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Examination session (May or November)

Year

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: WORLD RELIGIONS

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: To what extent are the concepts of Hijab and Niqab, supported by the Quran, Prophetic Narrations and Islamic Jurists?

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I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

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has been a pleasure to work with. She is the only Muslim student on campus and she takes herself and her religion seriously. Initially we tried to get this topic to fit in the History syllabus and struggled greatly. After the conversion to World Religions the essay came together much more easily. Even during the early struggles, I was certain that this was to be her topic regardless of the difficulties in getting it to conform to the criteria. She was committed to this topic at a very personal level and worked to the best of her ability to produce the best possible product.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

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Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number	
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		Achievement level	
		First examiner	Second examiner
General assessment criteria <i>Refer to the general guidelines.</i>	A Research question	2	
	B Approach	3	
	C Analysis/interpretation	4	
	D Argument/evaluation	4	
	E Conclusion	2	
	F Abstract	2	
	G Formal presentation	3	
	H Holistic judgement	4	
Subject assessment criteria <i>Refer to the subject guidelines.</i> <i>Not all of the following criteria will apply to all subjects; use only the criteria that apply to the subject of the extended essay.</i>	J		
	K		
	L		
	M		
Total out of 36		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Name of first examiner:
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number:

Name of second examiner:
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number:

This essay is an excellent example
of an argument using the traditional
techniques of logic. It poses a
clear well defined question,
comes out a disciplined analysis,
& makes a well developed
argument. It would be stronger
if it also used more
historical analysis

Extended Essay

World Religions

*To what extent are the concepts of Hijab and
Niqab, supported by the Quran, Prophetic
Narrations and Islamic Jurists?*

Word count: 3991

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my parents for their support and understanding, always, my father for his wise guidance and advice.

I would also like to thank _____ for his direction on this complex topic. It is greatly appreciated Sir.

Abstract

The dress code of Muslim women has become an extremely controversial issue today, not only in Muslim societies but increasingly within the global community. This essay thus, examines the extent to which the concepts of hijab (headscarf) and niqab (face veil) are supported by the Quran, Prophetic narrations (hadith) and the opinions of Islamic jurists.

Three main verses were identified from two chapters of the Quran, Surah (chapter) al-Ahzab and an-Nur, relating directly the Islamic dress code. It was found that there was somewhat a contradiction in these two verses, where al-Ahzab is claimed by the conservatives to command the covering of the face, while an-Nur does not. Therefore, in order to put these into a historical context, the chronologies of the two surahs were examined. To further substantiate the counter-claims, the Hadith were also investigated, with regards to the dress code of women during the Prophetic era, where claims to support the niqab were also explored. Then, through the analysis of the Quranic verses and hadith three varying viewpoints were identified, where the liberal view that neither the hijab nor the niqab is required; the moderate opinion that the hijab is obligatory while the niqab is not. The conservative viewpoint on the other hand, points out that the niqab is mandatory. Following from here, the issue was further sustained using the opinions the four main traditional legal jurists, who were linked to the first generation of Islam, in order to arrive at a clearer conclusion.

A large body of evidence was found substantiating the moderate position that the hijab is supported by the Quran, Prophetic traditions and Islamic jurists while the niqab can be deemed to be only optional.

Word count: 281

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1. Introduction, Aim & Assumptions

The issue regarding the Islamic dress code for women is very much a controversial subject not only in the public arena where it has presented itself as a highly complex matter but even within Islamic societies, where opinions are diverse.

Three main positions emerging from the analysis are examined. Firstly, the liberal viewpoint, that hijab and veil¹ are not required. Secondly, the moderate voice, that the hijab is required, whilst the veil is not. Thirdly, the more conservative opinion, that the hijab and veil are both obligatory. **Thus, the key question here is, to what extent are the concepts of hijab and niqab supported by the Quran, Prophetic traditions and Islamic jurist?** Thus, this essay seeks to find the origins of the issue, which impacts on the identity of Muslim women.

It is generally not known that Islam has a systematic method of collecting data, having a rigorous system of analysis and recording set against established criteria, which makes relevant data amenable to analysis (See Appendix 2). In order to effectively analyse the data, different forms of data utilised as follows:

- a) Quran²- the word of God transmitted to humankind through the Prophet, whose role was only a messenger. The Quran is proven to remain unchanged since its revelation to the Prophet. This claim is substantiated by the preservation of Quran in its full and systemised version of the physical text is still accessible in Tashknet. It is to be noted that on receiving the revelation, the Prophet dictated it to the scribe and it was recorded immediately using natural materials such as leaves, parchment, barks, bones etc³.
- b) Narrations of the Prophet-authenticated hadith,⁴ deriving from the Prophet himself and two out of six masters of hadith, that is, those who have collected more than 100,000 hadith. The authentic hadith consist of unbroken or multiple narrations relating the incident and those regarded as reliable reporters, through character analysis are deemed authentic (refer to Appendix 2).
- c) Secondary sources- Islamic texts, websites, journal articles relating to the Quran and hadith are used. In order to systematically analyse the sources a matrix has been

¹ Concepts elaborated in Section 3 below

² Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Quran Translation and Commentary*. Birmingham: IPCI: Islamic Vision, 1999

³ Please refer to Appendix 2

⁴ Please refer to Appendix 3

outlined in Appendix 2, which provides a criteria for examining the hadiths. It should be noted that all secondary sources, including websites used have been confined to those only containing authenticated hadiths.

In order to strengthen the study, Islamic jurists of the four main traditional Islamic Schools of Thought have been used; whose sources are closer to the Prophetic era and within first generation and therefore deemed to be reliable. In terms of scope, this essay will primarily be related to head and face covering and not garments to cover the outer body, as this is another argument altogether.

In terms of the structure of the essay, firstly, the background and context are outlined, which includes the key definitions and the historical perspective. Secondly, the Quran and hadith are examined, followed by the varying interpretations of the Islamic dress code. Thirdly, the various viewpoints are discussed and analysed. Finally, relevant conclusions are drawn against the key question as outlined above.

