



**WHAT IS THE LIMIT
OF WHAT
THE MUSLIM WOMAN
CAN DISPLAY IN FRONT OF
THE MUSLIM WOMEN ?**

حدود عورة المرأة بالنسبة للرأة المسلمة

The Limit of the Awrah of The Women to other Muslim Women

Prepared by Aboo Waheeda As-salafee

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INTRODUCTION :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

All Perfect Praise be to Allaah , we praise Him , seek His aid, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of ourselves and from our bad deeds. He whom Allaah guides , there is None to Misguide him, and He whom he leaves astray there is None to guide him ! I bear witness that none is worthy of Worship but Allaah, who is alone without partners and I bear witness that Muhammad (sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam) is his slave and His Messenger.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ ،

“O you who believe! Fear Allâh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared.

[Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islâm (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allâh.”

[Al-Imraan : 102]

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾

“O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allâh through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship)^[1]. Surely, Allâh is Ever an All-Watcher over you.”

[An-Nisaa :1]

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٦٧﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٦٨﴾ ﴾

“O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth.

He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger (SAW) he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and made to enter Paradise).”

[Al-Ahzaab : 70-71]

أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلَّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلَّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

To Proceed.....

“Verily the most truthful speech is the Book of Allaah , and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam .

And the worst matters are the newly invented matters , and ALL new matters are innovations into the religion , and all the innovations are misguidance , and all the misguidance lead to the fire.”

To proceed :

InshaAllaah this is the introduction to our discussion , a small treatise discussing one important subject –it is dedicated to all the Muslim women who have even a speck of jealousy and love for their religion- and similarly to the men who are in control of households –and have some sense of jealousy and shyness regarding their sisters , their wives , and their mothers-.

And this is the topic of : **What is the limit of what the woman can display in front of her sisters and the Muslim women ?**

Before getting into the discussion ; it is important to know the definition of some terms which will be re-appearing in this treatise InshaAllaah :

Mahram : These are relatives whom a person is not allowed to marry . Either due to blood relationship (like the father , mother , brother, sister..) , or due to marital relations (like the father and the grand-father in law , or the mother in law), or due to breast feeding (meaning the person whom breast fed you she becomes your Mom , and the person who breastfed from the same women , they become your sisters or brothers).

Awrah : This is the parts of the body which are impermissible to be displayed. It is different in the men and the women , and It has different rulings in regards to different sets of people . Some of them :

a. The awrah of the Men ; By agreement of the majority of the Scholars , it is what is between the navel and the knees. In front of men or women. But covering up properly is better.

b. The awrah of Women : It has different rulings in relation to different people :

- *The awrah of Women to non-Mahram men (strange men)* : There are two famous opinions from the Scholars :

1. It is all of her body.
2. It is all of her body except the face and the wrists.

The discussion for this is famous through history ; and this is not the place for that InshaAllaah. It is worth while noting though , that all the scholars agree that it is better and most recommended for the women to cover all her body.

- *The Awrah of the Women to the Mahram* : This is part of our discussion in this treatise , so InshaAllaah it will come to be clear.

The Awrah of The Women to other Muslim Women : This is the main discussion. There are two famous opinions between the Scholars :

1. It is like the Awrah of the men to men : meaning it was what is between the navel and the knees.
2. It is not the same as that of the men – it is what she reveals in the normal routine of her house ; like the head , the feet and the hands. This is what is the closest to the truth.

This is our discussion and it will be clarified with all clarity, InshaAllaah.

Note : As for between the husband and the wife : then there is no limits as to what can be seen.

Aboo Waheeda as-Salafee

10 Rabi'u Thaane 1429 .

THE VERSE of SURAATUL NUR : 31

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ إِبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (31)

“ And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), and to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islâm), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.”

In his Tafsir , al-hafidh ibn Kathir brings this narration from ibn ‘Abbaas : In explaining the part :

{ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ }

“...or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islâm)...”

From Ibn ‘Abbaas (radhiyaAllaahu anhu) who said : ‘They are the muslim women. She does not reveal to the women of the jews or the christians.

And what is revealed is the neck , the earring [the ears]... and the like of which is not permissible to see except by the mahram.” ¹

- His explanation points that what she reveals to the Muslim women is what she reveals to the mahrams.

¹ Tafsir ibn Kathir : Suratul Nur

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND VERDICTS

Q. 'What are the limits of the 'Awrah of the women in front of the Muslim women and to the Non-muslim women ?'

A. ' All Perfect praise is for Allaah The Lord of All the Worlds , and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and all of his companions :

Indeed in the beginning of Islam ; the women reached the highest peak of purity, chastity, shyness, and respect ; by the blessings of believing in Allaah and his prophet, and by following the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

And the women at that time used to wear clothes which covered them and it is never known from them that they used to display themselves and to be care free whether between themselves, or in front of their mahram.

