



الحمد لله حمد الشاكرين، والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين، وهدايا للناس أجمعين. صلاة وسلاماً دائماً إلى يوم الدين، وآله وصحبه ومن تبعهم بإحسان، وسلم تسليماً كثيراً، أما بعد:

فصل الخطاب فى أحكام الحجاب

The Manners of Clothing & Covering of Women According To Islam

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur'an: 'O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the believing women to draw their veils (جلباب) over their body. That will be better, that they be known so as not to be annoyed. And Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful.' (Al Ahzab s33, v59)

Allah ﷻ has revealed 7 verses of the Holy Qur'an and there are also 70 narrations from the Prophet ﷺ in respect of the 'orders of Hijab' for believing women. It is clear from these verses and sayings that a woman's body and actions should be kept hidden from strange men (those whom the Shari'ah has called Ghair Mahram).

In the life of 'Man', there is great emphasis and importance placed on the matter of privacy and modesty. This is the specific quality which sets 'Man' aside from other creation. The Creator has not placed this quality of modesty in the other creations as He ﷻ has placed intrinsically in Mankind. All the previous Prophets عليهم السلام taught their followers the importance of adopting shame and modesty. All the religions of the World, although there may be differences in beliefs and practices, are all in agreement that 'Mankind' should not roam the streets naked, as animals do. It is also a uniform belief amongst the religions of the World that the requirements of covering are greater on the womenfolk than on the menfolk, due to the fact that women naturally have been blessed with more attraction, for this reason also, Allah ﷻ has naturally kept greater modesty and bashfulness in women.

Due to the neglect of this commandment, the fabric of society; the family structure has disintegrated leading to a whole multitude of problems, including the honoured status of a women being reduced to a sex object and a whole generation of young people growing up confused, emotionally bereft and fatherless. By creating the illusion of freedom they have in reality degraded and dishonoured the status of women in society.

There was a time when the honour and dignity of women was safeguarded and those men that did so were regarded as chivalrous. The degradation in society has meant that when women were oppressed and abused to do immoral acts in the past, it was considered abominable. Over time, the mind set of society has been manipulated to such an extent that, this same oppression of women to perform immoral acts (modelling, acting etc) has been labelled as freedom and a celebration of the human form. An evil act has been given a pleasant name and nothing else.

The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Verily, that person who looks at the beauty of a strange woman with desire...on the Day of Judgement, Allah ﷻ will put molten glass in his eyes.' (Fathul Qadeer)

This teaching is not only specific to Islam. These types of stern warnings for immodesty are found in other revealed scriptures also; for example:

In the Bible, Matthew 5:28-29: 'If a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell.'

In Islam, it is considered a great sin (Haram) for a woman to be unveiled in front of strange (non-mahram) men. It is not a cause of amazement; as in Christianity, it is ordered that a woman who roams with her hair uncovered should have her hair shaved off-1 Corinthians 11:6: 'In fact, a woman who will not wear a veil ought to have her hair cut off. If a woman is ashamed to have her hair cut off or shaved, she ought to wear a veil.'

It is merely ignorance and propaganda against the religion of Islam to claim its orders oppress and subjugate its womenfolk. This is merely a religion of peace and modesty, completing the teachings of all previous Prophets عليهم السلام and the revealed scriptures.

Sayyidina Anas رضي الله عنه relates: The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Allah ﷻ curses the one who looks at and the one who shows their private part to others.' (Mishkaat Masabih, vol 1, p467)

The Shari'ah has safeguarded the modesty and honour of women by ordaining the rules of covering. There are 3 levels for the covering of women:

1. **That a women stays inside her home:** This is the highest form of 'covering' stipulated in Islam, through the verses of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an states that a woman should not leave her home without a valid Shari'ah reason. 'And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like the women of the time of ignorance.' (s33,v33)

Sayyidina Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه relates: The Prophet ﷺ said: 'When a woman leaves her house, Shaytaan (the devil) utilises her presence to spread evil.' (Jami Tirmidhi)

The Prophet ﷺ said: 'A woman is closest to her Creator when she is in the inner confines of her home.' (Ibn Khuzaimah/ Sahih Ibn Hibban)

The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘There is no place for a woman to leave her home, except if there is a dire necessity for her to fulfill.’ (Tibrani/ Kanzul Amar, vol 8, p263)

Sayyidina Ali ﷺ relates: ‘One day I was in the company of the Prophet ﷺ wherein the Prophet ﷺ asked the Companions ﷺ: ‘What is best for a woman?’ All the Companions ﷺ remained silent. When I returned home, I asked this same question of Fatima ﷺ. She ﷺ replied: ‘It is best for a woman that she not look at any man and no man should look upon her.’ I (Ali) then repeated this response of Fatima ﷺ to the Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ said: ‘She has spoken the truth, verily she is a part of me.’ (Ma’ariful Qur’an, vol 7, p216)

For this reason, the Mothers of the Faithful (wives of the Prophet ﷺ, daughters of the Prophet ﷺ and the women folk of the pious predecessors would consider it unpleasant to leave their homes without a dire necessity. The Prophet ﷺ is the greatest example for Mankind to follow, likewise the womenfolk of the Prophet’s ﷺ household are the greatest example for believing women to follow.