2. Key Concepts & Historical Perspective

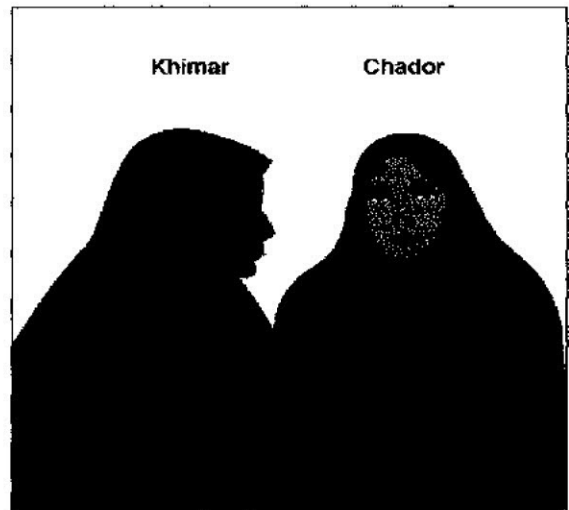
2.1 Definition of Key Concepts.

There are many different terms used to describe the hijab and the veil hence this section aims to bring clarity to the essay by providing pictures⁵ and definitions for the expressions used.



Hijab: literally means 'to cover' or 'to shelter'. During the time of the Prophet it originally referred to a screen.⁶ Today however, it refers to the headscarf.

Khimar (Plural Khumur): all pieces of cloth which are used to cover the head. It is a cloth which is used by a woman to cover her head but it was covers the upper back and bosom.⁷ Chador: a full length cloak worn by Iranian women usually, with a headscarf beneath.⁸

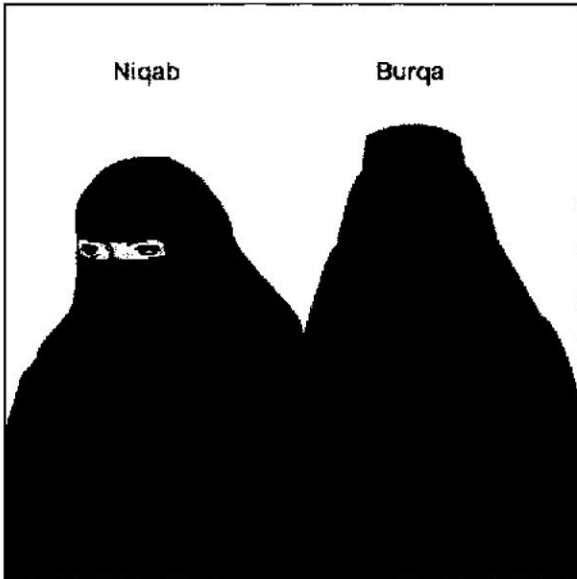


⁵ Asser, Martin. *Why Muslim Women Wear the Veil*. BBC News. 5 Oct 2006. 23 July 2007. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5411320.stm)

⁶ Ali, Yusuf *The Holy Quran Translation and Commentary* P:1220 n.3760

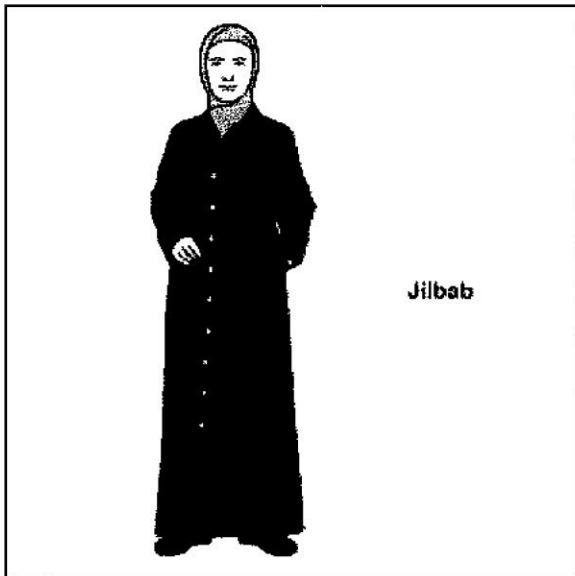
⁷ *The Dictionary of Classical Arabic, Aqrab al-Manwid* in Al Muhajaba. "A Study of Surah an- Nur." 15 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.muhababah.com/surah-an-nur.htm>>.

⁸ Asser, Martin. *Why Muslim Women Wear the Veil*. 5 Oct 2006. 23 July 2007. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5411320.stm)



Niqab: a veil covering the face and exposing the eyes. This can also be worn with a second veil, covering the eyes.⁹

Burqa: a full body garment, containing a mesh to see through.¹⁰



Jilbab (plural jilbab): an outer garment; long gown covering the whole body or a cloak covering head, neck and bosom.¹¹

⁹ Asser, Martin. *Why Muslim Women Wear the Veil*. 5 Oct 2006. 23 July 2007. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5411320.stm)

¹⁰ Asser, Martin. *Why Muslim Women Wear the Veil*. 5 Oct 2006. 23 July 2007. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5411320.stm)

¹¹ Ali, Yusuf *The Holy Quran Translation and Commentary* P:1220 n.3765

2.2. Historical Perspective

There are three different historical perspectives emerging from the historical analysis, namely, the pre-Islamic (before Prophet Muhammed); Islamic (during the time of the Prophet and first four caliphates) and post-Islamic (after the first four caliphates). The veiling custom can be traced back many centuries before Islam, to the Near Eastern civilizations, like the Christian Byzantine and Zoroastrian Persian empires (before the first Century)¹². Primarily worn to indicate wealth and prestige and differentiate women belonging to the aristocratic class from common women. The majority of the women, however, lived in the rural and nomadic areas and had active roles in supporting their families, making it impractical for them to wear the face veil¹³. Veiling was also a concept unheard of in Arabia, among the Bedouin women in particular, who were accustomed to the traditional head covering, which was tied and hung loosely behind their backs¹⁴. Within the Islamic period certain authenticated hadith indicate that women in the presence of the Prophet did not cover their face (Appendix 1). However, during the post-Islamic period, Islam spread to the Byzantine and Persian empires and veiling became incorporated into the Islamic culture. Although veiling was an unheard of concept within the society of Medina, it was adopted and slowly became apart of the Arabian society. Such customs were then justified by turning back to the Quran¹⁵. Thus; face covering was adapted in Arabia after the Prophet and the Caliphate therefore not part of the original Islamic teachings.

