234554 - Ruling on putting a light cover over the niqab so that it no longer matches the description of the niqab that a woman is forbidden to wear whilst in ihram

the question

What is the ruling on a light cover that goes over the eyes so that the woman can see clearly when in ihram– i.e., it is like the niqab, but over it there is another piece that cannot be removed, because it is stitched to it, so that it becomes a layer that is thick at the edges but in front of the eyes there is a layer that is not thick, so that the woman can see clearly, as one of the things that are prohibited when in ihram is the niqab? Is what is meant that through which one can see clearly, or is it that in which there is an opening?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The woman in ihram is forbidden to wear niqab whilst in ihram.

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, what garments do you instruct us to wear when in ihram? The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: … And a woman in ihram should not wear niqab or gloves.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1838); also narrated by at-Tirmidhi (833), who said: This is a hasan saheeh hadith, and it is to be followed according to the scholars.

What appears to be the case is that this that you are asking about comes under the heading of the niqab.

Firstly:

Because there is no difference between it and the niqab except that the opening for the eyes in the niqab is clearly visible, whereas the covering you mention is covered with thin material through which one can see.

Secondly:

The woman in ihram is forbidden to wear niqab because it is a garment that is made to fit the face in order to cover it, so it is included with similar garments (that are also made to fit a particular part of the body). The same factor is also present in the case of this covering, because it is made to fit the face in order to cover it.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade women to wear the niqab or gloves (when in ihram), as he forbade men in ihram to wear a chemise or khufoof (leather slippers that come up to the ankle), even though it is permissible for him to cover his arms and legs, according to the consensus of the imams, and the burqa‘ is more emphatically prohibited than the niqab. Hence it was prohibited according to consensus. Therefore the woman in ihram should not wear anything that is made to cover the face, such as the burqa‘ and the like, because it is like the niqab.

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (26/112-113)

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

… The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “A woman should not wear the niqab or gloves”, i.e., when in ihram. The prohibition on wearing anything that is made to fit that part of the body applies equally to hands and face.

The correct view is that what is prohibited is anything that comes under that general wording and the general reason for the prohibition. Although the burqa‘ and lithaam (types of face veils) are not called niqab, there is no difference between them and it. In fact if a woman is forbidden to wear the niqab, it is more appropriate that she be forbidden to wear the burqa‘ and lithaam.

End quote from I'laam al-Muwaqqi'een (2/393-395)

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

What is meant by "women should not wear the niqab or gloves" is that they should not wear something that is made to fit the face, such as the niqab, or to fit the hands, such as gloves.

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn Baaz (5/223)

For more information on how a woman may cover her face whilst in ihram, please see fatwa no. 227097

And Allah knows best.