

Assalamu alaikum,

I wanted to get clarification on the explanation Sh. Nuh gave on the evidence for hijab. This has been a topic of debate since the hijab ban discussion in France and I'm unclear now on where the requirement comes from.

Sh. Nuh writes:

'There is no other lexical sense in which the word khimar may be construed. The wording of the command, however, and let them drape their head coverings over their bosoms, sometimes confuses nonspecialists in the sciences of the Qur'an, and in truth, interpreting the Qur'an does sometimes require in-depth knowledge of the historical circumstances in which the various verses were revealed. In this instance, the elliptical form of the divine command is because women at the time of the revelation wore their headcovers tied back behind their necks, as some village women still do in Muslim countries, leaving the front of the neck bare, as well as the opening (Ar. singular jayb, plural juyub, translated as "bosoms" in the above verse) at the top of the dress. The Islamic revelation confirmed the practice of covering the head, understood from the use of the word khimar in the verse, but also explained that the custom of the time was not sufficient and that women were henceforth to tie the headcover in front and let it drape down to conceal the throat and the dress's opening at the top.'

I'm a bit confused about how the wording used in these particular verses are considered to be a command. My earlier understanding of the evidence for hijab was that the specificity of the command came from the hadith in Abu Dawood about the Prophet (AS) pointing out to Asma that only the face and hands should be revealed. Can you please clarify what it is about the wording/grammar in the verses reference above that makes them the evidence for the fard status for hijab? I'm not clear how the word "khimar" in and of itself is used as evidence to say that hijab is required.

Answer:



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Praise be to Allah. May Allah's peace and blessings shower upon our beloved Messenger.

Dear Sister,

The obligation of hijab is evident when we examine the grammatical structure of this verse.

The verse reads:

وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ

وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا

وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ

The translation:

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms..." [Abdullah Yusuf Ali]

The style of the language employed in the verse is very important. Allah Most High begins with the imperative form of the verb "qalla," which means to say or tell. Thus, Allah Most High is commanding the Prophet, peace be upon him, to tell the believing women to take a series of steps:

1. To guard their gaze, which is an important factor in modest interaction;
2. To guard their chastity or sexuality;
3. To conceal their adornment and natural beauty, which scholars have interpreted to mean the whole body except for the face, hands, and (for Hanafis) the feet.
4. And, finally, to emphasize the above point, Allah Ta'ala uses the phrase, "wa-lyadhribna bikhumurihinna ala juyubihinna." The verb "yadhribna" which means "to draw or pull over" appears as a feminine plural, thus going back to the original subject of the verse, the believing women. Most importantly, it starts off with the letter "lam," which is called "lam al-amr." Lam al-amr, when prefixed to a present tense verb, such as "yadhribna," makes the verb an imperative, that is, a command. It is not understood as a recommendation, but a specific command directly from Allah Most High to His slaves among the believing women.

Lam al-amr is used in other imperative contexts in the Qur'an. For example, Allah Ta'ala says, "Let the man of means spend according to his means: and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what God has given him..." [Al-Talaq, 65:7]

The Arabic reads:

لِيُنْفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ

وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا ءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يَكْلَفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَّا ءَاتَاهَا

Here, Allah Most High is commanding men to spend according to their means in the context of child support for divorced wives.

This is understood to be a command, not a recommendation, since men are required to support their children. The lam of command, or lam al-amr, once again appears prefixed to the present verb, "yunfiq," meaning "to spend." [Qatr al-Nada, Dar al-Asmaa, 96]

To return to the verse in question, the phrase "wa-lyadhribna bikhumurihinna ala juyubihinna," is a command for women to draw their veils over their bosoms. Allah Most High did not say, "And tell the believing women to put on their veils," because implicit in the verse is the understanding that women were already expected to veil. However, unlike the practice at the time of leaving the scarf hanging down the back with the neck and cleavage exposed, Muslim women were to take it one step further and draw the "khimar" or veil over the neck and cleavage area. Those who argue that the Qur'an says nothing about veiling are completely misreading this verse. Not only does the Qur'anic text make it clear that women are expected to veil, it also dictates the extent of the veiling, i.e., covering the neck and cleavage.

This point is elucidated by reports from Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and other women of the Sahaba, who immediately implemented this verse by tearing up pieces of cloth and covering their hair and bodies. Al-Bukhari recorded that Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "May Allah have mercy on the women of the early emigrants. When Allah revealed the verse: [وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ]

(and to draw their veils over their bosoms), they tore their aprons and veiled themselves [made khimars] with them." [Tafsir Ibn Kathir]

The actions of the Sahaba, may Allah be pleased with them all, did not indicate that hijab was optional. I find it interesting that hijab was not legislated in stages, as opposed to the ban on intoxicants. When the verses in Surat al-Nur were revealed, the female Sahaba immediately covered themselves. Would that we had a fraction of their iman!

And Allah knows best.

Umm Salah (Zaynab Ansari)

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Hijab

الرحيم بسم الله الرحمن

قَوْلِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ; وَاخْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي ; يَفْقَهُوا ; رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي

It is one of the most misunderstood, most misused and most attacked subjects in the world at the moment. However, it is one of the most important subjects in our life. I personally feel that if Hijab is observed in true sense by all of us, half of the problems existing in our society will be solved, Be-izn-Allah. Believe me, it is really so important.

Let us try to understand the word Hijab (veil) before going in to further details. Hijab stands for modesty. We can say that Hijab is important because of modesty. Then some of us may ask: But why is modesty so important? I say: Qur'an will explain to us about this. Let us turn our attention to The Holy Qur'an.

People usually discuss Hijab in context of women. However, in the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) first mentions Hijab for men, before Hijab for women.

خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَلِيلٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْضُوا

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) & to protect their private parts. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do."

(Aayah No. 30, Surah Al-Nūr, Chapter No. 24, Holy Qur'an).

This guards the modesty of men. People obeying this hukm of Allah (SWT) will be seen as modest men in society.

Now let us shift our focus to Hijab for women.

