217241 - Ruling on celebrating World Hijab Day

the question

World Hijab Day is celebrated on 1 February every year. What do the scholars say about that? What is your view concerning this issue? Is this regarded as coming under the heading of innovation (bid ‘ah)?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

World Hijab Day is an idea promoted by a Muslim woman living in the USA called Nazma Khan. She is a Muslim woman of Bengali origin who migrated to the US when she was eleven years old, and she faced all kinds of harrassment and pressure because of her hijab, which made her think of a way to put a stop to this discrimination against the hijab. The way she came up with was to call women of all countries, religions and races to put on the hijab for at least one day, namely the first day of February, which is known as World Hijab Day.

Hijab is a well-established obligation that Allah, may He be glorified, has prescribed for believing women. It is a symbol of chastity and a sign of dignity and piety. Muslim scholars, preachers and individuals must do their utmost to call people to it and encourage it, but despite that the methods used to achieve this aim must be methods that are prescribed in Islam, because the means of pursuing praiseworthy goals should be in accordance with Islamic teaching. As for designating a particular day in the year, that is repeated every year and is called World Hijab Day, that is not permissible, for the following reasons:

Firstly:

This involves imitating the traditions of the disbelievers who are enemies to Allah, may He be glorified, and are enemies to His Messengers. It is they who introduced such ideas, and allocated for every issue that they want to promote and disseminate an occasion to celebrate it, that is

repeated every year, such as the International Day of the Child, the International Day Against Violence Against Women, International Cancer Day, the International Day for People with Special Needs, Mother's Day, national festivals (such as Independence Day and the like), and many other examples of such innovations and evil practices for which Allah has not sent down any authority.

Rather these things are more akin to reprehensible innovations, because allocating a particular day that is repeated every year, on which people gather to do certain things makes this day a kind of "eid" or festival, because the root meaning of the word eid refers to something that returns and is repeated.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said, in Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah – vol. 1 (3/88): Eid is a word that refers to something that is repeated, of gatherings in a customary manner, either once a year, once a month, or once a week, and the like. So the word eid refers to several things, such as a special day that is repeated, such as the day of Eid al-Fitr or the day of Jumu'ah (Friday); the gatherings held on those days; or the activities that are done on those days, both acts of worship and customs and traditions. End quote.

See also the answer to question no 10070.

The prescription of eids or festivals can only come from Allah, may He be glorified, like all other matters of prescription or legislation, that can only come from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, to Whom belong the power of creation and command, legislation and ruling, permitting and forbidding. Allah, may He be glorified, has not prescribed for us Muslims anything but two eids only, namely Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr; then there is the weekly "eid", which is the day of Jumu'ah (Friday).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

All eids or festivals other than the prescribed eids are innovated festivals that have been introduced into the religion. They were not known at the time of the righteous early generations, and they may have originated among non-Muslims. Therefore they involve the innovation of imitating the enemies of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. The prescribed eids are well

known to the Muslims; they are Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, as well as the weekly eid (the day of Jumu'ah). There are no other eids in Islam apart from these three.

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen (2/301)

Secondly:

The celebrations that happen on this day involve entertainment, exuberance and foolishness that are contrary to the purpose behind the prescription of the hijab, and indeed all other prescribed rulings. That is because when it comes to the rulings prescribed by Allah, may He be glorified, people should hasten to do them and adhere to them in a spirit of humility, submission, seeking reward from Allah and aiming thereby to draw close to Allah, may He be glorified, hoping for His reward and fearing His wrath and punishment. As for women gathering on the so-called World Hijab Day, in an atmosphere of fun, playing, celebrating and exuberance, inviting women of all religions, nationalities and races to put on the hijab for a single day so they can take pictures and publish these pictures as a kind of advertisement, then take off the hijab after that – all of that is a kind of toying with the commands of Allah, because hijab is an act of worship in which it is essential to have the correct intention, seeking reward with Allah and persisting in it.

Thirdly:

The kind of hijab that women wear on this day often makes a mockery of this divinely-ordained obligation, and does more harm than good. That is because with regard to hijab as prescribed in Islam, there are conditions and criteria which, if they are met, then it is the correct Islamic hijab that Allah has enjoined upon women. But if these conditions are not met – in full or in part – then this cannot be called correct Islamic hijab. These criteria have been discussed previously in fatwa no. 6991. As for the hijab that women wear on this occasion, in most cases it has nothing to do with correct Islamic hijab; in fact all that the woman does in this case is cover her hair and body, but at the same time she may be wearing pants, or the clothes may be tight and show the shape of the body, or she may be wearing make-up, or the clothes that she is wearing may be an adornment in and of themselves, as they are colourful, adorned and attract attention or provoke

desire in sick hearts. All of these things are contrary to the hijab that Allah has enjoined.

Based on that, celebrating so-called World Hijab Day is not permissible, even if the intention of the people behind it is good and sincere. However sincere intention alone is not sufficient; rather it is essential that the methods used should be in accordance with Islamic teachings, and not involve anything that is contrary to the command of Allah, may He be glorified.

However, if a group of Muslims, men or women, gather in a certain place at a certain time in order to promote the obligation of hijab and inform people about it, then this is a good thing and comes under the promotion of what is right and good, that Allah, may He be glorified, has enjoined upon us. But when doing that, it is essential to adhere to the following guidelines:

· they should not imitate the disbelievers and their customary practices in celebrating such things

· they should not allocate a specific day that is repeated every year, because this is a kind of innovation, as explained above

· they should call women to adhere to correct Islamic hijab, fulfilling all the criteria and conditions that have been explained by the scholars, as discussed in the fatwa referred to above

· they should inform women that hijab is a well-established obligation and an important act of worship, in which believing women worship Allah, so they should hasten to do it and persist in it. As for calling women to put on hijab for one or two days, and the like, that is not permissible.

And Allah knows best.