22137 - Ruling on taking off hijaab when travelling abroad

the question

What is the ruling on taking off hijaab and uncovering the face when traveling abroad in obedience to my mother’s demands, on the grounds that I attract unwelcome attention?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible for you or for any other woman to take off your hijaab in the kaafir countries, just as that is not permissible in any Muslim country. It is obligatory to observe hijaab in front of non-mahram males whether they are Muslims or kaafirs; indeed it is more obligatory in the case of kaafirs, because they have no faith to keep them from doing that which Allaah has forbidden.

It is not permissible for you or any other woman to obey parents or anyone else in doing that which Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) have forbidden. Allaah says in Soorat al-Ahzaab (interpretation of the meaning):

“And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen, that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts”

[al-Ahzaab 33:53]

In this aayah Allaah explains that for women to observe hijaab and be screened from non-mahram men is purer for the hearts of everyone. And Allaah says in Soorat al-Noor (interpretation of the meaning):

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer palms of hands or one eye or dress like veil, gloves, headcover, apron), and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their

bodies, faces, necks and bosoms) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband’s fathers…”

[al-Noor 24:31]

And the face is the greatest part of beauty or adornment.