

## Wearing Muslimah Attire as an Expression of Preserving Personal Dignity and a Servant's Obedience to Islamic Law

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| Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Article Info                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <p>Clothing for a Muslim woman is not merely a covering for the body, but rather a manifestation of adherence to Islamic law, which has spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. Modern phenomena demonstrate the tension between the demands of fashion/popular culture and the principles of Islamic law regarding dress. This study aims to analyze in depth the legal status of Muslim women's dress in Islam, identify the dimensions of obedience and spirituality in the practice of covering the genitals, and examine the role of Muslim clothing as a means of maintaining self-respect (al-`iffah) amidst contemporary social challenges. This study uses the method qualitative with the approach library research And analysis of Fiqh (Islamic law). Primary data sources include the Qur'an (especially QS. An-Nur: 31 and QS. Al-Ahzab: 59) and the Hadith of the Prophet, while secondary data comes from tafsir books, classical fiqh, as well as contemporary scientific journals and literature related to the ethics of Muslim women's dress. The results of the study indicate that the obligation for Muslim women to dress according to sharia (covering all aurat except the face and palms, not tight, not transparent, not resembling men's clothing, and not excessive) is a law that qath'I (definitely) in Islam. Shar'i clothing has a dual function: as symbol of servant obedience to the command of God and as protector of self-respect from slander (distribution) and maintaining individual and social morality</p> | <p><b>Article History</b><br/> <i>Received :</i><br/> <i>April 10, 2025</i><br/> <i>Revised :</i><br/> <i>November 01, 2025</i><br/> <i>Accepted :</i><br/> <i>December 29, 2025</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b><br/> <i>Muslimah Clothing, Aurat, Self-Respect, Obedience, Islamic Law, Jurisprudence</i></p> |
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### INTRODUCTION

Clothing, from an Islamic perspective, has a meaning that goes far beyond its physical function as body covering and protection from the weather. In the Qur'an (QS. Al-A'raf: 26), Allah mentions the clothing of piety as the best. Specifically, for women who have reached puberty (adulthood), Islamic law stipulates strict rules regarding covering the aurat as an integral part of a servant's obedience. The command regarding the hijab and khimar is clearly stated in QS. An-Nur: 31 and QS. Al-Ahzab: 59, which constitute the primary legal basis for ethical Muslim dress.

Since the beginning, humans have been known as the most noble social creatures, above all other creatures. Therefore, it is a concrete and real understanding that has developed in society in general that clothing is one of the things that distinguishes humans from others. Moreover, clothing functions as a covering for the genitals and as a symbol of one's status in society. For a Muslim, clothing reflects personality, social status and strata, aesthetic needs, tastes, and a myriad of other human needs. For him, color, shape, type, fashion, and the suitability of clothing to the climate and place also have their own unique value and world of satisfaction. If we look around us, we will find a variety of patterns and styles of clothing, which are usually closely related to religion, customs, and local cultures.

Islam, as a normative ethic for its adherents, is expected to perfectly embody its values. Therefore, Islam is not a religion limited to personal life, merely regulating human relationships with God, but rather provides a comprehensive and holistic guide to life. The comprehensiveness of Islamic values in regulating human life means that no phenomenon in life is beyond Islamic teachings, including the dress code for Muslim women. This is evident in several verses of the Quran that discuss Muslim attire, from discussing women's modesty to defining the boundaries and criteria for Muslim attire itself.

According to Islam, women's clothing restrictions are intended to protect them. This initial precaution is intended to maintain their dignity and ensure their status as respected members of society, as well as foster moral development to prevent competition, envy, and other forms of violence. Furthermore, Muslim attire for men also instills a universal and fundamental tradition of eradicating moral decline by closing the door to promiscuity.