Thus, upon this upright Sunnaah ; generation and generation of this Ummah –and All Perfect praise is for Allaah – passed, and this was the way of the women of Islaam : up to the few past times when there entered upon the women , what entered. That is the corruption in clothing and behaviours ; and this is due to numerous reasons – of which now is not the time to discuss these reasons.

And due to the numerous questions being posed to *The Permanent Committee of Scholarly Research and Verdicts* : concerning the looking of the women to the awrah of another women , and what is upon her to wear [in front of women] - then the Committee is clarifying to all the Muslim women that :

It is obligatory upon the women to adorn herself with manners which are manners of shyness ; of which the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} has said that it [shyness] is from Eeman {belief} and it is one of its branches.

And from the shyness which is commanded by the Shariah of Islaam and by customs ; is

- The women covering herself properly
- And her modesty
- And her having of manners which prevent her and keep her far from situations of trials {fitna} and suspicions.

And the clarity in the Qur'an has proved that the women does not reveal to other women ; except the same as what she reveals to her mahram ; of which is what is [revealed] customarily in the house and in times of he daily chores in the house.

As Allaah said :

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ بُعُولَتِ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ

“...and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islām),..” [Sooratul Nur :31]

So if this is the text of the Qur'an , and this is what the Sunnah has proven , then this is what was the norm of the wives of the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} and the wives of the Sahaaba , and from those who followed them in goodness –from among the women of the Ummah- including this time of ours.

And what has been mentioned in the verse in the excuse of what is to be revealed ; is what the women normally reveals in her house and during the time of the house work ; like revealing the head, and the hands, and the neck, and the feet.

But as for easiness and expanding [upon this permissibility] in regards to what she can reveal , then this :

- Foremost does not have any proof in the Book or in the Sunnah.
- And it is a way of bringing fitna {trials and evil} to the women in regards to her fellow ladies. And this is something which is present in between them.
- And also it is a bad example to other women.
- Likewise it is imitation of the disbelievers, and the prostitutes, and the shameless ones: in terms of their way of dressing. And it has been authentically reported from the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} that he said :

{ مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ }

“Whoever imitates a people , then he is amongst them.” ²

² Reported by Imaam Ahmad , and Aboo Daawood

And also that the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} said :

صِنْفَانِ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ لَمْ أَرَهُمَا : قَوْمٌ مَعَهُمْ سِيَاطٌ كَأَدْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ يَضْرِبُونَ بِهَا النَّاسَ ،
وَنِسَاءٌ كَاسِيَاتٌ عَارِيَّاتٌ مُمِيلَاتٌ مَائِلَاتٌ ، رُءُوسُهُنَّ كَأَسْنِمَةِ الْبُخْتِ الْمَائِلَةِ ، لَا
يَدْخُلْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يَجِدْنَ رِيحَهَا ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا لَيُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ كَذَا وَكَذَا

“ Two types of people of the Hell fire -who I did not see [in my life]- are :

- A people having whips like the tails of cows ; beating the people with them.

- And the women who are dressed but appear naked (who would be inclined to evil), their heads would be like the humps of the Bactrian camels inclined to one side ; They will not enter Paradise ,and they will not smell the scent of Paradise , even though its smell can be smelt from such and such a distance. ”³

And the meaning of 'clothed yet naked' : is when a women wears that which does not properly cover her. So she is considered to be dressed , but in reality she is naked.

Like the one who wears a thin cloth which is translucent and shows her skin , or like the tight cloth which describes her figure , or the short cloth which covers only some of her parts.

So what is designated for the Muslim women is:

- To stick to the guidance which the Mothers of the believers and the Female Companions were upon. (may Allaah have mercy on all of them).

- And to strive and be diligent in concerning: covering up properly and in modesty. Indeed this is a way of keeping away from fitna , and safe guarding for the soul from what affects it – from the callings of desires - and falling into despicable evil deeds.

-Just as it is obligatory on the Muslim women to watch out from falling into the haraam which Allaah and his Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} warned against: in terms of the dress code which resembles the disbelievers and the prostitutes.

So they should keep away from this; as a form of obedience to Allaah and his Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} , and hoping for the rewards from Allaah and fearing His punishment.

³ Saheeh Muslim : 2128

As it is obligatory also for every Muslim male to fear Allaah in regards to those women under his authority . He should not leave them to wear what has been made haraam by Allaah and his Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} : in regards to the clothing which is displaying, revealing, a source of trials.