¹² Muhammed Marmaduke Pickthall- a well known Quranic exegete

¹³ Reese, L., "Historical Perspectives on Islamic Dress." 2007. 20 Jan. 2007

<<http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/essay-01.html>>.

¹⁴ Syed, Ibrahim B. "Women in Islam: Hijab." 2001. 30 Jan. 2007

<<http://www.islamfortoday.com/syed01.htm>>.

¹⁵ Syed, Ibrahim B. "Women in Islam: Hijab." 2001. 30 Jan. 2007

<<http://www.islamfortoday.com/syed01.htm>>.

3. Examination of the Quran

This section examines the three main Quranic verses related to the Islamic dress code:

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments.”¹⁶ (24:31). For the sake of accuracy, the transliteration of this verse is cited in Appendix 4.

From this verse, two points directly related to the dress code can be identified:

- a) Not to display ornaments
- b) Draw the veil over the bosom.

The Arabic word *Khumur*, translated here as ‘veil’, refers to a head covering and not the face although in many cases it has been interpreted in this way (Section 3.3.3). This can be verified through a hadith “The prayer of a woman past puberty will not be accepted without a *khimar*.”¹⁷ This demonstrates that the *khimar* is not a garment to cover the face, since during pray—the face is exposed. In this verse, moreover, the face, as mentioned by conservatives is not addressed, so one can conclude that this is not to be covered. The conservative interpretation therefore, seems to exaggerate the Quranic verse by adding subjective interpretations into translations. It should also be noted that an-Nur verse 30, commands men to lower their gazes too, something that is often left unsaid.

A verse signifying the actual revelation of the hijab is the Surah al-Ahzab (33:53):

“O ye who Believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses until leave is given you for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation: but when ye are invited, enter; and when ye have taken your meal, disperse, without seeking familiar talk. Such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet: he is ashamed to dismiss you, but Allah

¹⁶ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf *The Holy Quran Translation and commentary* P: 996

¹⁷ Albani, Nasir Ud-Din (Sheikh). "The Translation and Summary of Al-Mar'ah al-Muslimah." 3rd edition, 1996. Al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah P: 5-20.

*is not ashamed (to tell you the truth). And when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want ask them before a screen: that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs. Nor is it right for you that ye should annoy Allah's Messenger, or that ye should marry his widows after him at any time. Truly such a thing is in Allah's sight and enmity.*¹⁸”

This verse deals with refining societal morals within the Arabian society. The hijab (screen) revealed, was a part of this reform to give the Prophet's Wives respect and privacy as 'Mothers of the Believers'. Respect was thus given to them, in this special way.¹⁹

Another verse promoting a more general ruling is Surah al-Ahzab (33:59):

*“O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should **cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.**”*²⁰ (See Appendix 4)

This verse consists of two main parts concerning a Muslimah's dress code:

- A) To draw their outer garments around them.
- B) So that they are recognized.

The controversy arises as some argue that surah al-Ahzab commands the niqab while an-Nur allows the display of the face. Therefore, one way to arrive at a conclusion is to determine the chronologies of the two surahs, where the one revealed first overrides the last surah, this is illustrated below.

3.1. Chronology

The Quran can be ordered through a historical timeline. For instance, the majority²¹ of Surah al-Ahzab was revealed at the time of the Battle of Khandaq (585AD)²².

¹⁸ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf *The Holy Quran Translation and commentary* P: 1217

¹⁹ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf *The Holy Quran Translation and commentary* P:1217

²⁰ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf *The Holy Quran Translation and Commentary* P: 1220

²¹ Some parts of the Surah were revealed in A.H 7. See n. 3705 *The Holy Quran Translation and commentary* by Yusuf Ali.

²² Ali, Yusuf *The Holy Quran Commentary and Translation*. See n. 3705.

The verse of the hijab (33:53) was also revealed in that year, during the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh. The hijab was enforced to preserve the dignity of the Prophet's household during a time when rumours were being spread about him. This safeguard was then extended to all Muslim women, who are addressed to wear the jilbab, in verse 59²³, due to the conditions existing then in Medina²⁴.

Surah an-Nur was revealed similarly, during the slander of Aisha²⁵, as verses 11- 20 are associated with this incident²⁶. This occurred after the campaign against Bani Al-Mustaliq, in 586AD²⁷. The 'hijab', furthermore, is only mentioned in al-Ahzab and this is with reference to the Prophet's household. While in an- Nur Muslim women are addressed generally to 'draw their veils over their bosoms'. The hijab was therefore, a special sign of respect for the Prophet's household, established five or six years before he died²⁸. The examination of historical evidence strongly suggests that Surah al-Ahzab was revealed before an-Nur, therefore an-Nur can be called the after-ruling²⁹.

Surah an-Nur commands that all should be covered except "what is apparent" and there are different views on this:

- 1) It is directed towards the outer garments.
- 2) It means the hands and face

Despite the prevailing dispute over the wording of an-Nur, the dress code of women during the Prophetic era can be further investigated using hadiths, as outlined below.

²³ Maududi, Syed Abu-Ala'. "Chapter Introductions to the Quran." 15 May 2007. <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/maududi/>>

²⁴ Ali, Yusuf *The Holy Quran Commentary and Translation* P:1220 n.3766

²⁵ The third wife of the Prophet

²⁶ Ali, Yusuf *The Holy Quran Commentary and Translation* P: 1009 n.3033

²⁷ Maududi, Syed Abu-Ala'. "Chapter Introductions to the Quran." 15 May 2007. <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/maududi/>>

²⁸ Ali, Yusuf *The Holy Quran Commentary and Translation* n.3760

²⁹ Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007 <<http://www.muahajabah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

3.2. Dress code during the Prophetic era

The tables in Appendix 1 contain authentic³⁰ hadith, demonstrating the nature of the veil for instance, as evident from Table 3 (Appendix 1), women were present with their faces uncovered in front of the Prophet, yet he did not tell them to cover up. These hadith come after the revelation of both surahs, therefore, they eliminate controversies arising concerning the chronologies of the surahs.³¹ Table 2, further shows that women were encouraged to carry out social duties despite wearing the 'veil'. Historical evidence, however, shows that Persian and Byzantine women of the upper class wore the face veil as a symbol of wealth; other women within these societies, however, did not as they had to work.³² This reflects the constraints the face veil places, hence the veil mentioned here, should be something that does not prevent them from carrying out their duties.

