Rich (2002). *Who is My Enemy*, Zondervan, p.146. Fiorenza (op.cit.). Murphy O’Connor (1980) and B. Witherington (1995) argue that *Paul* says about unkempt or loose hair. (Nyamaah, Emmanuel, Matilda Nsiah, Alice (2013). *Christianity And Culture In Ghana: A Study Of The Church Of Pentecost’s Decree On Head Covering And 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, 1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, AIIC 2013, 24-26 April, Azores, Portugal - Proceedings-15) 2013, 24-26 April, Azores, Portugal - Proceedings-15)

⁶⁴³ For example *John MacArthur* in his commentary on 1 Cor emphasizes on the cultural view and writes: “Dress is largely cultural and, unless what a person wears is immodest or sexually suggestive, it has no moral or spiritual significance. . . It is the principle of women’s subordination to men, not the particular mark or symbol of that subordination that *Paul* is teaching in this passage.” MacArthur, John (1983). *Commentary on First Corinthians*, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 256.

⁶⁴⁴ Thiselton, Anthony C. (2000). *op. cit.*

Evangelical feminism⁶⁴⁵ argues that God created man and woman as equals in a sense that excludes male headship. Male headship/domination (feminism acknowledges no distinction) was imposed upon Eve as a penalty for her part in the fall. It follows, in this view, that a woman's redemption in Christ releases her from the punishment of male headship.⁶⁴⁶

In Christian history, woman wearing chapel veil or mantilla was a universal practice even in Europe and North America until the 19th century, but the first time the requirement of women veiling in church's congregation was announced as universal law for *Latin Rite* of the church is in 1917.⁶⁴⁷ Pope Pius XII identified that women must cover the upper arms and shoulders, skirts must reach at least to the knee and the neckline should not reveal anything.⁶⁴⁸ Some catholic churches have struggled to develop these standards.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁵ See: Foh, Susan T. (1979). *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism* Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, pp. 5-49. Ortlund, Jr. (1991). *Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3*, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, pp.98-99.

⁶⁴⁶ In this essay I will be interacting primarily with the evangelical feminist interpretation of Genesis 1-3 in Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985) and Aida Bensenon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985).

⁶⁴⁷ "Codex Iuris Canonici" in 1917. Canon Law:

"Men, in a church or outside a church, while they are assisting at sacred rites, shall be bare-headed, unless the approved mores of the people or peculiar circumstances of things determine otherwise; women, however, shall have a covered head and be modestly dressed, especially when they approach the table of the Lord." (Canon 1262) Retrieved on 27/1/2015 from http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0813/_P42.HTM

⁶⁴⁸ Schmiedicke, Regina (1999), Modesty and Beauty - the Lost Connection, *Concourse, an Independent Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 4, No. 5.

⁶⁴⁹ See: Chesterton, G. K. (2006), *What's Wrong with the World*, Part III, Chap. V.

3.5 Conclusion

Christianity shares with Judaism in some teachings including women's position according to Hebrew Bible because, the male headship role is both implicit and explicit in Gen 2-3 and, therefore it is part of the divine design at creation.⁶⁵⁰ Nevertheless, there are some different principles regarding women's issue between Christian and Judaic theologies. Christianity's attitude has suffered from duality; the equality of men and women based on Jesus's approach and subordination of women on Paul's approach. Traditionally, the Church follows Paul's view.

Also, all Christian scholars of early church father (2- 3th centuries) and medieval commentators recognized that Paul obliges women to have head covering as a material head covering. They believe that by setting this doctrine of reasoning Paul emphasizes on head covering as a women's universal practice that cannot be set aside with changing women position or hair fashion.⁶⁵¹ Nonetheless, since 1970s, the Christian Egalitarianism and Complementarianism perspectives by more moderate opinions about women has prevailed the belief in being "equal but different". They think that custom of hair covering no longer communicated with their new life. Still, the essential principal has remained that a woman must pray and prophesy while believe to male leadership.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵⁰ Bediako, Daniel K. (2013). *Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation*, Valley View University, Ghana: Theology of Ordination Study Committee, p.63. Retrieved on 27/6/2015 from <https://www.adventistarchives.org/man-and-woman-in-genesis-one-thru-three.pdf>

⁶⁵¹ Lewis, John Thomas (1947), *op. cit.*

⁶⁵² The failure to distinguish adequately between what speaks to the first-century situation and today's church leads some to the conclusion that women should wear coverings in church today. Cf. Bruce Waltke, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978): 46-57; Foh, Susan T. (1989). *A Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman Is the Man,* Women in Ministry: Four Views, ed. B. Clouse and R. G. Clouse Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, , pp. 86-87. R. D. Culver, in "Traditional View: Let the Women Keep Silence," in Clouse and Clouse, pp.

As Bediako writes; it is an unfortunate reality that male headship has been abused both in society and in scripture. In man's hands, a divinely-ordered headship has often been turned into male superiority and domination. In fact, feminist reactions to male headship are now leading to the opposite extreme, sometimes attempting to obliterate any notions of maleness and femaleness altogether.⁶⁵³

29-32, 48, seems to prefer the wearing of head coverings as well, although he allows some liberty on the question.

⁶⁵³ Bediako, Daniel K. (2013). *Man and Woman in Genesis 1-3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation*, Valley View University, Ghana: Theology of Ordination Study Committee, p.63. Retrieved on 27/6/2015 from <https://www.adventistarchives.org/man-and-woman-in-genesis-one-thru-three.pdf>

CHAPTER FOUR

**THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND
MODEST DRESS OBSERVANCE OF WOMEN IN ISLAM**

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF MODESTY AND MODEST DRESS OBSERVANCE OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

4. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will scrutinize the philosophy of observance of modesty and women's modest dress in the religion of Islam. As introduction this section will discuss the position of women in Islamic teaching briefly and will introduce the certain conceptions and terms of modesty and modest dress in the Islamic teachings and tradition. Then, the reasons of modesty and women's modest dress in Islamic instructions will be examined.

In the pre-Islamic period in Arabia, like most ancient civilizations, women were considered an ominous abject creature often deprived most her human rights. Islam sought to return to women their divine nobility by awarding her the complete set of human including legal, social, economic and spiritual rights, in addition to re-establishing her importance for the wellbeing of human society.

4.1 The Position of Women in Islam

Islam assigned to women a position of dignity and honor. Islamic laws and traditions enhanced various stages of a Muslim woman's life, including, rights to inheritance, property rights independent freedom to consent to marriage, rights to alimony and *Mahr* (dowry), and her education (the pursuit of knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim male and female). It equalized the public rights

between woman and man such as the right of life, education and spouse selection.⁶⁵⁴ From the theological perspective in Islam, the nature of women's creation influences her position in every perspective.⁶⁵⁵ The view of man's superiority to women mostly relies on the belief that woman was created from and for men, as advocated by Judaic and Christian teachings. The story of Adam's⁶⁵⁶ creation as the deputy of God on the earth has a highly significant importance in Islam.

A. The equality of Adam and Eve in the Origin of Creation

The Qur'an has talked about Adam's wife in three verses but does not provide much in the way of details. It states that God has created man and woman from a single soul (person)⁶⁵⁷ and with the same nature in order that they dwell in love.⁶⁵⁸ Some scholars like Hassan argue that the Qur'anic descriptions of human creation illustrate a single source for man and woman. They believe that unlike

⁶⁵⁴ Bukhari, Syed Abdul Ghaffar (2012). Role of Women in the Development of Islamic Civilization, *Jihat al-Islam* Vol. 5, No. 2.

⁶⁵⁵ Hassan, Riffat (1987). Equal Before Allah? Women-men Equality in Islamic Tradition, *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 2-20.

⁶⁵⁶ The name Adam is mentioned in Qur'an 25 times that 8 times of them are in terms of the children of Adam (بنى آدم). Adam is a Hebrew word (from *adamah*, meaning 'the soil'). and it functions generally as a collective noun referring to 'the human' rather than to a male person. In the Qur'an, the word Adam (which Arabic borrowed from Hebrew) mostly does not refer to a particular human being. Because, 21 cases it is used as a symbol for self-conscious humanity. *Hassan* quotes from *Muhammad Iqbal*: "Indeed, in the verses which deal with the origin of man as a living being, the Qur'an uses the words *Bashar* or *Insan*, not Adam, which it reserves for man in his capacity of God's vice-regent on earth." (Hassan, Riffat (1987). *op. cit.*)

⁶⁵⁷ An-Nisa (4): 1

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Aaraf (7): 189

Judeo-Christian teachings (in Genesis 2), Eve is not considered the first sinner nor is she responsible for Adam's sin.⁶⁵⁹

B. The Equal Responsibility of Adam and Eve in Their Sin

The three Surahs *Baqara*, *Aaraaf* and *Taha* state the story Adam and his wife. It mentions that Eve cannot be blamed for Adam's temptation and that both are equal at fault:

"Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them ..." ⁶⁶⁰

"So by deceit he brought about their fall ..." ⁶⁶¹

"And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere adviser."⁶⁶²

The Qur'an clearly asserts that Adam can only blame himself for his sin:

⁶⁵⁹ She proves that Eve was not created from Adam's rib and the rib story has entered the Islamic traditions during the early centuries of Islam. In this context, she has brought six important hadiths and compared and analyzed them with Qur'an. She regarded them to be weak with regards to their formal aspect (i.e. with reference to their *Isnad* and opposite view of Qur'an. Since all Muslim scholars agree on the principle that any hadith which is in contradiction to the Qur'an cannot be accepted as authentic, the above-mentioned hadiths ought to be rejected on material grounds. (Hassan, Riffat (1987). *op. cit.*). also see: al-Ghannoushi, Rashid (2000). *Al mar'a bayna Al- Qur'an wa wa'iqi' Al-muslimin*, Maghreb Centre for Research and Translation, London, p.15. And see: Wadud, Amina (1999). *Qur'an and Woman*, Oxford University Press, p. 47.

⁶⁶⁰ Al-Aaraf (7): 20:

"فوسوس لهما الشيطان..."

⁶⁶¹ Al-Aaraf (7): 22:

"فدليهما بغرور..."

⁶⁶² Al-Aaraf (7): 21:

"وقاسمهما اني لمن الناصحين..."

“We had already, beforehand, taken the covenant of Adam, but he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve.”⁶⁶³

Additionally, Eve was not cursed for her mistake with a “painful pregnancy” or “increasing the pains in childbearing”.⁶⁶⁴

C. Equal Consequence of Adam and Eve’s Sin

Both Adam and Eve repented and God accepted their repentance:

“They said, “Our Lord, we have wronged our own souls, and if thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.”⁶⁶⁵ Thus, Adam and Eve begged for God’s forgiveness for which God chose to forgive and guide them.⁶⁶⁶

In addition, Muslims believe that all people are born with *al-Fitrah*⁶⁶⁷; a pure natural state of submission to God. There is nothing in the Qur’an concerning

⁶⁶³ Taha (20): 115.

⁶⁶⁴ Torah, Gen 3:16

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Aaraf (7): 23:

"قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ."

⁶⁶⁶ Taha (20): 122. Also see: Al-Bagharah (2): 37:

"ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَى."

⁶⁶⁷ The existence of the role played by the surrounding environment in a child’s developmental process, who is born with a fitting fitrah. (Zaizul Ab. Rahman, (2012). [The Role Of Fitrah As An Element In The Personality Of A Da’i In Achieving The Identity Of A True Da’I, International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol. 3 No. 4, p. 165.) so, it is confirmed in the saying of the Prophet (PBUH):

"Every child is born with fitrah. Only his parents (i.e. his environment) make him a Jew, Christian or Zoroastrian"

the human inheritance of this ‘original’ sin. While, Islam maintains that every person is responsible for their own actions. In several places that Qur’an emphasized:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.”⁶⁶⁸

According to the Qur’an, women are considered equal before God in performance of their religious duties and entitlements:

“Whose doeth that which is right, whether male or female, and has faith, verily to him we will give a new life and life that is good and pure and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.”⁶⁶⁹

Accordingly, in religious obligations such as daily prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage, women are not different from men. They differ only in reference to differences in their biological and psychological conditions which can exempt them from prayer and fasting in times of menstruation and other female specific conditions. The study of the conditions of women in the pre-Islamic era and the Islamic era show that Islam has bestowed Muslim women with social and economic rights not bestowed them by any other society, culture or religion. These rights include the rights of possession, ownership, mortgage and performance in all types of contracts (to sell, purchase, lease and entrepreneurship, speculation and other financial affairs) while she is single or married.⁶⁷⁰ In addition, she can seek

(Al-Albānî, Muḥammad Nāṣiruddîn (1991), *Da cêf Sunan al-Tirmidhî*. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmî, p. 243, no.3245., *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 2, Book 23, Number 441.

⁶⁶⁸ Al-Fater (35):18, Al-Anaam: 164, At-Tahrim: 66. Also Qur’an states: "Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds." Al-Mudatsir (74):38.

⁶⁶⁹ Al-Nahl (16): 97 Also see: An-Nisa’ (4): 124, Ale-Imran (3): 195

⁶⁷⁰ Bukhari, Syed Abdul Ghaffar (2012). *op. cit.*

employment, although Islam prefers her natural roles in society as a wife and mother which are sacred and essential roles for human and social sustainability. There are various other manifold rights of women that Islam granted to women including, “Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim (male and female).”⁶⁷¹

In addition, a woman cannot be forced to marry without her agreement. Nevertheless, there is a hierarchal positioning for men above women⁶⁷² based on the idea of *Qiwamah* (maintenance and protection). The key word *Qawwamun* is most often translated as ruler (*hakim*) however, linguistically this word refers to those who provide a means of support or livelihood.⁶⁷³ This order refers to the natural differences between males and females. It has nothing to do with the dignity of woman and her rights, but pertain to natural differences in her biological and psychological character. These differences imply the “complementary” roles of both sexes in life. Quran considers men as protector of women affairs because men spend their wealth on them.⁶⁷⁴ According to Quran, women are able to obtain to all human excellences as Qur’an presents some women⁶⁷⁵ as exemplars for all

⁶⁷¹ Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani. *Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* (1989). 14 vols. Notes by `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Baz. Beirut: Darul Kotob al-`Ilmiyya, Vol 1, p. 71.

⁶⁷² Al-Bagharah (2): 228.

⁶⁷³ Hassan, Riffat (1987). *op. cit.*

⁶⁷⁴ An-Nisa (4): 34

⁶⁷⁵ Generally, the Qur’an mentions the names of 15 faithful women from which the virtues of nine women are emphasized more than others. In addition to *Asiah* and Mary, the Qur’an mentions the virtues of the following exemplary women; mother of Moses (PBUH) for surrendering to God, the wife of Moses (PBUH) for her modesty, the mother of Mary (SA) for her honesty and sincerity, the wife of Zechariah (as) for her righteousness and obedience, the wife of Job (SA) for her patience; and the Queen of Saba for her surrender to God’s orders.

believers and appreciates the wife of Pharaoh for her faith and Mary the mother of Jesus for her chastity and modesty.⁶⁷⁶

In a hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), the perfect women are four: Mary (mother of Jesus), Asia (wife of Pharaoh), *Khadīja bint Khuwaylid* and Fatima.⁶⁷⁷ These examples that form an uncontested part of Islam indicate the possibility of growth and excellence in female personalities to reach the top levels of human nobility and virtues. The history of Muslims is rich with great achievements of women. Women have played constructive roles in the Islamic civilization and serve as exemplars of virtues such as righteousness, strength, faith, obedience, purity and modesty.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁶ "And Allah sets forth, as an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh: Behold she said: "O my Lord! Build for me, in nearness to Thee, a mansion in the Garden, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from those that do wrong. And Mary the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of His Revelations, and was one of the devout (servants)."(At-Tahrim (66):11-12)

"وَصَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَةٌ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ الْقَوْمِ الطَّالِمِينَ

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتْ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُنْتِ مِنَ الْقَائِمِينَ"

Also, the Quran says about her: "Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah hath chosen thee and purified thee- chosen thee above the women of all nations". (Ale-Imran (3): 42)

"وإذ قالت الملائكة يا مريم إن الله اصطفاك وطهرتك واصطفاك على نساء العالمين"

⁶⁷⁷ "كامل من الرجال كثر و لم يكمل من النساء إلا مريم بنت عمران و آسية بنت مزاحم (امرأة فرعون) و خديجة بنت خويلد و فاطمة "

(Hanbal, Ahmad ibn Muhammad Abu Abdullah Al-shybaby, Al- Mosnd, Beirut: Darus sodur C-4, p. 326). Also see: Soyuti, Jalaluddin (1982). *Ad Dorol Mansur Fi Tafsir Al-ma'sur*, Darul kotob Al-Ilmiyah Press, p. 246.

⁶⁷⁸ Bukhari, Syed Abdul Ghaffar (2012). *op. cit.*

4.2 The Conception of Modesty and Modest Dress in Islam

The Qur'an has demonstrated the importance of modesty in some verses, from which we note the following:

A. Modesty (*Haya'*)

God not only wants women to conceal their beauty, but also walk modestly and decently. The Qur'an appreciated the manner in which the daughter of Prophet *Shoa'ib* walked:

فجاءته إحداهما تمشي على استحياء...

“Afterwards one of the (damsels) came (back) to him walking bashfully.⁶⁷⁹

Literally, the Arabic word *Haya'* is derived from *Hayat* which refers to the meaning of life. *Haya'* implies a bad and uneasy feeling accompanied by embarrassment that causes one to fear being exposed for some unworthy or indecent conduct. Some mix the meanings of two terms of *Haya'* (modesty) and shyness. Shyness is a natural consequence of fear from being worthless before others and is a negative character. However, *Haya'* is a natural feeling of embarrassment from doing something out of purity and neatness to keep the individual from immorality. There are interesting hadiths about *Haya'* from the prophet of Islam:

“*Haya'* and faith are intertwined; if one is lifted the other will follow”⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁹ Al- Qaṣaṣ (28): 25

⁶⁸⁰ Al-albany, Muhammad Nasir al-Din (1405). fi Takhryj Meshkat Al-masabyh Beirut: Al-mktbalaslamy: No. 5020

It is narrated that he stated: “*Haya*’ brings forth nothing but goodness.”⁶⁸¹

B. Chastity (*Effah*)

Ragheb Al-Esfahani (d. 402 H) writes about the meaning of *Effah* that:

“Chastity is obtaining the state of the soul that refrains from the predominance of lust.”⁶⁸²

In the Qur’an, modesty (*Effah*) has been used four times from the root of (*Affah*) of which two⁶⁸³ are generally in the meaning of piousness, self-control and self-protection. The other two verses⁶⁸⁴ refer to a sense of sexual restraint by refraining from sexual sins when single. One of the manifestation of the chastity (*Effah*) and modesty (*Haya*’) is having appropriate and modest dress. As such, in the Qur’anic verses along with recommendations for observing modesty, there is the requirement to dress modestly such that a woman should cover her body in association with none-*mahram* men (whom she is not related to according to the Divine Law) and that she does not flaunt and display herself.

⁶⁸¹ Al-`Asqalani, Ibn Hajar (1989). *op. cit.*

⁶⁸² Al-Isfahani, Raghib (1961). *Al-mufradat fi gharib al-qur’an*. Damascus: Darul qalam, Vol. 2, p. 440.

⁶⁸³ Al-Bagharah (2): 273, An-Nisa’ (4): 6

⁶⁸⁴ “But let them who find not [the means for] marriage abstain [from sexual relations] until Allah enriches them from His bounty...” (An-Nur (24) :33)

"وليستعفف الذين لا يجدون نكاحاً حتى يغنيهم الله من فضله "

"Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage,- there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty: but it is best for them to be modest ... " (An-Nur (24) :60)

"و القواعد من النساء اللاتي لا يرجون نكاحاً فليس عليهن جناح ان يضعن ثيابهن غير متبرجات بزينة و ان يستعففن خيراً لهن والله سمیعٌ علیہم ."