And he should know that he is a care taker who is accountable –in the Day of Judgment- regarding those under him.

We ask Allaah to rectify the affairs of the Muslims , and we ask Him to guide all of us to the straight path. Verily He is The One who hears, The One who is close, The One who responds. And may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and all of his companions .' ⁴

Permanent Committee of Scholarly Research and Verdicts :

Head : Shaykh `Abdul-`Azeez aalu-Shaykh

Member: Shaykh Swaaleh ibn Fawzaan

Member : Shaykh `Bakr Aboo Zayd

Member : Shaykh `Abdullah bin Ghudyaan

In another Question posed to the Committee :

Q. 'In the last few years, there has been an increase in the wearing of morally depraved clothing in between the women. Of which [these clothes] display some parts of the body and its shape; all of this in imitation of the disbelievers.

And their 'defense' or proof in 'allowing' these clothes ; is that they are just in between fellow women , and that the awrah of the women in front of other women is what is between the navel and knee ! ?'

⁴ Fataawaa Lajna ad-daimah 17/290

A. 'It is upon the women to be have modesty and manners , and it is upon her to beautify herself with shyness. Even if no one will look at her except other women.

It is upon her not to reveal to them ; except what is normal and customary in being revealed.

So this is like she is present with them while wearing a loose fitting covering dress. Showing her face , her hands, and the feet , and like this.

And this is more proper in guarding herself and keeping away from situations of suspicion.

Also it is impermissible for the women to wear clothing which resembles the clothes of the disbelievers ; even if they are covering ; let alone those which are short, tight, and 'see through'.

According to the statement of the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} that he said :

{ مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ }

"Whoever imitates a people , then he is amongst them." ⁵

And also that the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} said :

صِنْفَانِ مِنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ لَمْ أَرَهُمَا : قَوْمٌ مَعَهُمْ سِيَاطٌ كَأَذْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ يَضْرِبُونَ بِهَا النَّاسَ ،
وَنِسَاءٌ كَاسِيَاتٌ عَارِيَّاتٌ مُمِيلَاتٌ مَائِلَاتٌ ، رُءُوسُهُنَّ كَأَسْنِمَةِ الْبُخْتِ الْمَائِلَةِ ، لَا
يَدْخُلْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يَجِدْنَ رِيحَهَا ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا لَيُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ كَذَا وَكَذَا

"Two types of people of the Hell fire -who I did not see [in my life]- are :

- A people having whips like the tails of cows ; beating the people with them.

- And the women who are dressed but appear naked (who would be inclined to evil), their heads would be like the humps of the Bactrian camels inclined to one side ; They will not enter Paradise ,and they will not smell the scent of Paradise , even though its smell can be smelt from such and such a distance. " ⁶

⁵ Reported by Imaam Ahmad, and Aboo Daawood: 4031, Musannaf of Ibn Abee Shaybah : 5/313 ,Musnad of Aboo Ya'laa : 4/287 , Tabaraanee in kabir : 5/267 ; as in Majmoo' Zawaaid.

⁶ Saheeh Muslim : 2128

And from Allaah is guidance . And may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and all of his companions .’⁷

Permanent Committee of Scholarly Research and Verdicts :

Head : Shaykh `Abdul-`Azeez ibn `Abdullaah bin Baz

Deputy : Shaykh `Abdul-`Azeez aalu-Shaykh

Member: Shaykh Swaaleh ibn Fawzaan

Member : Shaykh `Bakr Aboo Zayd

Member : Shaykh `Abdullaah bin Ghudyaan

And another Question posed to the Committee :

Q. ‘In the latter times there has come up a form of a cloth which is tight fitting on the body. Such that it describes the figure/ shape of the body.

So what is the ruling of wearing it in front of other women or in front of the close male relatives?’

A. ‘It is not permissible for the women to wear a cloth which describes her body – either through being tight fitting or translucency.

This is due to what this action brings of fitna (evils/trials) to the men.

And due to it being a bad example to other women.

And from Allaah is guidance . And may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and all of his companions .’⁸

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⁷ Fataawaa Lajna ad-daimah 17/289

⁸ Question no. : 20513

IMAAM MUHAMMAD NAASIRUDDEN AL-ALBAANEE :

1. After mentioning the weak narration which says :

“The awrah of the men to other men And the Awrah of the women to other women is like the Awrah of the women to men.” [Silsilah ahadeeth ad-Dhaaifaah : 3923]

[Imam Al-Albaanee says :] “And this is from the strange things which Allaah saves a person from being bonded to a particular madhhab [opinion].