عَفُورًا جَلَابِيبَهُنَّ ذَلِكَ أَذْنَى أَنْ يُعْرِفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ لَأَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَبَنَاتِكُمْ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ يَاسٍ أَيْهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ رَحِيمًا

"O Prophet! Tell your wives & your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known as (respectable woman), so as not to be annoyed. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

(Aayah No. 59, Surah Al-Ahzab, Chapter No. 33, Holy Qur'an).

See, Qur'an answers the question about modesty. "...so that they should be known as respectable woman, so as not to be annoyed....". So, it is all about modesty. I will give some more explanation about this at the end. Till then, let us concentrate on other aspects related to Hijab. Let us discuss point-by-point:

Point-1. Criteria for Hijab

There are basically 06 criteria for observing Hijab. I will write them one by one.

A: Extent

The extent of body that should be covered is different for men & women. The extent of covering obligatory on the male is to cover the body at least from navel to the knees. For women, the extent of covering obligatory is to cover the complete body except the face and hands up to the wrists. If they wish to, they can cover even these. Some scholars are of the view that face should also be covered. My personal understanding is that face covering is optional (references are available to explain this); however, it is up to an individual to adopt whichever view he/she chose to; both views are correct (Wallah-o-alam).

This is the only criteria which is different for men & women. All other five criteria are same for men & women.

B: The clothes worn should be loose and should not reveal the figure.

This criterion, though same for both men & women, yet is more critical for women. We can see in abundance nowadays, women wearing revealing dresses. Rasool-Allah (PBUH) strictly condemned this. Refer to following hadith:

It was narrated that Abu Hurairah (RA) said: Rasool-Allah (PBUH) said: "There are two types of the people of Hell whom I have not seen: People having whips, like the tails of cows, with which they strike the people; and women who are clothed yet naked (i.e. scantily dressed); with their heads like the humps of camels leaning to one side. They will not enter Paradise nor smell its (Jannah's) fragrance, and its fragrance may be detected from such & such distance."

(Hadith No. 5582 (2128), Book about Clothing & Adornment, Sahih Muslim, Vol. 5).

C: The clothes worn should not be transparent such that one can see through.

This criterion, again, though same for both men & women, yet it is more crucial for women. The fact is that woman is such a beautiful, delicate and attractive creation of Allah (SWT) that it needs to be guarded carefully. Hence, the criterion becomes more crucial when it comes to women. Nevertheless, let us study the following hadith to understand the importance of not wearing transparent clothes.

It was narrated from Dihyah bin Khalifah Al-Kalbi that he said: Some pieces of *Qabati* (fine Egyptian linen) were brought to Rasool-Allah (PBUH) & he gave me a piece of it & said: "Cut it into two and make a *Qamis* with one, and give the other to your wife to cover herself with it." When he turned away, he said, "Tell your wife to put a cloth under it, so that it cannot be seen through."

(Hadith No. 4116, Book of Clothing, Sunan Abu Dawud, Vol. 4).

D: The clothes worn should not be so glamorous as to attract opposite sex.

This is applicable to both men & women equally.

E: The clothes worn should not resemble that of opposite sex.

This is again a very big concern rising rapidly in our society. Women are mostly attired in men's dressings (jeans, trousers, etc.). Some sections of males are also adopting cross-dressing; such males are now in abundance who assume styles of females (Wallah-o-alam why?). Rasool-Allah has cursed such persons. Refer to following hadith on this matter:

It was narrated that Abu Hurairah (RA) said: Rasool-Allah (PBUH) cursed men who wear women's clothes and women who wear men's clothes.

(Hadith No. 4098, Book of Clothing, Sunan Abu Dawud, Vol. 4).

F: The clothes worn should not resemble that of the unbelievers i.e. they should not wear clothes that are specifically symbolic of un-believer's religion (like dhoti or saffron coloured costume or any other such dress etc.).

Point-2. List of people in front of whom a woman is allowed to be without Hijab

[illegible]

" And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts and not to show their adornment (*zeenat*) except only that is apparent, and to draw their veils all over their bodies, and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers (includes Chacha, Mamoo etc.), or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers, or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women (sisters in Islam), or female slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of feminine sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O' believers, that you may be successful."

(Aayah No. 31, Surah Al-Nūr, Chapter No. 24, Holy Qur'an).

This aayah confirms the list of *Mahrams*. In front of these a woman need not wear *Abaya* (the outer cloth used for Hijab) on her body and the head scarf. However, she still has to maintain the

Satr i.e. cover her bosom and/or other body curves with any big cloth (like shawl etc.). When among others (other than these people), every Muslim women has to observe Hijab (i.e she has to cover her body and head by a big *Shawl* or *Abaya* over her inner clothes).

Point-3. Exemption for some

Allah (SWT) has ordered Hijab due to a certain reason. And He exempts some. Let us see for ourselves.

لَهُنَّ ثِيَابُهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّائِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحاً فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"And as for women past child-bearing who do not expect wed-lock, it is no sin on them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a way as not to show their adornment. But to refrain is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower."

(Aayah No. 60, Surah Al-Nūr, Chapter No. 24, Holy Qur'an).

After reading this aayah, we see and can understand the *hikmah* of Allah (SWT). Based on this, I can say, our mothers (who fall in this category) have a choice of not wearing their *Abayas* (or *Burkhas*) when they go out. However, it does not in any way permit them to go out in indecent dresses (they have still to guard their adornment).

Some people argue: *Decent clothing is what Hijab refers to. What is the use of this Abaya, or extra clothing over the main clothes?* This beautiful verse answers this question also. It is clearly stated that Allah allows women past certain age to discard their outer clothing i.e. Abaya or Burkha etc. Therefore, it is mandatory that the woman who observes Hijab, she wears an outer clothing like *Abaya* or a *Burkha* etc. That is what Hijab asks for.

Point-4. No purdah among husband-wife

Allah (SWT) has created this exceptional relation where a woman and man have no hijab between them. It is clearly mentioned in Holy Qur'an:

لِيَأْسُ لَهُنَّ هُنَّ لِيَأْسُ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ

"They are *libas* (i.e. body cover, screen, dress) for you and you are the same for them."