Throughout history, a variety of Islamic modest dress in different societies has been used but there are only three words in relation to the issue of women covering in the Qur'an:⁶⁸⁵

C. *Jilbab*

The second word that the Qur'an uses in this relation is *Jalabib* which is the plural form of the word *Jilbab*. The Qur'anic verse in this regard is:

“O Prophet! Say to your wives and daughters and the believing women that they draw their *Jilbab* (outer garments) close to them; so it is more proper that they may be known and not hurt.”⁶⁸⁶

Raghib Al Esfahani writes that it implies both dress and scarf.⁶⁸⁷ Ibn Al-Manzur (1233 -1311) stated:

“*Jilbab* is actually the outer sheet or coverlet which a woman wraps around on top of her garments to cover herself from head to toe. It hides her body completely.”⁶⁸⁸

For more explanation, Ibn Al-Hasam (AD 965-1040) mentions:

“In Arabic language, the language of the Prophet (saw), *Jilbab* is that outer sheet which covers the entire body. A piece of cloth which is too small to cover the entire body could not be called *Jalbab*.”⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁵ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁶⁸⁶ Al-Ahzab (33): 59.

⁶⁸⁷ Raghib Isfahani, Abul Qasim Husayn ibn Muhammad (1992). *Al Mofradat fi Gharib Al Qur'an*, Damascus: Darul qalam, p.66.

⁶⁸⁸ Jamal Al-Din Muhammad (1405). *Lisan-ul Arab*, 18 Vols, Iran, Qom: Nashr AdabHowzeh, Vol. 1, p. 273.

In this verse, Muslim women, along with the prophet's wives and daughters, are commanded to wear a fully covering garment when they are in public.⁶⁹⁰

D. *Khimar*

The third word in this regard in the Qur'an is *Khimar*:

“Say to the believing women that they cast down their glance and guard their private parts and reveal not their adornment except such as is outward and let them cast their veils (*Khumur*) over their bosoms...”⁶⁹¹

The vast majority of commentators and jurists approve that this verse orders believing woman to draw her existing head covering over the *Jayb* (which is the collar line or bosom). In this Qur'anic verse, the term “*Khimar*” (in plural form) is clearly used as head covering.⁶⁹²

In addition to these mentioned terms, the encyclopedia of Islam has classified over 100 terms as pieces of female clothing such as *Burqa*, *Abayah*, *Jallabah*, and *Izar*.⁶⁹³ Generally, in Islamic scholarship, Hijab is still taken to mean

⁶⁸⁹ Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa‘īd (2012). *Al-Muhalla*, Vol. 3, p. 217.

⁶⁹⁰ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *The Islamic Modest Dress*, Trans: Laleh Bakhtiar, 3rd edn. Chicago. IL: Kazi Publications, , p. 96.

⁶⁹¹ Al-Nur (24) :31.

⁶⁹² Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁶⁹³ Anwar, Ghazala (2004). *Veiling in Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, New York: Macmillan. Vol. 2, pp. 721-722 (6)

“modest dress” and conduct.⁶⁹⁴ In this study, the term “modest dress” with the exception of quotes.

F. Hijab

In recent times, the term Hijab (حجاب) is symbolically used for Islamic modest dress and sometimes refers to modest behavior. Scholars define Hijab in a variety of ways and associate it with diverse meanings that range from covering of the head to modest behavior.⁶⁹⁵ Hijab has various meanings in the Qur’an. Literally, it means a cover, curtain or screen. According to Lane’s Arabic–English lexicon, its meaning is:

“A thing that prevents, hinders, debars, or precludes; a thing that veils, conceals, hides, covers, or protects, because it prevents seeing, or beholding.”⁶⁹⁶

The Qur’an has mostly used the word Hijab in a metaphysical sense, referring to the illusory feature of creation.⁶⁹⁷ Overall, the term Hijab is used seven times in the Qur’an⁶⁹⁸ (generally in the meaning of hinder and curtain) that one of them is appeared in the meaning of curtain between men and women and is

⁶⁹⁴ Ssenyonjo, Manisuli (2007). The Islamic veil and freedom of religion, the rights to education and work: A survey of recent international and national cases." *Chinese Journal of International Law*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 653-710.

⁶⁹⁵ Fahim Ruby, Tabassum (2006). *op. cit.*

⁶⁹⁶ Lane, Edward William (1984, originally appeared in 1863). *Arabic–English lexicon (a classical dictionary)* (London: Willams & Norgate).

⁶⁹⁷ Ibrahim, B. Syed (1999). *Women in Islam: Hijab. Aalim*, Islamic Research Foundation (IRF). Vol. 7.

⁶⁹⁸ These verses are: Al-Aaraf (7):46, Al- Ahzab (33):53, Saad (38):32, Fussilat (41):5, Al-Shura (42):51, Al- Asra’ (17):45 and Maryam (19):17.

commanded to the men that ask the wives of the prophet of Islam as the mothers of believers ⁶⁹⁹ behind the curtain and says:

“And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen (Hijab); that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs.”⁷⁰⁰

Accordingly, the true meaning of Hijab is curtain or screen and is not veil.⁷⁰¹ It has not been used as a technical term in jurisprudence for women’s dress code in Islam. In fact, the usual term in Islamic jurisprudence is *Sitr* or *Sater* (الستر، الساتر, cover). Jurists, in the section of ritual prayer and marriage, when they discuss clothing, they use the term *Sitr* and not Hijab.⁷⁰² Motahhari (1919-1979) in his book *The Islamic Modest Dress* attempts to question this popular usage of this term:

“But there is a question as to why, in the recent era, did the current expression of the religious jurists, that is *Sitr* (a technical word that is used for covering body and includes the other words) not become prevalent instead of Hijab? The reason is unknown to me. Perhaps they mistook the Islamic Hijab for the Hijab which is traditional in other countries.”⁷⁰³

In answering this question, El- Guindis writes:

⁶⁹⁹ Al-Ahzab (33): 6

⁷⁰⁰ Al- Ahzab (33): 53

⁷⁰¹ Ansar Khan, Sumbul (2014). Notion of Veil in Islam: A Sign of Placate or Disconcert among the Women of Karachi, Pakistan, *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, Vol. 3, No. 2.

⁷⁰² Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

When the veil became the centre of the feminist/nationalist discourse in Egypt during the British colonial occupation, Hijab was the term used by feminists and nationalists and secularists. The phrase used for the removal of urban women's face/head cover was Raf' (lifting) al-Hijab (not Al-Habarah the term used for cloak/veil among upper-class Egyptian women at the turn of the century).⁷⁰⁴

Hence, it seems that there was a deliberate usage of this term in the feminists' dialogues, because they have not used an already existing term of "Al-Habarah" in public. This issue is noted by some scholars. Motahhari suggests that:

It would have been best if the word had not been changed and we had continued to use the word 'covering' or Sitr because, as we have said, the prevalent meaning of the word Hijab is veil. If it is to be used in the sense of 'covering', it gives the idea of a woman being placed behind a curtain. This very thing has caused a great number of people to think that Islam has wanted women to always remain behind a curtain, to be imprisoned in the house and not to leave it.⁷⁰⁵

Today, this term refers to a variety of different head coverings and loose dress styles. Some have cultural links such as Pakistani *Shalwar Khamis*, Afghani *Burqa*, Iranian *Chador*, and Malaysian *Tudung*. Nevertheless, when such dress is worn, they have worn a Hijab. Recent decades have placed a great emphasis on the term Hijab which is often understood as only a headscarf.⁷⁰⁶ However, the Islamic modest dress is more than just a scarf.⁷⁰⁷ Since clothing must cover the entire body,

⁷⁰⁴ El-Guindi (1999). *op. cit.*, p. 153

⁷⁰⁵ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁷⁰⁶ Ternikar, Farha(2009), *op. cit.*,

⁷⁰⁷ Ansar Khan, Sumbul (2014). *op. cit.*,

except the face and hands according to majority of Muslim scholars, a minority of scholars say that a woman is supposed to cover even her face and hands as well, because they advocate the entire body of a woman is *Awrah*⁷⁰⁸ and is to be concealed except her eyes.⁷⁰⁹

Unlike common Western presumptions, the headscarf is not interchangeable with the term Hijab⁷¹⁰ or in better term "modest dress". Today, the term Hijab is used especially in the West and particularly in the media to define the headdress or scarf-like and sometimes overall clothing of Muslim women.⁷¹¹ Sometimes, the word 'veil' is used synonymously, or interchangeably, with the word Hijab. Literally, the word 'veil' is derived from the Latin noun 'velum'.⁷¹² In English, the veil is:

"A piece of usually more or less transparent fabric attached to a woman's hat, etc., to conceal the face or protect against the sun."⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁸ An-Nur (24): 30-31:

"أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيَّ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ"

⁷⁰⁹ Kutty, Ahmad (2015). To Veil or to Unveil, Islamic institute of Toronto, Retrieved on 19/6/2014 from http://www.islam.ca/documents/akutty-niqab_or_not.pdf

⁷¹⁰ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p.71.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁷¹² Goto, Emi (2004). *op. cit.*

⁷¹³ *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* writes: "a piece of linen etc. as part of a nun's head-dress"; "To take the veil" means becoming a nun. (Fowler, H W, Fowler, F G, Murray, James A H (1964). *The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, Retrieved on 19/5/2015, Online Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Retrieved on 12/12/2009 from http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=veil&_searchBtn=Search.) Given the respect accorded to nuns in the West, it is a pity "taking the veil" has not had the same positive connotations for Muslim women who "take the veil".

This word is matched to the Arabic *Niqab* by which women cover their faces in the presence of men who are non-*Mahram* (strangers) in some Muslim countries.⁷¹⁴ Moreover, the veil which is mostly considered in Western traditions, particularly Christianity, as a face or head covering does not correspond with the modest dress of Muslims. Most Muslim scholars believe that women are premised to expose their faces and hands as in a hadith that the Prophet states to *Aisha's* sister, Asma':

“O Asma'! When a lady reaches her menstruation (puberty) nothing of her should be shown except this and this” and he pointed towards the face and hands.”⁷¹⁵

The reason for allowing women to expose their faces and hands is based on this Prophetic hadith.⁷¹⁶ In the context to the term Hijab, El-Guindi writes, in Arabic which is the language of the Qur'an's and is spoken and written by some 250 million people and is the religious language of more than one billion people, the word Hijab has no single equivalent such as veil.⁷¹⁷

(Fowler, H W, Fowler, F G, Murray, James A H (1964). *The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, Retrieved on 19/5/2015, Online Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Retrieved on 12/12/2009 from http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=veil&_searchBtn=Search.)

⁷¹⁴ Goto, Emi (2004). *op. cit.*

⁷¹⁵ An-Nissa'ee, Hafiz (2007). *Sunan*, Beirut: Lebanon, Dar Al-Arabia, Vol. 1, No. 200. Bayhaqi., Vol. 1, No. 198. Abu-Da'ud Sulayman al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani. (1993). *Sunan* Abu Dawud. Sh. M. Ashraf, Vol. 4, p. 62: *Aisha* narrated that Asma bint Abu Bakr entered upon the Prophet (PBUH). whilst she was wearing a thin dress. He turned his face away from her and said:

“يا اسماء، ان المراه اذا بلغت المحيض لم تصلح ان يري الا هذا وهذا و اشار الي كفه و وجهه”

⁷¹⁶ Goto, Emi (2004). *op. cit.*

⁷¹⁷ Fahim Ruby, Tabassum (2006). *op. cit.*

4.3 The Importance of Modesty and Modest Dress

Observance in Islam

As all divine religions preach that observing modesty as a moral and social virtue is emphasized in Islam, observing modesty among men and women and maintaining privacy is significantly essential. One of the most important Islam's virtues is modesty. The Prophet (PBUH) states:

“Every religion (Dean) has an innate character; the character of Islam is modesty.”⁷¹⁸

“Modesty and belief are fully associated together if one is lifted the other follows suit.”⁷¹⁹

Islamic teachings consider modesty in all behaviors and practices including in dress, which includes the wearing of the veil. Nevertheless, being modest in dress was not introduced by Islam. Scholars such as El Guindi and Mernissi claim that historically, wearing modest dress can be traced to pre-Islamic times in Mesopotian and Mediterranean areas.⁷²⁰ Ahmed believes that wearing the veil was not institutionalized before Islam.⁷²¹ In some cases, the stricter rules of modesty are

⁷¹⁸Ibn Majah Al-Qazwini, Muhammad Bin Yazeed (1415/1995). Al-Sunan, Beirut: Darul-fekr, No. 4182.

"إِنَّ لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا ، وَإِنَّ خُلُقَ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ."

Also see: Ibn Anas, Malik (1398 /1978). Al-Muwatta, Beirut: Darul-fekr, Vol. 47. p. 9.

"الحياء والإيمانُ قُرْنَا جميعاً، فإذا رُفِعَ أَحَدُهُمَا رُفِعَ الْآخَرُ"

(Al-albany, Muhammad Nasir al-Din (1405). fi Takhryj Meshkat Al-masabyh Beirut: Al-mktbalaslamy: No. 5020.)

⁷²⁰ El Guindi, Fadwa (1999). *op. cit.*, Mernissi, Fatima (1991). *op. cit.*

⁷²¹ Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op. cit.*,

seen in ancient Iran, India and other non-Arab cultures.⁷²² A style of women covering from head to toe was known in ancient Mesopotamia around 3000 BC. In addition, the Old Testament demonstrates that the women of ancient Babylonia and Judea used various kinds of veil.⁷²³ In any case, it was Islam that established the rules of modesty in Arabia⁷²⁴ despite some Arabian tribes observing modest dress.⁷²⁵ Despite the variety of opinions, the vast majority of Muslim jurists⁷²⁶ and scholars require women to wear modest dress.⁷²⁷ Such is not only a religious

⁷²² The oldest statute with regard to the veiling of women known today is the Middle Assyrian Law (BC 1300). A man who saw one who was forbidden to do so wearing a veil and who failed to report the breach to the authorities would also be punished. (Driver, G.R., John C. Miles, eds (1935). *The Assyrian Laws*, Edited with Translation and Commentary, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 406–09.)

⁷²³ There are many references to the use of veils or face-veils in the Old Testament. For example see: Genesis 24:64–65 and Isaiah 47:2. And make not a dazzling display, like that of the former times of ignorance.

⁷²⁴ Qur'an demonstrates this matter when says to the Prophet wives to cover themselves properly:

"And make not a dazzling display, like that of the former times of ignorance." (Al-Ahzab (33): 33)

"... وَلَا تَبْرَجْنَ تَبْرُجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى"

⁷²⁵ Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani (897–967) in his book; “The Book of Songs”, has quoted the story of “the War of Fojjar” which occurred near Mecca at the end of the sixth century as bellow: “On the day of the ‘Ukaz market, a beautiful girl of the Amir tribe was sitting in the market place, wearing a *burqu*’, a face-veil. Young men from Qura’ish and the Kinana tribe saw her and crowded around her to ask her to take off her *burqu*’. After she refused, one of the youths played a trick on her, secretly attaching her garment to a stick. Not knowing what he had done, she stood up. Consequently her *dir* (outer garment) slipped down, baring her back. They jeered at her, saying, “Since you refused to show your face, now you have been reduced to showing us your back.” “Oh, people of Amir!” she cried. Thus the fight between the tribes of *Amir and Kinana*, lasting for four years, began.” (Al-Isfahani, Abu Al-Faraj (1323H.) *Kitab Al- Aghani*. 21 vols. Cairo, Vol. 19, pp. 73–74.)

⁷²⁶ Also, *Roald* makes this point: “Among Islamic scholars, there is a consensus with regard to female covering but there is no consensus for the actual form of the covering.” (Roald, Anne Sofie (2001). *Women in Islam. The Western Experience*. New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 271)

⁷²⁷ See: Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 29. A. Badawi, Jamal (1998). *The Muslim Woman’s Dress According to the Qur’an and Sunnah*, Islamic Propagation Centre International.

symbol but also as a religious obligation for Muslim women when they reach puberty.⁷²⁸ Throughout Islamic history, the wearing of the Islamic dress often called Hijab has manifested in different ways in various countries taking multiple forms, including the *Jilbab*, *Khimar*, *Chadur*, *Purdah*, *Burqa* and *Tudung*.

In recent centuries, with expanding unveiling in western countries, wearing modest dress as the most apparent visual representation of Islamic culture has become mostly a symbol of Muslim women's religiosity, particularly in western societies.⁷²⁹ Islamic norms of modesty, particularly women's veil, has been subject to broad media and academic scrutiny attention mainly for interpreting and understanding its and origin meaning.⁷³⁰ Islamic teachings from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*⁷³¹ have demonstrated the reason and wisdom of modesty.

⁷²⁸ Senyonjo, Manisuli (2007). The Islamic Veil and Freedom of Religion, the Rights to Education and Work: a Survey of Recent International and National Cases, *Chinese Journal of International Law*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp.653-710.

⁷²⁹ Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *The Veil: Symbol and State Identity, Iran and France*, International Relations Master's Program, University of Massachusetts Boston, John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, p.9.

⁷³⁰ There are extensive literatures on this topic, particularly in the fields of sociology and ethnology. See: Macleod, Arlene Elowe (1992). *Accommodating Protest: Working Women, the New Veiling, and Change in Cairo*. Cairo, Zuhur, Sherifa (1992). *Revealing Reveiling: Islamist Gender Ideology in Contemporary Egypt*. New York: State University of New York, El Guindi, Fadwa (1999). *op. cit.*, Ôtsuka, Kazuo (1985). Agohige to beeru: ishô kara mita kindai Ejiputo no Isuramu genrishûgi. *Minzokugaku kenkyu*, Vol. 50, No.3, pp. 239-69.

⁷³¹ The definition for *Sunnah* is: The oral tradition of the Prophet (saw) scientifically recorded is called hadith (pl. hadiths). (Wood Boulanouar, Aisha (2006). The Notion of Modesty in Muslim Women's Clothing: An Islamic Point of View, *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 134-156.) Or: Both a record of what Muhammad actually said and did and also a record of what his community in the first two centuries of Islamic history believed that he said and did" (Stowasser, Barbara Freyer (1994). *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 104.)

Surprisingly, the western media and scholars often emphasize on different factors such as denial of freedom, oppression, and subjugation of women.⁷³² For this reason, some recent academic researches asserted that the modest dress of Muslim women is today widely misunderstood, particularly in the west and the real reasons need be clarified.⁷³³ In fact, today's veiling has become globally polarizing. There is a struggle between western and Islamic culture and between traditional and contemporary readings of Islam.⁷³⁴ Moreover, feminist scholarship generally stereotypes the Hijab as seclusion of Muslim women and their independence,⁷³⁵ gender inequality, alienation, discrimination and a tool of female oppression.⁷³⁶ According to Bullock, this perception is held, maintained and disseminated across all levels of Western society, from academic and intellectual to popular culture.⁷³⁷

Meanwhile, a few researches have explored the earliest reasons for modesty norms in the Islamic context,⁷³⁸ but have failed to notice that Hijab has multiple

⁷³² Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op. cit.*, Davary, Bahar (2009). *Women and the Qur'an: A Study in Islamic Hermeneutics* Paperback, Lewiston NY: The Edwin Mellen Press., Fernea, Elizabeth W. (1998). *In search of Islamic feminism: One woman's journey*. New York: Doubleday, Wadud, Amina (1999). *op. cit.* Barzangi, Hafez (2004). *Women's Identity and the Qur'an: A new reading*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

⁷³³ Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁷³⁴ Heath, Jennifer (ed.) (2008). *op. cit.*, Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.* Also, it is said: "The veil is at the very center of the current struggle between conservative Islamist forces and liberal movements, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring." (Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *Hijab, Meaning, Identity, Otherization and Politics: British Muslim Women*, Published by Islamic Human Rights Commission, p.11.)

⁷³⁵ See: Afshar, Haleh (1993).