How can they say that the Awrah of the women to other women is what is between the navel and knees ?

This opinion –after the fact that- it does not have any basis in the Book or in the Sunnah Rather it is opposing the statement of The Exalted in the verse in Suratul Nur :

“...and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers...” . Up to His statement... **“...or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islām)..”**

What is meant by adornments here are the adornments , and they are : the earring, the bracelet, the anklet, and the necklace. And this is by the agreement of the Scholars of Tafseer. And it is also narrated from Ibn Mas’oud.

And shaykh Tuwayjiree mentioned it in his book .

So this is a clear verse from the Qur’an showing that it is not permissible for the women to reveal in front of other Muslim women – more that these places only.

Or does the shaykh see that the places of adornment – as mentioned in the verse- are : the breasts , and the back , and her hips...!? ” ⁹

2. Shaykh Albaanee also said :

“ And the statement [opinion] that the Awrah of the women to other women is like the awrah of the men to other men : then this is something which I don’t know of any basis for it.

Rather it is opposing the verse which has been mentioned [Sooratul nur : 31]..” ¹⁰

⁹ Radd al Mufhim : 1/74

¹⁰ Talkhees Ahkâm janaaza : 1/94

AI-ALLAAMAH SHAYKH SWAALEH AL-FAWZAAN

Q. 'What is the ruling of the women dancing in the presence of each other – in the weddings and other places. Give us a verdict, may Allaah reward you ?'

A. "There is no problem for the dancing of the women during the wedding ceremonies, and their hitting the duff while singing nice clean songs. This is because this is from the modes of announcing the wedding – which is something legislated by the shariah.

But it has a condition that :

-It is between women only.

-And by voices which are not high such that they are heard from other places too.

-And by the condition that there is complete covering; in the way that nothing of the Awrah of the women is displayed – during this dancing.

For example her shins, or her fore arms, or her back ; so she is only to reveal what is normally revealed by the muslim women in front of her fellow Muslim women." ¹¹

And the shaykh may Allaah preserve him , was also asked :

Q. 'Is the action of the women wearing tight fitting clothing – in the presence of other women – included in the hadeeth of the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} where he said :

"...the women who are dressed but appear naked.." to the end of the hadeeth. Narrated by Imaam Muslim in his saheeh [3/1680] ?'

A. "There is no doubt that it is not permissible for the women to wear anything which is tight and describes her body.

This is not permissible : except to her husband only.

As for other than her husband ; then it is not allowed.

¹¹<http://www.sahab.com/go/fatwa.php?id=690&query=الشيخ%20صالح%20بن%20فوزان%20الفوزان>

Even if it is only in the presence of other women.

This is because she becomes a bad example to others ; when they see her wearing this. They might imitate her.

And also [because] she is commanded to properly cover her awrah, in the proper covering in front of every body ; except to her husband.

She covers her awrah in front of the women just as she covers herself in front of men.

Except that –in front of women , she can reveal that -which can be revealed customary : like her face , her wrists , her feet ; when there is a need for her to do so.”¹²

¹² Muntaqa min Fataawa Shaykh Fawzaan : 454

SHAYKH MASHHOOR HASAN

Q. 'What is the limit of the Awrah of the women to other women and to the mahram?'

A. 'It is widespread amongst most of the people that the Awrah of the women to other women and to the mahram : is what is between the navel and the knees. And this is wrong.

What is correct is what Allaah has said in Suratul Nur , He said :

وَمَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ

“And not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers.....”

And He mentioned a majority of the mahram.

So it is permissible for the women to reveal to other women and to her mahram ; the parts which take adornments.

As for the body parts which do not take adornments ; then she is not reveal this ; except to her husband. And this is due to the generality of the hadeeth :

{المرأة عورة}.

“The women is awrah.”

So for example ; the hair takes adornments ; thus it is permissible for her to reveal this [to other women and to her mahram] , and the neck and the upper part of the chest also takes adornments [neck lace] ; thus it is okay for her to reveal this, and the hands take adornments also ; so it is permissible for her to show her hands , and likewise the lower part of the shins it takes adornment in the form of the anklet ; so it is okay for her to reveal this.

As for her to reveal her thighs , or her breasts , or her back , and similar things ; to other women and to her mahram ; this is haraam.

Similarly it is not allowed for her to be in front of her mahram with what describes her awrah ; like wearing tight trousers [pants] or something which is translucent and shows her body : so all of this is haraam.

Instead it is upon her to be in their presence ; dressed in wide , loose clothing which she wears in her house . Like the gown which goes past the knees , or pants while having over them a long dress which is almost to her knees , and similar to these [proper coverings] ; so it is upon her to be in front of her mahram in this state.