Clothing is a manifestation of human civilization. Therefore, dressing is not only to fulfill biological needs, but also to protect the body from heat, cold, and attacks from various animals. Clothing is also closely related to traditions or customs, outlook on life, position, status, and even a person's identity. Clothing is a clearly recognizable outward appearance that distinguishes one population from another and also equates one group with another.

Although initially, the function of clothing was to protect the human body from heat and cold, and even to protect it from all kinds of dirt, with the advancement of human civilization, clothing's primary function has become more than just a necessity; it also has a social function. In other words, clothing is an expression of human culture.

Clothing is a form of identity, or it could also be described as a symbol of dignity, even status within a social and social environment. Clothing is also a tool for communication, as it allows people to build relationships and communicate directly, either in groups or individually. In other words, clothing reflects the values and beliefs inherent within it. Whatever its form or style, clothing represents the intrinsic values and meanings of a community's culture.

However, in the era of globalization and rapid fashion development, various interpretations and modifications to Muslim women's clothing styles have emerged, sometimes clashing with Islamic law, such as the use of tight or sheer clothing. This raises questions about the extent to which clothing can still be categorized as a form of self-respect (*ʿiffah*) and true obedience.

A free woman's entire body represents her intimate area, and she is not allowed to see anything other than her face and hands. Flaunting clothing or exposing private parts is harmful. Since ancient times, sages from the West and the East, both Muslims and pagans, have recognized this. Dressing and flaunting one's beauty can be very harmful for both men and women. The effort to destroy morals is part of the Jewish program.

The obligation to cover intimate areas applies holistically to various existing regional clothing, encompassing changes in structure (cut, shape, weave) and decoration (pattern, color, embellishments, texture, motifs, accessories). Design. It is undeniable that time has brought progress. Cultural influences, including fashion, have influenced Indonesia. As a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia should play a leading role in facilitating elegant fashion innovation while adhering to Islamic sharia values.

This research is important to reaffirm the philosophical and juridical basis of the obligation to dress according to Islamic law for Muslim women, highlighting the aspects Self-Respect as the purpose (*maqasid*) of the Sharia, and clarifying the criteria Obedience of a Servant within the framework of Islamic law. This is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding so that Muslim women can balance the demands of modernity with adherence to sharia.

## METHOD

This research uses an approach qualitative-normative with the type library research.

1. Data Collection: Data was collected from primary and secondary sources.
  - a) First: Text of the Qur'an and Hadith.
  - b) Seconds: Fiqh books (such as *Sunnah Fiqh* the work of Sayyid Sabiq, the work of the imam of the four schools of thought regarding the aurat), the Book of Tafsir (such as *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by Quraish Shihab), and relevant scientific articles/journals.
2. Data analysis:
  - a) Analisis Isi (Content Analysis): Analyzing sharia texts to determine the laws and criteria for Muslim clothing.
  - b) Maqasid Shariah Approach: Analyzing the purpose behind the command to dress according to Islamic law, namely to maintain honor (*hifdzun nafs* and *hifdzul ʿirdh*).
  - c) Comparative Analysis of Jurisprudence: Comparing the views of jurists regarding the limitations of women's aurat in the presence of non-mahrams.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Muslim Clothing in the Sources of Islamic Law

Terminologically, Muslim attire is clothing worn by Muslim women that meets the requirements of Islamic law. These requirements include covering the aurat (body parts), modesty, avoiding slander, and reflecting the values of modesty. Islamic attire is not intended to restrict women's freedom, but rather to maintain their honor, dignity, and the well-being of themselves and society at large. Clothing is the item worn (shirts, trousers, etc.).

