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# INTERNATIONAL HIJAB DAY

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Organized by **DISCOVER ISLAM**  
(Kingdom of Bahrain)

To take part in this important event and to show our support and solidarity to our fellow sisters all over the world, we arranged a discussion forum entitled *"Human Rights and Freedom of Choice"*, at Bait al-Qur'an auditorium located in the capital city Manama. Due to the short time limit, we could not arrange a picketing or demonstration in front of the embassies of the European countries which have banned the hijab. Because Bahrain being a small country and the cultural barriers adopted by Muslim women, the time frame was an obstacle to convince the sisters to go out for a demonstration.

Discover Islam is proud to say that Masha Allah the forum was a success, with an attendance of about 45 men and women from all strata of the society. The program was started by a beautiful recitation from the Holy Quran by 11 year old Adnan Khan, Masha'Allah his beautiful voice mesmerized the audience.

After an excellent opening speech by Br. Shahid Chaudhari who was the moderator of the program, the other speakers delivered their speeches. Mr. Chaudhari quoted a Hadith of our Prophet Mohammed May Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, concerning the Hijab. The prophet said *"a girl who reaches puberty is allowed to only show her hands and face"* He emphasized the Hijab is ordained by Allah Subhanna Wa Ta'ala, and is clearly mentioned in the Quran.

The first speech was delivered by Ameena, a ten year old girl from the Philippines, she spoke with so much confidence and skill, leaving the audience stunned. In her speech she compared a muslim women to a very expensive diamond, kept safely in a velvet box, secured in the

cupboard, contrary to an artificial diamond kept outside on the dresser, left to gather dust. She ended her speech with a poem, and really this little girl said it all, in short, how the Hijab continued to be a Muslim girls' identity and if you take that from her what's left.

The second speech was by a high school student Ebtisam Khalifa, yet again she said her view, as how she felt safer, and respected in her Hijab as a young ambitious girl.

The third speaker, was a University Student, Sumaiya Khan, who spoke very well, again emphasizing the fact that Hijab is not oppression, in fact it is freedom: freedom from the pressures of looking perfect. Sumaiya explained a Muslim women in Hijab is not selling her looks but is appreciated for her mental ability rather than her feminine looks. This is the real freedom. She continued that Hijab does not stop Muslim women from achieving their goals such as seeking education or a career.

The next speaker, was Qasem, from the United States who works in the Bahrain Defense Force. His speech was very professional; he gave us his point of view, as an American Muslim living in a non muslim country. Br. Qasem said that the women in Hijab are facing discrimination everywhere, and this is their jihad. Br. Qasem gave the audience light to the culture in America and the current almost naked fashion trends are even making the average non Muslim American parent say to their daughters "stop, enough".

Br. Qasem pointed out to a saddening fact that some Muslim women from Muslim countries, when visiting the U.S take off their hijab and some times even their unostentatious clothes and start wearing immodest clothing. This is what the non Muslim media or even so called "*Muslim Liberal*" are looking for, and thus they start to wonder whether Hijab is religious or cultural. Br. Qasem said that in the U.S Constitution, freedom of religious practices allows Muslim women to wear the Hijab, and any institution contradicting this may be taken to the court.

The next speaker was Amin Brunet, a French revert, who is a Lawyer by profession, could not make it to the program, so Sr. Tooba Toosy read the speech on his behalf. Brother Amin's point of view raised many eyebrows since he said that there are other matters like polygamy and capital punishment which the Muslims have to address before the Hijab ban. He believed this issue should be postponed to a later more appropriate time.

After this speech, Br. Yahya gave his views in support of the Hijab. He gave some statistics and spoke about some newspaper articles. His speech was based on case studies. Though short; it was very informative.

There were two people in the audience who did not support the Hijab or rather did not believe the Hijab is mentioned in the Quran. Br. Qasem answered the questions with wisdom and patience.

Discover Islam plans to continue such programs, and involve a wider audience, hoping that some common misunderstandings may be cleared among some Muslims and non Muslims alike. It is quite interesting to note that there are some born Muslims living in Muslim countries who do not believe that Hijab is mandatory; May Allah guide them and us! Ameen!

Wassalam,

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