(Aayah No. 187, Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter No. 2, Holy Qur'an).

All these references from Holy Qur'an and authentic ahadith of beloved Rasool-Allah (PBUH) give a beautiful, meaningful and clear explanation of requirements of Hijab, both for men & women. Besides the above mentioned six criteria of clothing, Hijab also includes moral conduct, behaviour, attitude and intention of the individual. Hijab of clothing has to be accompanied by

Hijab of eyes, Hijab of heart, Hijab of tongue, Hijab of thoughts and intentions. And this aspect is so important when it comes to women that all the above mentioned Hijabs (of heart, eyes etc.) come in to play. How? I will cite one example:

Suppose two sisters are twins, equally beautiful and they are walking down a street. One of them is in Hijab, while other one is in a mini skirt or a tight jeans or any other revealing dress. If a hooligan faces them, whom will he tease? Every reader should ask himself/herself. Naturally he will tease the scantily clad girl. This shows that the revealing dress will act as an invitation for the hooligans.

This is the importance of Hijab. Qur'an has laid down this requirement to help women, to save them from molestation, to guard their modesty.

But what a pity; present day woman will do anything to fight in favour of wearing such dresses and abandoning Hijab. And, we husbands feel a great pride and honour if our women are attired in western clothing. On the contrary, we feel a bit ashamed of ensuring that our women observe Hijab.....Shame on us.

I hope we all understand this as soon as we can. Plus, let us not be a *Faasiq* by disobeying Allah, for any act of ours which is against the will of Allah (against Qur'an) leads us to *Fisq*. Follow Qur'an.

And Allah knows best.

May Allah forgive me if I am wrong and guide us to the right path...Ameen.

The requirements of a Muslimah's Dress
by Dr Mohammed Ismail Memon Madani

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Burqa'or jalbab

In the last Verse, Muslim women were asked not to leave their homes without necessity. If they must, they should not go out boldly without Hijab like the women of the olden Days of Ignorance. Further, in Surah Ahzab, Allah commanded them to use Jalbab when they came out of their homes:

"O Prophet! Tell your Wives and daughters, and the believing women that they should cast (Yudnina 'Alaihinna) their outer garments (Jalabib) over them; so that it is likelier that they will be known and not harmed; and Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah

Ahzab, v. 59)"

This Verse is a very important one among the Verses revealed about Hijab, because it clearly states that hiding one's face is included in the Commandment of Hijab. Therefore, the scholars and Interpreters of the Holy Qur'an have discussed this issue at great length.

Secondly, since this Verse is not specifically addressed only to the Consorts of the Prophet (s.a.w.), there is no room to make-excuses regarding its applicability to all women. Let us look at the literal meaning of the words JALBAB and YUDNINA 'ALAIHINNA in this Verse.

What is jalbab?

JALABIB is the plural form of the word JALBAB. Many different interpretations have been made in explaining Jalbab. In his research of this word, 'Allamah Ibn Al-Manzur concludes:

Jalbab is actually the outer sheet or coverlet which a woman wraps around on top of her garments to cover herself from head to toe. It hides her body completely. (Lisan-ul Arab, vol. 1, p. 273)

The root word is JALBAB which is basically used for such things which completely cover something. For example, the blankets we use in cold weather or the darkness of the night which covers all things completely.

The word Jalbab is therefore used for that outer sheet which a woman wraps around on top of her clothes to hide herself from the eyes of strangers.

In interpreting the word, 'Allamah Ibn Al-Hazam writes:

In Arabic language, the language of the Prophet (s.a.w.), Jalbab is that outer sheet which covers the entire body. A piece of cloth which is too small to cover the entire body could not be called Jalbab. (Al-Muhalla, vol. 3, p. 217)

In describing it, Ibn Mas'ud (r.a.) said that Jalbab is that sheet of cloth which is worn on top of the scarf. Ibn 'Abbas (r.a.) described it as follows:

Allah commanded Muslim women to pull this sheet on top of them to cover their bodies except one eye, when it is necessary for them to come out of their home. {Ibn Kathir}

Imam Mohammed Bin Sinn said, "When I asked 'Ubaidah Salmani (r.a.) the meaning of this Verse and how the Jalbab was to be used, he demonstrated it to me by pulling a sheet of cloth over his head to cover his body, leaving his left eye uncovered. This was also the explanation of the word 'ALAIHINNA in this Verse."

This Verse clearly requires hiding of the face which supports the Commandments in the Verse of Hijab.

The second phrase in this Verse which requires interpretation is YUDNINA 'ALAIHINNA. 'Allamah Alusi writes:

(The root word) ADNA literally means to bring something closer. Here it means to hang something close to you, or over you, since it is followed by 'ALA in the phrase. In my opinion, ADNA followed by 'ALA points towards covering themselves with the sheet hanging on top of them in a way so that they can see the road as they walk (Ruh-ul-Ma'ani, vol. 22, pp. 88-89)

After quoting and 'Allamah Alusi concludes:

All the above discussions deal with explaining the gist (of the term). The apparent meaning of the word 'ALAIHINNA is clearly to cover one's body completely, although some have interpreted it to mean covering the head and the face, because in the olden Days of Ignorance, women usually left their faces uncovered.