In Indonesian, clothing is also called fashion. Therefore, Muslim clothing refers to clothing worn by Muslim women. Based on this meaning, Muslim clothing can be defined as clothing worn by Muslim women that covers the aurat (awrah) that is required by religion, for the benefit and well-being of the woman herself and the society in which she lives. Clothing is something that humans wear to cover and protect all or part of their body from heat and cold, such as shirts, sarongs, and turbans. Clothing holds a very important position in Islamic teachings, not merely as a form of body protection but also as a form of identity, a symbol of piety, and a manifestation of a Muslim woman's obedience to religious teachings. Islam views clothing as part of a value system that regulates human relationships with God (ḥabl min Allāh), fellow human beings (ḥabl min al-nās), and their social environment. Therefore, discussions about Muslim clothing cannot be separated from the sources of Islamic law, which serve as the normative basis for determining the boundaries, purposes, and wisdom of clothing.

Clothing is also defined as anything that covers the body. Clothing is understood as a tool to protect the body or a facility to beautify one's appearance. But beyond fulfilling these two functions, clothing can also serve as a means of nonverbal communication, as it contains symbols with various meanings. Clothing style is part of how one presents oneself in one's environment. When dressing appropriately, we are required to wear clothing that demonstrates piety, not clothing that looks tattered. Clothing has a specific meaning. Therefore, clothing must be sized appropriately so that one's attitude and movements do not tempt others. By dressing according to moral norms, one not only maintains the morals of society (others) but also protects oneself.

#### a) Aurat in the Quran and Hadith:

The Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic law for establishing the dress code for Muslim women. Several verses explicitly and implicitly explain the principles of dress for women. The most frequently cited verse is Surah an-Nūr, verse 31, which commands believing women to lower their gaze, guard their modesty, and draw their headscarves (khimār) over their chests. This verse demonstrates that covering one's private parts is not only a moral imperative, but also a normative legal one. Furthermore, Surah al-Aḥzāb, verse 59, emphasizes the command to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to tell his wives, daughters, and believing women to lower their headscarves. The purpose of this command is to make them more easily recognized as respectable women and to avoid harassment. This verse emphasizes that Muslim dress has dimensions of social protection and faith identity. From these two verses, it can be concluded that the Qur'an emphasizes three main principles of dress for Muslim women: covering the private parts, maintaining honor, and avoiding things that could cause harassment or slander. Referring to the interpretation of key verses (QS. An-Nur: 31 and QS. Al-Aḥzāb: 59) which order covering the private parts and extending the hijab.

QS. An-Nur: 31

And say For believing women They lower their gaze from Their eyes And they protect their private parts no They show Their adornment Except what back From it Let them strike with their veils Alaa Their pockets no They show Their adornment Except to their husbands Oh <sup>بآبائهم</sup> Oh Father Their husbands Oh ABNA Oh people Their husbands Oh Their brothers Oh brown Their brothers Oh brown Their sisters Oh Their wives Oh what Malika Their oaths or The followers not first The need from men or The child The Ones did not They appear Alaa Awrat Women no They strike with their feet So that it may be known what They hide from Their adornment And repent To Allah all any The believers Perhaps you You will succeed

It means :

*Tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty and not to reveal their adornment except that which is visible. They should draw their veils over their bosoms. They should not reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers,*

*their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their female companions, their female slaves, their male servants who have no desire for women, or children who do not yet understand the female genitalia. They should not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal. Repent to Allah, all of you, O you who believe, that you may be successful.*

QS. Al-Ahzab: 59

Those who convey the messages of God and fear Him and do not fear anyone but God. And sufficient is God as Accountant. ﴿٥٩﴾

It means:

*(Namely) those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him and fear none but Allah. Sufficient is Allah as a reckoner.*

b) Sharia Clothing Criteria:

Clothing in Islam is not simply a covering for the body, but has profound theological, moral, and social dimensions. Islam views clothing as a means of maintaining a Muslim's honor, identity, and piety. Therefore, the concept of sharia clothing is not only measured by aesthetic aspects or fashion trends, but also by its conformity to the values of Islamic law. In the modern context, understanding the criteria for sharia clothing is crucial for Muslims to be able to balance religious demands and cultural dynamics. Analysis of the opinions of fuqaha (jurists) regarding the requirements for Muslim women's clothing includes: covering the entire aurat (except for the face and palms), not being transparent, loose (not showing body curves), not wearing jewelry that attracts attention (libas syuhrah), and not resembling the clothing of the opposite sex.

