

Kuranski propisi o odijevanju kao temelj egalitarnosti u islamu

Članak ukazuje na to da su određeni kodeksi oblačenja, koji su se uvažili u nekim islamskim zemljama, posljedica predislamske tradicije i patrijarhalnih interpretacija Kurana te da nisu u skladu sa jednim od temeljnih ciljeva religije - ispravljanjem krivičnih društvenih struktura. Iako se iz Kuranskih propisa, koji su predstavljeni u prvom dijelu članka, može razabrati da upute o odijevanju nisu bile postavljene zato, da bi se žene podredilo, neke se prakse pokrivanja koje su ostale na snazi sve do danas i koje su predstavljene u drugom dijelu članka, utemeljuju upravo sa Kuranom. Zato članak u trećem, zadnjem dijelu, ističe potrebu, po ponovnom čitanju Kurana i osvještavanju o prvobitnoj namjeri islama.

Ključne riječi: odijevanje, pokrivanje lica, pokrivanje kose, hidžab, nikab, čador, burka, muslimanke

Dok smo na Zapadu navikli vidjeti časne sestre i nevjestice koje pokrivaju glavu velom, manje nam je uobičajeno vidjeti žene koje ga nose u svom svakodnevnom životu. Susret sa ženom koja pokriva glavu ili čak lice skoro neizbježno, ako se ne radi o trenutnom modnom trendu, podrazumijeva susret sa drugom kulturom i vjerom. Najčešće sa islamom. Pretpostavlja se čak, da je pokrivanje kose i lica islamska novost iako u Kuranu ne nalazimo niti jedan (eksplicitan) propis o pokrivanju lica. Zato je namjera ovog članka osvijetliti pozadinu tog fenomena i prezentirati Kuranske citate koji se odnose na pokrivanje žena a i muškaraca. Suprotno općenito prihvaćenom mišljenju da je pokrivanje kose i lica islamska novina, u Kuranu ne nalazimo niti jedan (eksplicitan) propis o tome. No, s obzirom na to da su se u islamskom svijetu ustalili i takvi običaji te zbog toga što je u zapadnim medijima prisutno mnogo nejasnoća glede naziva odjeće – izraz hidžab, primjerice, često se koristi za ono što je zapravo nikab – jedan je od

ciljeva ovog rada razjasniti upravo te nejasnoće. Predstavljajući različite vrste odjeće i njihove nazive, ovaj će rad ujedno ukazati i na heterogenost islamskog svijeta koja se, među ostalim, odražava i u nejedinstvenome načinu oblačenja. Na kraju će se sagledati osnovne crte rasprava o značenju i ulozi odjeće: od vrlo čestog zapadnjačkog stava da je razotkrivanje u islamskom društvu jedan od najočitijih znakova otpora postojećemu društvenom uređenju i položaju žena u njemu, do toga da je Irankama čador način pristupanja u javni prostor.

Izvori pokrivanja kose i lica u islamu

Pokrivanje kose i lica u islamu različito se objašnjava, ali među prihvaćenijim je tumačenje da se zapravo ne radi o islamskoj novini, već o nastavljanju predislamskih običaja. Zbog teških uvjeta nomadskog života već su predislamski Arapi željeli svoje žene zaštititi od pogleda stranaca, koji su predstavljali potencijalne neprijatelje. Različiti napadi, otimanja i silovanja bili su stalna prijetnja, pa im se činilo najboljim zaštititi žene velovima i različitim drugim pokrivalima.

Uz to, muslimanke su se ugledale na Perzijanke i Bizantinke (Rippin, 2000: 271) promijenivši tako namjenu pokrivanja: dok su se prve pokrivalo kako bi se razlikovale od žena iz nižih slojeva, muslimanke, koje su se s njima sretale na molitvi, počele su se pokrivate kako bi pokazale pripadnost istoj vjeri – islamu. (Esposito, 2003: 105) Njihovo je pokrivanje isticalo istost u vjeri dok su se imućne Bizantinke i Perzijanke pokrivalo kako bi isticale svoju različitost od žena nižih slojeva. Upravo ugledavši se na bizantinke i Perzijanke, neke su muslimanke počele pokrivate i lice iako njegovo zakrivanje u Kuranu nigdje nije spomenuto. U prilog tezi da se radi o predislamskoj praksi govori i činjenica, da je već Tertulijan u *De virginibus velandis* kršćanskim ženama za uzor dao Arapkinje o kojima je zapisao da si ne pokrivaju samo glave, već i lice, jer radije žive u polumraku, nego da pokazuju svoje lice. (Tertulijan: XVII/4)

Propisi u Kuranu i hadis o pokrivanju

U Kuranu možemo naći samo tri eksplicitna propisa o odijevanju: u poglavlju koje govori o sredstvima za sprečavanje bluda (Kuran 24:30–31), u ajetu koji govori o prepoznatljivosti muslimanki (Kuran 33:59) i u ajetu koji starijim ženama daje upute o odijevanju (Kuran 24:60).

a) Zaštita žena

Kažu, da Muhamed ženama nije propisao pokrivanje zato da bi im s tim uskratio slobodu već zato, jer je želio svoje žene i druge muslimanke zaštititi pred već spomenutim mogućim napadima, otimanjima i silovanjima. To možemo razabrati iz Kurana