And in the case when she has to breast feed her baby ; then she should do so while having a covering which covers her ; and thus she breastfeeds the baby under this. And she is not to reveal her breast in front of her father or her brothers.

This is from the shyness (and modesty) which is a must on the woman to observe and be immersed in.”¹³

¹³ Fataawaa shaykh Mashhoor : 71

SHAYKH 'ABDUL-'AZEEZ BIN 'ABDILLA AH AR-RAAJIHEE

Q. 'Some women dress in clothing which in reality might be short and revealing some of her adornment , or the upper chest , or her shoulders , and similar to this.

So what is the ruling of the Awrah of the women to other women ?

A. 'It is not permissible for the women to reveal her Awrah in front of other women ; except to the same extent that she reveals in front of her mahram.

The women's awrah which she can reveal in front of other women ; is the same that she reveals in front of her mahram ; and this is : her face, her head, her hands, and her neck.

But for her to display her back , and her stomach ; this is haraam.

Allaah The Exalted says :

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ

" And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), and to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islām)...."

So He made the women same as the mahram.

So what she reveals to her father , and her brother , and her paternal and maternal uncle , : is the same as to what she reveals in front of the women. It is one ruling.

So it is not allowed for her to reveal her breasts, or her back , or her thighs, in front of the women. That is not permissible for her.

So she covers herself just as she covers in front of the mahram. Yes. " ¹⁴

¹⁴ <http://www.sh-rajhi.com/rajhi/?action=DisplayLec&docid=34&page=Wadaa00012.Htm>

SHAYKH ALEE RIDHAA

Q. 'Is there a difference between the awrah of the free women and the awrah of the slave ?

And what is the limit of the Awrah of the women to other women ?

And what is the limit of her awrah to her mahram (like her father and her brother)?'

A. "There is no difference between the awrah of the free women and the awrah of the slave : according to the correct opinion which some of the authenticators have chosen , like Shaykhul Islaam ibn Taymiyyah and others. And it is that her whole body is awrah except the face and the hands.

And the Awrah of the women to other women or in front of her mahram : all of her body is awrah ; except what is apparent from her and that is like her hair , her neck , her shins , her hands.

And she is not to reveal her breasts or her thighs...leave alone the awrah which is more extreme." ¹⁵

SHAYKH ABDURRAHMAN AL-AJLAAN

Q. 'I need to go to a female doctor ; so is it permissible to reveal – for example- my stomach ?

And what is the limit of the Awrah of the women in front of other women ?'

A. "The Awrah of the women in front of other women **in times of necessity** ; is between the navel and the knees.

Except that it is from the modes of holding on to the virtuous behaviours and manners that ; a women does not reveal herself to other women anything of her body – except what is revealed customarily.

¹⁵ <http://www.albaidha.net/vb/showthread.php?p=14744>

And here we see there is a difference between the women revealing a part of her body in front of other women ; due to treatment or due to giving birth , or due to any necessity : [there is a difference between this] and the women revealing this ; due to her own liking , and without any need or necessity.

So it is permissible in cases of necessity ; and it is prohibited in other than that.

And Allaah knows best. ” ¹⁶

At this point I hope it is very clear to the reader that this is the strong opinion due to the evident proofs ; as explained by the people of knowledge.

*And now Without holding back : we present to you some words from the Lion of the Sunnah , the reviver of this era , the one who never ceased to be a student of knowledge –as he insisted in many times- he is none other than **al-Imaam Muhammad Naasiruddeen al-Albaanee** , he (rahimahullaah) said :*

“ I see it is best to remind the brothers present here in this blessed gathering –InshaAllaah- and to those whom these words will reach them ; about a matter which I think most of the Muslim are heedless about.

And it is not strange to anybody that reminding people with what they have neglected and what they are ignorant about ; has more priority than to speak to them about things which they usually hear on from those who give sermons , and the teachers , and those who give admonitions , and from the radio’s ... and other than these from among the means which have Allaah has made easy in these present times.

And also due to the statement of the Prophet (sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam) :

“ The best of the people ; are the most beneficial to them.”

So there is no doubt that we understand from the hadeeth that ; benefitting the people is by teaching them what they don’t know , or by reminding them what they have become heedless about.

And from these matters is to know: What is the ‘Awrah of the Muslim woman in front of another Muslim woman.

¹⁶ The source of this fatwa is a site of brothers who have strayed from the correct methodology ; so I see it is proper not to put the reference here. If anyone wants it , he can contact me InshaAllaah.

