

The Garment that Subjugated Women in History, is Embraced Once Again

The infamous Victorian corset of the 19th century became a sign of the woman's subjugated state. That in order to appear appealing to men she had to clad a garment that reshifted her organs and contracted her lungs to such an extent that it was known that many women actually passed out. But health and well being in the Victorian era, was secondary to the mould women had to fit.

Today in the 21st century we would believe such garments to be only a figment of history and now the imagination! However there has been a reported rise of the post-baby girdle amongst women after they have their baby, particularly after American actress Jessica Alba admitted wearing one after each time she gave birth to her two children. She said, "It was brutal..... But worth it."

There are a variety of brands which sell such a product now, as women rush to embrace a garment of agony, virtually hours after experiencing the agony of childbirth. Although many of the women argue it helped their stomach muscles contract and had health benefits, there are no proven ones as Dr Edward R. Laskowski, specialist in sports medicine, recently said that it just "temporarily compress and redistribute fat and skin around the abdomen."

The fact that a discussion is now ensuing in the beauty world about girdles being an option to regain one's former figure, when such a garment was labelled and sealed as oppressive over a century ago, highlights the absolute failure of the feminist struggle in the West. Because feminism erupted seeking to smash the shackles of expectations and moulds which degraded women, reducing them to objects to look pretty. However here we are a century or more later, still discussing how enduring pain to be perceived as beautiful by men and society, is acceptable and even praised.

This is because although women under feminism woke up in the West and started to fight for their rights, what they did not realise was the system had not been woken up. The system was still the Capitalist system which always put making money over the well being and value of people. So as women fought to be just like men, in order to be treated the same as men and enter the workplace, Capitalism supported this because it would make money. Women working would make more revenue and GDP. As women fought to have the freedom to dress how they wanted, and behave how they wanted, Capitalism supported this and pushed her to do this, by making money out of sexualising her in everything from the media to advertising so men would buy. It was never about the woman's struggle, rather about revenue.

It is this system which never cared for the rights of women and never owed anything to the well being of women, which now continues to damage the lives of women. It does not care how far women have come whether it has been a century or a day; it only cares that women can still be made to feel terrible about their physical appearance so they will then purchase make-up to girdles, to feel better. It cares only that if the image of the physically beautiful woman is perpetuated in public, men will continue to be interested and buy into it.

Women must understand that taking on a battle for rights and value will never come to anything under a system which will never care. If they want real rights and value to be enshrined and prioritised whatever happens, the only alternative is Islam.

The rights of any group of people – man, woman, non-Muslim, Muslim can never be changed according to any perceived benefits or losses under Islam as it is the rule of Allah (swt) which has been defined by Him and set by Him. And the ruler in Islam is then accountable to Allah (swt) in how he executes the rule of Allah. Thus the viewpoint of the woman is always defined by hadith such as this where Muhammad (saw) said:

"الدنيا متاع وخير متاعها المرأة الصالحة"

"The world and all things in it are precious but the most precious thing is a virtuous woman" (Muslim)

Ensuring that the value of the woman through her character and virtues, always remains as the value that society judges her by.

((وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ))

"We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit."

[TMQ 16:89]

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