⁷³⁶ Ssenyonjo, Manisuli (2007). *op. cit.*

⁷³⁷ Bullock, Katherine (2003). *op. cit.*

⁷³⁸ On the earliest commentaries regarding to the wearing modest dress, see: Mernissi, Fatima (1991). *op. cit.*, Stowasser, Barbara Freyer (1994). *op. cit.*, Goto, Emi (2004). *Qur'an and The Veil:*

interpretations.⁷³⁹ Issues pertaining to modesty and modest dress as a part of a theological discourse are mostly overlooked in academic literature. Instead, the majority of contemporary studies are on socio-political contexts,⁷⁴⁰ because modesty rules, particularly the Hijab, is a visible symbol and often controversial in western societies.⁷⁴¹ After the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Hijab shifted to a symbol of “progress” of a liberated woman who was not a “painted Western doll” and became a mark of fundamentalism and traditionalism or re-traditionalization.⁷⁴² Furthermore, after the controversy in France in 2004 over the right of Muslim schoolgirls to wear the veil, questions were raised regarding the meaning of the Hijab for which some researches⁷⁴³ associated the Hijab with young educated

Contexts and Interpretations of the Revelation, Cambridge University Press, *International Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 2004, pp. 277-295.

⁷³⁹ Tariq-Munir, Erum (2014). *The Dynamics of Wearing Hijab for Muslim American Women in the United States*, (Graduate Theses and Dissertations, Paper 13842, Iowa State University, Retrieved on 12/12/2009 from <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd>. Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*

⁷⁴⁰ See: Hajjaji-Jarrah, S. (2003). Women’s modesty in Qur’anic Commentaries: The founding discourse, In: *The Muslim veil in North America: Issues and debates*, ed. S. Alvi, H. Hoodfar, and S. McDonough, Toronto: Women’s Press, pp.145–80, , Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op. cit.* ,

⁷⁴¹ Murphy, Caryle (2009). Behind the veil: Why Islam’s most visible symbol is spreading, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Retrieved on 12/12/2012 from <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2009/1213/Behind-the-veil-Why-Islam-s-most-visible-symbol-is-spreading>

⁷⁴² See: Shirazi, Faegheh (2001). *The Veil Unveiled: The Hijab in Modern Culture*, University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

⁷⁴³ For example, in Ssenyonjo’s survey, some Muslim women in the UK asserted in May 2006 that Muslim women are not oppressed. Wearing Hijab as spiritual or personal choice is a part of their identity. (Ssenyonjo, Manisuli (2007). *op. cit.*,) and another article that reveals a gap between dominant understandings of the Hijab as a symbol of Muslim women’s oppression, and the self-expressed sense of women participating in the study that the wearing of the Hijab is a positive experience in their lives. (Fahim Ruby, Tabassum (2006). Listening to the voices of Hijab, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Vol. 29, pp. 54–66.) and also in: Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck (2007). The Post-9/11 Hijab as Icon, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 253-267, and: Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p.11.

women returning to the veil⁷⁴⁴ because they consider it a symbol of empowerment, identity and religious devotion.⁷⁴⁵ The main sources of *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) are principally the Qur'an as God's revelation and *Sunnah* as the Prophet's (PBUH) elaboration which provide the basis for all authentic Islamic views and instructions.⁷⁴⁶ As Islamic law, *Shari'ah* switches between two dimensions:

1- *Ibadat* as a vertical dimension regarding the human being's duties in relation with God.

2- *Muamalat* as a horizontal dimension that covers the legislation in the society; responsibilities, rights and obligations in terms of inter-human relationships.⁷⁴⁷

In the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH), there are numerous instructions for protecting Muslim modesty. The Holy Qur'an, as the most important and reliable source, says of the natural human desire for chastity and covering in general:

"O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment..."⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁴ Mule, Pat, Barthel, Diane (1992). The Return to the Veil: Individual Autonomy vs. Social Esteem, *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 323-332.

⁷⁴⁵ Tariq-Munir, Erum (2014). *op. cit.*,

⁷⁴⁶ Badawi, Jamal A. (1980). *Status of women in Islam*. Saudi Arabia Foreigners Guidance Center, Vol. 8, No. 2.

⁷⁴⁷ Roald, Anne Sofie (2001). *op. cit.*, p.104-105.

⁷⁴⁸ Al-Aaraf (7): 26 :

"يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوْءَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا..."

In the Qur'an, dress is considered God's gift to mankind which Satan removed. After God taught Adam the knowledge of all things, He covered Adam and Eve in paradise (the divine dignity dress):

"يا بني ادم لا يفتنكم الشيطان كما اخرج ابويكم من الجنة ينزع عنهما لباسهما ليريهما سوءاتهما"

“O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts.”⁷⁴⁹

This verse shows the importance of clothing and covering in the Qur'an and the phrase, “to show them their private parts” implies that human being needs to cover. Upon committing the sin, Adam and his wife were rendered naked and bare, which they did not like (according to their nature). In Islam, modesty is not merely related to clothing. It also regulates the manner in which everybody should walk, speak and behave. For example, God says in the Holy Qur'an that the wives of the Prophet (PBUH) should not speak in a way that might attract those men to their beauty or to their privacy.⁷⁵⁰

As a first step to understanding the sense of women's modest dress, this study refers to the relevant Qur'anic verses. Generally, the verses regarding modest dress are revealed within 10 years of Islamic government after the migration to Medina. In the Qur'an, the word Hijab has been used seven times to generally mean curtain. The verse that states the word Hijab in the meaning of curtain is verse 53 of *Al-Ahzab* which gives some commands about chastity and privacy regarding the Prophet's wives, but in later verses the command extended to all believers. Generally, verses that have clearly reminded about observance of modesty and

⁷⁴⁹ Al-Aaraf (7): 27

⁷⁵⁰ Al-Ahzab (33): 33

coverage are in four items. Two cases; Surah *Al-Ahzab* (33): 53⁷⁵¹ and 32⁷⁵² addressed the Prophet's wives because observance of modestly conduct and covering became obligatory first for them⁷⁵³ and then extended to all believing women in Surah *An-Nur* (24): 30-31⁷⁵⁴ and *Al-Ahzab* (33): 59.⁷⁵⁵ These verses were revealed to the Prophet at a wedding five years before his death.⁷⁵⁶ Muslim scholars regard the verse (24:31) as a strong interpretive emphasis that requires women, "not

⁷⁵¹ "...And when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want, ask them from before a screen: that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs."

"يا ايها الذين آمنوا لا تدخلوا بيوت النبي الا ان يؤذن لكم الي طعام غير ناظرين انيه و لكن اذا دعيتم فادخلوا فاذا طعمتم فانثشروا و لا مستانسين لحديث ان ذلكم كان يؤذي النبي فيستحي منكم و الله لا يستحي من الحق و اذا سالتموهن متاعا فسنلوهن من وراء حجاب ذلكم اطهر لقلوبكم و قلوبهن و..."

⁷⁵² "O Consorts of the Prophet! Ye are not like any of the (other) women: if ye do fear (Allah), be not too complacent of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech (that is) just."

"يا نساء النبي لستن كاحد من النساء ان اتقيتن فلا تخضعن بالقول فيطمع الذي في قلبه مرض و قلن قولا معروفا و قرن في بيوتكن و لاتبرجن تبرج الجاهليه الاولى"

⁷⁵³ They consider that these verses were revealed to the Prophet at a wedding five years before his death. (Ghaza Read, Jen`nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). To Veil or Not To Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation Among Muslim Women In Austin, Texas, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 395-417.)

⁷⁵⁴ "قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم و يحفظوا فروجهم، ذلك ازكى لهم، ان الله خبير بما يصنعون. و قل للمؤمنات يغضضن من ابصارهن و يحفظن فروجهن و لا يبدين زينتهن الا ما ظهر منها وليضربن بخمرهن على جيوبهن و لا يبدين زينتهن الا لبعولتهن او ابنائهن او ابناء بعولتهن او اخوانهن او بنى اخواتهن او بنى اخواتهن او نساءهن او ما ملكت ايمانهن او التابعين غير اولى الاربة من الرجال او الطفل الذين لم يظهروا على عورات النساء و لا يضربن بارجلهن ليعلم ما يخفين من زينتهن و توبوا الى الله جميعا ايها المؤمنون لعلكم تفلحون"

⁷⁵⁵ "يا ايها النبي قل لاوزوجك و بناتك و نساء المؤمنين يدنين عليهن من جلابيبهن ذلك ادني ان يعرفن فلا يؤذين و كان الله غفوراً رحيماً"

⁷⁵⁶ Ibn Kathir and 'Shaukani believed it to be in the 5th year of *Hijra*. There has been a consensus among all scholars about this verse being the very first one related to the commandments of Hijab. (Memon, Muhammad Ismai (2015). *Hijab - The Islamic Commandments of Hijab*, Trns: Mohamed Siq, Retrieved on 21/5/2015 from <http://www.islameasy.org/pdf/HIJAB%20INTRO%20and%20CHAPTER%20ONE.pdf>)

(to) show their beauty and adornments” but rather to “draw their head cover over their bosoms and not display their ornament.”⁷⁵⁷

4.4 The philosophy of Modesty and Women's Modest Dress in Islam

Islam is a comprehensive religion to enjoy all benefits in this life and the hereafter.⁷⁵⁸ Although believers always obey God’s command devotionally and enjoy spiritual pleasure from obedience of God they also enjoy its benefits, whether they realize the wisdom of not. God in His decrees has considered our nature and real needs which only He knows as He created us. Nevertheless, Muslims often attempt to realize the philosophy and wisdom of the Qur’anic commands because:

- 1- God commands to think about His verses⁷⁵⁹
- 2- Man instinctively wants to be convinced by the reason of these commands.
- 3- When man realizes the reasoning, he has more motivation to observe the commands.

⁷⁵⁷ An-Nur (24): 31

⁷⁵⁸ Wajdi Dusuki, Asyraf & Abozaid, Abdulazeem (2007). *A Critical Appraisal on the Challenges of Realizing Maqasid al-Shari’ah in Islamic Banking and Finance*, IIUM, Journal of Economics and Management, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 143-165.

⁷⁵⁹ For example Allah states in Qur’an: “And We have sent down the Reminder to you so that you can make clear to mankind what has been sent down to them so that hopefully they will reflect.” (Al-Nahl (16):44)

In addition, achieving *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*⁷⁶⁰ will create a society whereby every member will cooperate with each other and compete constructively in achieving success in life i.e. obtaining *falah* (the ultimate happiness).⁷⁶¹ *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*⁷⁶² aims the achievement of good, happiness, benefits and maintenance against evil, damage and harm to people (which in Arabic refers to *Masalih al-Ibad*).⁷⁶³ Family is an important institution for all divine religions, particularly Islam where it is central to its framework of Islamic law. There are many moral and legal laws seeking to preserve the family institution. One of these regulations is invitation to modesty and modest dress, which benefit society and enhance spirituality. This section discusses the objectives of modesty and modest dress in the view of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* from which extend the fundamental wisdom for the establishment of welfare in this world and the hereafter. If such details are ignored, there will be chaos and disorder where *Fasad* (disorder and anarchy) will spread leading to *al-khursan al-mubin* (obvious damage in the hereafter).⁷⁶⁴ This research has categorized the reasons in two main sets for observing modesty and wearing the veil woman:

⁷⁶⁰ *Maqasid* is the plural of *Maqsad* and comes from "*Qasada*". Literally, it means to intend. The word *Shari'ah*, which is a noun meaning a path to a water hole, and in its more common usage, the law of Allah as revealed to the Prophet. Together, the term *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* means the goals and objectives for the legislation of the rules of Islam or simply the objectives of the Islamic Law. (Faizal Abdul Aziz, Ahmad, Mohamad, Shaifulfazlee (2013). Fulfillment of Maqasid al-Shari'ah via Takaful, International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF). Malaysia, Retrieved on 12/12/2013 from <http://mpira.ub.uni->)

⁷⁶¹ Faizal Abdul Aziz, Ahmad, Mohamad, Shaifulfazlee (2013). *op. cit.*

⁷⁶² *Al-Ghazali* has tried to formulate this theory and established frameworks of *Al-mqasid*. *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* has been classified into three categories according to their importance of life preservation namely; *daruriyyat*, *hajiyyat*, and *tahsiniyyat*. (Faizal Abdul Aziz, Ahmad, Mohamad, Shaifulfazlee (2013). *op. cit.*)

⁷⁶³ Ahmed, Zia (2010). Achieving Maqasid Al-Shari'ah through Takaful, Retrieved on 12/12/2012 from www.ziaahmed.org

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

4.4.1 Individual Trait: to Achieve Individual Prosperity

Man needs removal of physical, mental and social depressions to achieve individual prosperity and perfection.

4.4.1.1 Spiritual and Mental aspects

A. Protecting the Virtue of Modesty as Obedience to God and Success in this World and the Hereafter

The Qur'an explicitly considers obedience of God and His Messenger as the means for success:

"It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have an option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed strayed in a plain error."⁷⁶⁵

"...And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (saw), he has indeed achieved a great achievement."⁷⁶⁶

Thus, observing modesty and modest dress as a command of God and the Prophet is considered key to success:

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are

⁷⁶⁵ Al-Ahzab (33): 36:

"وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا"

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Ahzab (33): 71:

"...و من بطع الله فقد فاز فوزا عظيما"

among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslim) and not annoyed...⁷⁶⁷

In addition, the spiritual effects deployed in observance of modesty and in compliance with the divine commands deserve God's pleasure, divine forgiveness, rewards in the Hereafter and eternal paradise. Under these teachings, the spiritual dimension including obedience to God is a key reason for wearing modest dress and adorning the veil, whereby Muslims take pride in their modesty and religious identity.⁷⁶⁸

The Qur'an demonstrates this issue in two cases:

"...that is most convenient that they should be known (as such)..."⁷⁶⁹

"...that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs...."⁷⁷⁰

Controlling one's gaze, behaving and dressing with modesty are God-ordained solutions for regulating sexual appetites.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁷ Al-Ahzab (33): 59:

"يا ايها النبي قل لازواجك بناتك و نساء المومنين يدنين عليهن من جلا يببين ... و كان الله غفوراً رحيماً"

⁷⁶⁸ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p .29.

⁷⁶⁹ Al-Ahzab (33): 59:

"... ذَلِكَ أدنى أن يُعْرَفْنَ."

⁷⁷⁰ Al-Ahzab (33): 53:

"...ذلكم اطهر لقلوبكم و قلوبهن."

⁷⁷¹ Ghazal Read, Jen'nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). *op. cit.*

B. Modesty for Achieving Self-Purification and Spiritual Life

The main aim of legislation in Islam is closeness to God⁷⁷² which is obtained through piety and self-purification. The ultimate goal of sending prophets and scriptures is the purification and evolution of man.⁷⁷³ God purifies the lives of the faithful believers through their good deeds. This rational or spiritual life is called a *Tayyibah* (A pure) life in Islam. God awards greater spirituality to those who engage in His worship:

“Whoever works righteousness, whether man or woman, and has faith, verily, We will give him a new life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.”⁷⁷⁴

In this verse, faith and good deeds are conditions for achieving a righteous life:

“O ye who believe! give your response to Allah and His apostle when He calleth you to that which will give you life.”⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷² "But some of the desert Arabs believe in Allah and the Last Day, and look on their payments as pious gifts bringing them nearer to Allah and obtaining the prayers of the Messenger. Aye, indeed they bring them nearer (to Him): soon will Allah admit them to His Mercy: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (At-Tawbah (9): 99)

⁷⁷³ "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error"(Al-Jumu'a (62): 2)

⁷⁷⁴ An-Nahl (16): 97:

"مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاتًا طَيِّبَةً ..."

⁷⁷⁵ Al-Anfal (8): 24.

In other portraits of spiritual life in the Qur'an, martyrdom in the way of God is valued whereby their souls are rejoicing:

“And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah: “They are dead.” Nay they are living though ye perceive (it) not.”⁷⁷⁶

The Qur'an has encouraged the importance of living a real life:

“...that it may give admonition to any (who are) alive and that the charge may be proved against those who reject (Truth).”⁷⁷⁷

Thus, observing modesty in dress and behavior are regarded for the sake of purity of both men and women:

“...that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs....”⁷⁷⁸

“Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them...”⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁶ Al-Bagharah (2): 154:

"ولا تقولوا لمن يُقتل في سبيل الله أموات بل أحياء ولكن لا تشعرون"

⁷⁷⁷ Ya-Seen (36):70:

"لينذر من كان حيا و يحق القول على الكافرين."

⁷⁷⁸ Al-Ahzab (33): 53:

"...و اذا سألتموهن متاعا فسئلوهُن من وراء حجاب ذلكم اطهر لقلوبكم و قلوبهن"

⁷⁷⁹ An-Nur (24): 30.

4.4.1.2 Maintaining Modesty (*Haya'*) As a Divine Virtue and Protecting Piety

The importance of modesty (*Haya'*) is based on morality as it is considered one of the attributes of God. The Prophet (PBUH) says:

“Allah, Most High, is Hayyea‘ (Bashful) Sitteer (Covered), He loves Haya‘ (Bashfulness) and Sitr (Shielding; Covering).”⁷⁸⁰

In this hadith, modesty is associated with covering. There is another prophetic hadith where the prophet Moses (PBUH) clarifies the relation of modesty and clothing:

“Verily, Moses was a modest and covered man, so it was not seen anything of his body.”⁷⁸¹

Regarding this issue, the Prophet considers women’s body as *Awrah* (عورة) that means it must be covered because of modesty: “The woman (i.e. woman’s body) is *Awrah*.”⁷⁸² The term *Awrah* is a noun derived from the root *a-w-r* and the verb *Aara* that means “something shameful to look at”. Generally, it is translated as private parts or genitals. The Qur’an used this word in verse 31 of surah *An-Nur* that states: “Children who have not yet attained knowledge of women’s *Awrah*” and

⁷⁸⁰ Abu-Da'ud Sulayman al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani. (1993). *Sunan Abu Dawud*. Sh. M. Ashraf, No. 4012, Also see: An-Nissa'ee, Hafiz (2007). *Sunan*, Beirut: Lebanon, Dar Al-Arabia, Al-Baihaqee, Ahmed, (1939) Termedhi, Mohammed (1982). *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Beirut: Darolfekr.

⁷⁸¹ Bokhari, Vol. 4. No. 129. Ahmed, Vol. 3, No. 596:

"ان موسى كان رجلاً حيناً ستره لا يرى من جلده شيء استحياء منه"

⁷⁸² At-Tirmidhi. Vol. 2, p. 319.

"المرأة عورة"

also in *An-Nur* (24): 58, *Al-Azhab* (33): 13. The *Awrah* is the part of the body that must be covered to protect *Haya'* (modesty).

Also, in Islam, God prefers people based on piety:

“Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.”⁷⁸³

The Qur'an knows the observance of modesty as a sign of piety:

يا نساء النبي لستن كأحد من النساء إن اتقين فلا تخضعن بالقول فيطمع الذي في قلبه مرض وقلن
قولا معروفا وقرن في بيوتكن ولا تبرجن تبرج الجاهلية الأولى"

“O Consorts of the Prophet! ye are not like any of the (other) women: if ye do fear (Allah) [you have piety] be not too complaisant of speech lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech (that is) just.”⁷⁸⁴

So, modest behavior can show the piety and it can be a sign of great inner strength and fortitude.

⁷⁸³ Al-Hujurat (49): 13:

"إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ"

⁷⁸⁴ Al-Ahzab (33): 32.

"يا نساء النبي لستن كأحد من النساء إن اتقين فلا تخضعن بالقول فيطمع الذي في قلبه مرض..."

4.4.1.3 Avoiding Lustful looking as Satanic Temptation

This important command in the Qur'an refers to both men and women before other recommendations in surah *An-Nur*:

“Tell the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them...”⁷⁸⁵

“And tell the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty ...”⁷⁸⁶

In this context, the significance of looking on a non-*Mahram* is seen in the prophetic hadith:

“The adultery of the eyes is the lustful look.”⁷⁸⁷

The Qur'an requires women to avoid nakedness and considers it a non-Islamic practice by making it difficult for people to lower their gaze:

“... do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance (Jahiliyeeyah).”⁷⁸⁸

The Qur'an cautions women from engaging in ignorance and from nakedness. Nakedness is a major factor leading to adultery (*zina*). In addition,

⁷⁸⁵ An-Nur (24): 30.