c) Hadith of the Prophet as an Explanation

The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) serve as explanations (bayān) of general provisions in the Qur'an. In the context of Muslim women's attire, the hadith provides more detailed definitions regarding the aurat (wārah) and dress etiquette. One frequently cited hadith is the hadith narrated by Abu Dawud about Asma' bint Abu Bakr, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explains that after a woman reaches puberty, it is inappropriate for her to be seen except for her face and palms. This hadith forms the basis for the majority of scholars' opinion that a woman's aurat is the entire body except for the face and palms. Furthermore, there are hadiths prohibiting thin, tight, and clothing resembling men's clothing. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also condemned women who were clothed but essentially naked, that is, who wore clothing that did not completely cover their aurat. This demonstrates that Islam values clothing not only from its physical aspect, but also from its function and impact.

## 2. The Concept of Obedience and Maqasid Sharia

Linguistically, obedience comes from the Arabic word *tā'a-yaṭī'u* which means obedience, submission, and following orders. In Islamic terminology, obedience is defined as an attitude of complete submission and adherence to the commands of Allah and His Messenger, both in aspects of faith, worship, and social interactions. Obedience in Islam is not passive, but active and conscious. This means that obedience is carried out based on faith, knowledge, and awareness of Allah's greatness, not because of coercion. Obedience in Islam is not an end in itself, but rather a means to achieve a greater goal, namely the welfare of humanity in accordance with the maqasid sharia. Every command and prohibition of Allah has a specific purpose that leads to the protection and well-being of humanity.

For example, the obligation to pray is not only intended as a ritual of worship, but also to form a character of discipline, peace of mind, and prevent vile and evil deeds. This is in line with the maqasid of protecting religion and morals.

Obedience that is not accompanied by an understanding of the maqasid can give rise to an attitude of excessive textualism and legal formalism. In this condition, a person can feel formally obedient, but in fact it causes harm to himself and others.

An example is the application of the law without considering the social context, humanity, and justice. In fact, justice is one of the main goals of sharia. Therefore, true obedience must always be in line with the maqasid.

Etymologically, *goals* is the plural form of *goal* which means goal, purpose, or objective. Meanwhile, *sharia* means the path or rules established by Allah for humanity. Thus, *maqasid sharia* can be defined as the primary goals that Islamic law seeks to achieve in regulating human life.

The scholars of *usul fiqh*, such as al-Ghazali and al-Syatibi, explained that the *sharia* was revealed to realize benefit (*jalb al-maṣāliḥ*) and prevent damage (*dar' al-mafāsīd*).

*Maqasid Syariah* (Islamic law) is the general objectives that *sharia* seeks to achieve and realize in life. *Maqasid Syariah* is a crucial concept in the study of Islamic law. *Mujtahids* must understand the objectives of law (*maqasid syariah*) in order to develop legal thought in Islam in general and address contemporary legal issues not explicitly regulated by the Qur'an and Hadith.

When the *maqasid* of *sharia* is mentioned, all those who study it always associate it with the name of Abu Ishaq ash-Syatibi. This is because he is widely known as the Father of *Maqasid* of *Sharia* and his work is widely known in *al-Muwafaqat*. Although he is called the "Father of *Makashid Sharia*," Imam Ash-Syatibi never clearly defined the meaning of *Maqasid Sharia*. He seems to think that those who have completed the reading of *Al-Muwafaqat* will be able to define the *maqasid* of *sharia*. The objectives of law (*maqasid sharia*) must be understood by *mujtahids* in order to develop legal thought in Islam in general and to answer contemporary legal issues whose cases are not explicitly regulated by the Qur'an and al-Hadith.