Some hadith that are used to support niqab are also presented in Appendix 2 (Table 4). These show that the translations of the hadith identified are misleading. Therefore, the findings from the analysis seem to identify with the moderate interpretation, allowing the face to be revealed.

Deriving from the differed interpretation of Quranic verses and hadith three distinguished viewpoints are discussed below.

3.3 Different Interpretations of Islamic Dress Code

3.3.1 Liberal Interpretation:

Among those who believe the headscarf and niqab are not required, it is argued that the term Hijab, in the Qur'an, is used in the context of a partition, rather than a piece of cloth worn on the head. They believe that there is a confusion regarding the term khimar and hijab, where the khimar is often referred to as the hijab. Hence, the hijab is not obligatory. The Sudanese scholar, Hassan Al-Turabi, is among those who believe that the hijab is optional, Al-Turabi states- "The word hijab appears in the Koran. It refers to a

³⁰ Please refer to Appendix 2

³¹ Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007
<<http://www.muhababah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

³² Please refer to 3.1 Historical Perspective

curtain in the Prophet's room... The Koran did not refer to this thing as a hijab. This was called a *khimar*, and it was worn over the chest only. What they are referring to is the *khimar*, not the hijab.³³

Others, including the Tunisian scholar Haroon Siddqui, believe that the Qur'an, states clearly only that women and men should be modest (an-Nur, 24:31-32). He also argues that there are divided interpretations of words like 'adornments' and 'what appears thereof'³⁴. Due to the varying interpretations cannot be certain of the right position³⁵. Thus, it is thought that neither the headscarf nor the niqab are required.

3.3.2 Moderate Interpretation

The moderate view holds that the headscarf is required but the niqab is not. This is an opinion shared by the majority of the Muslims including eminent scholars. According to Imam Kathir³⁶:

"Everything that covers something else is called a khimar. But in common usage khimar has come to be used as a name for the garment with which a woman covers her head. Draw their Khumur to cover their bosom means that they should wear the Khimar in such a way that they cover their chest so that they will be different from the women of the jahiliyah...³⁷"

Imam Qurtubi further verifies this point:

"Women in those days used to cover their heads with the Khimar, throwing its ends upon their backs. This left the neck and upper part of the chest bare, along with ears, in the

³³ Memri TV: The Middle East Media Research Institute. 4 April 2006. 27 March 2007
(<http://www.memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=1112>)

³⁴ Siddiqui, Haroon. "Veil (Hijab) Furor Hides an Arrogant Bias." 2006. 17 Feb. 2007
<http://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_701_750/veil_furor_hides_an_arrogant_bias.htm>.

³⁵ Siddiqui, Haroon. "Veil (Hijab) Furor Hides an Arrogant Bias." 2006. 17 Feb. 2007
<http://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_701_750/veil_furor_hides_an_arrogant_bias.htm>.

³⁶ Imam Qurtubi was an eminent scholar and Imam ibn Kathir is a commentator of the Quran and scholar. Both are considered as traditional scholars and well known within the Muslim world.

³⁷ Al Muhajaba. "A Study of Surah an- Nur." 15 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.muhababah.com/surah-an-nur.htm>>.

manner of the Christians. Then God commanded them to cover those parts with the Khimar.³⁸

Numerous scholars within this interpretation refer to the Quran, arguing that although covering the head is not explicitly said it is implied through words like “outer garments” (Surah al-Ahzab). Authentic hadith related to the Prophets actions are also examined, where the Prophet himself did not command women to cover their faces in his presence³⁹. Thus, it is thought the niqab is not obligatory whilst the headscarf is.

3.3.3 Conservative interpretation.

Within the conservative viewpoint it is believed that the niqab is obligatory. This is supported by modernist-reformist like Ibn Timiya and Ibn Wahab⁴⁰, whose opinions have been integrated into the Middle East. Thus, due to the economic power of the regimes in Middle-East and ensuing globalisation, their ideologies are becoming widespread to other societies like Asia.

It is argued for a woman to ‘guard her modesty’ her face should be concealed too, as this is the primary symbol of beauty. Sheikh Muhammad bin Saalih al 'Uthaimeen for example disputes that the verse “...and to draw their veils all over *Juyyobihinna* (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms) ...”⁴¹ Since the bosoms are required to be covered surely this extends to the face as well in relation to its desirous nature. Furthermore, they refer to Surah Al-Ahzab interpreting the verses pertaining to the hijab⁴², as a sign underlining the function of the niqab in this modern day⁴³. Some of the evidences for niqab are also said to be found in

³⁸ Al Muhajaba. "A Study of Surah an- Nur". 15 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.muhababah.com/surah-an-nur.htm>>.

³⁹ Please refer to Appendix 1

⁴⁰ Eaton, Charles Le Gai. *Remembering God: Reflections on Islam*. Kazi Publishers, 2000 P:210

⁴¹ Uthaimeen , Muhammad bin Saalih al (sheikh). “The Veil (Niqaab) is Obligatory with detailed Proofs.” 6 Oct 2006. 17 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.theclearpath.com/viewtopic.php?t=121>>.

⁴² Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 53

⁴³ Madani, Memon Mohammed. *Hijab*. Islamic Book Service: New Delhi, 2004 P: 27

certain hadith, however, table 4 (Appendix 2) shows that this may not be the case. The conservative interpretation thus, follows the discipline where the niqab is obligatory.

With reference to al-Ahzab (33:59), Muslim women in general are addressed to cover themselves with an outer garment however, in a convenient manner, so that they are recognized. Thus, the liberal interpretation suggesting that no form of covering is required is questioned, since this verse indicates the requirement of an outer covering. Wearing the face veil alternatively, would make them unrecognizable therefore; the conservative interpretation would be impractical. Hence, this verse clearly indicates that women have not been restricted to the house and that they are allowed to travel, provided they are dressed appropriately. The moderate viewpoint therefore, seems to offer a practical solution, an outer garment allowing women to be recognised.

