8540 - Can a Muslim Woman Show Her Eyes?

the question

Is it permissible to show the eyes only in front of non-Mahram men?

Summary of answer

It is permissible for a Muslim woman to show her eyes so she can see clearly. However, the ruling emphasizes modesty, ensuring that no other part of the face is uncovered, particularly in the presence of non-Mahram men.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Understanding the Permissibility of Showing Eyes in Islam

It is permissible for a woman to show her eyes. That is so that she will be able to see. But it is not permissible for men to look at the eyes of a woman.

Scholarly Opinions on Women Covering Their Face and Eyes

Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Humayd (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If the Burqa [a kind of face veil] covers the entire face, leaving only the eyes uncovered, there is nothing wrong with that. But if it does not cover the entire face, rather it covers the mouth and leaves the rest of the face uncovered, that is not permissible, especially in the presence of non-Mahram men.

So the entire face must be covered, but the eyes may be left uncovered so that the woman can see where she is going, as was said by Ibn Mas`ud, `Ubaydah Al-Salmani and others. And Allah

knows best. (End quote from Fatawa Al-Mar'ah Al-Muslimah, 1/393, 394)

Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan (may Allah preserve him) said:

There is nothing wrong with covering the face with the Niqab or Burqa [kinds of face veil] which has two openings for the eyes only, because this was known at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), because there is a need for that. If nothing shows but the eyes, that is acceptable, especially if that is what women customarily wear in that society. (End quote from Fatawa Al-Mar'ah Al-Muslimah, 1/399)

Proper Hijab

But we should note that the majority of women, nowadays, do not stop at uncovering the eyes only, rather they go beyond that and uncover part of the forehead and nose, so they go beyond the area that it is permitted for them to show. Hence some of the scholars – such as Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) – forbade wearing the Burqa and Niqab, because of the careless attitude on the part of some women.

And Allah knows best.