

MODULE 5

Class Title: Dress Code – part 2

(3rd part of a 4 lesson series, should be done after *Haya* series)

Aim of Lesson: To understand *libas* (dress) requirements for a Muslim woman

Category: Scripture/popular culture

Lesson Format: Power point presentation & narration. Discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

Last week we talked about what *awrah* or *satar* is, what parts of the body that need to be covered in front of different people – so we saw that *awrah* or *satar* requirements are not the same all the time but differ according to who we are with.

Then we looked at those requirement in front of other Muslim women/girls, in front of *mehram* relatives and in front of *non-mehrams*.

Throughout the discussion, *haya* was a predominant feature – that outer signs of *haya* are as important as inner ones, and in covering our *awrah*, we must keep *haya* in mind.

Slide 2:

Covering of the body includes three things; *awrah* or *satar*, *libas* which is your dress and *hijab* which is your outer covering. *Alhamdulillah* we have already covered *awrah*, and *hijab* will come later. Today we will discuss *libas*

Slides 3 & 4:

Libas is something that has a purpose. How do we know that it has a purpose?

Because Allah (swt) says in Surah Al-A'raf that,

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوْءَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

“I have sent down clothes so that you may cover yourself and as an adornment.”

(Surah Al A'raf 7: Verse 26)

So this purpose has not been concocted by a human being.

Allah (swt) Himself has sent the *libas* down with a specific purpose, which is to cover your *awrah* or *satar* and to beautify you because this is what was said in Surah Al-A'raf.

Slides 5 & 6:

What is the basic purpose of a house? To live in, provide shelter and privacy. If it doesn't do that, it's not a house.

Slides 7 & 8:

Similarly, the basic purpose of food is to provide nutrition; if it doesn't do that, we call it Junk food. It looks yummy but it doesn't provide nutrition.

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an about food, "Eat from the *halal* and *tayyib*."

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

(Surah Al Baqarah2: Verse 168)

Tayyib means pure. Where ever in the Qur'an it says *halal*, it says *tayyib* with it. So this food is not *tayyib*. It's not to say that it's *haram*, but it's not good for you. You can have it because it's permissible; for this you have to know which things are *shariah* compliant. *Shariah* compliant means that Allah (swt) has allowed those; there are certain things which are totally not permissible and there are certain things which are in between; they are not ideal, but they are permissible. E.g. you can say alcohol is *haram* but you can't say Coke is *haram*. You can say it's not *tayyib*; because it's bad for you, it's fattening, it's got caffeine etc., but it's not *haram*. We can't mess with *haram* and *halal*. That is something Allah (swt) has ordained and commanded.

Slide 9:

Similarly there are some clothing requirements; keep that verse in mind, where Allah (swt) has said that clothing is meant to provide cover and adornment. We'll come to the adornment part later; let's first talk about what the clothing requirements are for covering ourselves.

We know these requirements from various *ahadith*. Allah (swt) gave us the commandment in the Qur'an and then *Rasullullah* (saw) told us how to apply it in our practical lives through either his actions or his words or through the actions of his companions; and since we are women, applied practically by women around the Messenger (pbuh).

First requirement; it must cover your *satar* or *awrah*. That is the reason why we talked about *satar* first; because unless you know what *satar* is, you'll be wondering what to cover!

Second; loose, not tight.

Third; not see through or transparent.

Fourth; boy and girl clothing must not be alike.

Fifth; it must not imitate other religions.

Lastly; it must not be showy or worn with the intent to show-off.

There are six clothing requirements that have to be ticked. By the way these clothing requirements are also important for your *salah*.

Slides 10 – 11:

Let's go over the clothing requirements in a little more detail: First, it must cover the *satar*.

Alhamdulillah we have already discussed that *satar* requirements vary – depending on who we are with; so that means that basic clothing requirements are different in front of different people. We are all Muslim women here, so the way we are sitting here is not how we will in front of non-*mehram* men.