One inference that can be made regarding the liberal and conservative interpretations is that their views are supported by more contemporary scholars like Hassan Al-Turabi (1932)⁴⁴ and Muhammad bin Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (present) respectively. The exception here seems to be Ibn Taimiya (a conservative, 1263-1328 AD) who held stringent opinions regarding Islamic laws, that the niqab is mandatory. The moderate interpretation alternatively, is supported by the traditional scholars (730 AD), who were closer to the era of the first four caliphates, their opinions are outlined below.

4. Islamic law regarding Hijab

The table below shows the opinion of scholars within the four main Islamic schools of thought⁴⁵. These schools of thought also define the Islamic laws, as the scholars were present during the first generation of Islam.

⁴⁴ "Profile: Sudan's Islamist Leader." 30 June 2005. 28 June 2007

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3190770.stm>>.

⁴⁵ The founders of the four Islamic schools of thought include Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Hanbal.

Table 1: A matrix of Scholars and their opinions on the Islamic dress code⁴⁶

Scholars	Madhab ⁴⁷	Extent of exposure	Quotations from scholarly books
Abu Hanifa (d. 730 CE)	Hanafi	Face, hands and feet ⁴⁸	
Ibn Rushd (d. 100 CE)	Maliki	Face and Hands	“Since the normal case is that a woman’s hands and face are revealed by the force of habit and for worship, as this is required in salat and hajj, then it is appropriate to say that the exemption applies to these.” ⁴⁹
Qurtabi (d.1200 CE)	Maliki	Face and Hands	“The consensus of the Muslims is that all of a woman except her face and hands, but some disagree about these two.” ⁵⁰
Ahmad ibn Naqib (d.1367 CE)	Shafi’i	Niqab required	
Ibn Hajar (1442 CE)	Shafi’i	Niqab required	
Ibn Qudama (1200 CE)	Hanbali	Face and Hands	“...because necessity demands the face should be uncovered for buying and selling and the hands should be uncovered for giving and taking.” ⁵¹

⁴⁶ Information in Table 3 is derived from Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007
<<http://www.muhababah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

⁴⁷ School of thought

⁴⁸ Imam ibn Taimiya, *Fatwa an-Nisa* p:36 in Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007
<<http://www.muhababah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

⁴⁹ Imam ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid* in Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007
<<http://www.muhababah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

⁵⁰ Imam Shafi’i, *Al Umm* in Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007
<<http://www.muhababah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

Table 1 is a clear indication of the majority opinion held by scholars, allowing the face and hands to be exposed for practical reasons. Within the Shafi'i school, it can be said that earlier scholars held this majority opinion however later scholars did not.

Further evidence reinforcing the moderate interpretation is the presence of Imam Hanifa (730 AD) present during the Umayyad (after the first four Caliphs) and early Abbasid era, during the first generation of the Prophets companions. Imam Malik (673-755 AD) was also present during this period. He spent his existence in Medina, the centre of Islamic law both during Prophet's time and throughout the era of the first four Caliphs. Furthermore, Imam Shafi'i as a cousin of the prophet was raised among scholars and was a student of Imam Maliki. Consequently, Imam Hanbal became a student of Imam Shafi'i⁵². Thus, the close connections these eminent imams had to the Prophet and the first generation strengthen the moderate interpretation, as the imams had similar opinions relating to women's garments.

5. Analysis, Synthesis & Summary

A large body of evidence substantiates the moderate interpretation, where the niqab is not obligatory, therefore taking precedence over conservative and liberal views as outlined below:

- a) The historical perspective shows that veiling was in fact a pre-Islamic tradition that was adopted in Medina during the spread of Islam to the Persian and Byzantine

⁵¹ Imam ibn Qudama, *Al-Mughni* in Al Muhajabah. "What is the Final Rule on Hijab." 6 June 2007
<<http://www.muhababah.com/finalrule.htm>>.

⁵² Zakiyah Munir, Lily. "General Introduction to Islamic Law." 2005. 15 Aug. 2007
<http://www.lfip.org/laws718/docs/lily-pdf/Introduction_to_Islamic_Law.pdf>.

empires. Therefore, indicating that veiling was not practiced during the Islamic period.

- b) An examination of Quranic verses reveals that, nowhere in the Quran are women explicitly asked to cover their faces. Within Surah an-Nur however, women are asked to cover their bosoms with a 'khimar', a garment referred to in a hadith about prayer, which indicates the exposure of the face and hands is allowed to be displayed during prayer.
- c) Men are also asked to lower their gazes in surah an-Nur, however, if women were commanded to be fully covered then why do men have to lower their gazes?
- d) The true meaning of 'hijab' has to be taken into consideration, where the hijab was initially prescribed as a screen for the Prophet's Wives to provide them respect and privacy as referenced in the Quran (33:53).
- e) The chronology pinpoints to the revelation of Surah al-Ahzab before an-Nur. This means the ruling of an-Nur (allowing the display of face) would succeed the initial commandments in al-Ahzab, argued by conservatives to command the niqab.
- f) The historical background at the time has to be also accounted, since at the al-Ahzab was revealed, the jilbab was prescribed to protect women's dignity within the emerging conditions of prosecution of Muslims in Medina. Hence, it was revealed to prevent women from being harmed when they travelled; it was not a measure to imprison women. Thus, it should be a convenient garment, allowing women to travel, niqab conversely would be impractical particularly when travelling or carrying out social duties.
- g) Further evidence comes from hadith containing women with unveiled faces in front of the Prophet. If the niqab is indeed obligatory, why then did the Prophet not command the women in these hadith (many of whom were unrelated to him), to cover their faces?
- h) Some of the hadith claimed by conservatives to command the niqab were examined. These, however, show that translators have influenced their meanings by adding subjective comments, imposing the niqab.
- i) Finally, the dominant opinions that emerge from eminent and traditional scholars, who have connections to the first generation of Islam, allow the exposure of the hands and face.

All of the above points, through the examination and analysis of the various sources, support the moderate viewpoint.