How to wrap the sheet around

Not only did the scholars of the Holy Qur'an clarify for us that, according to this Verse, it is mandatory for women to wear Hijab and hide their faces, but they also explained exactly how the Jalbab should be worn. The greatest interpreter of the Holy Qur'an, Ibn 'Abbas (r.a.), has been reported to have mentioned two ways of wearing Jalbab. The first one, where the sheet of cloth should be pulled over on top to cover the body with the exception of one eye, has been already mentioned above. The second method, which allows for keeping both eyes uncovered, has been reported by 'Allamah Alusi as follows:

Ibn Jarir and Ibn Al-Munzir described the method of wearing the Jalbab according to Ibn 'Abbas and Qatadah. The sheet should be wrapped from the top covering the forehead, then bringing one side of the sheet to cover the face below the eyes so that most of the face and the upper body is covered. This will leave both the eyes uncovered (which is acceptable under necessity). (Ru-ul-Ma'ani, vol. 22, p. 89)

Many other scholars, such as Mohammed Bin Sirin, 'Allamah Ibn Jarir, Imam Suddi, Imam Abubakr Jassas, Imam Wahidi, and 'Allamah Ibn Sa'd Mohammed Bin Ka'b Kurazi, have described the use of Jalbab in more or less the same way as the two ways described by Ibn 'Abbas (r.a.).

In addition to the scholars mentioned above, all interpreters of the Holy Qur'an, from the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.) to the present day, have consistently adhered to the same interpretation of this Verse, i.e., women are required to cover themselves when coming out of their homes and that hiding of the face is included in the Hijab. To quote all these scholars would make this document unnecessarily long, but following are some examples:

'Allamah Ibn Jarir writes:

In this Verse, Allah is commanding the Prophet (s.a.w.) to ask his Wives, his daughters and to all Muslim women that they should not dress like slave girls leaving their heads and faces uncovered when they come out of their homes. Instead, they should cover themselves with a cloak covering their faces so that nobody will stand in their way and everyone will know that they are respectable folks. (Tafsir Ibn Jarir, vol. 22, p. 29)

'Allamah Nishapuri writes:

In the early days of Islam, all women used to come out dressed in knee-length shirts and scarves as was the tradition in the former Days of Ignorance. There was no difference in the dresses of street women and those from respectable families. Then Allah commanded (Muslim women) to cover their heads and faces so that people would differentiate them from the street women. (Ahkam-ul Qur'an, vol. 4, p. 354) 'Allamah Abu Hayyan states:

The advantage in observing Hijab is that these women are recognized as pious and respectable. Thus, the perverts would not be after them and the women would not have to face unpleasantness. Nobody will dare follow and make advances to a woman who has completely concealed herself as opposed to the one who has come out nicely decorated without Hijab; the malicious and evil-minded folks will associate great hopes with such women. (Al-Bahr-ul Muhit, vol. 7, p. 250)

These quotations are taken from some of the well-known Interpreters of the Holy Qur'an. Otherwise, almost all the scholars of the Holy Qur'an have been interpreting this Verse to include hiding of the face in the Commandment of Hijab. It is also noteworthy that among these scholars are the followers of all the four schools of thought. Thus, regardless of whether they are Hanafi, Shafi, Hambali or Maliki, all include hiding of the face in the Commandment of Hijab without any disagreement.

And, this is not a theoretical matter. We find from the Ahadith and other narrations that all women, including the Wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.), immediately implemented this Commandment after the Revelation of this Verse, and the use of Jalbab and Hijab by women quickly became the norm of the Muslim society. Actually, it was exemplary how readily the Muslim women obeyed and practiced it. Imam Abdul Razzaq narrated from Ummi Salamah (r.a.):

After the Revelation of this Verse, the ladies of Ansar used to come out of their homes and walk with such dignity as if there were birds sitting on their heads (which would fly away if they walked any faster). And, they used to cover themselves with big black cloaks.

It should be noted here that the modern day Burqa' (which is used in some countries by Muslim women) also serves as Jalbab. It is this Hijab, customary among Muslim women since the beginning of Islam, which is now being abolished by those who have been influenced by the western thinking. To accomplish this, they interpret the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith according to

their own desires thereby going astray themselves and leading others on the same path. May Allah guide us and protect us from these mischiefs.

The commandment for protecting gaze and hiding adornment

Not only did Islam command women to stay home, to not talk to Ghair-Mahram men seductively, and to cover themselves with cloaks, it barricaded all those roads from where carnal excitement and bad thoughts may attack human beings. Thus, Allah said (in the Holy Qur'an):

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them; and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their fathers-in-law, their sons, their step sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you Believers! Turn you all together towards Allah, that you may attain Bliss. (Surah Nur, v. 30-31)

Before going into the details of the Commandments contained in the above two Verses, it will be useful to know that the very first Verse containing the Commandments of Hijab was the one which was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, i.e., the Verse 53 of Surah Ahzab which was revealed at the time of the wedding of Zainab Bint Jahash (r.a.) to the Prophet (s.a.w.). Scholars have estimated that this Verse was revealed in either the 3rd or 5th year of Hijrah. Imam Ibn Kathir and 'Allamah Shaukani believed it to be in the 5th year of Hijra. However, there has been a consensus among all scholars about this Verse being the very first one related to the Commandments of Hijab.

The above two Verses of Surah Nur were revealed at the time of the incident of Ifk which occurred upon the return of the Prophet (s.a.w.) from the battle of Bani Al-Mustaliq. This battle took place in the 6th year of Hijra, which tells us that these two Verses were revealed after the Verses of Surah Ahzab. Thus, the Commandments of Hijab were implemented when the Verses in Surah Ahzab were revealed (which was a year before the above two Verses).

These Verses further contain the following Commandments:

1. Lowering the eyes (ghadd al-basar):

The word Yaghuddu in the above Verses comes from the root word Ghadd which means to lower, to regulate, to suppress (Mufaradat-ul Qur'an). To lower the eyes in this context means to turn away the eyes from everything forbidden (Tqfsir Ibn Kathir). Included in this is looking at a woman with bad intentions and also looking at a woman with no specific intention. As well, it includes looking at those parts of the body of a man or woman which are defined as private (Satr). However, necessities such as medical treatment, are exempt from it. Similarly, to peek into people's houses and to use the eyes in seeing all such things that the religion has forbidden are included under this Commandment.