33:59, gdje se ističe, da je pokrivanje ogrtačima potrebno, kako bi kćeri i žene muslimana bile prepoznate i pošteđene uznemiravanja. Unatoč dobroj namjeri koju možemo prepoznati iz tog uspostavljanja „sigurnog područja“, danas je takav diskurs teško prihvatljiv kako za žene tako i za muškarce. On naime implicira, da je muškarac nesposoban savladati svoje nagone i da su muškarci „po prirodi“ lovci koji vrebaju na lovinu. U konačnici takav stav ne degradira samo žena, koje postaju objekti te prisiljene živjeti u neakvoj mobilnoj izolaciji, već i muškarce, koji odjednom postaju bića niže intelektualne razine.

b) Moralno uzdizanje

U poglavlju koje govori o sredstvima za sprečavanje bluda ponajprije nailazimo na uputu muškarcima da okrenu svoje poglede i čuvaju svoje spolne ograne (Kuran 24:30). (Chebel, 1995: 104-105) Iako je poslanik nosio odjeću koja je pokrivala tijelo od ramena do zapešća i gležnja, uvriježilo se da je minimalno tjelesno područje, koje muškarac mora pokrivati, od pupka do koljena. To je u ono vrijeme važno ponajprije za muškarce koji su presiromašni da bi si mogli priuštiti cijelo „odijelo“. (Patel, 2003: 82) Tijekom vremena uvriježio se da bi pravovjerman musliman trebao u znamen visokocijenjene muževnosti nositi brkove i bradu. Kažu da je brada Božji propis i da treba za nju brinuti jednako pažljivo kao i za čistoću tijela i odjeće. Za bradu se smatra da ima i afrodizijski učinak na žene. (Chebel, 1995: 104-105)

Ta uputa je namijenjena muškarcima i bitna je iz dva aspekta: zato što je prisutna i zbog toga što je možemo usporediti s uputom ženama. Obraćanje muškima govori o tome, da treba opustiti malo prije spomenuto gledanje na muškarce kao na lovce te da su po Kuranu muškarci dužni obuzdavati svoje nagone. Isto važi i za žene: moć ili slabost jednih i drugih, žena i muških, nije u njihovoj fizičkoj moći i/ili slabašnosti, već u moralnom uzdizanju iznad njih.

Iz odlomka koji je upućen ženama (Kuran 24:31), možemo razabrati da ni žene, kao ni muškarci, ne smiju gledati u oči nepoznatima te da ne smiju dopustiti da se vide određeni dijelovi tijela. Budući da je nevjera u islamu jedan od najtežih grijeha, zabranjeno je (bilo) sve što bi moglo dovesti do nevjere. Zato islamski nauk osuđuje pornografiju, šund literaturu, prostačke šale, intimne tjelesne dodire, grljenje, ljubljenje muškarca i žene ukoliko nisu u braku, razgaljenost, izazovno oblačenje i slično. (Haverić i Haverić, 1991:39) Tu posebno mjesto ima – pogled. Po islamskom je učenju upravo pogled prvi korak na putu ka nevjeri. A zato što se smatra da su muškarci općenito agresivniji, Kuran najprije njima propisuje da odvrte svoje poglede i da paze na svoje sramne dijelove tijela, kaže Ismael A. Patel. (Patel, 2003: 80) Ali Kuran se odmah iza toga obraća i ženama te je postupno prevladalo uvjerenje da su žene iskušene i da ih muškarci moraju izbjegavati. To potvrđuje i hadis koji muškarce opominje da se čuvaju razgovora nasamo s tuđim ženama, jer nije moguće da bi muškarac bio sam sa ženom s kojom nije u rodu, a da je ne poželi ili pomisli na zabranjeno. (ur. Memić, 1984: 135)

Ženama propisana pokrivala, kao znak pravovjernosti, nisu bitna isključivo za ovaj svijet, nego i za posmrtni život. U Muslimovom hadisu čitamo da u raju neće biti žena koje se oskudno oblače, ni onih koje koketiraju ili zavodnički hodaju. (ur. El-Munziri, 2004b: 446–447). Odjeća, naime, nije namijenjena samo pokrivanju tijela, nego je bitna i iz eshatološkog gledišta, jer nije samo običaj, već etički ili čak teološki sustav. (Al-W. Bouhidba, 2004: 37) Čednost odražava pravovjernost koja u najširem smislu obuhvaća poniznost, suzdržavanje u stavu i ponašanju, izbjegavanje pretjerivanja i skromnu te neupadljivu pojavnost. To je, kao što tvrdi Ismael A. Patel, način života za koji odgaja Kuran i koji ima za uzor poslanika Muhameda. (Patel, 2003: 79) Žena koja se pokrije iskazuje svoju pripadnost skupini i pokornost Stvoritelju te islamski odgoj.

Inače se interpreti slažu da taj ajet, slično kao i prethodni, koji se odnosi na muškarce, poziva na uzorno ponašanje i oblačenje ponajprije zato da bi vjernice bile ponizne i skromne i, ujedno, da bi se zaštitio njihov besprijekoran moral. Iako na prvi pogled možda izgleda drugačije, izvorna namjera ajeta 24:31 dakle nije (bila) podčiniti žene, već spriječiti interakciju među ženama i muškarcima koja bi mogla dovesti do nepodobnog ponašanja. Segregacija i pravila oblačenja postala su normativna zato, da bi se ograničilo miješanje spolova, jer je to po islamskom uvjerenju glavni razlog bluda, koji uništava društvo i razdire moral. (Doumato, 2001: 170) Uoči susreta žene i muškarca, koji nisu u srodstvu, postoji opasnost da se pojavi tjelesna želja, jer njihovom susretu uvijek svjedoči sotona. U jednom od hadisa možemo čak pročitati, da žena dolazi u sotonovom obliku i da se mora zato muškarac, kad ugleda (tuđu) ženu, vratiti k svojoj, da bi tako odbacio ono što osjeća u duši. (ur. El-Munziri, 2004a: 681; ur. Memić, 1984: 135)