Indeed what is stated in some books of fiqh is that the 'Awrah of the Muslim woman in front of another Muslim woman is like the awrah of the man to another man – that is between the navel and the knees. And by this it means that it is permissible for a Muslim woman to expose and be naked in front of her sister ; the upper half of her body and what is lower the knees !

And what I want to remind you with is that : We have to know - before anything else- that this ruling does not have any proof from the Book of Allaah nor any hadeeth of the Prophet (sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam).

Another thing : The Book of Allaah proves opposite to this expansion in regards to the 'Awrah of the Muslim woman in front of her Muslim sister.

The scholars of tafseer have stated that in regards to the women ; there are two types of adornments : The apparent adornments , and the interior adornments.

And this is taken from two Noble verses ; the first one is the Statement of The Exalted :

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا

“...And not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent....”

That they don't reveal their adornments in front of strange men. And this is the apparent adornment. Its ruling is the one tied to the strange men. And as established from the hadeeth of the Prophet (sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam) – it is the face and the wrists only.

As for all other body parts – then they are considered to be among the interior adornment ; which she is not allowed to display any of it – in front of strange men.

As for the interior adornment – it is what The Most Glorious The Most Majestic has allowed her to reveal to her mahram and to the Muslim women.

As in the famous verse , where The Exalted says :

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ

“....And not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers.....”

...And like this The Exalted continues to name the mahram ; until He says **“or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islâm), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess..”**

So in His statement **“or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islâm),”** : in this is a clear proof that it is permissible for the Muslim woman to display in front of the Muslim woman the inner adornment which she reveals to her father , her brother , her sister, and to the other mahram.

Therefore , likewise the awrah of the woman in front of the Muslim woman is restricted to this interior adornment – which we will come to know exactly what it is.

[And for this] We have to return to time of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic era); and see what the women were upon at that time and before their acceptance of Islaam. Thus this ruling came to clarify to the women what they are permitted to reveal in front of :

- The strange men (who are not mahram) : and this is the face and the wrists only. And this [as has been discussed] is the apparent / outer adornment.
- And what is permissible for them in front of the mahram : and this is the inner adornments.

So what is this inner adornment ?

Here , we have to stop a little bit at the tafseer of the scholars concerning this verse :

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ

“And not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers.....”

What is the meaning of this sentence : “**And not to reveal their adornment..**” ? Is it meaning the adornments themselves ? Or is it the places of the adornments ?

Meaning : is the meaning of the verse that they do not reveal the places of the adornments , even if there are no adornments worn ? Or does it mean that they don't reveal these places when they have adornments worn?

There are two statements from the Scholars , but there is no doubt that the correct statement is that the meaning is that they do not reveal the places of the adornments .

Thus the intended meaning of the verse : “**And not to reveal their adornment..**” : it means the places where the adornments are worn , [that they do not reveal them] except to the mahram and the Muslim women ; as has been mentioned.

And this is also because it is always in our intellect that there are places [body parts] which can never take adornments, and is never the custom of the women to put adornments on them.

So for example : is there an adornment [jewellery] on the thighs ? The answer is: No. Is there an adornment on the back? The answer is: No. Is there an adornment on the breasts? The answer is: No. is there an adornment under the arm pit? The answer is: No. And continue to name the body parts ; and the answer is No, No, No.

Therefore , there in this verse , Our Lord The Most Glorious The Most Majestic has allowed her to reveal in front of her mahram and the women ; the parts of their bodies which take adornments. Nothing else.

Only the body parts which take adornments, and not more than that.....”

Then the shaykh continues to say :

“ So we have known the apparent / outer adornment ; and that the most that the Legislation permits her to reveal in front of the strange men : is the face and wrists only.

And what is permissible in front of the mahram: are the places of adornments.

So what are the places of adornments which were considered during the time of the Prophet (sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam) ?

These are restricted and are well known from the body parts : the first of which is are the bracelets on the wrists and the bangles on the hands, and the necklace which is on her neck and some parts of the upper chest, and lastly the anklet - of which our Lord clarified that it is from the outer adornments in his statement :

وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“..And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment..”

This is because the women who used to go astray in regards to some of the Islaamic Hijaab and manners – which are a must for the Muslim woman to adorn herself with – they used to hit their legs while passing by men , so that the men can hear it [the anklet] and thus look at her when they hear the sound of the bell like sound from the anklet. So this is what some of the women used to do during the early days of Islaam ; when Islaam was still new.

So Allaah disciplined them with this verse. thus He said : ***“..And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment..”***

So therefore , this is the last well- known adornment [together with the necklace , and the bracelet] in the time of the ancient Islaam.