2. Guarding the modesty (private parts):

This implies restraining oneself from all forbidden means to satisfy one's sexual desires. Included in this are adultery, rape, masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism, etc. With a little analysis, it becomes clear that the intent in these Verses is to stop people from all forbidden means of satisfying sexual desires. The beginning and the end points were clearly pointed out (i.e., looking at others with bad intentions and guarding the private parts), and everything in between automatically became part of this Commandment. The sexual excitement and mischief indeed begins from freely looking at the opposite sex, and its potential end is indulging in adultery and rape. In between these extremes are sexual fantasies, lewd talk, touching, fondling, etc. 'Allamah Ibn Kathir quotes 'Ubaidah (r.a.):

Everything which is in disobedience of Allah is a major sin. In this Verse, the beginning and the end point of this sin have been identified. (Tafsi'r Ibn Kathir)

3. Concealing the beauty and ornaments:

What does the word Zinat mean? Maulana Muhammad Idris Kandhalvi writes in the interpretation of this Verse:

Zinat means beautification, whether it is natural such as face, hands and body, or artificial and intentional such as, clothes, jewelry and makeup. All of these form the apparent beauty of a woman and are included in the meaning of . All of these things, therefore, should be concealed from everyone except the Maharim (those who have been exempted). These have been described in the next Verse. The Commandments in this Verse are mainly related to women's Satr, i.e., an explanation of what parts of a woman's body and her beauty must be concealed from others. In the next Verse, exceptions have been listed about the people in front of whom she does not have to observe these restrictions. These are twelve. (Ma'arif-ul Qur'an)

Mufti Muhammad Shaft's interpretation of this Verse reads:

In the beginning of this Verse, women were asked not to reveal their beauty. In this part of the Verse, they have been asked to conceal their natural beauty as well by covering it with their

scarves. The purpose here was also to eradicate the tradition, which was prevalent in the Days of Ignorance, whereby women use to put their scarves on their heads with the sides hanging on the back. This left their ears, neck, collar, and chest exposed. Therefore, Muslim women were asked here not to wear their scarves in this manner, but to wrap the two sides of it closely on top of their chests covering all these parts of the body.

Next, those men are described with whom Hijab is not required. There are two reasons for these exceptions. First, there is no danger of any mischief from these men, as they are the Maharim⁴. By nature, these men are the Maharim is plural of the word Mahram. A Mahram is a man with whom marriage is forbidden and, therefore, women are not required to observe Hijab in front of them. Examples of such men are father, brother, and uncle. They are protectors of their women's honour. Second, they live with these women in the same house which also dictates that they be exempted from these restrictions. It is also important to remember that with the exception of the husband, Satr must be observed with the rest of these Maharim men. Exposing of Satr, which is not permissible even in Salat, is forbidden with the Maharim as well.

Eight Maharim and four other kinds of men have been exempted in this Verse from the Commandment of Hijab. Seven of these Maharim were mentioned before in the Verse of Hijab in Surah Ahzab. Five other exceptions were mentioned in this Verse.

It should also be kept in mind that the word Mahram has been used here in its common meaning and includes the husband. The interpretation of Mahram by the scholars, which means "a man with whom marriage is forbidden," is not meant here.

1. Husband: A wife is not required to observe Hijab of any part of her body with her husband. However, to look at the private parts unnecessarily is not preferable. 'Aishah (r.a.) stated that the Prophet (s.a.w.) never looked at her private parts nor did she look at his.
2. Father: The grandfather and the great grand father are also included in this category.
3. Father-in-Law: The grand father-in-law and the great grandfather-in-law are included here as well.
4. Sons: The real sons.
5. Step-sons.
6. Real and step-brothers. However, cousin brothers, all of whom are considered Ghair-Mahram, are not included in this category.
7. Sons of the real or step brothers.
8. Sons of real and step sisters. Cousin sisters are not included in here.

The above are the eight kinds of Maharim.

9. Women: Hijab does not need to be observed with other Muslim women either, but Satr cannot be exposed to them as well. However, for the purpose of medical treatment, it is permissible.

10. Their women attendants or servants: According to the majority of scholars, male servants are not included in this category. Hijab must be observed with male servants in the same way as with other Ghair-Mahram men.

11. Men who have no interest or desire for women: These are the men who, because of their mental or physical condition, have no interest or desire left in them for the opposite sex.

12. Immature children: Those who have not reached puberty and have not developed an interest or knowledge of the specific matters related to sex and women. Those children who have such knowledge and interest, regardless of their age, will not be included in this category.

4. concealing the sound: The fourth important issue that has been discussed in this Verse pertains to the sound. Women have been asked not to walk with a heavy foot so as to draw attention of men through the sounds of their jewelry.

According to this, to attach any such things to the jewelry which make noise, or to wear jewelry on top of each other producing noise, or to walk in a way so as to create noise of the jewelry which may be heard by Ghair-Mahram men, are all forbidden.

From this Verse, many jurists have inferred that if it is forbidden to have the Ghair-Mahram men hear the sounds made by pieces of jewelry, it is certainly forbidden for Ghair-Mahram men to hear the voice of women. That is why, these jurists have included the voice of a woman in the definition of Satr.

Now whether the voice of a woman in itself is a part of her Satr is a controversial issue. Imam Shafi has not included it in the definition of Satr for women. There is a difference of opinion among the followers of Imam Abu Hanifah. Ibn Hammam has included it in Satr which is why it is not preferable for a woman to call Adhan. However, it is evident from Ahadith that the Wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.) spoke with the Ghair-Mahram men from behind a curtain even after the Revelation of the Verse of Hijab. From all of this, it seems that where it has the potential to create Fitnah (mischief) for both the men and women, it is forbidden. Where there is no such likelihood, it is permissible for a woman to speak with a Ghair-Mahram man. To be on the safe side though, it is preferable that women don't talk to Ghair-Mahram men unnecessarily.

Imam Jassas, in the interpretation of this Verse, wrote:

When Allah has included the sounds of jewelry worn by a woman in the expression of her beauty, it would also be forbidden for a woman to wear colourful and decorated outer garments (like a Jalbab or Burqa', when she is among the Ghair-Mahram men).