Podjarmljivanje žena u islamu dakle nije posljedica Kuranskih propisa, jer je iz Kurana moguće razabrati načelno izjednačenje žena i muškaraca. Ali ipak je Kuran poslužio kao temelj tom podčinjavanju i u praksi su se pravila o pokrivanju i osami žena postepeno pooštrila. (Schimmel, 2003: 27) Žene su postepeno postajale sve izoliranije i sve više se je ustaljivalo uvjerenje, da su žene zavodnice, koje moraju muškarci izbjegavati. Neki interpreti kažu, da je to djelomično bilo i posljedica kršćanskog pogleda na ženu kao Evu (zavodnicu) koja je zavela Adama (Wadud, 1999: 25) iako se u Kuranu nigdje ni riječju ne spominje, da bi Eva bila odgovorna ili čak kriva za iskonski grijeh.

c) Iznimka – starije žene

Naposlijetku, u Kuranu nalazimo i nešto drugačiju uputu glede oblačenja žena. Ona kaže da nije nepoćudno ako se starije žene, koje se više ne namjeravaju udavati, ne pridržavaju strogo propisa o odijevanju, zadrže li pritom suzdržanost u oblačenju i ne pokazuju svoje ukrase. Unatoč tom propisu bolje je da ostanu kreposne i da ne skidaju odjeću (Kuran 24:60), jer žene imaju pri čuvanju obiteljske časti. To se vidi i iz činjenice da čast kćerke odražava čast obitelji njenog oca, (Keohane, 1988: 107–117) te stoga ne čudi ni iskazivanje kreposti u kasnim godinama. Samo tako mogu majke i bake biti uzor nevjestama i unukama, na čija se pleća prenosi breme očuvanja obiteljske časti.

d) Žene u pubertetu

U jednom takozvanom slabom (daif) hadisu, čitamo da je nepoćudno pokazuje li žena svoje tijelo nakon ulaska u pubertet, odnosno nakon prve menstruacije. Po tom hadisu dopušteno je imati otkrivene samo ruke do zapešća i lice. (Navodi Syed, 2005) Taj hadis problematičan je upravo zato jer nije autentičan (sahih) ili bar dobar (hasan) hadis, pa stoga ne bi smjeo utjecati na šerijatske zakone iako su se u nekim zemljama uvažile i prakse potpunog pokrivanja žena. (Navodi Syed, 2005) Iako su muslimani većinom suglasni oko toga da mora odjeća biti dugačka, neprozirna i labava kako se ne bi isticale ženske obline, razlikuju se oko toga što da li je potrebno pokrivati lice, dlanove i stopala. (Salleh, 1993: 114)

Različiti običaji oblačenja

Tijekom vremena različito se interpretiralo kakva je odjeća uistinu propisana muslimankama te se ona danas bitno razlikuje po oblicima, tkaninama i bojama. Različitu odjeću nalazimo u Maroku, Iranu, Afganistanu, Pakistanu ili kod muslimanki u Europi. Kako bi razumjeli te razlike, pogledajmo kako izgledaju pokrivala za glavu, haljine i kaputi, koje muslimanke nose.

a) Pokrivala za glavu – hidžab, al-amira, šajla i nikab¹

Najprepoznatljiviji komad odjeće kod muslimanki je marama. Dok na Zapadu sve marame više-manje svrstavamo u isti koš, muslimanke razlikuju najmanje tri vrste marama: hidžab, al-amira i šajlu. sva ta pokrivala pokrivaju prvenstveno kosu i vrat, dok lice ostavljaju otkrivenim. No, za razliku od hidžaba koji je jednodijelni, al-amira je sastavljena iz dva dijela, koja su obično u kompletu: cjevaste vrpce tijesno priljubljene uz glavu, koje pokrivaju kosu i djelomično čelo, a preko koje se nosi labavija i nešto šira vrpca što seže do ramena. U pokrivala za glavu ubraja se i šajla koja isto kao hidžab i al-amira ne pokriva lica. Šajla je najsličnija onomu što na Zapadu jednostavno zovemo šal. Ako je dovoljno široka, šajla se može zakopčati slično kao hidžab, a može se samo lagano prebaciti preko glave, jednom ili dvaput zaviti oko vrata i pustiti da krajevi slobodno padaju. Obično se ispod šala nosi pripijena kapica, na koju se može sapeti šal i koja sprečava da kosa slobodno pada na lice.

Kao što je spomenuto, na nekim se područjima ustalio i običaj pokrivanja lica. Ali, s obzirom na to da nijedno od opisanih pokrivala za glavu ne pokriva lice, uz hidžab, al-amira i šajlu, nosi se nikab. Nikab, koji uglavnom nose Saudijke, namijenjen je prije svega pokrivanju lica. Iako nikab u principu ostavlja otkrivenim predio oko očiju, neke muslimanke nose i takozvani „potpuni nikab“. U tom je slučaju prekriven i predio oko očiju, a potpunom nikabu obično spadaju i rukavice.