Hence according to the verse , Allaah has allowed for the women to reveal [to the mahram and the Muslim women]these parts where these adornments are worn.

So we have clearly known what the body parts which are permitted for the women to expose in front of her father , her brother, her nephew, and lastly the Muslim women.

So we have the hands where there is the bracelets and bangles , then we have the head where there is adornments on the ears [ear rings] , and the neck as we mentioned , then the feet and some parts of her shins where the anklet is worn.

These are the parts which Allaah has permitted the women to expose in front of her mahram and her Muslim sister.

Now , how can the Muslims live in their homes , they live in exposure / nudity which resembles women who it is as if they don't even know the religion of Allaah The Most Glorious The Most Majestic ?

And I don't know the extent of this in this land because I am new here (in Jordan). But in Egypt and Syria we have been tried into trials where it has become that there is no problem for the people to expand on this exposure in their houses.

The women exposes many things of her body – which Allaah has not permitted her to reveal.

So we have been put into trials with scanty clothing which have no sleeves [sleeveless tops] , and the inner clothing which used to be known in the old Arabic as 'tabban' , and it is known today as 'shurt' [the short pants] ; which at least show the thighs.

So the woman today , the mother and the daughter wear these short ' scanty clothes ; and the daughter sits like this in front of her father , rather in front of her brother ; who is a youth at the peak of his youth full of desires ; [she is in his presence] and she rises her legs and puts it on the other thigh ; thus exposing her thighs – completely uncovered !!

By what proof [can they do this]!? By claiming that there is no stranger , this is only her brother ?!!

This is completely against the verse which has been mentioned. Verily she is only allowed to reveal the parts of adornments, and the thighs have never been a part of adornments in any day, and probably it will never.

And more than that , it happens ... the mother enters the bathroom in the house and she calls the daughter to scrub her back ; so she uncovers her back and her breasts, and [as they claim] there is no problem at all ?!

Where did they get this ?

When the verse is clear that the women is only allowed to reveal the parts of adornments. The breasts are not a part which is adorned , and the back is not a part of adornments.

And our Salafu Saalih used to live in their house in the limits of proper covering which Allaah has set for them. Thus there was never this exposure ; which has spread these days in the muslim lands.

I wish to state at this point that this is understood clearly from the Qur'ân : and that we should take it upon ourselves to have the manners stated by the Qur'ân , and to discipline and teach the manners to our women and our daughters. And we should not be affected by the surroundings / movements which are around us ; this is because mostly these are blind followings of the disbelieving Europeans...." ¹⁷

End of Imaam Al-Albaanee's words.

After this , And all Perfect praise is for Allaah ; there is no doubt that this is the strongest opinion and it is more close to the truth : as based on proofs. And that is the explanation of the verse of Suratul Nur, the hadeeth, and the actions of the Salaf.

Thereafter , if - and I say – If a woman was to say ; 'well I choose the other opinion , that it is permissible for me –in front of my sisters- to just cover what is between the navel and the knees.'

Can she actually do that ?

The answer is Yes and No.

Yes ; she can choose to follow the opinion of the other scholars of the Sunnah who say the awrah of women to women is between the navel and the knees. This is because the followers of the authentic Sunnah allow difference of opinions in matters of fiqh – where there is room for more than one view. And all Praise is for Allaah. ¹⁸

No ; by the fact that , we have to really see what do these scholars really say. Do they allow this unrestrictedly? Meaning do they really, say even to those who choose this opinion – that they can sit with their sisters or mothers while only covering what is between the navel and the knees?

If we were to return to the statement of Imaam Al-Albaanee (rahimahullaah) [and all the statements of the scholars which have been mentioned] then surely we see this opinion is weak.

But here we have to see the exact statements of the scholars of the Sunnah who say the awrah of women to women is between the navel and the knees. Do they say its okay ?

¹⁷ Silsilah muhadharah : 13

¹⁸ For some precious words on this , see : <http://www.madeenah.com/article.cfm?id=1216>

At this point we bring some statements of Our scholars who hold this second opinion ; and we see exactly what they mean :

Among them is **AL-ALLAAMAH SHAYKH MUHAMMAD IBN SWAALEH AL-UTHAYMEEN :**

The Limit and the Standard of the Clothing of the Women in front of Women and the Mahram

The shaykh – may Allaah raise his status – was asked :

‘What is your opinion regarding the limit of the Awrah of the women to other women?’

He answered saying : “The awrah of the women to other women is like that of the men to men ; that is , between the navel and the knees. ***BUT this does not mean that the women wears in front of other women – short scanty clothes which only cover what is between the navel and the knees. There is no one among the scholars who says this !***

What it means is that when the women is wearing a long wide dress , but then something happens on her shins or on her neck and like this ; and there is a need to uncover ; then she has no sin to uncover this in front of the women [this is what it means].