"And O you Believers, turn you all together towards Allah, so that you may attain Bliss." After commanding men to lower their gaze and women to observe Hijab with Ghair-Mahram men,

Allah instructed all men and women to turn to Him for forgiveness for their shortcomings, and to make a firm determination not to disobey Allah again. (Ma'arif-ul Qur'an, vol. 6, p. 394)

Extracted from "Hijab"

Veiling

One of the most misunderstood concepts of Islam is the wearing of the veil, (In Islam, it is called Hijab.) This concept was discussed under misconceptions, but I will discuss it here in more detail.

It is believed by many people who have no knowledge of Islam that women are required to veil (cover their face and hair). Women are admonished in the Qur'an to wear Hijab (cover). What is Hijab? It means that the woman should cover all of her body down to her wrists and ankles and wear opaque loose-fitting clothing. She is also admonished to cover her hair. Hijab is not only a way of dressing but it is also a way conducting oneself. Covering the face as it is practiced in some Islamic countries is cultural rather than religious.

The parts of the dress should include Khimar (head cover), Jilbab (overgarment) and [Niqaab (veil) according to some scholars]

Clarification July 21, 2000

I wish to make a clarification on the statement that covering the face is cultural rather than religious. In the time of the Prophet (PBUH) it was advised that the when speaking to the wives (i.e. of the Prophet [PBUH]) it was to be done from behind a screen.

In his book Islamic Dress Code For Women, Mahmoud Ridha Murad sets these as the conditions of veiling.

1. The outer garment should be long, loose and opaque.
2. It should hide the entire body of the woman starting from her head, hair, face, hands and bosom down to the toe of her feet.
3. Her anklets and bracelets should not tinkle to allure men towards her.
4. It must be plain and close in texture not to draw attention to the woman. Also, it should not be decorated with ostentatious colors and designs.
5. It must not be transparent that reveals the woman's shape or her inner clothes.
6. It should not be designed to resemble the clothing of the disbelieving women.
7. It should not be similar to men's outfits in color or design as the Prophet (PBUH) is reported as having said:

"Allah condemns those men who act in a womanlike manner, and those women who behave or act in a man like manner."

8. It should not be perfumed at all as it not permissible for the Muslim woman to wear perfume while leaving home for an outing. The Prophet (PBUH) has said:

"Every eye is adulterous and when a woman perfumes herself and passes a company (of men) she is such and such (meaning adulterous)." (At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud)

Although, there is some difference in opinion among scholars as to whether the woman should veil her face or not, it is agreed that the minimum that should be covered is her head (i.e. hair), neck, bosom, and her entire body to her wrists and to her ankles. This is to be within Islamic standards of dress.

In her book The Muslim Woman's Hand Book, Huda Khattab says this:

"There is a certain amount of debate among scholars as to the extent of the covering. Some (mostly Shafi'i and Hanabali) favor covering the face and hands too. The Malaki Madhhab considers the whole body - except the face and hands - to be '*Awrah* [that which must be covered]. The Hanafis suggest likewise; later Hanafi scholars have allowed uncovering the feet too, but other scholars have suggested that this is an unfounded ruling."¹

The extent of covering (i.e. the face) should be the woman's choice and should not be forced on her. When a person is forced to do something, they will often resent it and will find ways of circumventing it. We have only to look at the situation in Iran (Reader's Digest May 2000 article Rebels With A Veil).²

A second point that I wish to make is that the wearing of Hijab is a means by which a Muslimah (a Muslim woman) is identified. It sets us apart, and any Muslim man who sees a woman wearing Hijab should immediately understand that this is a woman who should be treated with the utmost respect. Now, you the reader, may ask why should it make any difference what a woman wears? Unfortunately, in the society of man, it does. Let me present you with an example of what I mean.

A pretty woman is walking down the street. She is wearing an outfit that brings attention to the fact that she is attractive. It may be a short skirt or a form fitting suit. The typical male reaction would be whistles, catcalls or leering looks etc. For a time, this may make the woman feel special, but after awhile it becomes an annoyance because she is being looked at as an object not a person.

Now, let us consider the same situation but the pretty woman is now wearing conservative clothing and she covers her hair with a scarf. What would be the male response now?

As much as we would like to think that we live in a society where everyone is equal, this is not the case. Men as a rule will continue to think of women as objects of desire, servants, or baby factories.

In Islam, this is not the case as set down in the Qur'an. The wearing of Hijab is Allah's way of reminding men that women are people and should be treated accordingly. An unfortunate circumstance but very much a fact of life

In these next two sections I have listed some verses from the Qur'an and Hadith dealing with covering.

Qur'an

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their *Furuji* (private parts), and disclose not their adornments except only that which is apparent, and that they should draw their head covers over their *Juyub* (bosoms), and that they disclose not their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or what their hands possess, or such of male attendants who have no sexual desire or young children who have not attained the knowledge of women's private parts. And that they should not stamp their feet lest what they hide of their ornaments be known. And turn you to all together, O believers that you may be successful." (24:31)

"O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters, and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies, that is more proper that they may be distinguished and not molested. And Allah is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful." (33:59)

"And when you ask them for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen, that is purer for your hearts and their hearts." (33:53)

This is the verse that scholars will often use when explaining the veiling of the face. It is interpreted as meaning that nothing should be visible.

Hadith

Abdullah, son of `Umar bin Khattab reported that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

"On the Day of Resurrection, will not look at the man who trails along his garment with pride." There upon Umm Salamah asked, "What should women do with their garments?" The Prophet (PBUH) said: "They should lower their garments a hand span," (half their shins down), Umm Salamah further said, "Women's feet would still be uncovered." Allah's Messenger (PBUH) replied: "Let them lower them a forearm's length, but no longer."

Asma said: "We used to cover our faces from men." (Al-Hakim)

The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Allah, Most High is Ha'yeei (most Bashful), Sit'teer (provides means that shield against the uncovering of disobedient acts), He loves Haya, (Bashfulness) and Sitr (Shielding; Covering)."

Collected by Abu Dawoud, An-Nissa'ee, Al-Baihaquee, Ahmed, and in Saheeh An-Nissa'ee.