2. To adorn a Burqa (برقع) thick long cloth when leaving the house: The religion of Islam is a complete all encompassing teaching, wherein all the requirements of the creation have been catered for and considered. It is clear that there will come a time, when women will encounter certain conditions, which will require them to leave their homes. In light of this, Islamic rulings have been revealed through the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah that stipulate the requirements of covering for women outside of the house. It is established that when leaving the home, women should cover everything from their head to their feet. No part of the body must be visible: ‘O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the believing women to draw their veils (جلباب) Jalbab over their body.’ (s33, v59)

Sayyidina Abdullah Ibn Abbas ﷺ relates: ‘جلباب Jalbab refers to that piece of clothing, that if a woman was to adorn it, it would hide everything from her head to her feet. The head covering should hide from her face down to below her chest. Only the eyes should be left, so as to see the way.’ (Tafsir Ibn Jarir, vol 22, p29/ Tafsir Ibn Abbas/ Ma’ariful Qur’an, vol 7, p217/)

The clothing referred to as (برقع) Burqa’ and (حجاب) Hijab is included within the term (جلباب) Jalbab and falls within the same ruling of covering according to the Holy Qur’an.

Sayyidah Aisha ﷺ stated: ‘Allah ﷻ have mercy on these women, those who migrated (from Makkah to Madinah) in the beginning of Islam. And when the order of Allah ﷻ came for women to cover, they cut their thick sheets and covered their whole bodies with them.’ (Sunan Abu Dawood #702)

After Hijrat, the commandment for women to cover themselves was revealed. Due to extreme poverty, the women in Madina used thick household sheets to cover their bodies. This demonstrates the importance of the commandment that even in the state of dire poverty, where there was no surplus clothing the women folk immediately whatever was to hand. It is sad indeed, in this age, after receiving so much of the bounties of Allah ﷻ, the Muslim women regard it as fashion and honour to display their bodies and beautify themselves for all of the creation to see. Just like Salah and Saum, it is compulsory (Fard) for a woman to cover herself in the manner Islam has stipulated when leaving the house.

It is unanimous amongst the Scholars and Jurists (Fuqaha) of the Ummah that this method of covering is permissible when a woman leaves her home for a necessity. In the Sahih Ahadith, the above mentioned mode of covering is permitted bearing in mind the following main restrictions among others are observed: (1) permission from her husband must be obtained (2) the burqa’ or cloth wrapping should not be decorated or attractive (3) she should Not use perfume (4) she should not wear shoes or jewellery that makes a sound whilst walking (5) she should refrain from raising her voice unnecessarily when out in public (6) she should keep away from groups of men in the streets etc.

3. The greatness of covering the face (Niqab): Sayyidah Aisha ﷺ relates: We (the Muslim women) were on a journey with the Prophet ﷺ in the state of Ihraam. (Due to the state of Ihraam, we (the women) had our faces uncovered, groups would pass us by on the journey (in these groups, men were also present). When these groups would approach us, every woman amongst us would hang their veil over their faces in such a manner that it did not touch the face. When the groups would pass by, we (the women) would then lift the veils from our faces. (Sunan Abu Dawood, Kitabul Hajj #69)

It is clear from this Sahih Hadith of the Mother of the Believers, Sayyidah Aisha ﷺ, wherein she explains the two teachings of Islam (1) In the state of Ihraam, it is the order that women should cover their faces, but in a manner that the veil does not touch the face. (2) It is necessary for women to conceal their faces from non-mahram men in all states. This ruling is not specific to the Wives and Daughters of the Prophet ﷺ, but, was applied by all the womenfolk of the Muslims who were travelling with the Prophet ﷺ in this journey. This situation occurred in the very last stages of the life of the Prophet ﷺ, if the order for covering the face was not necessary for all Muslim women, this would have been made clear by the Prophet ﷺ on this occasion.

The simplest way to implement the Niqab (face veil) in the state of Ihraam, in such a manner that it does not touch the face is by wearing it over a ‘peak cap’. In this way both objectives are achieved, the face is concealed and the cloth is kept away from the face.

Ibn Umar ﷺ relates: The Prophet ﷺ stated: ‘The women in the state of Ihraam should not adorn Niqab.’ (Bukhari)

It is clear from this Hadith, in the time of the Prophet ﷺ all women would adorn Niqab when leaving the house. This is the reason it was abstained from in the state of Ihraam. Even so, this meant the Niqab of Ihraam and the every day face

veil was not the same. The manner of performing Niqab in the state of Ihraam has been explained through practical example of the Hadith of Sayyidah Aisha رضي الله عنها. (Mirqatul Mafatih, vol 5, p383)

In regards to the common womenfolk (Sahabiyat) covering their faces outside the home, Imam Hakim رحمه الله has narrated from the Sahihain the following Hadith: Asma binti Ibn Bakr رضي الله عنها stated: ‘We, the women, would hide our faces from strange (non-mahram) men.’ (Mustadarak Hakim)