⁷⁸⁶ An-Nur (24): 31

⁷⁸⁷ Sahih Muslim, The Book of Destiny (Kitab-ul-Qadr), 1622:

"العَيْنَانِ زَنَاهُمَا النَّظَرُ"

⁷⁸⁸ Al-Ahzab (33): 33:

"... وَلَا تَبْرُجْنَ تَبْرُجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى"

lustful look is considered a step towards adultery. The Qur'an cautions to draw near to adultery: "Do not go near fornication and adultery, it is an abomination and an evil way."⁷⁸⁹ Since adultery is satanic way: "Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit sins."⁷⁹⁰ Today, the dominant global popular culture is replete with impurity and immodesty. Such an environment has led to the emergence of voyeurism by ogling commonly associated with sexual perversion and has rendered it acceptable to many. Such developments emphasize the need for modesty in dress and behavior:

"Verily, those who like, that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter..."⁷⁹¹

Moreover, some early scholars have associated the issue of women's sexuality as *Fitnah*⁷⁹² for men⁷⁹³ derived from a Prophetic hadith that states: "No *Fitnah* (trial) takes place after my era that is heavier upon men than (the trial) of

⁷⁸⁹ Al-'Isra' (17): 32:

"وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزَّوْجَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا"

⁷⁹⁰ Al-Bagharah (2): 268:

"الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ"

⁷⁹¹ An-Nur (24): 19:

"إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجِبُونَ أَنْ تَشْبَعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ"

⁷⁹² Khaled, Abou El Fadl (2001). *Speaking in god's name: Islamic law, authority and women*. Oxford, Oneworld. p. 233.

⁷⁹³ The idea of *Fitnah* or temptation is also found in the Judeo-Christian veiling tradition, where it was thought that an uncovered female head aroused sexual desire in men (Bronner, Leila Leah (1993). From veil to wig: Jewish women's hair covering. *Judaism*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 465.).

women.”⁷⁹⁴ Accordingly, Ibn Al-Jawzi (AD 1116-1201) explains that women should stay at home, and if they want to go out, they must dress appropriately and cover themselves to avoid causing *Fitnah*⁷⁹⁵ (temptation). He also mentions a hadith that, “the best mosque for woman is her home.” Nevertheless, Al-Ghazzali⁷⁹⁶ (1054–1111) says that there are several hadiths that shows women in the Prophet’s time used to pray at the mosque and these hadiths are more reliable.⁷⁹⁷ The Qur’an has used the word *Fitnah* as a test for non-sexual temptations, such as money (property) and children.⁷⁹⁸ In another verse that states other divine trials, the case of women’s sexuality has not been mentioned.⁷⁹⁹

In any case, Muslim scholars emphasize this perception from the hadith that an uncovered adornment in public can cause a *Fitnah* due to the irritability, excitability and natural weakness of men. In contrast, Khaled argues that this perception does not fit with Islam’s message and the issue is not that the women’s body is *Fitnah*. Rather, women are objectified by these jurists as items for male consumption, which is a testimony of immodesty.⁸⁰⁰ The Qur’an firstly required

⁷⁹⁴ Bokhari, Vol. 5. No. 1959:

"ما تركت بعدي فتنة أضر على الرجال من النساء"

⁷⁹⁵ About its meaning, Ibn Faaris said: “Fa-ta-na is a sound root which indicates testing or trial.” (Ibn Faaris, Ahmed (1979). *Maqaayees al-Lughah*, Darul-fekr, Vol. 4, p. 472.).

⁷⁹⁶ Al-Ghazzali, Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (1989).

⁷⁹⁷ Roald, Anne Sofie (2001). *op. cit.*, p. 271,

⁷⁹⁸ For example: At-Tagabun (64): 15.

"إنما أموالكم وأولادكم فتنة و الله عنده أجر عظيم"

⁷⁹⁹ At-Tawbah (9): 24.

⁸⁰⁰ Khaled, Abou El Fadl (2001). *op. cit.*, p. 235–6.

lowering or casting the gaze and guarding modesty⁸⁰¹ for both men and women and considers women covering only a part of true modesty.⁸⁰²

4.4.2 Social Aspects

Islam has allowed women to attend in public but to remain modest to avoid corruption.⁸⁰³ If women have the appropriate coverage, men will be kept spiritually healthy and public safety and correct social behavior will increase. Moreover, by wearing modest dress, women are advertising Islamic ritual and spiritual values. Generally, dressing modestly will engender the following social benefits:

4.4.2.1 Stability of Family Foundation

Islamic teachings include regulations that increase and strengthen the family. The role of the family is very important for the growth of individuals and societies. Modest dress in Islam is rooted in a more general and basic issue. That is, Islamic precepts aim at limiting all kinds of sexual enjoyment to the family and the marital environment within the bounds of marriage. If women have the appropriate coverage, men and society will be kept spiritually healthy. The improvement of social behaviors also increases public safety.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰¹ Al-Nur (24): 31.

⁸⁰² Fahim Ruby, Tabassum (2006). Listening to the voices of Hijab, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 29, pp. 54–66

⁸⁰³ Al-Ahzab (33): 59:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَبَنَاتِكُمْ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ"

⁸⁰⁴ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 11.

A. Mental and Physical Tranquility

The Holy Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the need of formation family. Qur'an recognizes marriage of men and women as one of God's will and signs. The Qur'an says in Surah Ar-Rūm (The Romans):

“And among His Signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves that he may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts)...”⁸⁰⁵

B. Covering and Supporting Each Other:

Finding the fulfillment of sexual desires within the framework of a legal marriage will strengthen the relationship between a husband and wife causing their union to become more stable as Qur'an states:

“They are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them.”

⁸⁰⁶

As for the family, efforts must be made so that marital relations become more and more intimate and whatever will weaken this relationship must be resisted. The limiting of sexual fulfillment to marriage, whatever kind of fulfillment it might be, causes the married couple to develop a more profound union because a man or a woman who knows only their spouse to be the source of their pleasure and happiness clearly will develop deeper and stronger ties.

⁸⁰⁵ Ar-Rum (30):21:

"وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ..."

⁸⁰⁶ Al-Bagharah (2): 187:

"هُنَّ لِيَابِسٌ لَكُمْ وَ أَنْتُمْ لِيَابِسٌ لِهِنَّ"

C. Psychological Tranquility in Society

In Islam, people are not only responsible for their faith and deeds but are also responsible for the faith and practices of others. Islam is a social religion. Without limits being established for relations between men and women or with unlimited free association, sexual excitement and stimulation increases and demands become unquenchable and insatiable. The sexual instinct is a powerful, deep-rooted instinct which resembles the fathomless ocean. Although one thinks that by obeying it, one will have tamed it, its rebellious nature continues to show forth. It is like a fire: the more fuel is added to it, the greater its flame. Islam has placed special emphasis upon the amazing power of this fiery instinct. There are traditions which speak the danger of a “look”, the danger of a man and woman being alone together and, the danger of the instinct which unites a man and a woman. Islam has established ways of controlling, balancing and taming the instinct. Duties have been given to both men and women in this area. One duty which is the responsibility of both men and women relates to looking at each other.⁸⁰⁷ The command is that a man and a woman should not fix or flirt their eyes upon each other with the intention of seeking sexual pleasure (unless within the sacred bounds of marriage). In this context, the Arabic word *Hisn* (حصن) is used as a fortress (of modesty) for marriage in the Qur’an. Overall, marriage, as a natural, meaningful and constructive institution has several purposes in Islam:

- 1- To follow God’s ordainments according to human’s nature⁸⁰⁸
- 2- To follow the manner of prophets, particularly the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH)⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁷ “Say to the believing men to cast down their glance and guard their private parts...” and “Say to the believing women to cast down their glance and guard their private parts.” (An-Nur (24): 30-31)

⁸⁰⁸ Ar-Rum (30): 21

- 3- To complete the faith and protect modesty⁸¹⁰
- 4- To obtain spiritual and mental tranquility and a kind of pure love⁸¹¹
- 5- Preservation of human race⁸¹²
- 6- To educate children in a warm and kind family⁸¹³
- 7- To satisfy the instinctive desire in a legitimate and peaceful environment⁸¹⁴
- 8- To obtain happiness that is felt naturally in the family⁸¹⁵
- 9- To obtain the divine consent by carrying out the responsibilities towards the spouse and children⁸¹⁶
- 10- To establish mutual rights of inheritance⁸¹⁷

⁸⁰⁹ The prophet of Islam stated: "I go with marriage; whoever does not follow my sunnah is not one of us." (Bokhari, 5063, Muslim, 1401)

"وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَن سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي"

⁸¹⁰ Bokhari reports that Prophet stated: "When Allah's servant marries he has completed one half of the Religion." Also, he said: "O you young men! Whoever is able to marry should marry, for that will help him to lower his gaze and guard his modesty."

⁸¹¹ Ar-Rum (30): 21.

⁸¹² An-Nisa' (4): 1.

⁸¹³ When a child is born, it is clear who its mother is and the mother knows her child. Even if she were to have intercourse with several men, she would know that the future generations are assured but men are not reassured in this way unless they have guarded that woman and created some precautions whereby they are assured of their fatherhood. (Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 36.)

⁸¹⁴ Ar-Rum (30): 21.

⁸¹⁵ Ar-Rum (30): 21

⁸¹⁶ "Believers, save yourselves and your families from the fire which is fueled by people and stones and is guarded by stern angels who do not disobey God's commands and do whatever they are ordered to do." (At-Tahrim (66): 6)

⁸¹⁷ An-Nisa' (4): 11

Thus, marriage can provide physical, emotional and spiritual companionship that generates sustainable love, kindness, mutual confidence. A spiritual and legal foundation is raised in the family that establishes mutual rights of inheritance.⁸¹⁸

4.4.2.2 Protection of Women's Social Position

In recent academic works, the body is theorized firstly as “a vehicle for imposition political, social, and economic powers onto persons and groups” and also as “a vehicle for resistance to these forces”.⁸¹⁹ Thus, the bodily practices of women purpose a mechanism that reflects the position of women in the culture.⁸²⁰ Throughout the history of Islam, the continuing practice of wearing modest dress has not been a static way in shape, style disposition and reasoning,⁸²¹ and has become a remarkable and strong social symbol.⁸²² The symbolic meaning of the Islamic modest dress is defined by cultural factors within the Islamic social system. It can be considered as a tool to help protect individual identity and encourage positive social exchange.⁸²³

In fact, protecting Muslim women's Immunity and identity are two important dimensions that this verse demonstrated that will be protected by observing modest dress properly and we will discuss about it in following sections:

⁸¹⁸ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁸¹⁹ Reischer, Erica, & Koo, Kathryn S. (2004). The body beautiful: Symbolism and agency in the social world. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33, p. 297–317.

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁸²¹ For example: "In Turkey, the veil historically represented traditional culture but now has come to represent religious or conservative identity." (Delaney, Carol (1994). *op. cit.*)

⁸²² Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁸²³ *Ibid.*, p.18.

A. Protecting Women Immunity and Security

The Verse 59 of *Al-Ahzab*⁸²⁴ is a foundation of interpretation of modesty in Islam and considers the observance of appropriate dress as a good way of recognizing noble and personable ladies to be protected from men. As Motahhari says, all of the interpreters approve that there was an event happening in the city of Madinah linked to this verse. There were some corrupt men who bothered women.⁸²⁵ Ibn Sa'd (AD 784-845), in his work *At-Tabaghat Al- Kubra* explains that at that times, shameless men used to molest slave-girls in Madinah. Sometimes, the Prophet's wives and daughters and other free women were mistaken as slaves, and were troubled by those men. God commands them to let down upon them their *Jilbab*.⁸²⁶ Correspondingly, verse 31 of sura *An-Nur* implies this reason for veiling. The theological basis for modest dress is this verse which calls women to cover their adornment.⁸²⁷ Contemporary commentators have interpreted this verse in multiple meanings.⁸²⁸ This verse shows the main reason of veiling is concealing women's beauty to secure their safety and position.⁸²⁹ Also, the issue of concealing beauty for the sake of women security is also implied as a reason of modesty in the verse below addressed to the Prophet's wives:

⁸²⁴ Al-Ahzab (33): 59:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزُوجِكُمْ وَبَنَاتِكُمْ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ"

⁸²⁵ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁸²⁶ Ibn Saad, Mohammed bin Saad (AH 1388, AD 1970). *At-Tabaqat Al-Kobra*, Beirut, Vol. 8, p. 141. Also see: Ibn Kathir, Vol. 3, p. 855.

⁸²⁷ An-Nur (24): 31.

⁸²⁸ See: Bullock, Katherine (2003). *op. cit.* Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*, Mernissi, Fatima (1991). *op. cit.*

⁸²⁹ Goto, Emi (2004). *op. cit.*

“O Consorts of the Prophet! ye are not like any of the (other) women: if ye do fear (Allah) [you have piety] be not too complaisant of speech lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: but speak ye a speech (that is) just.”⁸³⁰

These verses clearly imply the security reason. So, the women’s modest behaviors protect their security from invasion and restrict lewd men. In Islamic communities, young girls are trained to avoid attracting men for the reason of modesty. They even link the issue of modesty and self-restraint to greater attractiveness.⁸³¹ Likewise, in a research about American Muslim, they defended this cultural practice and argue that men are mostly vulnerable to corruption through unregulated sexual contact with women. Anderson, Park and Burgess highlighted the role of modest dress in “segregation”.⁸³² They think that this protection of order is considered necessary because human nature is to indulge one’s interests and lusts which make people dangerous to them, to others, and to the social order and rules.⁸³³ These scholars contend that the objective behind Islamic modest dress is the regulation of the contacts and protection of Muslim women from molesters.⁸³⁴

Therefore, Islam seeks to fix and organize sexual relations and strives towards closing the means used by evil-minded individuals for exploiting woman

⁸³⁰ Al-Ahzab (33): 32.

"يا نساء النبي لئن كنن كأحد من النساء إن اتقيتن فلا تخضعن بالقول فيطمع الذي في قلبه مرض..."

⁸³¹ Rappaport, Roy A. (1993). *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*, North Atlantic Books, p. 54.

⁸³² Park, Robert E. (1926). *The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and a Moral Order*, in: Burgess, Ernest (Ed.) *The Urban Community*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-18.

⁸³³ W. Anderson, Jon (1982). *op. cit.*

⁸³⁴ Ghazal Read, Jen’nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). *op. cit.*

and achieving their enjoyment through her as they wish. Some believe that the covering actually prevents aggression of men while, this is not the sole reason why Islam encouraged modest dress.⁸³⁵ This issue is highly relevant in the western world⁸³⁶ where there are constant horrible reports of abuse and a general lack of safety.⁸³⁷

B. Protecting Women's Humanistic Value and Identity

Essentially, observant ladies defend and advertise Islamic values through modest dress. Covering provides every woman an opportunity to look the same regardless of their beauty and physical appearance. Thus, the veil is the reviver of spiritual values and observant women publicize and promote moral purities, virtues

⁸³⁵ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁸³⁷ In fact, the sexual harassment is widespread in the West. High educational level and civilized behavior do not prevent such thing. A UN report gathered from various governmental sources in more than 65 countries revealed that more than 250,000 rape cases, whether committed or not, were reported to police annually. Moreover, according to Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), the largest national organization in America against sexual assaults: One of every six American women has been a victim of a sexual attack. 1.3 adult women are raped every minute, that is, 78 every hour and 1,871 every day. (National Center of Victims and National Center of Research and Treating Crime Victims 1992) In USA, one rape is reported every five minutes. (FBI: Common Crime Report, 2000) Sexual assault is still the most increasing and violent crime in USA. (American Medical Society, 2000) There were about 51,000 rapes and sexual assaults that took place at workplaces every year from 1992 until 1996. (US Department of Justice, Office of Judicial Statistics, A Survey on Violence Victims at Workplaces) Victims of sexual violence face immediate and long-term psychological effects (Ackard Eight L. 2004; Feleiti Eight L. 1998; Craco Eight L. 2002; Yestigaard Eight L. 2004) Some researchers consider the following healthy behaviors as being effects of sexual violence and factors that may increase the probability of another trauma in the future (Breiner Eight L 1999; Lang Eight L. 2003).

and prosperities by their modest dress. Doi writes that this rule is proposed to guard not only women but also the spiritual virtue of men.⁸³⁸

Mir-Hosseini explains that in doing so, they are challenging both Islamist and orientalist notions of Hijab, and giving it a new meaning and symbolic value.⁸³⁹ Recent surveys demonstrate that modest dress today is considered a main element of religious character and identity. They see it as one of the most important, or a very important component of faith. It is considered as one of the most important religious values.⁸⁴⁰ Williams and Vashi explored the issue of Islamic dress among American second-generation college student in 2007:

“Donning Hijab is a practice that allows young women to create some cultural space for them – it is a part of a larger identity project by second-generation Muslim young people to negotiate their dual identities as Muslims and Americans and gives them the opportunity to be part of both worlds.”⁸⁴¹

This research displays a positive factor in the lives of converted white Muslims. The study positions as a value neutral social practice that neither inheres liberation or subjugation.⁸⁴² Moreover, some men see the veil as a manner of ensuring women could communicate in public while not being sexually

⁸³⁸ Doi, ‘Abdul Rahman I. (1994). *Woman in Shari’ah (Islamic Law)*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers, p. 76.

⁸³⁹ Mir-Hosseini, Ziba (2007). Negotiating the Forbidden: On Women and Sexual Love in Iranian Cinema, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa & the Middle East*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 673-79.

⁸⁴⁰ Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck (2007). *op. cit.*

⁸⁴¹ Rhys H., Williams, Varshi, Gira (2007). Hijab and American Muslim Women: Creating the Space for Autonomous Selves, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 269–97.

⁸⁴² Franks, M. (2000). Crossing the Borders of Whiteness? White Muslim Women who wear the Hijab in Britain Today, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 23 (5). pp. 917-929.

exploited.⁸⁴³ So, one of the wisdom of “modesty” is emerging a humanistic outlook on woman. Javadi Amoli writes:

“Here is no difference between men and women in any dimension for the journey towards perfection levels; the veil is a way to respect and reverence for women so that passers would not look at them brutish.”⁸⁴⁴

Regarding the reason as to why the Islamic command to cover is exclusive to women, Motahhari writes that the desire to show off and display one’s self is a particular trait of women. She is the hunter in the domination of the hearts of men and man is the prey, whereas man is the hunter in the domination of the body of women and she is the prey. A woman’s desire to display herself comes from this essence of the hunter. It is the female instinct, because of her particular nature, wishes to capture hearts and imprison the male. Thus, the deviation begins with the female instinct and therefore the command to cover was issued.⁸⁴⁵

Today, women who do not have spiritual and moral capitals, fill their lack by decoration and projection of their appearances and shapes. However, the author of *Al-Bahr-ul Muhit* writes that nobody will dare follow and make advances to a woman who has completely concealed herself as opposed to the one who has come out nicely decorated without modest dress. The malicious and evil-minded folks will associate great hopes with such women.⁸⁴⁶ This privacy policy can be effective

⁸⁴³ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁸⁴⁴ Javadi Amoli, Abdullah (2012). *Zan dar Ayeeneh Jamal va Jalal (Mirror the Beauty and Glory)*. Iran, Tehran: Asra’ publishing, p. 75.