- a) Obedience of Servants (*Al-Ibadah*): Explaining dressing as an act of worship (ritual obedience) which is vertical (relationship with Allah) and is an implementation of the monotheism of Allah.
- b) Self-Respect (*Al-Iffah*): Analyzing the concept of *iffah* (guarding oneself from inappropriate things) as one of the goals of Islamic law (*Maqasid Sharia*), where clothing functions as a defensive bulwark of honor.
- c) *Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah*: The principle of preventing things that can lead to damage, in this context, is avoiding slander (temptation) that arises from ignoring dress ethics.

Implementation of Obedience Based on *Maqasid Sharia* In the context of modern life, obedience based on the *maqasid* of *sharia* has become very relevant. The challenges of globalization, pluralism, and the development of science require Muslims to understand *sharia* dynamically and contextually. In education, for example, adherence to Islamic values should foster the development of reason, ethics, and social responsibility in students. In the economic sphere, adherence to *sharia* means not only avoiding usury but also achieving justice, prosperity, and equality. Similarly, in the life of a nation and state, obedience to leaders must be directed towards the creation of public welfare and social justice, in accordance with the principles of *maqasid syariah*.

### 3. The Legal Position of Muslim Clothing in Islamic Fiqh

Clothing holds a crucial place in Islamic teachings, not only as a physical necessity but also as a representation of moral values, ethics, and religious identity. In Islamic jurisprudence, discussions of Muslim women's attire are not solely concerned with cultural or customary aspects, but also touch on the dimensions of *sharia* law derived from the Quran, hadith, consensus (*ijma'*), and *qiyas* (paraphrasing). Therefore, Muslim attire has a clear and binding legal standing for Muslim women who meet the requirements of *taklif*.

According to Islamic jurisprudence, *aurat* refers to parts of a person's body that must be covered from view. According to Islamic law, *aurat* refers to something that Allah has forbidden to be shown to others, even those who have not permitted it to be seen. In its origin, humans are born into this world with the potential to be ashamed of their environment. They must cover their shame completely, because if they cannot, their shame will be known to others. Therefore, to cover their shame, humans try as hard as possible to protect their bodies from various kinds of harassment, and clothing is a fundamental element in protecting them from such harassment.

In Islamic jurisprudence, clothing (*al-libās*) is understood as a means of covering the private parts, maintaining honor, and protecting humans from environmental harm. Allah SWT states in Surah Al-A'raf, verse 26 of the Quran, that clothing serves to cover the private parts and as adornment, but most importantly, it is clothing of piety. This verse demonstrates

that clothing in Islam has both an outward and an inward dimension, both of which are interconnected.

Islamic jurisprudence views clothing as part of the Sharia commandments that are directly related to the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*), especially in maintaining honor (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) and maintaining the morals of society. Thus, the dress code is not just an ethical recommendation, but is included in the realm of Islamic law that has consequences of reward and sin.

However, the effort to always cover the body will always exist, even if in a very minimal or limited form according to the ability of life, body and human mind. With clothing, humans want to distinguish themselves or their group from others. Clothing provides self-identity so that it can influence the behavior of the wearer and can also reflect the emotions of the wearer which at the same time can influence the emotions of others.

The law on covering the aurat for Muslim women is *mustafardhu ain*. Based on the consensus of scholars (*ijma'*), a woman's entire body is aurat, except for the face and the palms of the hands (on which there is a difference of opinion among the schools of thought). Therefore, dressing *Islamic law* is binding obligation and not just a cultural choice or social ethics. Violation of it is considered immoral.

#### 4. Muslim Clothing as a Guardian of Personal Honor (Iffah)

In Islamic teachings, clothing is not simply a biological necessity to cover the body, but has profound spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. For a Muslim woman, clothing is a manifestation of her faith and obedience to Allah SWT. One of the primary values embodied through Islamic dress codes is *iffah*, namely, maintaining personal honor, purity, and human dignity. The concept of Muslim attire is inseparable from efforts to develop moral, civilized, and noble individuals within society.