¹ Izvor fotografija: Desertstore, URL: <http://www.desertstore.com>, 21.3.2007

b) Haljine – abaja i džilbab

Abaja i džilbab haljine su koje se uglavnom nose u kombinaciji s hidžabom, al-amirom i šajlom. Abaja je duga i udobna, nikako tijesna, haljina koja se nosi ponajviše u Saudijskoj Arabiji i u Zaljevskim državama. Džilbab, dugačka i udobna haljina, poprilično je sličan abaji, ali se od nje razlikuje po tome što je u gornjem dijelu sličniji sakou negoli ženskoj haljini budući da ga obično krasi ovratnik. Uz to, džilbab se ne sastoji nužno samo iz jednog dijela, nego može biti sastavljen iz više dijelova – može se nositi s hlačama ili s dugačkom suknjom te preko majice, odnosno bluze. Džilbab se nosi pretežno u Jordaniji, Palestini i Siriji, a možemo ga naći i u Libiji i Alžiru.

c) »Kaputi« – kimar, čador i burka

Kimar je dugačak, pelerini nalik kaput koji pokriva kosu, vrat i ramena.² Obično pada preko bokova, a ponekad seže i preko koljena. Kimaru je jako sličan čador koji, prije svega, nose postrevolucionarne Iranke. Čador se od kimara razlikuje samo po tome što je duži i što obično seže do gležnjeva. Burka, najrigoroznija ženska odjeća islamskog svijeta, specifična je za Afganistan. Gusta tkanina potpuno pokriva cijelo tijelo, uključujući i lice, a samo malu vidljivost dopušta kroz gustu mrežu u predjelu očiju.

Podijeljena mišljenja glede pokrivanja

U vidu odjeće nasilje je bilo najvidljivije kad su u Afganistanu na vlast došli talibani i ženama zapovjedili nošenje burki, ili pak u Iranu, gdje poslije islamske revolucije poznaju čak moralnu policiju. Azar Nafisi piše o teheranskim ulicama punima automobila koje nazivaju Božja krv. Njihova je zadaća provjeravati dali žene nose marame na propisani način ili dali su možda našminkane ili pak u pratnji muškarca, sa kojim nisu u srodstvu. (Nafisi, 2004: 31) U tim i sličnim slučajevima možemo se opravdano upitati da li su propisi o odijevanju žena spojivi sa poštovanjem ljudskog dostojanstva i autonomije žena. Unatoč tome moramo paziti da ne zapadnemo u generaliziranje i stigmatiziranje te da svim muslimankama ne dodijelimo etikete podređenih i bezglasnih. Činjenica je, da se neke muslimanke same odlučuju za nošenje tradicionalne odjeće i s time izražavaju svoju kulturnu i vjersku pripadnost. Zato bi bilo pogrešno u ime demokracije i ljudskih prava pozivati k bezuvjetnom ukidanju nošenja hidžaba, jer bi s time, uz ostalo, prekršili i temeljna načela demokracije – među koja se ubrajaju i sloboda izražavanja i vjeroispovijedi. Po drugoj strani nije prihvatljivo ni nekritično promoviranje multikulturalizma, koje zanemaruje činjenicu ugnjetavanja žena i nasilja.

Naravno, nije lako odrediti granice i teško je izvana reći kada se radi o slobodnoj odluci, a kada o prilagođivanju uspostavljenim normama. Ipak, potrebno je prihvatiti

² Islamic Boutique, URL: <http://www.islamicboutique.com>, 21.3.2007

činjenicu, da nošenje propisane islamske odjeće nije uvijek oblik subordinacije žena. To je jasno uočljivo na primjeru o kojem piše Azar Nafisi u knjizi *Lolita u Teheranu: životopis u knjigama*:³ njena baka mjesecima nije izlazila iz kuće kada su u četrdesetim godinama prošlog stoljeća od nje zahtijevali da se razotkrije, dok se sama Azar Nafisi osjećala osramoćeno i poniženo kada su nekoliko desetljeća kasnije od nje zahtijevali da se pokrije. (Nafisi, 2004: 157) No, razlikuje li se Azar Nafisi od svoje bake? Čini se da se zapravo radi o vrlo sličnoj reakciji na nametnuto – otkrivanje ili pokrivanje. To je primjer dviju žena kojima je bilo oduzeto pravo da same odlučuju o tome što žele ili ne žele nositi. Radi se o tome da su ženska odjeća/pokrivala postala oruđe moći. Iako neke muslimanke naglašuju vjerski karakter marame i kažu da ona ponajprije odražava želju muslimanki da se pridržavaju islamskih propisa, jasno je da se, u slučaju kada nošenje propisane odjeće nije moguće izbjeći, odjeća shvaća i kao simbol i kao politički potez. U trenutku kada zakonodavac propiše neku uniformu i kada izbor više nije moguć, možemo reći da je život žena podređen interesima ustanova na koje same ne mogu utjecati. Ono što je najviše povrijedilo postrevolucionarne Iranke kada im je naređeno nošenje čadora, a njihove bake kada im je naređeno skidanje marame, jest prisila i nemogućnost slobodnog izbora. S toga gledišta, nema bitne razlike između Irana, gdje je čador propisan i gdje žene žive u strahu od kazne zbog mogućeg kršenja pravila, i Turske, gdje je ženama u javnim ustanovama službeno zabranjeno nositi marame. Prisilno i potpuno napuštanje tradicije, naime, nije ništa manje nasilno od nametanja isključivog, obveznog kodeksa oblačenja.

Zaključak

Vidjeli smo da potpuni nikab, iranski čador i afganistanska burka, kao najstroži običaj oblačenja, nisu izravno propisani u islamskim svetim spisima, nego su posljedica njihovih patrijarhalnih interpretacija. Propisi na koje nailazimo u Kuranu ukazuju, da je odjeća, koju propisuje islam, pripisana prije svega radi uspostavljanja moralnog reda i na zbog toga, da bi se ugnjetavalo žene. Unatoč tome ti propisi mogu poslužiti i podržavanju pogleda na ženu kao na iskušenje, zbog čega ju je potrebno pokriti i zatvoriti kako ne bi muškarca navodila na blud. Dakle, iako kuranski propisi ukazuju samo na kimar (Kuran 24:31) i na džilbab (Kuran 33:59), u pojedinim islamskim državama uvažila se i praksa pokrivanja žena „od glave do pete“.