⁸⁴⁵ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁸⁴⁶ Al-Andalusia, Abu Hayyan (1993). *Tafsîr al-Bahr al-Muhith*, Beirut: Darul Kutub al-Ilmiyyah Vol. 7, p. 250.

in the emotional role of women on men. Woman coverage strengthens the imagination and love of men and keeping privacies is one of the mysterious means for maintaining women's authority and status before men. Thus, this privacy policy can be effective in the emotional role of women on men. Wearing modest dress by removing sexuality *per se* (not just for women) in public is an effective way of subverting the men's gaze and promoting women's autonomy.⁸⁴⁷ Bullock investigated the reasons for modest dress among Muslim women in Canada. She exposes three items on why women wear modest dress:

1-Firstly, covering acts as a block to the male gaze. The point of covering is not that sexual attraction is bad; simply that should be expressed only between a husband and wife inside the privacy of the home. A public space free of sexual tensions is seen as a more harmonious and peaceful place for human beings, men and women, to interact, do business and build a healthy civilization.⁸⁴⁸

2-Secondly according to her interviews, she found nothing wrong with the idea that women could help men practice their faith better. They believed that society benefited by having sexual tension between men and women reduced in the public space.⁸⁴⁹

3-The third reason she pointed out is "women protection" from rape and sexual harassment and also emerging a source of greater respect in the community.⁸⁵⁰

She concludes: "Hijab improved male-female relations, was beneficial for society, and that it protected women"⁸⁵¹ Therefore, the society which Islam wishes

⁸⁴⁷ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁸⁴⁸ Bullock, Katherine (2003). *op. cit.* p. 53

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58

⁸⁵¹ Bullock, Katherine (2003). *op. cit.* p. 52.

to institute is not a sensate, sex-ridden culture. The wide-ranging modesty norms in the Islamic system protect the family and close the paths that lead toward illegal sex relations in society.⁸⁵²

C. Protection the Identity and Struggling with Foreign Culture (Ignorance's Nakedness or تَبَرُّجُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ)

The Qur'an emphasizes protecting the humanistic value of women and avoiding banality as non-Islamic values by resistance to ignorant culture:

“O Prophet! Say to your wives and daughters and the believing women that they draw their Jilbab (outer garments) close to them; so it is more proper that they may be known and not hurt.”⁸⁵³

God pronounces that the prophet:

“He allows them as lawful At-Tayyibah (all good), and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khaba'ith (all evil).⁸⁵⁴

So, nakedness and *Tabarroj* (ostentation) and all forms of *Jahiliyeeyah* (ignorance) are considered unlawful in Islam. In this new era of ignorance, nakedness and ostentation is seen in most public multi media. In this profligate and unrestrained atmosphere, observant women still protect themselves from dirty looks and do not permit to men to think about molesting them. On the other hand, although unveiled women are sexually attractive, veiled women rely on their mental-value. They prefer to be considered as a human with virtues apart from their

⁸⁵² See: Ghazal Read, Jen'nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). *op. cit.*

⁸⁵³ Al-Ahzab (33): 59.

⁸⁵⁴ Al-Aaraf (7): 157:

"وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ"

beauty, physical characteristics and would like their personal validities to be seen in society.

According to the Qur'an⁸⁵⁵ and *Sunnah*, Muslims should not follow deviant and infidel cultures. They should respect their traditional practice without noticing other cultures. Since the nineteenth century, veiling has become a factor where Muslim women can indicate their anti-Western identification with the colonial powers emergence in which a creative political definition of the veil has been generated along with adding another layer of meaning to the Islamic veiling. Women's identification has raised by the socio-political context from the traditional Islamic veil suggestions a focus on Muslim women's symbolic role in social contexts.⁸⁵⁶

D. Protection of Identity and Autonomy in Political View

In recent centuries, along with the Western colonialism of Muslim countries, cultural changes have occurred mostly by force, supported by West-oriented educated people. Some governments such as Mostafa Kamal Ataturk in Turkey (1881-1938), Amanullah Khan in Afghanistan (1919-1929), Reza Shah in Iran (1925-1941), along with modernization of their countries, obligated the unveiling on women legally, whereas they faced the resistance of people particularly the clergies. In the current century, there are widespread researches regarding Islamic modest dress as political and social discourse.⁸⁵⁷ In addition, several surveys indicate that not only in Islamic countries, but also among immigrant Muslim

⁸⁵⁵ "No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord." (Surah Al-Nahl (16): 99, Al-Ahzab (33): 33.)

⁸⁵⁶ Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.*, p.9.

⁸⁵⁷ Fanun, Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op. cit.*, Ghazal Read, Jen'nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). *op. cit.*, Mernissi, Fatima (1991). *op. cit.*

women in the West Islamic modest dress is a religious rather than a political symbol.⁸⁵⁸ That is a symbol of allegiance to Islam⁸⁵⁹ and resistance⁸⁶⁰ before foreign culture. Nevertheless, there are many western documents that illustrate an exotic attitude. Delaney writes regarding this issue:

To the Western eye, the covering of women's heads in Turkey and other Muslim countries is surely one of the most noticeable and provocative practices related to hair... Westerners have ambivalent responses to this practice, considering it both exotic and erotic or, in a more negative vein, as evidence of the backwardness of Islam and the oppression of women.⁸⁶¹

Heath writes regarding this issue that the symbolic image of the Islamic dress has become more like a cliché in the Westerners' view. It has become equal with tyranny, oppositions and zealotry.⁸⁶² However, none of these terms have anything to do with the actual purpose of Muslim women modest dress.⁸⁶³ Wearing Islamic dress for Muslim women in the West countries is mostly understood as an affirmation of the Muslim identity, as well as a statement that they would not like to miss their tradition and follow western culture. Sometimes, this popularized concept at the policy level has manifested in "Hijab ban" in French schools, Netherlands, some German states and some parts of Belgium. All the bans remind this meaning

⁸⁵⁸ Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*

⁸⁵⁹ In Turkey that allegiance conflicts with nationalist ideals and thus the wearing of the headscarf can be interpreted as a threat to the secular national government' (Delaney, Carol (1994). Untangling the Meanings of Hair in Turkish Society, *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 67. No. 4, pp. 159–72.)

⁸⁶⁰ Merali, Auzu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁸⁶¹ Delaney, Carol (1994). *op. cit.*

⁸⁶² Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.*, p.22.

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.9.

that Hijab wearers are faithless to the West's secular values even though they have to miss many opportunities in life for the sake of it.⁸⁶⁴

So, in addition to the image of women's modest dress as their tradition and identity in Muslim communities, today more than other times, it is an international image that shows a symbol for Islamic culture.⁸⁶⁵ Nowadays, one of the most visible and controversial aspects of Islam in the face of Western culture is the dress code, particularly the headscarf. There are several reasons for this issue:

1- Some based on misunderstanding the reason of using modest dress (because there are a variety of reasons for wearing veils in other cultures particularly in Judaism and Christianity that differ from Islam). They do not recognize the incongruity and incompatibility of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian teachings on the reason of women's covering.

2- Expansion of today's modern Western dress around the world (although it is still not passed more than half a century from the wearing hats or mantilla and covered clothes of women in the West, the women's dresses have changed considerably within advertising the fashions for economic and politic motives).

3- Some reasons are merely political.⁸⁶⁶ While some contemporary scholars and leaders have interpreted the issue of modesty norms as mandatory, a few countries such as Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran have enforced specified

⁸⁶⁴In fact, France's Muslim nationals face strong discrimination in every sphere of life. Their job applications are systematically rejected when recruiting agencies or private sector firms see the Muslim name of the applicant. (Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 33.)

⁸⁶⁵ Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁸⁶⁶ Wood Boulanouar, Aisha (2006). *op. cit.*

standards as women's dress. Nevertheless, most countries do not enforce modesty by law.⁸⁶⁷

E. Modest Dress as a Symbol of Women's Empowerment

In recent decades, there are some sophisticated answers regarding women's modest dress in gender analyses of Muslim women scholars. They have attempted to prove that it does more than merely assessment of traditional feminists' arguments as oppressive.⁸⁶⁸ They say that most researches are limited and different methodologies need to be used in combination, also, diverse voices should be recognised on an equal level for the analysis of the concept of Islamic modest dress.⁸⁶⁹

In recent decades, responding to the western perception and claims some Islamic scholars attempted to conceptualize women's modest dress in academic debate through the findings of surveys.⁸⁷⁰ They have attempted to explore the diverse sense of Islamic modest dress among Muslims in different countries.⁸⁷¹ Although there are multiple interpretations for this practice in these surveys⁸⁷² today, Muslim women do not see it as oppression or restriction but more as a symbol of empowerment.⁸⁷³ They see veiling as a way to assert their Islamic

⁸⁶⁷ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *From Tichels to hair bands: Modern orthodox women and the practice of head covering*, *Women's Studies International Forum* 34 (2011) 349–359

⁸⁶⁸ Inayatullah, Sohail (1998). Causal Layered Analysis: Postculturalism as method, *Futures*, Vol. 30. No. 8, pp. 815-829.

⁸⁶⁹ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷¹ For instance; *Faegheh Shirazi* explores the different meanings the veil has held among Iraqi, Indian, Uzbeki, and Iranian poets and authors. (Shirazi, Faegheh (2001). *op. cit.*)

⁸⁷² Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*, Tariq-Munir, Erum (2014). *op. cit.*

⁸⁷³ Tariq-Munir, Erum (2014). *op. cit.*

identity and to defy misogynistic fundamental controls on women.⁸⁷⁴ For example, in relation to women's empowerment, one study that has examined the feeling of 163 veiled/unveiled and educated/uneducated Muslim women about the concept of modest dress in Islam shows that women use modest dress willingly and feel more confident after becoming veiled. The covered dress has not hindered their progress.⁸⁷⁵

The theme of *otherization* that explores a major communication inhibition through looking at how, so easily, one can construct and reduce people to be less than what they are.⁸⁷⁶ According to the concept of Orientalism of Said (1935-2003), the process of *otherization* is a proper term for investigating the way Muslim women feel they are portrayed.⁸⁷⁷ Moreover, Go`le emphasizes that:

“No other symbol than the veil reconstructs with such force the otherness of Islam to the West.”⁸⁷⁸

In this regard, the British as colonizers in Egypt has enforced the notion of the Islamic women's dress as illustrative of Muslim backwardness.⁸⁷⁹ This issue

⁸⁷⁴ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁸⁷⁵ Ansar Khan, Sumbul (2014). *op. cit.*

⁸⁷⁶ Holiday, Adrian, Hyde, Martin, Kullman, John (2004). *Intercultural Communication*, New York: Routledge, p.21.

⁸⁷⁷ Said, Edward (1978). *Orientalism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.110-111.

⁸⁷⁸ Go`le, Nilofar (1996). *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p.1.

⁸⁷⁹ For instance one of this works says: “Practices of veiling and segregation are often cited as emblems of the Muslim world in general, demonstrating not only those Muslim women are oppressed but also that Muslim societies are backward.” (C. M. Van Santen, José (2010). My “Veil” Does Not Go With My Jeans’: Veiling, Fundamentalism, Education and Women’s Agency in Northern Cameroon, *Africa*, Vol. 80, No. 2.)

caused that elite women to challenge this practice. Furthermore, this colonial perception on Islamic dress caused Muslim women to react and claim the Hijab as a symbol of anti-colonialism.⁸⁸⁰

F. Modest Dress as a Symbol of Women's Freedom not Oppression

Western media and scholars often emphasise on reasons such as denial of freedom, oppression, and subjugation of women.⁸⁸¹ As some recent Muslim researches imply, today's Muslim women's modest dress is widely misunderstood, particularly in the west and the real reasons need to be clearly explored.⁸⁸² Emi Goto regarding to this issue writes that although Muslim men are also required to be "modest in dress" Over the past three decades, many efforts have been made to challenge people's narrow understanding of the meaning of the Muslim veil: it is usually seen as a symbol of the oppression of women in the name of religion or as a mark of a sympathizer with radical Islam. It is surprising that, in spite of these efforts, they have continued to spread widely to the present day.⁸⁸³

So, although an increasing number of scholars have emphasized that equating the Islamic dress with oppression and subordination of women is an overstatement, this view has remained extensively advertised, particularly in the West. Some underscore ignoring Hijab's multiple religious and cultural dimensions in the West.⁸⁸⁴ Regarding the source of this popular perspective, Bullock and Jafri

⁸⁸⁰ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁸⁸¹ See: Ahmed, Leila (1992). *op. cit.*, Davary, Bahar (2009). *op. cit.*, Fernea, Elizabeth W. (1998). *In search of Islamic feminism: One woman's journey*. New York: Doubleday, Wadud, Amina (1999). *op. cit.* Barzangi, Hafez (2004). *Women's Identity and the Qur'an: A new reading*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

⁸⁸² Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011). *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁸⁸³ Goto, Emi (2004). *op. cit.*

⁸⁸⁴ Ssenyonjo, Manisuli (2007). *op. cit.*

maintain that today, Muslim women are presented by the media as bothers, the members of a religion that does not follow Canadian culture, even rather, anti-Canadian values like indiscriminate violence and oppression on women.⁸⁸⁵ In mass media, veiling is considered a great symbol of oppression on Muslim women.⁸⁸⁶ Today, as Goto says, there are appreciated works that have offered a serious challenge to this dominant view. For example, Ternikar in her comparative analysis of the Muslim veil sociology among American Muslim in 2009 concludes that Islamic dress:

“Often empowers young American Muslim women by allowing them more freedom.”⁸⁸⁷

Williams and Vashi in their investigation about the issue of Islamic dress among American second generation college student in 2007 quote that these women feel this practice emerges a cultural space for them. Their research explains how the Islamic dress mostly empowers them by allowing them more freedom. They highlight that:

“Young women are using Hijab as a cultural resource to give some substantive meaning to their contentions that difference does not necessarily mean inequality.”⁸⁸⁸

Merali and Ameli in their investigation if the meaning of Islamic dress amongst 1125 Muslim from different countries including south Asian, afro-Caribbean and British in the book *Hijab, Meaning, Identity, Otherization and*

⁸⁸⁵ Bullock, Katherine, Jafri, Joun (2000). Media (Mis) Representations: Muslim Women in the Canadian Nation. *Canadian Woman Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 35-40 .

⁸⁸⁶ Fahim Ruby, Tabassum (2006). *op. cit.*

⁸⁸⁷ Ternikar, Farha (2009), *op. cit.*

⁸⁸⁸ Rhys H., Williams, Varshi, Gira (2007). *op. cit.*

Politics: British Muslim Women concluded that: “No-one in the survey saw the conscious wearing of Hijab as oppressive in any Way.”⁸⁸⁹

4.5 Necessity of Women Wearing Modest Dress at Prayer

In Islam, like most other religions, women are required to cover themselves at prayer. Women’s veil has many effects and benefits even in prayer. The Qur’an has not mentioned this issue explicitly. Some interpreters have highlighted this issue in some verses (such as verse of Al-Aaraf (7): 31-26).⁸⁹⁰ Since essentially religious commandments and liturgical affairs are issued from the Lord’s Knowledge and wisdom, the believers respect them devotionally for the sake of their faith. The Holy Legislator’s Will can be the most important criteria for admission, although other interests may lie in these orders that we are not aware of. Of course, some of their aspects are being clarified by the progress of human knowledge, understanding and wisdom. However, nobody is able to claim that the cause of such orders is one specific reason and not any other. The tradition of women’s modest dress during prayer is one of these provisions.

It is clear that the issue of *mahram* (confidant) or non-*mahram* is relevant to mankind and God is glorified from them due to His Omniscience and Omnipresence. The Holy Qur’an says: “We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.”⁸⁹¹ The philosophy of human covering is not only regarding to *mahram* or

⁸⁸⁹ Merali, Arezu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁸⁹⁰ "O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment..." (Al-Aaraf (7): 26)

"O Children of Adam! Put on your adornment (decent proper dress) when you attend your Masjid" (Al-Aaraf (7): 31)

⁸⁹¹ Qáf (50): 16.

non-mahram issue, because it is essential for the prayers (males or females) to cover themselves while worshipping as much as it is obligatory in the holy law although, they may be alone and say prayer in solitude and nobody sees them. Here, I deal with some advantages of the veil in prayer:

1-Coverings for man or woman, is a kind of divine dignity. Only human dresses and no animals wear clothes. Therefore, covering is considered an indication of human respect and dignity. Covering can be seen as a type of politeness and courtesy. Politeness demands man to attend in public, especially before the elderly, with full dress. Participating at religious rituals is usually associated with a cloak in most religions. Since the prayer is offered before Heavenly Presence of God, the perfect, clean and more fragrant the dress, the much desirable it seems in this assembly since: “Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.”⁸⁹²What God asks women in slavery humility and respect, is to observe the veil while praying.

2. One of the benefits of veiling may be a kind of daily and constant practice to maintain Hijab. Dressing up five times a day can be very good practical suggestion on Muslim women. A woman feels more modest and pious when she is all dressed up and it trains a woman on how to behave in the presence of men.

3. Women praying in public places, mosques and communities require a full veil. It keeps women safe from evil looks, preserves spiritual peace prayer and protects public chastity.

Nevertheless, the main reason is respecting and obeying the traditions of God. Some hadiths are quoted from the Prophet (PBUH) about the requirement of

⁸⁹² Hafez, Abu Hussein, bin Hajjaj (1320). *Almsund Az Zawaa'id*, Cairo: *Zawaa'id*, No. 1626.

women veiling in the prayer time and is considered a factor for God accepting the prayer:

“An adult woman’s prayer is not accepted by God unless she is covering her head.”⁸⁹³

Haetz (حائض) means reaching to the age of puberty or menstruation. It is clear that woman must not pray during menstruation. This hadith implies to the condition of women’s veiling at prayers. Another hadith says:

“Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman she has not properly covered, nor from the girl who has reached the age of puberty (menstruation) until she covers herself.”⁸⁹⁴

Overall, these narratives imply the necessity of women’s *Khimar* (veil). Thus, covering the head and body are obligatory in times of prayer as a condition of acceptance. All Islamic schools have consensus that every man and woman must cover themselves while praying. *Awrah* (عورة: what must be covered) is defined in prayer and non-prayer (public).⁸⁹⁵ Generally, women veiling during praying is as a courtesy and respect, training for modesty and to obey to the God’s commands even in solitude and loneliness. This command has some secret wisdom, supernatural and metaphysical effects beyond human understanding that have yet to be revealed.

⁸⁹³ Abu-Da’ud Sulayman al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani. (1993). *Sunan Abu Dawud*. Sh. M. Ashraf, Vol. 1, p. 152. Termedhi, Mohammed (1982). *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Beirut: Darul-fekr, Vol. 1, p. 234, No. 375:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ صَلَاةَ حَائِضٍ إِلَّا بِخِمَارٍ."

⁸⁹⁴ Al-Tabaraani, Suleiman bin Ahmed Abu al-Qasim (1983). *Al-Mo’jamol kabir*, Al-MO’Jamol- ausat, Moosel: Darul-maktabahatoz-Zahra, Vol. 7, p. 315:

"لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ صَلَاةَ حَائِضٍ حَتَّى تَخْتَمِرَ."

⁸⁹⁵ Al Zohaily, Wahba (1999). *Al-Fiqhhol Islami wa Adellatohu*, Damascus: Darul-fekr, Vol. 1, p. 587-8, Vol. 3, p. 562.

4.6 Conclusion

As a result, although the concept of women's modest dress had been a pre-Islamic tradition; Islamic teachings have appreciated and appropriated modesty in conduct and dress. According to the Qur'an and its commentaries, there are multiple religious reasons and cultural meanings and dimensions for women's observance of modesty and modest dress as a symbol. The most important reasons are piety, obedience to God and His Prophet (as a Quranic command), and protecting modesty as a virtue. As a social reason, distinguishing honored and decent women's position, identity, securing and protecting women's safety from molesting men and avoiding sexual harassment. Moreover, observing modest conduct in public places limit all kinds of sexual enjoyment to the family and the marital environment within the bounds of marriage.

Regarding the debate over the philosophy and meaning of recommended modesty norms in the Qur'an, there are a variety of reasons that appeared among feminists, and West media. On a global level, they have presented and dictated some new reasons such as oppression on women as a patriarchal rule, gender discrimination, a mark of fundamentalism, a symbol of traditionalism or the re-traditionalization and resistance. Some contemporary Islamic commentators construct several meanings depending on time and place responding to these critiques. They have emphasized that the modesty norm is not merely a symbol limited to a dress code and there is a concealed value in political and social situations.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will first present the similarities and differences in how the Abrahamic religions view the position of women. Then, the similarities in their reasons and wisdoms on modesty and women's modest dress will be analyzed. The analysis will highlight in particular the differences in the details among their teachings on the real root of modesty or the requirement of modest dress for women that today has been sometimes limited to head covering. The logical and intellectual way in which the Islamic teachings consider the natural and social realities of modesty renders it comprehensible and thus acceptable. Finally, this chapter will explicate the gap in the basic reasons and wisdom on modesty norms as they are stated in the primary resources of the different religions and the theory advocated by feminist methodologies⁸⁹⁶ on the reasons for requiring of women to wear modest dress.

