

BRITISH SHARIAH COUNCIL



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In Islam hijab is compulsory and any woman who denies the ruling of hijab is disobeying her Lord and is rebelling against the Islamic law.

A woman who obeys
but wear hijab

This is the opinion according to what hijab is however, it is important to ascertain as to what your client and her husband mean by the term hijab. I have stated the general ruling above.

Therefore hijab is compulsory and she does not need to cover her face, hands or feet. The question that arises is that are hands, feet and the face part of hijab or not? The Islamic scholars fall in to two main groups and there are four main schools of thought. Amongst these four schools the Hanafi scholars do not consider the above three parts of the body as hijab whilst the other three (Shafi, Malaki and Hanbali) do.

With regards to the veil those of the scholars who consider the face to be part of the hijab will then consider the veil to be compulsory and the others will not. It is up to your client to decide as to which school of thought she follows and to abide by its opinion.

The British Shariah Council in one of its seminar on hijab in March 2007 which, consisted of scholars from various schools of thought decided to issue the following fatwa.

"Hijab (i.e. covering) is compulsory in Islamic law and if the woman choose to cover her face in front of other men that that is desirable and encouraged. However, if she chooses to cover her body and leaves her face uncovered then she is permitted. The condition for this is that she must not adorn her self or wear make-up when she leaves her house."

Hence the veil is encouraged by Islamic scholars but it does not fall in to disobedience of God. It should also be noted that when there are differences of opinion on a matter and adopting an opinion from these different opinions should suffice.

I have now brought to your attention the differences of opinions with respect to hijab and you can adopt whichever you wish to do so.

Now coming to your specific questions in your letter, hijab is compulsory and a woman must cover her body in front of other men. A woman is honourable and much respected in Islam and the rule of hijab is for her protection and guarding of her chastity. However,

الحجاب لحماية عفت المرأة
وشرافتها