Linguistically, *iffah* means self-restraint, maintaining purity, and abstaining from inappropriate behavior. In Islamic terminology, *iffah* encompasses a person's ability to control their desires, whether in terms of gaze, speech, actions, or appearance. Allah SWT commands believers, both men and women, to guard their gaze and honor, as stated in Surah An-Nur, verses 30–31. This verse emphasizes that maintaining honor is not only internal but also external, including through dress.

For Muslim women, modesty is a crucial foundation for building a dignified personality. Sharia-compliant clothing serves as a bulwark that protects against objectification, exploitation, and judgment based solely on physical appearance. Therefore, modesty is not a restriction on freedom, but rather a means of preserving human dignity as a creature honored by God.

Self-Respect (*Iffah*) etymologically means to refrain from things that are not halal or inappropriate. In the context of clothing:

- a) Protection from Defamation: Clothing that covers the genitals, is loose and not excessively decorated, serves to limit sexual attraction in public spaces, thus protecting Muslim women from indecent views (slander) and harassment.
- b) Identity of Goodness: The Word of God, "*That is so that they are easier to recognize, so that they are not disturbed.*" (QS. Al-Ahzab: 59), shows that sharia clothing is an identification mark for women who maintain their honor, distinguishing them from women who do not care about moral ethics.
- c) Inner Balance: Clothing that maintains modesty reflects purity of heart and behavior. It guides Muslim women to guard their gaze and movements, which in turn strengthens their moral integrity.

#### 5. Manifestation of a Servant's Obedience in Dressing to Islamic Law

Clothing is a cultural product, as well as a religious and moral imperative. This gives rise to what are called traditional, regional, and national clothing, as well as formal attire for certain celebrations and religious clothing. However, it's important to note that some religious requirements stem from societal culture, as religion takes societal conditions into account that customs that conflict with its values are considered legal considerations. *Al adat muhakkimah* with a formula proposed by Islamic legal experts. As a result of the development of fashion that penetrated the world of Muslim clothing, in 2010 a contemporary hijab community emerged. Originating from the lifestyle and fashion style community. As reported in the fashion blog, *Compagnons* (2012), which published an article that "the K-Pop

community is loved by many teenagers today. In addition, the community that is always hotly discussed is the contemporary hijab community such as "Hijabers" which quickly created a new hijab trend in Indonesia." These communities are groups of people who want to look the same with one view in style and clothing. This will help people or members gain a shared identity even though the culture embraced within it is no longer purely personal culture but has been assimilated by the culture embraced by the community. Nevertheless, there is always a feeling of curiosity and passion to join each existing community.

Dressed *Islamic law* is an action that is *devotion* (pure worship) at the same time *thoughts* (logical/rational, because the goal is clear: self-preservation). This obedience is manifested in several aspects:

- a) Absolute Compliance: Carrying out Allah's commands without questioning logic or social trends, affirms the position of a servant who is completely submissive to Allah. *Creator* (Creator).
- b) Spiritual Integration: The awareness that clothing is a reflection of the clothing of piety (spiritual awareness), turns daily activities into worship.
- c) Implementation Consistency: Perfect obedience is demonstrated by consistently fulfilling all the criteria for sharia clothing, not only covering the head (hijab/khimar), but also paying attention to the material (not transparent) and model (not tight).

## CONCLUSION

Based on jurisprudential analysis and maqasid syariah studies, it can be concluded that Dressing Muslimahs according to Sharia law is a fundamental legal obligation in Islam. This obligation serves as the manifestation of servant obedience which is based on the commands of the Qur'an and Hadith. Functionally, Islamic clothing is an effective means of maintaining self-respect (*iffah*), namely by limiting the potential for slander, protecting from social disturbances, and building a high moral identity for a Muslim woman.

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