I'd like you to understand that the job of studying Allah (swt)'s commandments can't be done by lay people like us; I'm not a scholar and none of your teachers here are scholars. There are scholars who go through the Qur'an and *ahadith* meticulously. They know fluent Arabic and they go through proper training. It's a lot of very hard work; like becoming a doctor. So the interpretation of the Qur'an and *ahadith* cannot be done by just anybody; you have to be a specialist in that. *Alhamdulillah* over the years, scholars have compiled a lot of *ehkaamaat* (commandments) in simple straight-forward language for people like you and me to understand.

These scholars have come up with clothing requirements based on the *hadith* of *Rasulullah* (pbuh) in which he says, "A woman is supposed to be concealed when she emerges outside; *Shaytaan* makes her adorned in front of men." [Tirmidhi]

Slides 12 – 14:

So e.g. if a woman is dressed like this in mixed company, then the very first requirement of clothing is not met.

Slides 15 – 18:

If you are given an exam paper and there are specific instructions to use a black pen, and fill in the boxes of the correct answer.

And what do you do? Do you try to be really jazzy? Would you make smiley faces with coloured pens? No, because the paper will just be trashed in the bin due to your not following the instructions. The first instruction wasn't followed; whether the question was right or wrong will come much later.

That is how important clothing requirements are, but sometimes we take it too lightly. Covering of the *awrah* or *satar* is the first requirement, other things come after that.

Slides 19 – 21:

The second instruction is that the clothes should be loose, not tight. There is a scholar who lives in America; his name is Yasir Qadhi. He delivers wonderful lectures and he strongly discourages women and girls to wear jeans, only because they are way too tight. If you are not wearing an outer covering and if that's all you're wearing to cover yourself, it's way too tight.

Sometimes we feel that only western clothes are tight; have you seen the *tang pajama*? I remember someone wearing a *tang pajama* the other day and she actually asked for a plastic bag so that she could pull the pajama up her calves because it's meant to be so tight.

Whether we wear western or eastern clothes – they can be tight. Some outfits seem to be stitched on bodies – I wonder how people breathe in them.

Slides 22 – 24:

The third requirement is that the clothes should not be transparent.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “There are two types of people of hell whom I have not seen; people with whips like tails of cattle with which they beat other people and women who are clothed yet naked. They will not enter Paradise nor smell its fragrance.” [Sahih Muslim]

A lot of times we feel our clothes are perfectly ok. Look at this, full sleeves but see through, again this is transparent.

Something that we must be particularly careful about in summer is the white *shalwar*. When you stand in the sun your legs are completely visible. Lawn (a light summer fabric) clothes also spell danger because if they are light coloured prints, you can see the lace on your underclothes as well!

Look at the fabric in the sun because a lot of times when you are buying it you can't tell in the shop; just go out in the sun and put your hand underneath it. Very often the shopkeeper will tell you, “*Baji ye dhul ke guff hojayga.*” (It will get thicker after washing). Nonsense, it never happens. A fabric which is see-through will remain see-through.

Chikan (embroidered fabric) *shalwars* are another thing to watch out for; the ones with the holes in them. They don't cover your body. Be very careful about them, especially when you're offering your *salah*. I remember my teacher once saying that the sari is a miracle; seven yards of cloth and concealing nothing!

Of course it also depends on how you are wearing what you are wearing. This is a very scary *hadith* reported in Sahih Muslim, meaning that the narration and authenticity is very sound. So

the bottom line is that your body should not be showing. Ensure particularly when you are offering *salah* that your hair and ears are not showing; that means that you can't offer *salah* in georgette *duppatas*, as your hair is visible through them.

Slides 25 – 27:

The fourth requirement is, no cross-dressing.

Look at this *hadith*. Trousers are an acceptable form of women's clothing and they are perfectly fine but when a man tries to look like a woman or when a woman tries to look like a man, there is a difference.