⁸⁹⁶ See: Gluck, Sherna Berger & Patai, Daphne (Eds.) (1991). *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York, Routledge. Hooks, Bell (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking Black*. Boston: South End. Kandiyoti, Deniz (1988). Bargaining with patriarchy, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 274–290. Hartman, Tova (2002). Appropriately subversive: Modern mothers in traditional religions. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Marmon, Naomi, Hartman, Tova (2004). Lived regulations, systemic attributions: Menstrual separation and ritual immersion in the experience of Orthodox Jewish women. *Gender & Society*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 389–408.

5.1 Analysis of the Position of Women in Abrahamic Religions

The position of women is not easily defined in the teachings of Abrahamic religions. There are contradictory issues about the creation, role and status of women in their holy books and traditions. In the story of the creation of Adam and Eve in the Quran and the Torah, which is also sanctioned by the New Testament, except for the general similarities, some essential principles are different. The Torah and the Gospel explicitly state that woman was created from and for men and the first woman was the seducer of Adam and the one primarily responsible for their Sin. The Bible mentions Eve's punishment as women's suffering during pregnancy and birthing, which are also examined at length in the dicta of Jewish Rabbis. For more than two thousand years, Judeo-Christian teachings consider the portrayal of Eve in the Torah as the base for the character and identity of all women. They deem that the true nature of women was exposed through Eve's creation, words and actions⁸⁹⁷ and plays a primary role in shaping what is today known as *gender ideology*. The Quran on the other hand does not express anything about these punishments.

Christian scholars, in interpreting the Torah's statement as part of their holy book, say that Eve's temptation caused realization of sexual lust in Adam.⁸⁹⁸ Therefore, the church considers the woman as the main factor for the first sin and the greatest of all temptations which is sex. Furthermore, Paul's appreciates on

⁸⁹⁷ L. C. E. Witcombe, Christopher (2000). *Eve and the Identity of Women*, Sweet Briar College, An earlier version of this essay appeared originally in: *Images of Women in Ancient Art*. Retrieved on 3/5/2015 from <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/eve-women/evebibliography.html>

⁸⁹⁸ Brachtendorf, Johannes (1997). Cicero and Augustine on the Passions, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, Vol. 43, pp. 289 -308.

singleness.⁸⁹⁹ In addition to that, the Judeo-Christian teaching states that Eve's sin offers the fundamental reason for all humans' Original sin. Islam clearly rejects this concept of Original sin. Instead Islam advocates that every human being is responsible for their actions and is born pure and free from sins. Moreover, according to the Quran, Eve and Adam had asked God for forgiveness and He forgave them. Therefore, the Judeo-Christian conception of women in the Torah has been tainted by the belief in the condemnation of Eve and her daughters' characters. Narrating this case during the history of Jews and Christianity was effective in weakening and subordinating the women's personality because the duty of women in the Genesis volume are, among others, giving birth and obeying the men and also in some commentaries, being modest and wearing modest dress as a symbol of shame and avoiding being attractive or a temptation to men.

Nevertheless, in the teachings of all these faiths, a woman can achieve merit and perfection by submission to God and observing modesty, housekeeping and performing the duties of the wife and mother as their natural roles. Also, it can be seen that in their histories, women are seen as pious and advisers. So, the Scriptures give a high degree of honor to a faithful and God-fearing woman. Jewish and Christian attitudes towards women noticeably vary throughout the past centuries. However, during the 70s more moderate opinions appeared as Egalitarianism and Complementarianism surfaced. The Egalitarians believe that Jesus has eliminated all discriminatory systems forever. The Complementarians, on the other hand, accepted the main interpretations of the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments) that proposes a male-priority according to hierarchy and gender roles; although they believe more in being "equal but different". In fact, the Complementarians agree with the Egalitarians on the male and female in the creation story, but with a difference in each of their roles. According to the Gospel, Jesus did not put any

⁸⁹⁹ 1 Cor 7:7-8

difference between men and women in speech or behavior. Peter recognized the woman as perfection, a benevolent being that is likened to an inner ornament. Nevertheless, the primacy of the male is still presented as a requirement in the Bible as seen through Paul's definition that the male and female play complementary roles.

Actually, the most important text about the position of women in the Gospel is Paul's explanation of the natural order of headship – "God, Christ, man, woman". Thus, in Christian teachings the principle of *Trinity* presents an analogy to the relationship of male and female as a divine design. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians considered three lines of authority that exist: Christ is the authority (head) over every man, man is the authority (head) over a woman, and God is the authority (head) over Christ.⁹⁰⁰ In addition, Paul emphasized on women's remaining characteristics; silence, modesty, wisdom and obedience to the husband. According to Paul's hierarchical doctrine, from the advent of Christian history, traditionally women have been positioned under men's authority in the church, marriage and elsewhere.

Generally, under the trainings of the Old and New Testaments and the Greek and Roman traditions, churches were neglectful of women's characteristics and rights and considered men's tendency succumb to women's seductive ways and practice of magic.⁹⁰¹ In most of cases, they did not believe in her rights to property and education. Contrastively, the excessiveness in spoiling women's rights in the

⁹⁰⁰ Grenz, Stanley J. Kjesbo, Denise Muir (2010). *op. tic.*, pp.13-35.

⁹⁰¹ Peter, Broedel Hans (2003). *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief*. Manchester University Press; Manchester: pp. 170–73. Rider Catherine (2006). *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages*. Oxford University Press; Oxford, pp. 97–99. Michael, Bailey (2002). The Feminization of Magic and the Emerging Idea of the Female Witch in the Late Middle Ages. *Essays in Medieval Studies*. Vol.19, pp. 125. Valerie, Flint (1991). *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*. Clarendon Press; Oxford: p. 231.

West, since the Renaissance and the rethinking of the church thoughts, generated paying attention to women's status in a manner that today we see vast changes even in the natural roles of women (as spouses and mothers).

According to the Quran, men and women are considered equal before God in terms of the obligational orders of performing religious duties.⁹⁰² They are not different from men except in terms of their biological and psychological conditions. Nevertheless, there is a hierarchical position for men as women's provider of livelihood⁹⁰³ above women⁹⁰⁴, which is known as *Qiwamah*. This order refers to the natural differences between male and female, which does not imply one, is lesser than the other. These differences imply the complementary roles of both sexes in life.⁹⁰⁵ Therefore, Islam has bestowed Muslim women the rights of possession, ownership, mortgage and the rights to perform all types of contracts while she is single or married.⁹⁰⁶ Also, she can seek employment, although Islam regards her natural role in society as a wife and mother first and foremost as her most sacred and essential role.⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰² Badawi, Jamal A. (1971). *op. tic.*

⁹⁰³ Hassan, Riffat (1987). *op. tic.*

⁹⁰⁴ Al Bagharah (2):228

⁹⁰⁵ Badawi, Jamal A. (1971). *op. tic.*

⁹⁰⁶ Bukhari, Syed Abdul Ghaffar (2012). Role Of Women In The Development Of Islamic Civilization, *Jihat al-Islam* Vol. 5, No.2.

⁹⁰⁷ Badawi, Jamal A. (1971). *op. tic.*

5.2 Analysis of the Philosophy on Modesty and Women's Modest Dress in Abrahamic Religions: Similarities and Differences

As Schwartz and Doniger pointed out, the ways in which women's heads (and bodies) are imagined in religious texts, myths, and stories, and how these symbols are reenacted in various practices, affect women's power, subjectivity, and identity.⁹⁰⁸ In fact, since all followers of these faiths essentially believe that all religious commandments and liturgical affairs are issued from the Lord Knowledge, they respect them devotionally for the sake of their faith to God and His wisdom, for their want of prosperity and happiness in this world and hereafter. Beside the Will of the Holy Legislator that can be the most important criterion for admission, there may be still some other important meanings in His orders that humans have not yet managed to uncover and understand. Of course, some of their benefits have been clarified as humans' level of understanding and wisdom progresses but nobody is able to claim that the cause of such orders is one specific reason and not any other. Since there are benefits, physically or spiritually in all God's orders, the believers perform them devotionally and enjoy doing so. Generally, all scriptures blame and reproach immodesty conducts, explicitly in the Gospel, the Quran and implicitly in the Hebrew Bible. In Hebrew teachings, in addition to some references about the observance of modesty for both men and women, they have recommended wearing modest dress for women in public. The traditions of modesty norm and women's wearing of the veil through history demonstrate the importance of this issue in all three faiths. This section presents the analysis that declares the basic reasons and wisdom on wearing of the veil for women as stated in the holy books. The common as well as some uncommon reasons for observing modesty and women's modest dress in these faiths are detailed out in the following sub-sections.

⁹⁰⁸ Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard, Doniger, Wendy (1995). *Off with Her Head!: The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, University of California Press, p. 8.

5.2.1 Piety and Obedience of God

The most significant reason of observing modesty that is common across these faiths is piety and obedience to God. Fear of God is seen as a powerful motivation for observing and keeping His orders, including the order to observe modesty. Essentially, in Jewish teachings, besides the emphasis on modesty in conduct, head covering for both of men and women is seen as a sign of humility before God, an external display of piety or *Yir'at shamayim* (Fear of God) and as a reminder that *Shekinah* or *Shekhinah* (the Divine Presence) is God's Omnipresence. In this regard, alongside the obligation that devolves upon men, there is also an obligation for women to cover their hair. In addition to this women must put on head covering in the presence of men while they are reciting *Berakhot* (blessings), praying, reading the scripture or invoking God's name since women should not be attractive to men to the point of corrupting them. Thus, Jewish women cover their heads at prayer time for two reasons: one of them is shared between both men and women and the second is only for women. However, these reasons are not reflected in Christianity or Islam, although most Muslim men traditionally use head covering particularly at prayer but not as a sign or symbol for anything. Christian men and women have been invited to observe modesty in the Gospel by Jesus, his disciples and companions, but the first reason for the use of head covering among women in public is based on God's order of the husband's headship.

In Islam, the main aim of legislation of all provisions is closeness to God which is obtainable through piety and self-purification. The Quran explicitly considers obedience to God and His Messenger as the way of salvation from all wrong doings. Even the criterion for gaining God's preference is their piety.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁹ Al Hojorat (49): 13.

Therefore, observing modesty and women's modest dress as a command of God and His Prophet has been considered necessary for salvation. In addition to that, the spiritual effects which are deployed for observance of modesty and compliances to divine commands is God's pleasure, rewards and in the hereafter, eternal paradise. Observance of Modesty and veiling provide women the benefit of divine forgiveness. In fact, modestly behavior and women's wearing of modest dress are God-ordained solutions for regulating male's and female's sexual appetites.⁹¹⁰ Even to elder women, Quran recommends the observance of modesty, although they are not required to cover themselves completely⁹¹¹:

5.2.2 Modesty Observance as the Origin of Spiritual Life

One of the common beliefs of Abrahamic faiths is considering the two dimensions: Material or physical and spiritual. Consequently there are two types of life and death for humans: material and spiritual. People of Abrahamic faiths believe that sins which are actions done against God's will and originate out of ignorance, arrogance and persistence in disobeying God can cause spiritual death and lack of salvation in this world and hereafter. Therefore, God gives a kind of real pure life to every faithful man and woman who believes and does good deeds. This spiritual life is called *Tayyibah* life in Islam. Actually, God who is Absolute Alive gives any person a degree of spiritual life according to how well they do; a life that only faithful and pure people will have access to. Observance of modesty and women's appropriate dresses are regarded for the sake of purity. Since women

⁹¹⁰ Ghaza Read, Jen'nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). To Veil or Not To Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation Among Muslim Women In Austin, Texas, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 395-417.

⁹¹¹ An Nur (24): 60.

essentially are temptations that threatens men's spiritual world, they must bear these duties to ensure that the men behave morally.⁹¹²

5.2.3 Modesty as a Divine Virtue

The teachings of the Abrahamic faiths also consider modesty as one of the virtues, eruditions and goodness that every believer should obtain for his or her journey towards perfection. Meanwhile, in addition to observing modesty in appearance, speech and the other behaviors, the followers of Abrahamic faiths consider wearing modest dress, particularly for women as one significant way for keeping modesty. There are specific factors in these faiths regarding the reasons that can be considered their differences. In Christianity, Peter's letter mentioned personal holiness and how a pious woman is to behave, which emphasizes on observing modesty as a virtue. All of the religions' teachings emphasized on the natural human desire for modesty as a virtue and women's veiling in general.⁹¹³ Also, they preserve modesty of men and women in their communication with emphasis on marriage as they consider marriage sacred. It is with this deference that in Christianity celibacy is sacred in the first degree and marriage as the second way.

In fact, observant ladies have essentially defended and advertised modesty virtue. As a matter of the fact, wearing veils provide every woman the opportunity to look the same regardless of their beauty and their physical shape. The mind only

⁹¹² See: Hartman, Tova (2007). *Feminism Encounters Traditional Judaism: Resistance and Accommodation*, Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, pp. 45–61. Block, Sima Zalcborg (2011). Shouldering the Burden of Redemption: How the "Fashion" of Wearing Capes Developed in Ultra-Orthodox Society. *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, No. 22, pp. 32-55.

⁹¹³ Al Aaraf (7): 26.

reflects human values, including science, literature, art and ethics and is diligent to obtain those values. Thus, the veil is seen as the reviver of spiritual values and observant women publicize and promote moral purities, virtues and prosperities through their modest dress.

5.2.4 Avoidance of the Lustful Gaze of the Insidious as the Origin of Adultery

Abrahamic faiths consider adultery and any relationship out of marriage as a major sin. They believe that observance of modesty and donning modest dress can reduce lustful liaisons between genders. Also, they recommend avoiding the lustful gaze and appearance in order to preserve a pure humanistic community and to prevent any ground for adultery from surfacing. In addition, they have identified some appropriate punishments for the commitment of adultery.

According to the Torah, avoiding adultery is the seventh commandment of the Decalogue.⁹¹⁴ Also, the Torah has recognized the death punishment for adultery. In the Gospel, Jesus (PBUH) expresses that ‘mental adultery’ is also sinful. So, modesty as a virtue even in appearance and thoughts is necessary and avoiding from looking at strangers is mentioned in the Gospel as the root and origin of adultery sin and refers to its influences on hereafter punishments. The Quran’s command to men is to avoid from looking at *non-Mahram* (strangers) and the other modesty recommendations mentioned in surah *An Nur*.⁹¹⁵ The Quran requires women to avoid nakedness that was prevalent during the era of Ignorance which clearly it makes it difficult for men to lower their gaze and is the leading reason for the

⁹¹⁴ See: Deut 5:18 And Exod 20:14.

⁹¹⁵ An Nur (24): 31.

commitment of *Zina* (adultery). So, the Quran says do not go near it at all.⁹¹⁶ Since, adultery is the way of Satan.⁹¹⁷

Today, the rapidly growing multimedia culture constantly bombards most of societies around the world with impurity and immodesty. The voyeurism phenomenon, which is most commonly associated with sexual perversion, has become a mainstream pastime. There is a need to therefore take a stand against this negative culture especially in relation to modesty and fashions of clothing and behavior in Islamic communities:⁹¹⁸

5.2.5 Modesty and Modest Dress as a Symbol of Righteous Women

In the Abrahamic religions, competent and holy ladies have always been seen as a symbol or exemplars for all women. In this context, their characteristics, manners and traditions have typically played a significant role in women's custom and culture. Across all three religions, one of the features of these competent ladies is modesty, which is manifested in their conduct, including having modest dress as their manner in clothing.

In the Jewish tradition, *Tzniut* or modesty law, which includes wearing modest dress, particularly hair covering, for women is considered as a symbol of Jewish women's identity. The depiction of Sarah remaining in the tent, and Rebecca's veiling and other mentioned characteristics of competent ladies is

⁹¹⁶ Al 'Isra' (17):32.

⁹¹⁷ Al Bagharah (2): 268.

⁹¹⁸ An Nur (24): 19.

portrayed in the Torah are considered as the modesty pattern of women with faith. Today, for Orthodox women, the head covering functions as a primary tool of identification and designation of their status in their social group. The holy lady of Christianity and Islam, Mary, is a symbol of obedience, humility and modesty.⁹¹⁹ Commonly across the religions, the reasons of her perfection and virtues have been singled out to signify modesty and servitude. Researches indicate that most traditional depictions of the holy Mary show her veiled⁹²⁰ from head to foot.⁹²¹ This dress is timeless, and appearing to fit the biblical clothes conception. For nearly two thousand years, habits as the nun's clothes have been considered a symbol of monasticism and representative of their holiness.⁹²² This veil has been a protector of privacy and a symbol of modesty⁹²³ for nun sisters seeking perfect chastity, modesty, and humility. However, in recent decades, most nuns say they have preferred to make the shift to secular clothes for better service.

Throughout the history of Christianity, particularly during the Middle Ages, Christian women, predominantly married Christian women, in Europe have commonly worn veils even cover their faces, with a variety of styles of kerchiefs, headgears and wimples.⁹²⁴ In this context through the church history, observation of modest dress and donning a mantle or a wimple has been recognized as the

⁹¹⁹ De Montfort, Grignon, Marie, Louis (1956). *Trued Evotion To the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Translated from the original French by Francoise de Castro, Ph.D., T.O.P, Adapted by Eddie Doherty, Bruklyni, die XXVI, © Montfort Publications, Bay Shore, New York, used with permission, p. 20.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.37, 77.

⁹²² Kuhns, Elizabeth (2003). *The Habit: A History of the Clothing of Catholic Nuns*, Doubleday, New York, p. 1.

⁹²³ Emmerich, Anne Catherine (1970). *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁹²⁴ De Montfort, Grignon, Marie, Louis (1956). *op. cit.*, p. 14.

women's chapel veil. Until the 1950s, many Christian women practiced the covering of their hair while at church. The Quran recognizes two faithful ladies as exemplars for all women -- *Asiyah*, the wife of Pharaoh and *Mary*, the mother of Jesus.⁹²⁵ Through these depictions, and following the practices of these exemplary women, religious women in Abrahamic faiths throughout the history have tracked the expected modesty norms and sought to identify them.

5.2.6 The Attractiveness of woman, a Fundamental Reason

One of the roots of women veiling in Judeo-Christian teachings is Eve's story. Judeo-Christian teachings consider the Eve story as a fundamental character and identity all women and the true nature of women was revealed through Eve's creation, words and actions.⁹²⁶ In the Torah, Eve as the first woman is portrayed as a seducer and the principle person responsible for bringing death to the human world. Haggadic traditions with regard to the story of Eve⁹²⁷ and her sin interpret the custom of hair covering as a sign of woman's feeling of shame and guilt for the sake of Eve's sin.⁹²⁸ Therefore she sees it as her obligation to cover herself modestly. Overall, in Judaic traditions, hair covering is considered as a sign of shame stemming from Eve's Sin and women are cursed to garb as a Mourner for bringing death to human and to avert from being seductive to men. As result,

⁹²⁵ At Tahrir:10-12.

⁹²⁶ L. C. E. Witcombe, Christopher (2000), *Eve and the Identity of Women*, Sweet Briar College. An earlier version of this essay appeared originally in: *Images of Women in Ancient Art*.

⁹²⁷ Gen 17: 8.

⁹²⁸ Bronner, Leila Leah (1993). *op. cit.*

protecting women's sexual modesty is one of the primary justifications in women hair covering⁹²⁹ in order to prevent men from having sinful thoughts.