Samo po sebi nameće se pitanje da li je moguće prevazi stoljetne prakse? Da li pozivanje na Kuran i na temelje islamske vjere može biti dovoljan? Da li je njihova reinterpretacija dovoljna za prevazilaženje ženama nenaklonih praksi? S vremenom je pokrivanje glave, vrata, ramena, a u nekim zemljama i lica, postalo sastavni dio identiteta muslimanki i zato duboko ukorijenjenih patrijarhalnih shvaćanja nije moguće promijeniti preko noći. Uz to, kako ističe Iranaka Ziba Mir Hosseini, u određenim kulturnim okruženjima tek potpuni nikab, čador ili burka ženama omogućuju

³ Hrvatski prijevod: Nafisi, A. (2005) *Lolita u Teheranu: životopis u knjigama*, Zagreb, Naklada Ljevak

prisutnost u dominantno muškom društvu i tako upravo ta odjeća, koja može odražavati i subordinaciju žena, postaje prvi korak ka njihovom uključivanju u javni život. (Mir-Hosseini, 1999: 96)

U islamskim zemljama se diskusija oko odijevanja žena svodi prije svega na nekoliko područja: dok su svi dosta suglasni oko toga da odjeća izražava pripadnost islamu i pokornost Stvoritelju, ostaju određene dvojbe oko političkih implikacija pokrivanja i zakrivanja islamskih žena: da li se doista radi o svojevoljnom i slobodnom izrazu otpora Zapadu i zapadnom modernizmu ili je pak tu na dijelu još jedna manipulacija sa ženama, koje tako ostaju u službi vladinih politika islamskih zemalja? A tu stupa pod upitnik i zapadno suprotstavljanje hidžabu i ostalim ženskim odjevnim predmetima. Jednako kao što možemo na pokrivanje muslimanki gledati kao na manipulaciju unutar samog islamskog svijeta, isto tako možemo i na zalaganje Zapadnjaka po njegovom uklanjanju gledati kao na želju po moći.

Naposljetku preostaje nam samo to, da priznamo, kako nema jednostavnih odgovora. Sa jednostavnim izjednačavanjem kulture i vjere, ne možemo razumjeti što je dio patrijarhalne kulturne ostavštine, a što su vjerski običaji. Zato je ponovno čitanje Kurana i svetih tekstova bitno iako to samo po sebi ne može ponuditi rješenja za suvremeno doba, niti ponuditi jednostavan preskok. Ali je u ponovnom čitanju tih tekstova moguće oživjeti osjećaj i osjetljivost za ono što je zapravo jedan od primarnih ciljeva religije: ispravljanje krivičnih društvenih struktura. Ako uspijemo prepoznati i prihvatiti taj socijalni vidik islama, možemo vidjeti, da pokrivanje žena nije bio pokušaj njihovog potlačivanja već poboljšanja njihovog tadašnjeg položaja. Upravo toga trebamo biti svjesni i danas, kad raspravljamo o odijevanju u islamu. Cilj tih rasprava ne bi trebalo biti poticanje k nekritičnoj imitaciji prethodnih praksi, vraćanje k izvorima, ili pak beskompromisno zabranjivanje nošenja tradicionalne odjeće, već bi cilj tih rasprava trebalo biti upravo promicanje osnovne ideje Kurana, da je potrebno ispravljati krivične strukture. I to bez obzira na to, da se one opravdavaju samim Kuranom ili tradicijom. Pronaći je potrebno nove, suvremenom dobu vlastite načine, kako bi se žene i muškarci mogli ravnopravno realizirati.

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Qur'an Dress Code as the Basis of Egalitarianism in Islam

The article claims that the specific dress codes, common for certain Islamic countries, are the consequence of the pre-Islamic traditions and patriarchic interpretations of the Qur'an and hence are not in accordance with one of the basic goals of every religion – correcting erroneous social structures. Even though we can conclude from the Qur'an regulations, presented in the first part of the article, that the strict dress code was not set in order to give women a subordinate position, nevertheless some of the practices of covering which are common today and which are presented in the second part of the article, are set by the Qur'an. Therefore the article in its third part emphasizes the need for re-reading of the Qur'an and for re-establishing the primary aims of the Islamic religion.

Key words: dressing, covering of face, covering of hair, hijab, niqab, chador, burqa, Muslim women

While in the West we are used seeing nuns and brides covering their heads with veil, it is less common to observe women who use it in their everyday lives. Meeting a woman who covers her , or even face, almost inevitably, unless it is a fashion trend, implies a meeting with other culture and religion. In most cases this is Islam. It is even assumed that covering of hair and face is a novelty in Islam and in the Qur'an there does not exist a single (explicit) rule about covering the face. Therefore the aim of this article is to shed some light on the background of this phenomenon and to present citations from the Qur'an which refer to covering of females, but also of males. Since these customs are now common in the Islamic countries and since there are many inconsistencies in the Western media regarding the names of these outfits – for example, the name 'hijab'

is used for something that is actually 'niqab' – one of the aims of this article is to explain these dilemmas. By presenting different types of outfits and their names, this article will also point to the heterogeneity of the Islamic world which, among other things, is observable in the different ways of dressing. At the end, the article will discuss the current debates on the significance and function of clothing: from the common Western attitude that uncovering of oneself in the Islamic world is one of the most vivid signs of resistance to the existing social order and the position of women in a given society, to the opinion that chador is to the Iranian women the only way they can enter the public sphere.