6. Conclusion

The body of evidence gathered support that moderate interpretation, as a more accurate position. Thus, the conclusion can be reached that the hijab is supported to a large extent by multiple sources namely, the Quran, Prophetic narration and Islamic jurists, while the niqab does not. This view provides a practical solution, allowing women to participate socially and economically while dressed appropriately, much like in the Prophetic era. The emancipation of women that existed during the Prophet's time, however, does not seem to be prevalent in certain societies. Niqab seems to be used as a restrictive measure, limiting women's interactions and freedom, supposedly based on the Quran and hadith.

A point that emerges from the analysis is that subjective interpretations are added to translation both in the Quran and hadith, for example, "to cover their bosoms", which is translated by conservatives as including the face-neck-bosom. This has been adopted by some regimes who are more akin to this type of interpretation, which favours their ideological position and cultural orientation. It is however, to be noted that Islam is a religion provides an equal perspective to men and women, as both are asked to lower their gazes and guard their modesty (24:30), although this is not often acknowledged.

The study is however, limited in terms of its depth, due to the lack of knowledge regarding classical Arabic, which otherwise would have provided greater insight into the Islamic dress code within the Quran and hadith. However, the study has contributed to a clearer position, where the face is not required to be covered, although, it ultimately rests on the choice of the individual, their circumstances or the regimes which imposes it as a rule.

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Appendix 1

Table 2 – A Matrix of Authentic Hadith & Interpretation

Source of Hadeeth	Original narrator	Text	Type of Hadeeth ⁵³	Interpretation
Al-Bukhaari <i>Volume 7, Book 65, Number 375: Muslim Book 008, Number 3334:</i>	Anas	I know (about) the Hijab (the order of veiling of women) more than anybody else. Ubai bin Ka'b used to ask me about it. Allah's Apostle became the bridegroom of Zainab bint Jahsh whom he married at Medina. After the sun had risen high in the sky, the Prophet invited the people to a meal. Allah's Apostle remained sitting and some people remained sitting with him after the other guests had left. Then Allah's Apostle got up and went away, and I too, followed him till he reached the door of 'Aisha's room. Then he thought that the people must have left the place by then, so he returned and I also returned with him. Behold, the people were still sitting at their places. So he went back again for the second time, and I went along with him too. When we reached the door of 'Aisha's room, he returned and I also returned with him to see that the people had left. Thereupon the Prophet hung a curtain between me and him and the Verse regarding the order for (veiling of women) Hijab was revealed.	Sahih	The Hijab here can be seen in its true sense, as a curtain to guard the privacy of the Prophets wives.
Al-Bukhaari <i>Volume 2, Book 26, Number 714:</i>	Hafsa	(On 'Id) We used to forbid our virgins to go out (for 'Id prayer). A lady came and stayed at the Palace of Bani Khalaf. She mentioned that her sister was married to one of the companions of Allah's Apostle who participated in twelve Ghazawats along with Allah's Apostle and her sister was with him in six of them. She said, "We used to dress the wounded and look after the patients." She (her sister) asked Allah's Apostle, "Is there any harm for a woman to stay at home if she doesn't have a veil?" He said, "She should cover herself with the veil of her companion and she should take part in the good deeds and in the religious gatherings of the believers." When Um 'Atiyya came, I asked her. "Did you hear anything about that?" Um 'Atiyya said, "Bi 'Abi" and she never mentioned the name of Allah's Apostle without saying "Bi 'Abi" (i.e. Let my father be sacrificed for you). We asked her, "Have you heard Allah's Apostle saying so and so (about women)?" She replied in the affirmative and said, "Let my father be sacrificed for him. He told us that unmarried mature virgins who stay often screened or unmarried young virgins and mature girls who stay often screened should come out and take part in the good deeds and in the religious gatherings of the believers. But the menstruating women should keep away from the Musalla (praying place)." I asked her, "The menstruating women?" She replied, "Don't they present themselves at 'Arafat and at such and such places?"	Sahih	The Prophet encouraged women to contribute to society despite being veiled. Hence the veil here may be interpreted as something that should not hinder the women from carrying out duties, somewhat like the headscarf. The face veil, to me seems impractical as it takes away the personal touch that is required in social duties like, treating patients.

⁵³ Please refer to Appendix 1.3 Hadith Categorization

Appendix 1: Table 2 – A Matrix of Authentic Hadith & Interpretation continued.....

Source of hadith	Narrator	Text	Type of hadith	Interpretation
Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume I, Book 4, Number: 148	Aisha	The wives of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) used to go to Al-Manasi, a vast open place to answer the call of nature at night. Umar used to say to the Prophet "Let your wives be veiled," but Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) did not do so. One night Sauda bint Zam'ah the wife of the Prophet went out at 'Isha' time and she was a tall lady. Umar addressed her and said, "I have recognized you, O Sauda." He said so, as he desired eagerly that the verses of Al-Hijab (the observing of veils by the Muslim women) may be revealed. So Allah revealed the verses of "Al-Hijab"	Sahih	This hadith refer to al-Ahzab verse 53, the verse of the hijab showing that this verse is related to the Prophet's wives; therefore it is not a command for all Muslim women. This is emphasised as Umar one of the closest companions of the prophet within the hadith says to the Prophet- "Let your wives be veiled," He did not however, ask for women in general to be veiled. The translators note inserted here-(the observing of veils by the Muslim women)is therefore misleading.

Source of hadith: Khan, Muhsin. *Translation of Al-Bukhari*. University of South California.2006. 25 Oct 2007.
 <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/054.sbt.htm>>

Table 3: A matrix containing hadith of Women with unveiled faces

Source of Hadith	Narrator	Text	Type of Hadith	Interpretation
Al Bukhari Book 74 Number:2 47 ³⁴	Abdullah bin Abbas	Al-Fadl bin Abbas rode behind the Prophet as his companion rider on the back portion of his she camel on the day of Nahr, and Al-Fadl was a handsome man. The Prophet stopped to give some people verdicts. Meanwhile a beautiful woman from the tribe of Khath'am came asking the verdict of Allah's Apostle. Al-Fadl started looking at her since her beauty attracted him. The Prophet looked back while Al-Fadl was looking at her; so the Prophet held out his hand backwards and caught the chin of Al-Fadl and turned is face to the other side in order that he should not gaze at her. She said "Oh Allah's Apostle! The obligation of performing Hajj enjoined Allah on his worshippers has become due on my father, who is an old man and who cannot sit firmly on the riding animal. Will it be sufficient that I perform Hajj on his behalf?" He said "Yes"	Sahih	The woman in this hadith must have had her face uncovered for her beauty to be noticed by Al-Fadl. The Prophets action of turning Al- Fadl's chin, underlines the notion within Surah an-Nur, commanding men and woman to lower their gazes. This raises the point that if women were to be completely covered why should men lower their gazes? Moreover the Prophet, didn't ask the women to cover herself in his presence.