In the New Testament and according to the Paul's doctrine, head covering is considered as a sign of women's subordination in creation because Adam was the source of Eve in her creation. So, men are divinely assigned the role of authority and headship over their women (11:8). Although, Church scholars have also indicated that it was Eve who encouraged Adam to disobey God and believe that it was this sin that brought up the realization of sexual lust in Adam⁹³⁰ and it was also believed that her sin offers the original reason for all humans' sins⁹³¹ they often consider women's observing head covering just as a sign of her acceptance of the submission to her husband's headship in creation and also God's order. Also, some accounts provide evidence that unmarried girls, like married women, may have covered hairs because of this reason.

In Qur'anic teachings there is not any hint to the culpability of Eve and her special punishment or curse. Nevertheless, the emphasis on averting one's eyes from women's attractiveness is the main source that necessitates women to practice the conduct of modesty.

⁹²⁹ Weiss, Susan (2009). Under Cover: Demystification of Women's Head Covering in Jewish Law, *Nashim*, No. 17, pp. 89-115.

⁹³⁰ Monsignor Cormac Burk (2006). Saint Augustine And Conjugal Sexuality, The ChurchinHistory Information Centre, *Communio: International Catholic Review*, p. 9, Retrieved on 27/6/2015 from <http://www.churchinhistory.org/pages/booklets/augustine.pdf>

⁹³¹ Brachtendorf, Johannes (1997). Cicero and Augustine on the Passions, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, Vol. 43, pp. 289 -308.

5.2.7 Considering Women's Body as *Ervah* or *Awrah*

The Abrahamic cultures apparently shared the view that a woman's hair and most of her body are considered as *Awrah* or *Ervah* and so must be covered. As discussed in Chapter 2, some Jewish rabbis consider the exposure of a married woman's hair and even body equivalent to the exposure of *Ervah* (her private parts) so much, thus her uncovered body is clearly her own shame since her hair is a sexually alluring factor that would make men powerless to resist.⁹³² So, particular activities, such as prayer, are prohibited in the presence of exposed *Ervah*.⁹³³ In this context, some rabbis decree that hair must be covered totally, while others allow revealing a *Tefach* (a hand's breadth) of hair.⁹³⁴

Christian scholars generally acknowledge the issue of covering for women. Some of them like Martin argue Paul trains Christian women to cover their head as it is considered a part of women's genitalia. So, they should cover their head in public worship and to dress modestly when around men.⁹³⁵ Today, they have not stated this stand on implementing the practice. Nevertheless, traditionally, the measures of covering until recent century were common and closely related to the judicial decrees of the faith.

According to Islamic traditions, *Awrah* (عورة) is the part of body that is considered mandatory to be covered and generally, it has been translated as private

⁹³² Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). From Tichels to hair bands: Modern orthodox women and the practice of head covering, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 34, No. 5, pp. 349–359.

⁹³³ Gordon, Samuel (1997). Head covering for women: A look at the sources, In F. K. Zisken (Ed.). *The Pardes reader Jerusalem*, The Pardes Institute, pp. 35–42. Henkin, Herzl, Herzl, Yehuda (2003). *Contemporary Tseni'ut*, *Tradition*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 1–48. Schiller, Mayer (1995). *op. cit.*

⁹³⁴ Seigelshifer, Valeria, Hartman, Tova (2011). *op. cit.*

⁹³⁵ Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op. cit.*

parts or genitals. The jurists have cogitated upon Quranic verses (An Nur (24):31) as a strong interpretive evidence that women are required “not (to) show their beauty and adornments” but rather to “draw their head cover over their bosoms and not display their ornament.”⁹³⁶ Nonetheless, women are premised to expose their faces and hands according to prophetic hadiths. Also, as discussed in the earlier subsections, the importance of *Haya'* (modesty) is the base of Islam's morality because it is considered as one of God's attributes. Regarding this issue, the Prophet considers a woman's body as *Awrah* that must be covered because of modesty. Generally, on this aspect Judaic and Islamic teachings have explicitly and commonly pointed out to *Awrah* or *Ervah* (in the meaning of the part of body that is considered a must to be covered) as a reason for women's wearing modest dress.

5.2.8 The Necessity of Women's Head Covering during Prayer

The custom of women veiling during prayer is one of the provisions that is common in Abrahamic faiths. Throughout history, all women followers of these faiths traditionally used a veil or head covering during prayer as part of its requirements. They believe that the quality of liturgical affairs is essentially issued from God's Knowledge and regards to God and His wisdom devotionally. Although some reasons are mentioned in the scriptures for this custom and the details of the reasons vary across the Abrahamic faiths.

In Judaism, Jewish women are required to cover their heads during prayer time and this is done for two reasons: one is *halakhicly*, which applies to both of men and women in an equal way as a reminder that God or heaven is above them

⁹³⁶ An-Nur (24):31

and it is a mean of honoring God. Secondly, based on Kabbalistic legal sources, women are obligated to cover their hair, as the hair is related to the concept of divine justice.⁹³⁷ In this regard, *Haggadic* traditions and *Midrash* by reference to the story of Eve define the hair of a woman and also other parts of her body as *Ervah* and during particular activities, such as prayer, it is prohibited to exposed *Ervah*.⁹³⁸ They argued that as Eve's attractiveness was what stimulated Adam to succumb to temptation, a woman's hair is considered a sexually alluring factor that would make men powerless to resist, so during prayer it must be covered.⁹³⁹ According to rabbinic principles, in addition to the time of reading or studying the Torah and invoking God's name, the recitation of *Berakhot* (blessings) and *Shema* or prayers in the presence of a bareheaded married lady and in some sources even single girls is prohibited. Despite all these historical evidences, some contemporary rabbis have pointed out that women are allowed to pray with no obligation to cover their heads.⁹⁴⁰ Furthermore, some Talmudic passages concerning hair-covering do not emphasize on the Eve story, even though the women's hair is viewed as being sexually tempting. The rabbis retained that the traditional prohibition for women to display their hair was only to prevent feminine attraction and stimulation, which can push men into having unholy thoughts⁹⁴¹ as such covering themselves in prayer.

⁹³⁷ Gen 2:18

⁹³⁸ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). Hair Covering for Single Women: A New Reading of Mizrahi Halakhic Rulings, *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*. Spring 2012, No. 23, pp. 35-59.

⁹³⁹ Gordon, Samuel (1997). Head covering for women: A look at the sources, In F. K. Zisken (Ed.). *The Pardes reader Jerusalem*, The Pardes Institute, pp. 35–42. Herzl Henkin, Yehuda Herzl (2003). Contemporary Tseni'ut, *Tradition*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 1–48. Schiller, Mayer (1995). *op. cit.*

⁹⁴⁰ El-Or, Tamar (1997). Visibility and Possibilities: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women between the Domestic and Public Spheres, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 20, Nos. 5/6, pp. 665-73.

⁹⁴¹ Bronner, Leila Leah (2013). *op.cit.*

In Christianity, a biblical basis for head coverings is found in 1 Corinthians, the section where Paul discusses head coverings and even hairstyles in relation to men and women who are praying or prophesying. Needless to say, these few verses have become controversial in our times. Essentially, women veiling implies their submission and obedience to their husbands as a sign of his headship. Nonetheless, in the Epistle of Paul, the covering finds a different meaning at prayer time. While a woman is in prayer and her attention is on *exousia* (Glory to God), there is a temporary deterioration of man's superiority and domination. Thus, her head covering becomes a symbol of obedience to God. So in church, a woman's head covering is regarded as a symbol of her authority to perform her devotion to God publicly.⁹⁴² In addition, Paul mentioned the angels as one of the motivations for teaching the covering of the head. In fact, Paul offered a scriptural basis for his directions on women's hairstyle while praying or prophesying, but his explanation is obscure because of its cryptic expression,⁹⁴³ at least to modern commentators.⁹⁴⁴ So, the commentaries on the references to angels in verse 10 are uncertain.⁹⁴⁵ The commentators have submitted two main suggestions due to the exact reason why women should cover their heads as the angels are witnessing as arguing about the role of guardian or watcher angels over the natural order.⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴² See: Hooker, M.D. (1964). Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 11:10, *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 10, pp. 410-16.

⁹⁴³ Tolmie, D. Francois (2011). Angels as arguments? The rhetorical function of references to angels in the Main Letters of Paul, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 1, 8 ps.

⁹⁴⁴ Martin, Troy W. (2004). *op, cit.*

⁹⁴⁵ Tolmie, D. Francois (2011). *op, cit.*

⁹⁴⁶ Foerster, W. (1973). 'ejxousiva' [Authority], *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, No. 2, pp. 562-574.

1- Paul considers the angels are good and are present at public worship of God. Accordingly, a woman declares her submission to divine order by wearing head covering.

2- Paul considers the angels are evil and will lust after uncovered women. In fact, the head covering acts as a barrier of the women from tempting, harassing and deceiving.

Thus, Paul requires the woman to conceal herself in some measure during prayer or prophesying because it is shameful to be uncovered then. In fact, she thereby is differentiating herself from men. Actually, Paul seeks to modify the male-female relationship in divine order during prayer.⁹⁴⁷ Also, the veil is meant to protect Christian women and men at worship.⁹⁴⁸ Therefore, Paul's concern is that the unveiled woman who prays or prophesizes may become the object of the men's erotic gaze. Some recent scholars through complicated arguments pronounce that they no longer can fully understand these verses because Paul offers different opinions for 'this custom'.⁹⁴⁹ Thus, a noticeable shift in the understanding of this passage accrued in the second half of the twentieth century. The modern interpreters tried to expand more opportunities for women inside and outside of the Church in western societies.⁹⁵⁰ Many churches have either neglected or dismissed it and failed

⁹⁴⁷ Watson, Francis (2000). *op. cit.*

⁹⁴⁸ Nyamaah, Emmanuel, Matilda Nsiah, Alice (2013). *op. cit.*

⁹⁴⁹ Massey, Preston. T. (2011). *op. cit.* Also see: Fee, Gordon (1987). *op. cit.*

⁹⁵⁰ Keener, Craig S. (1992). *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*, Hendrickson Publishers, p. 46.

to teach this subject today and as such, many Christians do not know that this subject is in the Bible.⁹⁵¹

In Islam, according to the Prophetic tradition, Muslim women, in addition to observing modesty in society, must use veil while they are praying. It is not explicitly stated in the Quran about women veiling at prayer time. But some interpreters and Jurisprudents have pointed to some Prophetic hadiths in clarification of some verses (like Al-Aaraf (7): 26-31).⁹⁵² The hadiths that imply the necessity of women's *Khimar* (veil) consider its reason as the condition of God's accepting the prayer. Some Islamic scholars have mentioned other reasons. They have said that women's covering at prayer time can be a kind of politeness, courtesy and respect while men mostly use hat and cover too which is also a practice for observance of modesty even in solitude. Moreover, when praying in public places, mosques and communities, women are required to use a full veil to remain safe from looks from passers-by to preserve spiritual peace during prayer and protect their public chastity. Furthermore, they have emphasized on some supernatural and metaphysical effects out of the circle of human knowledge may also be present as threats. So it is better to surrender to God's will, in order to achieve prosperity and salvation.

Overall, the common point that all these faiths share is the belief which regards to the wisdom of God; who complies and accepts the prayers, and obeying His Will. Judaic tradition emphasizes on women's head covering in front of men during some specific prayers for keeping them away from disturbances everywhere,

⁹⁵¹ Minnick, Mark (1995). "Teaching Regarding Head covering," Sermon preached on 2 Corinthians 11:3-16, Greenville, S.C.: Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, December 17, Tape Number 2792.

⁹⁵² "يَابَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوْءَ تَكْمُمْ وَ رِيشًا وَ لِبَاسَ التَّقْوَى ذَلِك خَيْرٌ ذَلِك مِنْ عَابِتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ" الاعراف : 26

although this issue is also common in other religions. Furthermore, two main points existed in Christianity according to the Epistle of Paul but they are not seen in other faiths. Firstly, the temporary deterioration of man's superiority and domination while a woman is in prayer thus her head covering is regarded as a symbol of her obedience to God and secondly her veiling is due to the issue of angels in any of its commentaries.

5.2.9 Wearing Modest Dress as a Sign of Matrimony

Throughout the history of Judeo-Christian tradition, a woman's veil has been a part of the white bridal gown as a sign for her marriage and her submission to him. However in recent centuries, along with the social changes in the western communities, this practice has become a controversial issue, still sometimes the custom of having bridal mantel in the wedding celebrations is seen as the last remains.

In Judaism, according to rabbinic literatures, using burqa or head covering would consider not only woman's modesty but also as a sign of wife belonging to a particular man to show husband's property right of wife sexuality. In addition, the veil had to be worn whenever she was in mixed company or went out in public.⁹⁵³ So, since ancient times head covering has been characterized as the attire of married women.⁹⁵⁴

⁹⁵³ L.J. Archer (1990). Her Price is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement, Vol. 60 (Sheffield: JSOT Press) pp. 212 and 247-248.

⁹⁵⁴ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

According to Christian's teaching originated from Paul's argument in his epistles to Corinthian,⁹⁵⁵ a married woman's head covering is a sign of her submission to the husband and a symbol of her husband's authority and headship.⁹⁵⁶ Hence, there is a hierarchy on God's order, and wearing the veil is considered as a symbol of the subordination of a woman under her husband and his headship and the husband's authority over her. Traditionally, the church has interpreted Paul's passage as identifying a hierarchical order in which the man is said to be over the woman in leadership, as Christ is said to be over man.⁹⁵⁷ However, neither in the Quran nor in the traditions and commentary books this argument and symbolism for women's veil is not seen.

5.2.10 Wearing Modest Dress as a Tool for the Empowerment of Women

Some contemporary women scholars of all these religions have provided sophisticated responses regarding women's modest dress in their gender analysis of religions. These reasons are mostly based on women's opinions rather than on the scriptures. They have attempted to prove that it is more than merely an assessment of traditional feminists' arguments.⁹⁵⁸ They say that most researches are limited and different methodologies need to be used in combination, and that diverse voices

⁹⁵⁵ 1 Cor. 11:3

⁹⁵⁶ Finney, Mark (2010). Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 in its Social Context, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 31-58.

⁹⁵⁷ W. J. Gill, David (1990). op. cit.

⁹⁵⁸ Inayatullah, S. (1998). Causal Layered Analysis: Postculturalism as method, *Futures*, Vol. 30. No. 8, pp. 815-829.

should be recognized on an equal level for the analysis of the concept of religious modest dress.⁹⁵⁹

Some Jewish scholars have considered hair covering as a means for the authorization of a tool for the empowerment of women.⁹⁶⁰ Actually, with the rise of the feminist movement and consumer culture the study of the body has changed. The argument “Who is strong? One who conquers his urges”⁹⁶¹ states the basic rabbinic approach towards the body.⁹⁶² They believe this practice actually enhances their personal freedom in public, authorizing them to perform more freely. Moreover, it gives women a feeling of religious superiority and belonging to a group that is acting properly. In this way, women can enhance their own power, acquire a position of their own and play a central role in preserving the identity of the group they belong to, as a counter-culture in the culture war being fought between them and the outside world.⁹⁶³ Thus, according to some Jewish and even Christian scholars, wearing modest dress is considered a tool for women empowerment against secular and consumer culture with a feeling of religious authority and decent identity.

Nevertheless, with the paling of religious practice in secular societies, many contemporary commentators have hermeneutically reconsidered and changed the modesty rules to a looser border. However, in spite of colonialism and cultural

⁹⁵⁹ Merali, Arzu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *Hijab, Meaning, Identity, Otherization and Politics: British Muslim Women*, Islamic Human Rights Commission, p. 32.

⁹⁶⁰ Fuchs, Ilan (2012). *op. cit.*

⁹⁶¹ Mishnah Avot 4:1.

⁹⁶² See; Biale, David (1992). *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, New York: Basic Books. Boyarin, Daniel (1997). *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁹⁶³ Block, Sima Zalberg (2011). *op. cit.*

changes in the Islamic world, many religious values and practices such as modesty norms are still respected. In recent decades, some Islamic scholars responses to the academic and media debates that have dictated some new reasons such as oppression on women as a patriarchal rule, gender discrimination, a mark of fundamentalism, a symbol of traditionalism or the re-traditionalization and resistance, have attempted to conceptualize women's modest dress by some survey findings.⁹⁶⁴ As already explained in the previous chapter, they believe that the theme of *otherization* is the issue that has happened in this relation.⁹⁶⁵ Moreover, some contemporary Islamic scholars have constructed several meanings of the modesty norm, one of which is that it is not merely a symbol limited to a dress code; there is a concealed value in political and social situation. In this context, the colonizers have imposed the concept of the Islamic dress as demonstrative of Muslim backwardness.⁹⁶⁶ So, some scholars tried to remove this practice. Furthermore, this colonial perception on Islamic dress caused Muslim women's reaction to claim the Islamic dress (hijab) as a symbol of anti-colonialism.⁹⁶⁷ Therefore, according to recent Islamic scholars in addition to traditional reasons, modesty rules including modest dress can be considered as a means of resistance to foreign values and a tool to empower them through religious identity.

⁹⁶⁴ For example, Ansar Khan, Sumbul (2014). *op. cit.*

⁹⁶⁵ Merali, Arzu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p.53.

⁹⁶⁶ Van Santen, José C. M. (2010). My "Veil" Does Not Go With My Jeans': Veiling, Fundamentalism, Education and Women's Agency in Northern Cameroon, *Africa, Vol. 80*, No. 2.

⁹⁶⁷ Merali, Arzu, R. Ameli, Saied (2006). *op. cit.*, p. 33.

5.2.11 Modesty Observation Protects the Marriage and Family

Another sophisticated reason in scholastic sociology analysis of these religions is that they are mostly based on the observation of women's opinions rather than the scriptures and they refer to a more general and basic issue, which is the protection of the stability of the family. Obviously, family value is an important issue that all these religions emphasize as a central and even sacred rule. So, many of the moral and juristic regulations are for maintaining the family system. One of these regulations is the invitation to modest behavior. These recommendations are not only for the protection of the family but also play a remarkable role in the spiritual stability of society.

In Jewish law, marriage and family formation are considered as sacred directions. Veiling or head covering, which is considered specifically as a sign of marriage, actually protects the marriage. Since, it is known then that a wife belongs to her husband so other men must therefore avoid improper contact with her.⁹⁶⁸ Moreover, the sexual values of Orthodox Jewish women would be separated from those of more promiscuous modern women via her head covering.⁹⁶⁹

Similarly, in Christianity marriage (also called Holy Matrimony) is considered as a sacred direction. Some scholars believe that the subordination of women to their husbands is meant for the purpose of making the family a viable and successful unit.⁹⁷⁰ The Bible considers a woman's hair as the most important feature

⁹⁶⁸ Goldman, Tehilla (2006). Dealing with It, in Schreiber, Lynne (ed.). *Hide and Seek: Jewish Women and Hair Covering*, Urim Publications, p. 141.

⁹⁶⁹ Weiss, Susan (2009). Under Cover: Demystification of Women's Head Covering in Jewish Law, *Nashim*, No. 17, pp. 89-115. 27p.

⁹⁷⁰ Mcgarvey, J.W. (1892). *Commentary on Acts*, Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, p. 109.

of her beauty that should therefore be reserved for her husband. Thus, an uncovered woman was considered as a prostitute or a young woman who is looking for a husband.

Islamic teachings have had some regulations that increase and strengthen the existence of the family unit because family plays the main role in the growth and excellence of individuals and societies. Islamic precepts aim at limiting all kinds of sexual enjoyment to the family and the marital environment within the bounds of marriage. So, if women have the appropriate coverage, men will be kept spiritually healthy. Also, through the improvement of social behaviors, safety in social centers can be raised.⁹⁷¹ Therefore, all these religions believe that the expansion of the modesty norm in society can close the paths that lead toward illegal sex relations in society and protect the stability of the family system.⁹⁷² Despite of these similarities, some roots on modesty norm in Judeo-Christian teachings confirm the feminist critiques, although they do not exist in Islam. Feministic critiques consider women's modest dress as a symbol of their oppression, denial of freedom, subordination to men, and patriarchy.⁹⁷³ While, Islamic teachings emphasize on protecting women from male's gaze and harassment by wearing modest dress. Furthermore, in Islam it is considered a tool for women's empowerment in their social presence. Therefore, as some recent academia and media implied, today's

⁹⁷¹ Motahhari, Murtadha (1992). *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁹⁷² See: Ghazal Read, Jen'nan, P. Bartkowski, John (2000). *op. cit.*

⁹⁷³ West, Candace, Fenstermaker, Sarah (1995). *Gender and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 8-37. Ahmed, Leila (1992), *op. cit.*, Davary, Bahar (2009), *op. cit.*, Wadud, Amina (1999), *op. cit.* Barzangi, Hafez (2004), *Women's Identity and the Qur'an: A new reading*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. Fernea, Elizabeth W. (1998), *In search of Islamic feminism: One woman's journey*. New York: Doubleday,

Muslim women's modest dress is widely misunderstood, particularly in Western media.⁹⁷⁴

These important points of the philosophy of modesty and women's modest dress can be summarised in the table 5.1 in the appendix.