Origins of covering hair and face in Islam

Covering of hair and face in Islam is being explained in different ways, but the most commonly accepted explanation is that it is not a novelty introduced by Islam, but simply a continuation of the pre-Islamic customs. Due to the harsh conditions of nomadic life, the pre-Islam Arabs wanted to protect their women from the eyes of strangers, who presented potential enemies. Numerous attacks, abductions and rapes were a constant threat, so it seemed best to protect their women with veils and other coverings.

Moreover, the Muslim women looked up to the women of Persia and Byzantium (Rippin 2000:271) and changed the whole aim of covering of their bodies: while the first covered themselves to clearly distinguish themselves from the women of lower social strata, Muslim women, who met them during the prayers, started covering themselves to display belonging to the common faith – Islam (Esposito 2003:105). Their covering emphasized uniqueness of faith, while rich Byzantine and Persian women covered themselves to mark their separateness from the women of lower social position. By imitating women of Persia and Byzantium, some Muslim women started to cover their faces, even though the obligation of body covering was not mentioned anywhere in the Qur'an. This hypothesis of body covering as the pre-Islamic tradition could be confirmed by the writings of Tertulian who in his *De virginibus velandis* stated that the Arab women should be role models to the Christian women since they covered not only their heads but also their faces and preferred living in the semi-darkness rather than openly displaying their faces (Tertulian: XVII/4).

Qur'an regulations and Hadith on covering

In the Qur'an, we can find only three explicit rules on dressing: in the chapter on the methods for the prevention of fornication (Qur'an 24:30-31), in the ayet which speaks of the identifiability of the Muslim women (Qur'an 33:59) and in the ayet containing dressing instructions for the older women (Qur'an 24:60).

a) Protection of women

The saying goes that Mohamed did not prescribe covering for women in order to deny them freedom, but because he wanted to protect his wives and other Muslim women from the already mentioned assaults, abductions and rapes. We can ascertain that from the Qur'an 33:59, where it is stated that the covering with veils is necessary so that Muslim daughters and wives could have been easily recognized and therefore spared from harassment. In spite of the 'good intention' which can be recognized in this establishment of a 'safe territory', such a discourse is today hardly acceptable for women and men alike. It implies that men are incapable of restraining their urges and that men are by their nature 'hunters' lurking on their prey. Such an attitude is degrading not only for women, who are becoming objects and are forced to live in a kind of mobile isolation, but also for men, who are thus becoming creatures of diminished intellectual capacities.

b) Moral raising

In the chapter which outlines methods for the prevention of fornication, we first find the instruction to the men to avert their eyes and preserve their sex organs (Qur'an 24:39). (Chebel 1995:104-105) Even though the emissaries had to wear clothes which covered their bodies from shoulders to wrists and ankles, commonly the minimal area of male body that had to be covered was from the belly to the knees. This at the time primarily referred to the men who were too poor to afford themselves the whole 'suit' (Patel 2003:82). In time, commonly accepted attitude was that every orthodox Muslim man should wear a mustache and a beard as the signs of highly valued masculinity. Having beard meant following God's regulations and its hygiene was equally important as the hygiene of body and clothing. The beard was also believed to have aphrodisiac effect on women (Chebel 1995:104-105).

This instruction intended for men was important for two reasons: because of its existence and because of the possible comparison with the instructions intended for women. This address to men suggests that the above mentioned claim that all men were considered hunters should be softened and that according to the Qur'an, men were actually obliged to control their urges. The same was true for women: strength or weakness of both women and men was not in their strong or delicate physique, but in the moral raising above the physical body.

In the paragraph which was intended for women (Qur'an 24:31), we could notice that neither women, nor men, were allowed to look in the eyes of strangers and should not allow certain parts of their body to be visible. Since infidelity was considered to be one of the gravest sins in Islam, anything that could lead to it was virtually banned. Therefore Islamic teachings condemn pornography, pornographic literature, vulgar jokes, intimate physical contact, hugging, kissing of men and women who are not married, nudity, provoking clothes and the like (Haverić and Haverić 1991:39). Special place here is taken by – the look. According to the Islamic law, the look is the first step to infidelity. And since men are thought to be more aggressive, the Qur'an firstly

orders them to avert their eyes and preserve the shameful parts of their bodies, says Ishmael A. Patel (Patel 2003:80). But right after that, the Qur'an addressed the women, too, and the attitude was slowly accepted that women generally presented a temptation and that men should avoid them. This was confirmed in *hadith* which warned men to keep away from having conversations alone with other men's wives, because it was not possible for a man to be alone with a woman with whom he was not related without wanting her or thinking the forbidden thoughts (Memic ed. 1984:135).

The prescribed coverings for women, as signs of religiousness, are not important only for this life, but also for the after life. In Muslim's *hadith* it is stated that in heaven there will be no place for women who dress scantily, those who flirt or walk provokingly (El-Munziri ed. 2004b:446-447). The function of clothes is not only covering of the body, but it is important from eschatological point of view as well; it is not only a custom, but ethical or even theological system (Al-W. Bouhidba 2004:37). Chastity reflects proper religiousness which in the broadest sense includes submissiveness, restraint in posture and behavior, avoidance of excessiveness and modest and discreet appearance. This is, according to Ismael A. Patel the way of life the Qur'an brings you up into and whose ideal is the Prophet Mohamed (Patel 2003:79). A woman who covers herself demonstrates her belonging to the group, her submissiveness to the Creator and the Islamic upbringing.