There are certain kinds of clothing which are unisex; that's fine, because you're not trying to look like the opposite gender.

“The Prophet (pbuh) cursed those men who assumed the manners of women and those women who assumed the manners of men.” [Muslim]

It is extremely unfortunate that on our national television, we have a show where a man dresses up as a woman and everybody under the sun goes and talks to him or her whatever. It's a man dressing up as a woman and look what is said; the Prophet (pbuh) cursed those men who assumed the mannerisms of women. What are we allowing ourselves to be exposed to? It's considered uncool and so *mullani* to say anything about that, so we just keep quiet.

I remember two years after the show had started they had the host of that show on Al-Jazeera TV (There is a TV network called Al-Jazeera) on a show which was called “Every Woman” and they called that person to represent Pakistani women! A dismal state for us Pakistani women indeed that a man who dresses like a woman should be representing us!

Remember, you guys are of that age and position where if you see something blatantly wrong, say or do something about it. Allah (Swt) has given us some platforms to talk on; go on our blog. We are always looking for contributions from you guys on the blog. There are lots of magazines, e.g. Hiba magazine have a section called “Raising Your Voice” where you can speak out, e.g. about obscene ads. etc.

Let's be clear that what goes on in somebody's house is private and their business, but what you are exposed to publicly, you must do something about.

Remember the story about the little bird, when Ibrahim (as) was going to be burned by Namrud and there was this little bird who had water in her beak and she was going to put out the fire and the other animals asked her if she was mad, how would that little bit of water help? She replied that she was just doing her bit.

We all have these tiny little circles of influence but the tiny things become bigger. Don't think that other people are going to think you daft, of course they will, but at least you try because

when you stand in front of Allah (swt) you can at least say that you tried. This is a serious matter, so if you see any small boys or girls dressing up as the opposite gender, strictly stop them.

Slides 28 – 32:

The fifth requirement is that the dress must not imitate other religions.

There is a hadith which is interpreted as, “Whoever imitates a nation is one of them.” [Sunan Abu Dawud]

Bear in mind that clothes are not Christian or Hindu, symbols are. That means that you cannot wear something which is symbolic of another religion, e.g. wearing a cross or a *bindi*; whether it's for the sake of fashion or anything else. Similarly, you cannot cover yourself by wearing a nun's habit or e.g. for a man to wear a turban like a Sikh's.

Slide 33:

People across the world wear clothes according to their culture and climate. All kinds of clothes are worn in different countries. That's why I said clothing is not Hindu or Muslim.

That is the reason why Allah (swt) has given us clothing requirements, not a particular style of clothing. That could depend on your culture and weather. Hence it's not really just **what** you wear; it's **how** you wear it that matters. E.g. you could wear a 'western' dress and still be *shariah* compliant or for that matter you could be wearing 50 yards of a *sharara* and it would still not be *shariah* compliant.

So it's not the cultural aspect of the clothes that comes in the clothing requirement but unfortunately sometimes we see a girl or woman wearing western clothes and we hear people say *kya pehna hua hai* (what is she wearing?)! On the other hand you may see someone wearing a flowy *kurta shalwar* but sleeveless and with a low neck and back and the ankles showing and it would be totally non *shariah* compliant.

Slides 34 -35:

E.g. this is a *sari* and this is a *sari* as well. I remember my grandmother used to wear one too and she used to wear a little full sleeved kurta with it and her *pallu* used to come from the back. She looked gorgeous.

Slides 36 – 46:

Uniforms are dress codes too, aren't they? Doctors have certain types of clothes, those are their dress code. Chefs have certain types of clothes. But you know the strictest dress code? Fashion! Do or die. You don't want to be seen with a tiny *kurta* nowadays do you, because everybody is wearing long flowy ones. And whenever people stop wearing these gown-like clothes, your hemline will go up and down like a yo-yo. Consequently fashion is the strictest dress code but

we just don't recognize it as such. We always hear about the Islamic dress code as if it's some sort of draconian law. It really isn't. The Islamic dress code is most flexible and it gives you a lot of choice because it doesn't confine you to a particular culture. As long as you're covered you can wear anything.