Sources in support of veiling of the face

The following sources were sent to me via e-mail and I have felt it appropriate to include these. I leave it up to the reader to decide the issue.

Proof for covering the face, taken from this page:

<http://members.tripod.com/ibnfarooq/nikaab.htm>

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:

Just to make it clear the point of this page is NOT to say if a woman doesn't wear nikaab she will go to Jahannam, as we know there are two valid view points on the Hijab. One view held by the Ullima is that the nikaab (covering the face) is Wajib (compulsory) and other Ullima hold the view it is Mustahab (recommended and the best thing to do but not compulsory). This page is to explain to those people who say things like "The nikaab is not in Islam or is not important" or is "bad for dawa" these people should understand that the Nikaab is from the Qur'an and Hadith and even if you hold the view of it not being Wajib it is still THE BEST thing and recommended and anyone who wears it is to be respected. And is anyone discourages the wearing of Nikaab or denies it being in Islam or makes fun of someone who wears it they should fear ALLAH and take their shahadah over.

And ALLAH (SWT) knows best.

Shih Al-Bukhari Volume 6, Book 60, Hadith # 282

Narrated Safiya bint Shaiba (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) "Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) used to say: "When (the Verse): "They should draw their veils over their necks and bosoms," was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their faces with the cut pieces.

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 8, Hadith # 368

Narrated 'Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) used to offer the Fajr prayer and some believing women covered with their veiling sheets used to attend the Fajr prayer with him and then they would return to their homes unrecognized . Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin in tafseer of this Hadith explains "This Hadith makes it clear that the Islamic dress is concealing of the entire body as explained in this Hadith. Only with the complete cover including the face and hands can a woman not be recognized. This was the understanding and practice of the Sahaba and they were the best of group, the noblest in the sight of Allah (SWT) with the most complete Imaan and noblest of characters. so if the practice of the women of the sahaba was to wear the complete veil then how can we deviate from their path? (Ibn Uthaimin in the book "Hijab" page # 12 and 13)

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 4, Hadith # 148

Narrated 'Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha): The wives of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) used to go to Al-Manasi, a vast open place (near Baqia at Medina) to answer the call of nature at night. 'Umar used to say to the Prophet "Let your wives be veiled," but Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) did not do so. One night Sauda bint Zam'a the wife of the Prophet went out at 'Isha' time and she was a tall lady. 'Umar addressed her and said, "I have recognized you, O Sauda." He said so, as he desired eagerly that the verses of Al-Hijab (the observing of veils by the Muslim women) may be revealed. So Allah revealed the verses of "Al-Hijab" (A complete body cover excluding the eyes).

Tirmidhi with a SAHIH chain reports...

"Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) said "All of a woman is awrah." (Shaikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid quotes this Hadith narrated by Tirmidhi with a Sahih isnaad and says this is a direct Hadith from Rasulullah(Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) and has made it clear that a woman must cover everything including the face and hands!)

Abu Dawood Book 14, Hadith # 2482

Narrated Thabit ibn Qays (Radhiallaahu Ã • nhu): A woman called Umm Khallad came to the Prophet (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) while she was veiled. She was searching for her son who had been killed (in the battle) Some of the Companions of the Prophet (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) said to her: You have come here asking for your son while veiling your face? She said: If I am afflicted with the loss of my son, I shall not suffer the loss of my modesty. Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) said: You will get the reward of two martyrs for your son. She asked: Why is that so, oh Prophet of Allah? He replied: Because the people of the Book have killed him.

Abu Dawood Book 32, Hadith # 4090

Narrated Umm Salamah, Ummul Mu'minin (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha): When the verse "That they should cast their outer garments over their persons" was revealed, the women of Ansar came out as if they had crows over their heads by wearing outer garments.

Abu Dawood Book 32, Hadith # 4091

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) "May Allah have mercy on the early immigrant women. When the verse "That they should draw their veils over their bosoms" was revealed, they tore their thick outer garments and made veils from them. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalanee, who is known as Ameer Al-Mu'mineen in the field of Hadith, said that the phrase, "covered themselves", in the above Hadith means that they "covered their faces". [Fath Al-Bari].

Imaam Malik's MUWATTA Book 20 Hadith # 20.5.16

Yahya related to me from Malik from Hisham ibn Urwa that Fatima bint al-Mundhir (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) said, "We used to veil our faces when we were in Ihram in the company of Asma bint Abi Bakr As-Siddiq (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha). "This again proves that not only the wives of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) wore the Niqaab and that even though in Ihram women are not supposed to wear Niqaab but if men are there they still have to cover the face.

Abu Dawood Book 10, Hadith # 1829

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin: (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nha) who said, "The riders would pass us while we were with the Messenger of Allah (Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam). When they got close to us, we would draw our outer cloak from our heads over our faces. When they passed by, we would uncover our faces.

Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah, Narrated 'Aisha. [In his work Jilbab al-Marah al-Muslimah, al-Albani states (p. 108) that it is hasan due to corroborating evidence. Also, in a narration from Asma {who was not the wife of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam)}, Asma also covered her face at all times in front of men.] Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin in his tafseer of this hadith explains "This hadith indicates the compulsion of the concealing of the faces as an order of Shariah, because during the Ihram it is "wajib" (compulsory) NOT to wear the Niqaab. So if it was only mustahab (recommended) to cover the face then Aisha and Asma (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nha) would have taken the wajib over the mustahab. It is well known by the Ullima that a wajib can only be left because of something that is also wajib or fardh. So Aisha and Asma (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nha) covering the face even in Ihram in the presence of strange (ghairMahraam) men shows that they understood this to be an act that was wajib or fardh or they would not have covered the face in Ihraam.

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 7, Book 72, Hadith # 715

Narrated 'Ikrima (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nhu)narrates "Rifa'a divorced his wife whereupon 'AbdurRahman bin Az-Zubair Al-Qurazi married her. 'Aisha said that the lady (came), wearing a green veil." It is a very long hadith but the point is the women of Sahaba wore the full veil.