Source of Hadith	Narrator	Text	Type of Hadith	Interpretation
Al Bukhari Volume 4 Book 54 Number: 515	Sa'd bin Abu Waqqaq	Once Umar leave to see Allah's Apostle, in whose company there were some Quraishi Women, who were talking to him and asking him for financial support, raising their voices. When Umar asked permission to enter, the women quickly screened themselves (fa badirna al-hijab). When Allah's Apostle admitted Umar, Allah's Apostle was smiling. Umar said, "O Allah's Apostle! May Allah keep you happy always!" Allah Apostle said "I am astonished with these women here with me. As soon as they heard your voice they quickly screened themselves". Umar said, "O Allah's Apostle! You have more right to be feared by them". Then he addressed (the women) saying "O enemies of yourselves! Do you fear me and not the Allah's Apostle? The replied, "Yes, for you are a fearful and fierce man as compared to the Allah's Apostle". On that Allah's Apostle said (to Umar), " By him in Whose hands my life is, when Satan sees you taking a path, he takes a path other than yours"	Sahih	The women here were not screened (fully covered) in front of the Prophet. They only observed hijab, upon the entrance of Umar. Once again, the Prophet did not command the women to cover completely in his presence.
Muslim Book: 4 Number: 1926	Jabir bin Abdullah	Jabir b. 'Abdullah reported: I observed prayer with the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) on the 'Id day. He commenced with prayer before the sermon without Adhan and Iqama. He then stood up leaning on Bilal, and he commanded (them) to be on guard (against evil for the sake of) Allah, and he exhorted (them) on obedience to Him, and he preached to the people and admonished them. He then walked on till he came to the women and preached to them and admonished them, and asked them to give alms, for most of them are the fuel for Hell. A woman having a dark spot on the cheek stood up and said: Why is it so, Messenger of Allah? He said: For you grumble often and show ingratitude to your spouse. And then they began to give alms out of their ornaments such as their earrings and rings which they threw on to the cloth of Bilal.	Sahih	The women with the spot on her cheek could have only been observed if her face was uncovered. She was also in the company of the Prophet who didn't command otherwise.

Table 4: A matrix of some of the hadith used to support the niqab.

Source of hadith	Narrator	Text	Type of Hadith	Interpretation
Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Number: 282	Safiya bint Shaiba	'Aisha used to say: "When (the Verse): "They should draw their veils over their necks and bosoms," was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their faces with the cut pieces."	Sahih	This hadith is another example of way in which translators can be subjective, as the in arabic the hadith does not mention "faces". In fact the "covered their faces with the cut pieces" can be transliterated to be " <i>ikhdamarna bi ha</i> " when translated this is actually " <i>made khimars from it</i> ". This goes back to Surah an-Nur commanding women to wear the khimar but it does not ask women to cover their
Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1 Book 8 Number: 368	Aisha	We used to offer the Fajr prayer and some believing women covered with their veiling sheets used to attend the Fajr prayer with him and then they would return to their homes unrecognized.	Sahih	There are many hadith reporting this incident, however, in the Arabic versions of the hadith it is indicated that the women were unrecognisable due to the dark and not because they were wearing the veil.

Source of hadith: Khan, Muhsin. *Translation of Al-Bukhari*. University of South California, 2006. 25 Oct 2007.
 <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/054.sbt.htm>>

Appendix 2

1.1Hadeeth

The hadith used in this essay are Sahih or authenticated. It has been classified in this way due to the evaluation criteria's outlined below.

Hadith, are texts of the narrations of the Prophet (SAW) and these are the narrations referred to after the Qur'an. A Hadith consists of two parts:

- a) Matn (texts)
- b) Isnad (chains of narration)

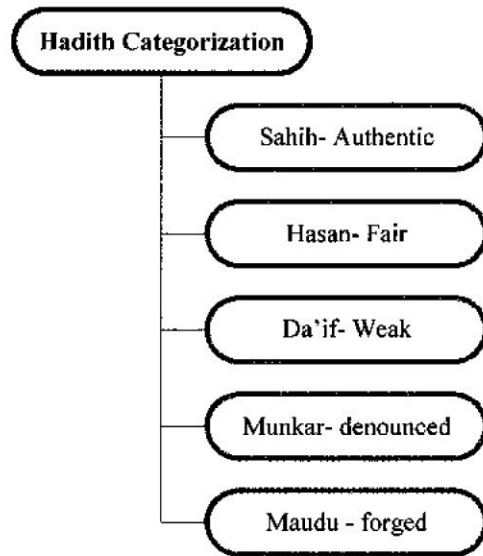
Evaluation and Criteria's of Hadith⁵⁵:

Source of Hadith	Reporters	Isnad links
<p>I <i>Allah (Hadith Qudsi)</i> Derived from Allah and conveyed through the Prophet Muhammed.</p>	<p><i>Multiple Reporters</i> Several people from every generation report the same hadith it is classified as authentic, unless it contradicts the Quran.</p>	<p><i>Supported</i> The narrator learnt the hadith at appropriate age.</p>
<p>II <i>Prophet Muhammad</i> III <i>Companion</i> Based on eyewitness accounts.</p>	<p><i>Few reporters within generations</i> When a few people in a generation narrate a hadith, the character of the narrator is analyzed in terms of the person's trustworthiness, knowledge, memory and so on.</p>	<p>Reported from a Companion who heard it from the Prophet himself.</p>
<p>IV <i>Successor</i> Reports succeed the Prophet therefore these are inauthentic as they don't have direct contact with the Prophet.</p>	<p><i>Continuous</i> Perpetual chains of narration leading directly to Prophet.</p>	

⁵⁵ Adapted from – Lochtefeld, James G. *Introduction to Hadith* (<http://personal.carthage.edu/jlochtefeld/islam/hadith.html>) , 2007

1.1.2. Hadith Categorisation

All hadith are evaluated using the above criteria and then classified using the categories below⁵⁶:



The hadith used within this essay are all **sahih (authentic)**, with reliable sources through the Prophet and his companions, they have trustworthy reporters evaluated based on their characteristics or the hadith have many reports. The hadith used are also related directly from the Prophet or have chains of narrations leading to the Prophet.