The interpreters generally agree that this ayet, as well as the previous one referring to men, asks for modest behavior and dressing firstly in order to make the female believers submissive and modest and, in the same time, to protect their impeccable moral. Even though at the first sight it might appear differently, the original intention of ayet 24:31 is (was) not to subordinate women, but to prevent interaction between men and women which could lead to improper behavior. Segregation and dress codes became a norm in order to limit contacts between sexes, because according to the Islamic beliefs this was the main incentive for fornication, which destroys the society and shatters moral (Doumato 2001:170). During the meeting between a man and a woman who are not related, there is always a danger that the physical desire might arise, since the Satan is always present at such meetings. In one of the *hadith* we can even read that a woman appears in the Satan's form and that therefore a man, when he sees (another man's) woman has to return to his own wife, in order to reject what he feels in his soul (El-Munziri ed. 2004a:681, Memic ed. 1984:135).

Subordination of women in Islam is therefore not the consequence of the Qur'an regulations, since, in principle, the Qur'an testifies on the equality between men and women. Nevertheless, the Qur'an served as the basis for the subordination of women and in everyday life the rules on covering women and their isolation have spread (Schimmel 2003:27). The women were becoming more isolated and the opinion that the women were the seductresses whom the men should avoid was spreading. Some interpreters claimed that this was partly a consequence of the Christian view on woman as Eve (the seductress) who seduced Adam (Wadud 1999:25), even though there was no mentioning of any kind in the Qur'an of Eve's responsibility for the Original Sin.

c) Exception – older women

Finally, in the Qur'an we find a somewhat different instruction intended for older women. It says that it is not entirely inappropriate if older women, who do not intend to marry any more, do not strictly follow the prescribed dress code, as long as they remain restrained in their clothing and do not display any ornaments. In spite of this rule it is still considered better if they remain virtuous and do not take off their clothes (Qur'an 24:60), since women have an important role in preserving the family honor. This is obvious from the fact that the honor of the daughter reflects the honor of her father's family (Koehane 1988:107-117), and therefore it should not surprise us that women emphasize their virtuousness even at an older age. Only in this way can the mothers and grandmothers be the role model to their daughters-in-law and granddaughters, to whose shoulders the burden of preserving the family honor will eventually fall.

d) Girls during puberty

In one of the so-called 'weak' (daif) hadith, we read that it is inappropriate if a woman displays her body after entering puberty, i.e. after the first menstruation. According to this hadith, it is allowed to have uncovered only the hands up to the wrists and the face (Navodi Syed 2005). This hadith is questionable primarily because it is not authentic (sahih) or at least good (hasan) hadith and hence it should not influence the Sheryatic Laws even though in some countries the complete covering of women has become an everyday practice (Navodi Syed 2005). Even though the Muslims are usually unanimous on the attitude that the clothes should be long, non-transparent and loose so that the female shape would not be emphasized, the attitudes differ on the question whether the face, the palms and the feet should be covered (Salleh 1993:114).

Different dressing customs

During different periods, there were different interpretations on the exact type of clothing which was prescribed to the Muslim women and today the types of clothing highly differ in terms of shapes, fabric and colors. Different types of clothing are found in Morocco, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan or with Muslim women in Europe. In order to understand these differences, we will shortly present here the main types of head coverings, dresses and coats worn by the Muslim women.

a) Head coverings – hijab, al-amira, shayla and niqab

The most recognizable piece of clothing with Muslim women is a scarf. While in the West all our scarves look alike, the Muslim women recognize at least three types of scarves: hijab, al-amira and shayla. They all cover hair and neck and leave the face open. However, unlike hijab, which is made of one piece, al-amira consists of two pieces

which are usually worn together: a tube-like scarf worn close to the head, covering hair and partially the forehead, and a wider and more loose scarf which is placed over the first one, reaching up to the shoulders. A common head covering is also shayla which, just like hijab and al-amira, does not cover the face. Shayla resembles what we call in the West simply a scarf. If wide enough, shayla can be tied together in the similar way as hijab or it can be just lightly placed over the head, wound around the neck once or twice, with loose ends falling freely. A close fitting cap is usually worn under the scarf which prevents the hair to fall down over the face and to which the scarf can be bound.

As mentioned before, the custom of covering the face also became common in some regions. However, since non of the above described head covering do not cover the face, hijab, al-amira and shayla are then combined with niqab. Niqab, mostly worn by Saudi women is primarily intended for covering of the face. Even though the niqab usually leaves the area around the eyes uncovered, some Muslim women also wear the so-called 'total niqab'. In that case, the area around the eyes is also covered and gloves are also part of the total niqab.

b) Dresses – abaya and jibab

Abaya and jibab are dresses usually worn together with hijab, al-amira and shayla. Abaya is a long and comfortable, never tight, dress worn mostly in the Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Jibab, a long and wide dress is quite similar to abaya, but with a different upper part which looks more like a male jacket than a women's dress since it usually has a collar. Furthermore, jibab is not necessarily composed only of one part, but it can be composed of two or more parts – can be worn with trousers or with a long skirt and over a blouse or a shirt. Jibab is commonly worn in Jordan, Palestine and Syria, but it can be also found in Libya and Algeria.

c) Coats – kimar, chador and burqa

Kimar is a long, bell-shaped coat covering hair, neck and shoulders. It usually falls over the hips or reaches down to the knees. Chador, which is mostly worn by post-revolutionary Iranian women, is very similar to kimar. The only difference is that chador is longer and usually reaches down to the knees. Burqa, the most rigorous female outfit of the Islamic world is specific for Afghanistan. A thick fabric covers the whole body, including face and a limited visibility is allowed through a textile web covering the area around the eyes.