Except That Which Is Apparent

‘And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts and to not show off their adornment except only that which is apparent... لا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا.’ (Surah Nur s24,v31)

In Surah Nur of the Holy Qur’an, Allah عز وجل has ordered the believing men and women to lower their gazes from unlawful things. Specifically, women have also been ordered to cover their faces, which is also explained in the verse of Surah Ahzab above. (s33, v59)

Sayyidina Abdullah Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه relates: ‘except only that which is apparent’ refers to that sheet and clothing which she adorns herself with, the upper garment (Burqa’/Niqab). This upper garment is to be used to cover and conceal the inner garment which could possess some decoration. It is clear from this verse that, for a woman to show her beauty in front of strange men is not permissible. The beauty of a woman’s face is more apparent than that of her clothes, for this reason, it is necessary to cover the face also. (Ma’ariful Qur’an, vol 6, p401)

Huzaifa رضي الله عنه relates: We were sitting with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ‘I do not know how many days of my life amongst you remain. After me continue to follow these two, on saying this, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم pointed towards Abu Bakr and Umar رضي الله عنهما.’ Then the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stated: ‘Whatever Ibn Masud narrates to you from Me, affirm it.’ (Musnad Ahmad, vol 5, p402)

Sayyidina Abdullah Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه was the 6th person to accept Islam, upon accepting Islam, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stated to him: اِنَّكَ غُلَامٌ مَعْلَمٌ (you are a young scholar). (Fathul Bari Shara Bukhari)

Ibn Taymiyyah writes: ‘In knowledge, Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه was in the same group as Ali رضي الله عنه and Umar رضي الله عنه.’ (Fatawa Ibn Taymiyyah, vol 4, p531)

The Covering of the Face According To the 4 Great Scholars

Imam Malik, Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمهم الله all state, whether there is fear of Fitnah (danger of evil) or not, it is not permissible for a woman to uncover her face or hands (except fingers).

Imam Azam Abu Hanifa رحمه الله, whilst keeping in mind a narration of Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه stated: ‘It is permissible to uncover the face when there is no danger of Fitnah.’ Nowadays, the eradication of Fitnah is not practical. For this reason, the jurists of the Hanifi School, like the scholars of the other 3 schools, have ruled it impermissible for a woman to display her face to a non-mahram. Therefore, the scholars of all 4 schools of thought are unanimous upon the covering of the face in all conditions.

Allamah Abideen Shami رحمه الله writes: ‘The permissibility of a man seeing the face of a strange women is dependant upon there being no desire involved. If the condition of ‘no desire’ is not able to be upheld, then it is Haram for a man to gaze upon a strange women. This quality (no desire with the gaze) was only found in the first 3 generations of Islam, in our time it is absolutely prohibited, due to the presence of wide spread fitnah, except for a valid Shari’ee reason. For example: ‘for a judge to verify the witnessing of a woman.’ (Radul Mukhtaar, Kitabul Qarahiya)

For a young mature woman, according to the ruling of Shari’ah, it is necessary for her to cover her face in all conditions when leaving the house. This is due to the possibility of impermissible glances she will receive from the opposite sex. There are many rulings of this type found in the Shari’ah; for example: In a journey, due to the usual presence of difficulty the traveller is ordered to pray Qasr Salah, allowing them to shorten their prayers. If one experiences a more comfortable state in a journey than at home, even then Qasr Salah has to be observed. In the same way, in the state of sleep, a person could release air and usually be unaware of it. For this reason, the Shari’ah has ruled that the state of sleep (whilst reclining) itself causes a persons Wudhu to break and orders that a fresh Wudhu (ablution) be performed upon waking prior to any worship. For this reason, the jurists of the Hanifi school, like the scholars of the other 3 schools, have ruled it impermissible for a woman to display her face in public, regardless of the presence of Fitnah or not.

In conclusion, aside from the Holy Qur’an and Sahih Ahadith, the very actions of the common women Companions (Sahabiyat رضي الله عنهن) of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was to cover the face and entire body when outside the house. It has also been proven that this is the required state for women, even in the state of Ihraam, as proven from Sahih Ahadith.

Those women who are passing their lives in a manner of being unveiled in every day life, should reflect and be modest and mindful of Allah عز وجل. They should pay special attention to 3 things: (1) to repent with true regret of not dressing in the manner of Islam and seek to adopt the correct manners of clothing for women in Islam (2) should be mindful of giving account of their actions to Allah عز وجل on the Day of Judgement and the warnings and punishments for not being properly covered in the Qur’an and Ahadith (3) wherever and whenever women encounter other women who have adopted the correct manner of dress according to Islam, they should treat each other with great respect and dignity.

We pray that Allah عز وجل grant us the ability to adopt the teachings of this pure religion, following the way of those who earned the pleasure of Allah عز وجل through doing so, Ameen.

محمد يوسف (عفى الله عنه)

Mufti Muhammad Yusuf bin Yaqaob Danka

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