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⁹⁷⁴ Tabatabai, Fakhrossadat (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This research has discussed the reasons of modesty and modest dress in all Abrahamic faiths in three chapters. In every chapter, firstly the position of women has been reviewed as introduction. Then, after introducing the particular terms and conceptions of modesty and modest dress in every religion, the observation reasons of modesty in the holy book and traditions has been discussed.

The chapter two is related to the oldest Abrahamic faiths i.e. Judaism. Overall, the position of woman in the Hebrew Bible is controversial even within contemporary Israeli secular culture and tradition where the belief that women have a seductive and guilty nature due to Eve's sin is still dominant. They also perceive women as the property of their husbands. In recent centuries, this issue has always been under feministic critiques. In Judaic teachings, modesty in sexual behaviour is mandatory for both males and females. The conception of *Tzniut* in the Hebrew biblical (particularly on Micah 6:8) highlights that modesty is humility and pertains to modest dress. *Tzniut* includes several guidelines for modest behaviours including the prohibition of *negiah* (physical contact or touch of men and women), *Kol Isha* (the voice of a woman) and other immodest sexual behaviour called *Kalut rosh* (frivolity). It is deliberated as modest dress, covering ones hair and other parts of a woman's body that is called *ervah* except to a *Tefach* (a hand's breadth). Since, *Tanach* considers the hair of women as the main attractive object to men, in some cases *Tzniut* has become exclusive to the head covering. *Tzniut* as a Jewish symbol and standard of modesty has several meanings. Head covering has traditionally been recognised as a sign of piety and God-fearing and is shared by men and women. Moreover, according to rabbinic literatures, head covering considered not the only sign to show the level of modesty as a virtue but also to identify that a women already belongs to a man. In addition, a woman is to wear a veil whenever she is in mixed company or goes out in public and at prayer. Throughout Judaic

history and even in orthodox Jewish communities today, married women have a *halakhic* obligation to cover their hair. Also, haggadic traditions regarding Eve and her sin argues that the tradition of hair covering is a sign of a woman's shame and a feeling of guilt. Furthermore, women's identification with spiritual meanings is reflected in modest dress and indicates a sense of belonging to a specific identity and/or group. Therefore, one of the key rationalisations to justify head covering is that it protects sexual modesty. If some sources do not require single women to cover their hair, it is to provide them the opportunity to find a husband.

As mentioned in chapter three, generally Christianity sharing in the reasons of Judaism considers the additional reasons like the headship according to God's order. Nevertheless, there are some different doctrines concerning to women's status between Christian and Judaic theologies. Also, Christianity's approach itself has suffered from duality; the equality of men and women based on Jesus's approach and subordination of women on Paul's attitude. Essentially, the Church has followed Paul's opinion. Since 1970, more moderate opinions from Christian Egalitarianism and Complementarianism perspectives about women have prevailed the belief in being "equal but different". Nevertheless, according to the teachings of the Old and New Testament and Greek and Roman Traditions, churches were negligent of women's rights, and thus the excessiveness in spoiling women's right in the West have brought about new thinking and broad changes in the natural roles of women (as a spouse and mother). Regarding the conception of modesty's in the New Testament, notions of modesty, head covering (*Katakephale*) and veil have been used. The chapel veil or mantle and the habit of the nuns are the most familiar religious symbols in Christian history.

In the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples have invited the followers to modesty. Jesus warned about the influence of looking at strange women on one's spirituality and the possible punishment in the hereafter. Peter realized modesty as a virtue and wearing clothes as inner ornament and beauty to prevent corruption. In the Christian tradition, Mary who is considered a perfect woman is a symbol of

virginity and modesty. In addition, observing modest dress is recognised as a symbol of modesty in monasticism.

Paul in his first epistle to Corinthians explained several reasons of women head covering. He dealt with disagreements on covering the head among Corinthian Christians. This argument of Paul on head covering as God's order of headship, glory, honour and authority of men, nature and because of angels approves the tradition of head covering for women is full of notorious exegetical difficulties. All the Early church father (2nd-3rd centuries), and medieval commentators (4-15th centuries) recognised that Paul obliged women to observe having head covering as a material head covering, including the reformist and post-reformist scholars (15-19th centuries). For the first time as modern commentary, Isaksson in the mid-twentieth century interpreted it in different way. After him, the number of the scholars with the traditional understanding decreased. They believe that the custom of hair covering is no longer relevant with their new life. Yet, the fundamental principal has still remained that a woman must pray in male leadership. The fundamental principal is that the sexes although equal, are nevertheless different. God has designed men to have the responsibility of leadership and women play a supportive and complementary role. Nevertheless, there are still many contemporary supporters for the traditional interpretation that the veil protects Christian woman at worship and as a visible symbol of her covenant with God's government. They believe that by setting this doctrine of reasoning, Paul emphasises on head covering as a women's universal practice that cannot be set aside with changing positions or hair fashions. Some groups such as the Amish, Mennonite, Evangelical Christians and holiness Christians still observe firm guidelines on modesty.

As stated in chapter four, the study of the women position in the pre-Islamic era highlights how Islamic laws and traditions have enhanced various stages of a Muslim women's life, including, rights to property, inheritance, alimony, and education. In Islam, women are no different from men in religious obligations such

as daily prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage, unless for the sake of their biological and psychological conditions. Qur'an established some of the women as exemplars for all mankind in virtues like righteousness, faith, God obedience, purity and modesty. The Qur'an has considered women to share the same nature and a single soul for man and woman in the order that they dwell in love. Unlike Judeo-Christian teachings, Eve has not been recognised as a sinner, not blamed for Adam's temptation and was not cursed. Both of them have the same responsibility for their mistake and repented and God accepted their repentance. In addition, unlike Christians, Muslims do not believe in the inheritance of this sin. In Islam, every person is responsible for their own actions.

The Qur'an, like the Old and New Testaments, has emphasised observing modesty as a moral and social virtue for both men and women while having modest dress for women. All Muslim jurists and scholars from the early time of Islam up to now have required women to wear modest dress. In recent centuries, with expanding western culture, wearing modest dress has become mostly a symbol of Muslim women's religiosity and has been subjected to wide media and academic attention mainly for interpreting and understanding its meaning and origin.

Islamic teachings in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* have demonstrated the wisdom of modest behaviour. The Qur'an has demonstrated the importance of modesty as *Haya'* (modesty) and *Effah* (chastity) with recommendation in using *Jilbab* and *Khimar* for women as a part of their modest conducts. The modest dress often called *Hijab* is used in Muslim countries in the form of *Jilbab*, *Khimar*, *Chadur*, *Purda*, *Burqa*, *Abayah*, and *Tudung* among others.

These important concepts of modesty and women's modest dress in Abrahamic religions can be summarised in the table 6.1 in the appendix.

Islam's comprehensive teachings have considered the benefits and happiness for human beings for this life and the hereafter. The rules of *Shariah* not only benefit human life but also make it easy because they are based on human nature. According to the Qur'an, the reasons for observing modesty and woman's modest dress can be categorized into individual prosperity and perfection and social aspects. Observance of modesty as a divine command merits God's pleasure, forgiveness, rewards and like all righteous actions if done along with faith, causes *Tayyibah* (A pure) life. Controlling one's gaze, modest behaviour and women wearing modest dress are divine solutions for regulating male and female sexual appetites. Pious women by covering their body which is called *Awrah* (عورة) maintain their *Haya'* that is considered a divine virtue.

Regarding social aspects, according to Islam, people are not only responsible for their faith and actions as individuals but are also responsible for others. Islam has allowed women to attend in public but by guarding their privacy to distance themselves from corruption. Through appropriate coverage, women help men to keep their spiritual health and public safety will increase. This rule is proposed to guard not only women but also the spiritual virtue of men. Women's modest behaviours protect them and prevent lewdness. They consider themselves responsible for inviting the instinctive male desire and curbing male temptation.

Moreover, since marriage and protection of family can provide physical, emotional and spiritual companionship that generates sustainable love, kindness, mutual confidence and psychological tranquillity in society, many moral and juristic regulations seek their stability including invitation to modesty and modest dress. The Qur'an emphasizes on protecting humanistic value an identity of women and their immunity and avoiding culture of ignorance. Thus, nakedness, *Tabarroj* (ostentation) and all forms of *Jahiliyeyah* (ignorance) are considered unlawful in Islam. Nowadays, in this new era of ignorance, nakedness and ostentation are seen in most public multi media. The society which Islam wishes to institute is not a sensate, sex-ridden culture. The wide-range of modesty norms in the Islamic system

protects the family and closes the paths that lead toward illegal sex relations. In addition, the symbolic meaning of the Islamic modest dress is defined as a tool to help in protecting an individual's identity. Today this covering has become an international image that shows the Islamic culture and identity symbolically and practically which protect their autonomy in political view.

Since the nineteenth century, veiling has become a factor where Muslim women can indicate their anti-Western identification with the colonial powers, because colonizers have attempted to unveil the women for more cultural, political and economic control over them. In this regard, they have pretended that women's veiling is their subordination, oppression and backwardness. However, none of these terms have anything to do with the actual purpose of Muslim women's modest dress. In recent decades, some Muslim women scholars have argued the reasons for women's modest dress by sophisticated answers responding to the western perception and claim in academic debates and surveys such as keeping women empowerment, identity and humanity. Today, although the number of scholars who have emphasized that equating the Islamic dress with oppression and subordination of women is an overstatement; this view is extensively advertised, particularly in western media. Anyway, wearing Islamic dress for Muslim women in the West is understood as an affirmation of a Muslim's identity, as well as a statement that they would not like to miss their tradition and follow the western culture. Sometimes, this popularised concept at the policy level has manifested in the "Hijab ban" in French schools, Netherlands, some German states and some parts of Belgium. All the bans argue that Hijab wearers are faithless to the West's secular values although they have to miss many opportunities in life for the sake of it.

In chapter five, this study has analysed and compared the position, conception and philosophy of modesty and modest dress in the teachings of Abrahamic religions. The most important points that can be concluded are:

1- The teachings of Abrahamic faiths on women's position are controversial issues and there are different interpretations about the creation and role of women in their holy books and traditions. Generally, under the teaching of the Torah, the Judeo-Christian conception of women has been influenced by the generalisation and extension of Eve's characters in Genesis to all women. In both form and symbol, Eve is a woman, and because of her, the prevalent belief in the West has been that all women are by nature disobedient, prone to temptation and evil, deceitful and seductive. In addition, the New Testament states that her sin offers a fundamental reason for all human's Original sin. The Qur'an clearly rejects these concepts.

2- There are different terms and conceptions used for modesty and modest dress in Abrahamic traditions. Jewish standards of modesty found in the concept of *Tzniut* include several instructions in modest conduct such as prohibition of *negiah* (physical contact or touch of men and women), *Kol Isha* (the voice of a woman) and other immodest sexual behaviour that called *Kalut rosh*" (literally, frivolity). *Tzniut* is considered modest dress; covering head hair and other parts of woman's body that is called *ervah* except to a *Tefach* (a hand's breadth). Jewish modest includes *Tichels* (scarves), *kerchiefs* (bandanas), *Shaitels* (wigs), hats, berets and baseball caps.

In Christianity, in addition to modest conduct, Head covering which is the translation from the Greek root of *peribolaion* and *katakephale* in 1 Cor 11: 15 is used. Other words as covering are veil, mantilla (or mantle), wimple and the habit which is the nun's clothing are constitute religious symbols.

The Qur'an has illustrated modest behaviour in the terms of *effah* (chastity) and *Haya'* (modesty) by mentioning the examples regarding the manners of walking and speaking. Also, there are some recommendations for using the modest dresses such as *khimar* and *Jilbab*.

3- Commonly, all scriptures of the Abrahamic faiths blame and reproach immodesty. In their teachings, in addition to some recommendations about the observance of modesty for both men and women, there are several references regarding wearing modest dress for women in the public. The common main reasons of observing modesty and woman's modest dress in these faiths regarding God's command are piety, obedience and fear of God and obtaining His satisfactory. Every woman should wear modest dress during prayer. In addition, they believe that as there are benefits for all God's commands, these rules are useful in the context of human spiritual and physical life. Generally, the common reasons of modesty in individual aspects are:

- Protecting piety and spiritual life
- Obtaining modesty as a divine virtue
- Protecting women's humanistic value

4- Besides, there are common social benefits for this virtue such as:

- To avoid from providing a field for lustful gazing as origin of adultery in society and protecting women immunity and security
- Stability of family by exclusivity of sexual relationship in family
- Protection a symbol of religious and social identity in struggling with foreign culture and women's empowerment and freedom from domination of consumerism culture

5- According to this research's analysis regarding modesty, the differences of meaning of the wearing modest dress or head covering in the Judeo Christian tradition and Islam are:

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, wearing modest dress is considered a ritual sign of matrimony, male authority and submission to the husband i.e. being sexually unavailable to all others and a wife's subordination. However, in Islam a woman

should have modest dress after puberty, even before marriage. Hence, it is not a sign of matrimony or the authority of the husband. In addition, Islam does not believe in Christian hierarchy and men's headship as God's order as a reason for women to cover their heads. In the story of Eve's sin, the Judaic teachings emphasize that Eve's attractiveness and temptation of Adam caused eating from the forbidden fruit resulting in the spiritual death of all humanity. Hence, all women should be ashamed for the sin of Eve and cover their heads. In Islam, Eve is not considered as the main responsible of the Sin and there is no such justification for women's modest dress.

In addition, the importance of this research is responding to some feministic critiques of women's Islamic modest dress. The research has found some reasons in Judeo-Christian teachings that emphasize the feminist critique. Feministic critiques consider women's modest dress as a symbol of their oppression, denial of freedom, subordination to men, and patriarchy. These notions belong to the Judeo-Christian traditions and are not relevant to Islamic teachings.

Thus, as some recent academic researches implied, today's Muslim women's modest dress is widely misunderstood, particularly in Western media and the real reasons need to be clearly explained. They failed to notice that women's modest dress has multiple explanations and despite some similar proofs, some reasons differ among Abrahamic faiths and their critiques are mostly related to Judeo-Christian traditions not Islam. Also, in academic literature modesty and modest dress issues are mostly overlooked as a part of a theological discourse. Instead, most contemporary studies are on socio-political contexts, because modesty rules and modest dress is a visible symbol and often controversial in western societies and is construed as an anti-Western culture. The diffusion of these findings in academic level and multimedia can enhance Muslim social presence and self-confidence.

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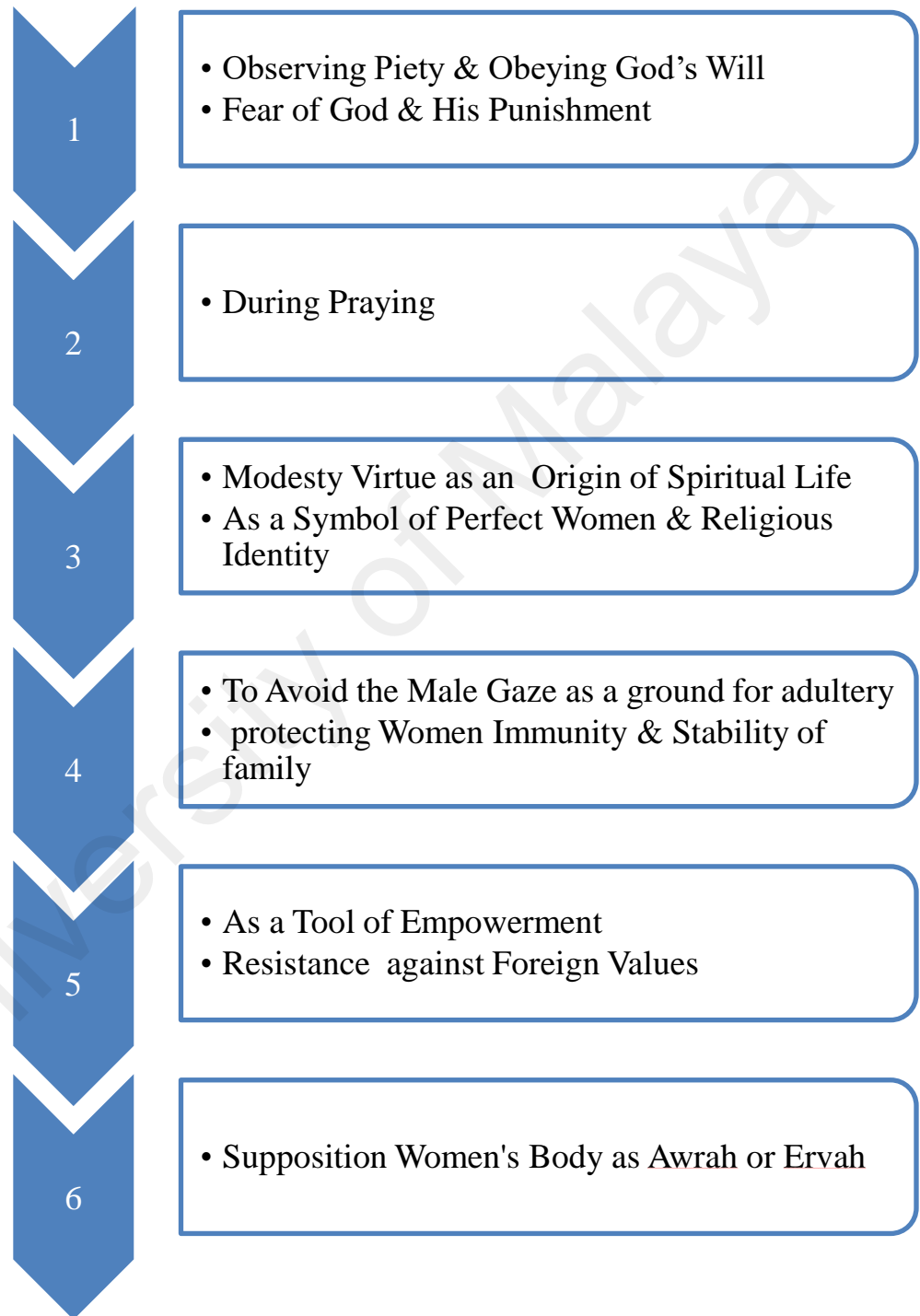
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List of Appendices

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List of Appendices: Appendix 1

Table 5.1: Philosophy of Modesty and Modest Dress in Abrahamic Religions: Similarities



Appendix 2

Table 6.1: The Conceptions of Modesty and Modest Dress in Abrahamic Religions

| The Abrahamic Religions | The Concepts of Modesty in the Holy books | The Concepts of Modest Dress in the Holy books | The Concepts of Modest Dress in the Traditions |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Judaism | <i>Tzniut</i> | Veil, Burqa, <i>Tzniut</i> | <i>Cape, Cloak Sheitel (wig), Tichel, Kerchiefs, Bandanas, Berets</i> |
| Christianity | Modesty, <i>Kosmios</i> | Mantle, Katakaphale, <i>Peribolaivou</i> | Habit, wimple Chapel Veil, |
| Islam | <i>Haya', Effah</i> | <i>Jilbab, Khimar</i> | <i>Chador, Parda, Burqa, Tudung, Habarah, Niqab. Burqa, Abayah, Izar</i> |