⁵⁶Mustalah al-Hadith (Classification of Hadith). (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/scienceofhadith/asa2.html>), 2007

Appendix 3

The Preservation of the Quran

The Quran has been preserve through oral and in written forms⁵⁷.

1. Oral Preservation

The Prophet Muhammed

Allah's words were conveyed to the Prophet Muhammed through the Angel Gabriel. The Angel used to pay visits to the prophet on a yearly basis to keep the Quran memorized.

The Companions of the first Generation

The prophet was able to pass these revelations to his companions, who in turn memorized the Quran too. The companions were encouraged to teach and learn it. During the battle of Yamama that the Quran was written down, "Narrated Zaid bin Thabit al Ansari, who was one of those who use to write the Divine Revelations: Abu Bakr sent me after the (heavy) casualties among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamama (where a great number of Qurra were killed). Umar was present with Abu Bakr who said: "Umar has come to me and said, the people have suffered heavy casualties on the day of (the battle of) Yamama, and I am afraid that there will be some casualties among the Qurra (those who memorized the entire Quran) at other place..."⁵⁹

During the caliphate of Umar, Quranic schools, devoted solely to the purpose of memorization were formed to preserve the Quran and allow it to be spread worldwide.⁶⁰

The Generations Thereafter

⁵⁷Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

⁵⁸Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

⁵⁹ Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

⁶⁰Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

Apart from the emergence of these schools, which have further expanded, Muslims continue to preserve the Quran through its recitation in their five daily prayers.⁶¹

2. Written Preservation

The Prophet didn't rely solely on his memory in order to preserve the Quran, being an illiterate man he used scribes to write revelations as they were revealed.

The Companions of the First Generations

Six months after the death of the Prophet, during the Battle of Yamama (633 CE), it was feared that the Quran would be lost due to the amount of casualties among the memorisers, Hence, a committee was formed to officially compile the Quran, lead by the Prophets original scribe, Zaid bin Thabit, who had memorized the entire scripture too.

Some criteria's to ensure the authenticity of the book include:

- a) The supervision of the Prophet during the writing of the material.
- b) Testimonies by two trustworthy witnesses, having heard the Prophet recite the materials.

The official manuscript remained with Abu Bakr until his death and was then passed onto his successor, Uthman.

3. The Uthmany Copy of the Quran

The Quran was originally revealed in the Quraishi dialect of Arabic, however it was later revealed in seven other dialects to allow for comprehension among others. This began to cause disputes, as recitation among the different dialects differed. Hence, Uthman, compiled the official copy in the Quraishi dialect and burnt the other copies to prevent divergence, by using the original form of revelation. Once Again Criteria's were set up:

- a) The copy of Abu Bakr was used as a basis upon which to form this copy.
- b) Uncertainties were clarified through memorisers who were present during the Prophets time.
- c) Uthman himself overlooked the compilation of the copy.

⁶¹ Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

Copies of these Quran were then sent to the cities of Makka, Damascus, Kufa, Basra and Madina. Two of these Uthmanian copies exist today in Uzbekistan and Turkey.

The copy sent to Medina was removed by the Turks and then to Berlin where it came to reside during the First World War, as the Treaty of Versailles documents: 'Article 246: Within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty, Germany will restore to His Majesty, King of Hedjaz, the original Koran of Caliph Othman, which was removed from Medina by the Turkish authorities and is stated to have been presented to the ex-Emperor William II'.⁶²

The second copy remains in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This copy arrived in Samarqand in 1458 and remained there until it was taken to St. Petersburg in 1869. A description of this was produced by a Russian Orientalist, as damaged with several missing pages. Then fifty copies were sent to the important Muslim leader's globally including the Ottoman Sultan, Shah of Iran and so forth. Finally the scripture was returned to Tashkent in 1924 where it currently remains.⁶³

⁶²Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

⁶³Sabeel, Ahmed. *Proof of the Preservation*. (<http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Sabeel/sabeel3.htm>), 2007

Appendix 4

Transliteration

Box 1 – Roman Transliteration^{64 65}: Surah an-Nur, verse 31.

"...WAL (and) QUL (say) LIL (to) MUMINAATI (believing women) YARDUDNA (lower their gaze) MIN (from) ABSAARIHINNA (looking) WA (and) YAHFADNA (guard) FARUJJAHUNNA (their modesty) WALAA (don't) YUBDIINA (show) ZIINATAHUNNA (their beauty) ILLA (except) MAA (what) DAHARA (is apparent) MINHAA (from) WAL (and) YADRIBNA (put) BIKMURIHINNS (their veils) ALAA (over) JUYUBIHINNA (their bosom) YUDIINA (show) ZIINATUHUNNA (their beauty) ILLAA (but) LIBU'UUTIHINNA (to their husband)..." (24:31)

Box 2: Surah al-Ahzab, Roman Transliteration⁶⁶: Surah al-Ahzab, verse 53.

"YĀ (oh) 'AYYUHĀ (you) AN-NABĪYU (Prophet) QUL (say) LI' (to) ZWĀJIKĀ (your wives) WA (and) BANĀTIKĀ (your daughters) WA (and) NISĀ'I (women) AL-MU'UMINĪNA (believers) YUDNĪNA (put/ lower) 'ALAYHINNA (over them) MIN (with) JALĀBĪBIHINNA (their Jilbabs)..." (33:53)

⁶⁴ The Roman transliteration has been used to bring clarity in understanding the true meaning of the verses.

⁶⁵ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Quran Translation and Commentary*. Birmingham: IPCI: Islamic Vision, 1999

⁶⁶ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Quran Translation and Commentary*. Birmingham: IPCI: Islamic Vision, 1999