Slides 47 – 49:

The sixth requirement is that the clothes must not be worn with the intent to show-off. E.g. in this picture the woman is completely covered; a lot of times we think that just because we're completely covered we're not showing off but the possibility is there.

There is a verse of the Qur'an which says:

... وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى...

“And do not display yourself like that of the times of ignorance.” (Surah Al Ahzaab: Verse 33)

Insha Allah in the next class we will discuss *tabarruj* in detail, but for now just understand that *Tabarruj* means showing off.

Slide 50:

Let's have a quick re-cap of the clothing requirements.

Must cover *awrah* or *satar*

Loose not tight

Thick not transparent

No cross-gender dressing

Must not imitate other religions

And finally must not be show-offy

Slide 51:

Our *deen* is a beautiful and complete way of life and that way of life includes a particular dress code. However, like we discussed few minutes back, Islamic dress code is so flexible and can have such variety. It accommodates all cultures under the sun. Allah (swt) has not asked us to dress like Arab women. He has told us **what** to cover. **How** we cover it is our call – *Alhamdulillah*.

How the commandment of covering our body is fulfilled returns to local customs, environment, and one's situation, flexible within the limits of the fixed guidelines of the Qur'an and the luminous guidance of the Beloved of Allah (pbuh).

Please understand that – Islamic dress code is not Arab dress.

Slides 52 – 82:

I'd like you to look at these pictures carefully; these are all Muslim women complying with the Islamic dress code in some way or the other.

It's quite obvious in them that the Islamic dress code doesn't constrain your participation in activities.

I know a friend's daughter who used to go riding with a full *burqa* on. *Alhamdulillah*.

Look at these women; they are playing basketball. The Islamic dress code doesn't restrain you at all. That's a huge misconception.

There are Muslim women all over the world doing different things; they do productive things. We need to realize this and understand that there is a reason for wearing these clothes; these women are not daft. If there was no such thing as an Islamic dress code, these women would not be covered up.

Slide 83:

Allah (swt) has said such a profound verse in Surah Al-A'raf,

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْآتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ
هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“O children of Adam! Let not Satan deceive you as he got your parents out of paradise, stripping them of their garments to show their private parts...”

The first place that he attacks is to get rid of *haya*. Your *haya* is gone and half of your faith is gone. That's how important clothing is, because it's directly related to *haya*.

A lot of times people say, *kya farq parta hay* (what difference does it make?), in what you wear - why do you have to be so rigid?

There is a very good reason for that. Why would Allah (swt) warn us that the first thing that happened is that our *haya* went? They ate the fruit and what happened? The clothes came off. Literally they came off. You all must have heard the story of Adam (as) and Hawwa (as).

The higher your level of sin, the lower your *haya*. When *haya* goes, everything goes. Remember when we talked about *haya* in the initial class, *Rasulullah* (pbuh) said that if you feel no *haya* do whatever you want to do.

Haya comes in every aspect of our lives; once you start doing *badtameezi* (being insolent) with your parents or your teachers, then *haya* is gone. Initially it might take a bit of courage or daring because you might feel awkward but soon that hesitation goes.

Do you all understand the clothing requirements completely? Do you see that it is not ambiguous and man-made? That's why it's very important; a lot of times we know certain things but we don't know the rationale behind it.

We know this is a very serious commandment; all of Allah (swt)'s commandments are very serious. Once we know that it is from the Qur'an and Sunnah then it's easier for us to understand and apply it.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika RabbulIzzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

Reference for Teachers:

Libaas ka Maqsad (The Purpose of Dress) – Urdu audio by Huma Najmul Hassan – www.al-ilm.com

See also some reference documents in folder