And it is well known that if the door was to be open for the women to wear short clothing ; then the consequences will be many things which have been warned against [haraam].

So the clothes are something, and the looking at the awrah is something else.

As for the clothing of the women in front of women ; then what is legislated is that the cloth be from her wrists in regards the limit of the hand , and up to the heels in length ; this is what is legislated.

But if the women -because of a necessity- needs to tuck up the lower part then ; she does so up to the knees , and likewise if she needs to fold the sleeve up to the fore arm – then she can do this ; because of a need only. As for making this to be her normal dress code ; then No.

And the hadeeth does not in any case ; indicate that. This is because the subject [of the hadeeth] is on the look , not on the thing being looked at. Thus the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} had no need to mention the dress code.

Hence , he {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} did not say : ‘the clothing of the women in front of the women is what covers the navel and the knees !’ And we are mentioning this , so that no doubt remains with these women.

And as for the mahram in regards to what they can look at her ; then it is the same as to that of in-between women , meaning : it is permissible for her to reveal in front of her mahram what she reveals in front of the women ; she reveals her head, her shoulders, her feet, her arms , her shins , and like this : but she should never make the dress short.

But as for what has been confused by some women that the statement of the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} :

‘The women is not to look at the awrah of women , and the men should not look at the awrah of women.’¹⁹

They are confused and take it to mean that the awrah of the women to women is what is between the navel and the knees , and thus it shows that the women can shorten her clothing!

[This is not correct because]The Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} did not say : ‘the clothing of the women in front of the women is what covers the navel and the knees !’ And [again] we are mentioning this , so that there is no proof with these women. Rather he said : **‘The women is not to look at the awrah of women ,’**

So he prohibited against the look ; because on the awrah there is clothing which covers it and it is wide long clothing. But sometimes she reveals some parts of her awrah due to a necessity ; thus he {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} forbade from looking at this [awrah when it is exposed].

And it is well known that the Female sahaaba used to wear long wide clothes which covered them and reached the ground, and the Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} allowed them to increase an arm’s length and not more.[meaning an arm’s length from what covers the feet].”²⁰

And also look at what the Other Reviver of this era says, and he is :

AL –IMAAM ABDUL’AZEEZ IBN ABDULLAAH IBN BAAZ

Q. ‘What is the ‘Awrah of the Muslim woman in front of her mahram , and to her Muslim sisters and other women?’

A. ‘As in regards to the women then it is between the navel and the knees. **BUT it is upon her to be modest at all times . Properly covered , at all times.**

¹⁹ Saheeh Muslim

²⁰ Majmoo Fataawa wa rasaail Shaykh Uthaymeen : 12/267-268

So that there is no easiness in regards to this matter. And likewise to her mahram ; she has to be properly covered and full of modesty ; except for her face and her hands and her feet, and there is no problem for the mahram to see her head.

But in the form of modesty and keeping away from fitna ; they should only see her face, her wrists ; or her feet if in necessity. So this is what is appropriate and upon her to do.

And she should be far and preventing easiness and laxity ; especially in these times where the most of the people have become weak in terms of their religion ; and [especially in these times where] the easiness and the wanton displaying among the women has become major.....’²¹

CONCLUSION :

There is no more doubt , that there is no room for even those who sisters who say it is okay to reveal except what is between the navel and the knees.

As we have seen even the scholars who hold this opinion; they never say its okay.

In fact if we were to re-quote the words of Imaam ibn Uthaymeen ; he says :

“this does not mean that the women wears in front of other women – short scanty clothes which only cover what is between the navel and the knees. There is no one among the scholars who says this !....”

I hope my sisters will take heed and pay attention.

Know that this issue is not something which is easy and small. Remember what our beloved Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} said :

الْحَيَاءُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

“Hayaa (shyness and modesty); are part of Eeman (Islâmic belief.)”²²

²¹ <http://www.ibnbaz.org.sa/mat/18230>

²² Saheeh al-Bukhaaree : 23

And our beloved Prophet {sallahAllaahu alayhi wasallam} also said :

الْحَيَاءُ لَا يَأْتِي إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ

“Hayaa (shyness and modesty) does not bring ; except goodness.”²³

InshaAllaah , we ask Allaah to rectify the matters of our religion . And to guide us on this blessed methodology , and to guide us to the best deeds and statements.

...وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

And our last message is ; Alhamdulillah Rabbil ‘alameen

[All Perfect Praise is for Allaah, The Lord of All the Worlds]

²³ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree : 5652