Attitudes towards body covering

In terms of clothing, the imposed violence was the strongest when the Talibans came to power in Afghanistan and ordered women to wear burqas or in Iran where, after

the Islamic revolution, a moral police was established. Azar Nafisi wrote about the streets of Teheran filled with cars called the Blood of God. Their task is to check whether women are wearing scarves in the proposed way, whether they wear make-up or are accompanied by men who are not related to them (Nafisi 2004:31). In this and the similar cases we can rightly ask the question whether the regulations on women dressing are in complete disagreement with the respect of human dignity and autonomy of women. In spite of that, we have to be careful not to engage in generalization and stigmatization and proclaim all Muslim women subordinate and voiceless. The fact remains that some Muslim women simply decide to wear traditional clothes and thus express their cultural and religious identity. Therefore it would be wrong to advocate the complete abolishment of wearing of hijab in the name of democracy and human rights, since thus we would violate the basic principle of democracy – freedom of expression and religion. On the other hand, the uncritical promotion of multi-culturalism is also unacceptable, because it negates the subordination and violence against women.

Of course, it is not easy to set boundaries and it is difficult to judge from the outside whether it is a case of free will or whether it is acceptance of the established norms. However, it is important to emphasize the fact that wearing the prescribed Islamic clothes is not always a sign of female subordination. This can be clearly seen from the example Azar Nafisi described in her book *Lolita in Teheran: Biography in Books*. Her grandmother refused to leave the house for months when, during the 1940ies, they demanded from her to uncover her body, while Azar Nafisi herself felt humiliated and embarrassed when she was asked a few decades later to cover herself (Nafisi 2004:157). But, is Azar Nafisi so much different from her grandmother? It seems that we are actually talking about a very similar reaction to the imposed – covering or uncovering. This is the example of two women who were denied their right to decide for themselves on what do they want or do not want to wear. The fact is that female clothes/coverings have become a power issue. Even though some Muslim women emphasize the religious character of the scarf and claim that it primarily reflects the desire of the Muslim women to abide to the laws of Islam, it is clear that, in case when wearing of the prescribed clothes is impossible to avoid, clothing is understood both as a symbol and a political statement. In the moment when the law providers prescribe a uniform and when there is no choice, we can say that the lives of women are subordinate to the interests of the institutions which they cannot influence themselves. What mostly disturbed the post-revolutionary Iranian women was when they were ordered to wear chador and their grandmothers when they were ordered to take off their scarves, was coercion and the impossibility to choose freely for themselves. From that point of view, there isn't a big difference between Iran, where chador is obligatory and women live in fear from punishment for the possible breaking of the rules and Turkey, where women in the public institutions are forbidden to wear scarves. Forceful and total negation of tradition is equally violent as the strict, obligatory dress code.

Conclusion

We have seen that the total niqab, Iranian chador and Afghan burqa, as the examples of the strictest dress customs, are not directly prescribed in the Islamic holy scriptures, but are the consequences of their patriarchic interpretations. The rules stipulated in the Qur'an point to the conclusion that the clothes, prescribed by the Islam, were prescribed for the purpose of establishing a moral order and not in order to subordinate women. However, these regulations can also support the image of women as temptation which should be covered and closed up so as not to incite men to fornication. Therefore, even though the Qur'an regulations mention only *kimar* (Qur'an 24:31) and *jibab* (Qur'an 33:59), in some Islamic countries the practice of covering women from 'head to toe' has become common.

The question arises whether it is possible at all to overcome the centuries long tradition? Can the reference to the Qur'an and the basic principles of Islamic religion be enough? Is their reinterpretation sufficient for overcoming the practices so unfavorable to women? In time, the covering of head, neck, shoulders and, in some countries, of the face, has become an integral part of the identity of the Muslim women and therefore the deeply rooted patriarchic attitudes cannot be changed overnight. Furthermore, as emphasized by an Iranian writer, Ziba Mir Hosseini, in certain cultural situations only the total niqab, chador or burqa enable women to appear in a dominantly male surroundings and hence it is exactly these clothes, which reflect female subordination, that are becoming the first step in their inclusion into the public sphere (Mir-Hosseini 1999:96).

In the Islamic world the discussion on female clothing is reduced to the following: even though the majority of people agree on the fact that these clothes express the belonging to the Islamic religion and subordination to the Creator, there are still doubts on political implications of covering and sheltering of the Islamic women; is this really a headstrong and free expression of resistance to the West and the Western modernism or is this another example of manipulating women, who thus remain loyal to the governmental politics of the Islamic countries? Another problem here is the Western opposition to hijab and other traditional head coverings. In the same way in which we can interpret the female covering in the Islamic world as the manipulation inside the Islamic world itself, we can also perceive the Western attempt to abolish it as a demonstration of power.

Finally, we have to admit that there are no simple answers. With oversimplified equating of culture and religion we cannot understand what is a part of patriarchic cultural heritage and what are religious customs. Therefore the re-reading of the Qur'an and other holy scriptures is important even though it cannot in itself offer solutions valid for today or simply erase the past. But re-reading can re-create the sensitivity and sensibility for what was actually one of the primary aims of religion: correcting the erroneous social structures. If we manage to recognize and accept this social aspect of the Islam, we could see that the covering of women in Islam was not an attempt at

their subordination but an attempt to improve their position at the time. We should be aware of that today, when we discuss the female dressing in the Islam. The aim of this discussions should not be to imitate un-critically the past practices, a kind of the return to the origin, or an uncompromised ban of wearing traditional clothing, but the aim should be the promotion of the basic idea of the Qur'an, which is that the erroneous social structures should be corrected. Regardless of the fact whether they justify themselves by the Qur'an or the old traditions. We have to find new, contemporary ways through which men and women could be realized as equals.

Translated by Tanja Bukovčan