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 8, Hadith # 347

Narrated Um 'Atiya (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nha) We were ordered (by Rasulullah '(Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam) to bring out our menstruating women and veiled women in the religious gatherings and invocation of Muslims on the two 'Eid festivals. These menstruating women were to keep away from their Musalla. A woman asked, "O Allah's Apostle ' What about one who does not have a veil (the veil is the complete cover with only one eye or two eyes showing)?" He said, "Let her share the veil of her companion." Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin in tafseer of this hadith explained "This Hadith proves that the general norm amongst the women of the Sahaba (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nhuma) was that no woman would go out of her home without a cloak, fully concealed and if she did not possess a veil, then it was not possible for her to go out. it was for this reason that when Rasulullah (Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam) ordered them to go to the Place for Eid Salah, they mentioned this hindrance. As a result Rasulullah (Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam) said that someone should lend her a veil, but did not say they could go out without it. If Rasulullah (Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam) did not allow women to go to a place like the Eid Salah, which has been ordered by Shariah for women and men alike, then how can people let women to out to market places and shopping centers without where there is open intermingling of the sexes, without a veil. (by Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin in the book "Hijaab" page # 11)

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 8, Book 76, Hadith # 572

In the end of this very long hadith it quotes Anas (Radhiallaahu ﷺ • nho) rates from Rasulullah (Sallallaahu ﷺ • layhi Wasallam) "and if one of the women of Paradise looked at the earth, she would fill the whole space between them (the earth and the heaven) with light, and would fill whatever is in between them, with perfume, and the veil of her face is better than the whole

world and whatever is in it." This shows that even the women of Jannah have veils and the word veil is what covers the face (niqaab).

Abu Dawood Book 33, Hadith # 4154, Agreed upon by Nasai

Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ā • nha) narrates that on one occasion a female Muslim wanted to give a letter to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam), the letter was delivered to the Holy Prophet (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) from behind a curtain.

Note: Quoted in the famous book Mishkaat. Here the Mufasereen of hadith have explained that the hadith where women came up to Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) face to face were before the ayah "And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen, that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts." (Surah AlAhzāb ayah # 53) And this hadith proves this order is for the whole Ummah not just for the wives of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam)!

Abu Dawood Book 2, Hadith # 0641

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin (Radhiallaahu Ā • nha) "Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) said "Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a veil."

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 9, Book 89, Hadith # 293

Narrated 'Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ā • nha) Utba bin Abi Waqqas said to his brother Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, "The son of the slave girl of Zam'a is from me, so take him into your custody." So in the year of Conquest of Mecca, Sa'd took him and said. (This is) my brother's son whom my brother has asked me to take into my custody." 'Abd bin Zam'a got up before him and said, (He is) my brother and the son of the slave girl of my father, and was born on my father's bed." So they both submitted their case before Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam). Sa'd said, "O Allah's Apostle! This boy is the son of my brother and he entrusted him to me." 'Abd bin Zam'a said, "This boy is my brother and the son of the slave girl of my father, and was born on the bed of my father." Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) said, "The boy is for you, O 'Abd bin Zam'a!" Then Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) further said, "The child is for the owner of the bed, and the stone is for the adulterer," Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) then said to Sauda bint Zam'a, "Veil (screen) yourself before him," when he saw the child's resemblance to 'Utba. The boy did not see her again till he met Allah. note: This hadith proves Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) did in fact order the veil to be observed.

Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 7, Book 65, Hadith # 375

Narrated Anas (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu) I know (about) the Hijab (the order of veiling of women) more than anybody else. Ubai bin Ka'b used to ask me about it. Allah's Apostle became the bridegroom of Zainab bint Jahsh whom he married at Medina. After the sun had risen high in the sky, the Prophet invited the people to a meal. Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) remained sitting and some people remained sitting with him after the other guests had left. Then Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) got up and went away, and I too, followed him till he reached the door of 'Aisha's room. Then he thought that the people must have left the place by then, so he returned and I also returned with him. Behold, the people were still sitting at their places. So he went back again for the second time, and I went along with him too. When we reached the door of 'Aisha's room, he returned and I also returned with him to see that the people

Explained, the word Jilbaab (as mentioned in the Quran Surah Ahzaab ayah # 59) means a cloak which covering the entire body including the head, face and hands. (Quoted from Ibn

Taymiyyah (Rahimahullah) in his book on fatwaas Page# 110 Vol # 2 and By Shaikh Ibn Uthamin in the book Hijaab Page # 15)

Abu Ubaidah Salmani (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu), an other well known Sahabi is quoted saying "Jilbaab should fully cover the women's body, so that nothing appears but one eye with which she can see." (Tafseer Al-Qurtubi) And In the time of Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) "The women used to don their cloaks (Jilbaabs) over their heads in such a manner that only the eyes were revealed in order to see the road." (The Book "Hijaab" page # 9)

Ubaida bin Abu Sufyan bin al-Harith('Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu' An' Other well known and knowledgeable Companion of Rasulullah and the son of Abu Sufiyan Bin Harith) Imam Muhammad bin Sirin (Rahimahullah) One of the most knowledgeable tabi'een) "When I asked Ubaida bin Sufyan bin al-Harith('Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu' An')the meaning of this verse about "Alaihinna" and how the jalbaab was to be worn, he demonstrated it to me by pulling a sheet of cloth over his head to cover his entire body, leaving the left eye uncovered. This was also the explanation of the word 'Alaihinna in this verse" (Commentary by Ibn Jarir and Ahkam-ul-Quran, Vol.III, p.457 also in "hijaab wa Safur" quoted by Shaikh AbdulAziz Bin Bazz under the chapter of his fatwaa on hijab on page #54)

From the Tabi 'een...

Ibn Jarir (Rahimahullah) Quotes the opinion of Ibn Ā • bbaas (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu) "Allah has enjoined upon all Muslim Women that when they go out of their homes under necessity, they should cover their faces by drawing a part of their outer garments over their heads." (Tafseer Ibn Jarir, VOL 22, pg.29)

The Tabi'ee, Qatadah (Rahimahullah)

Stated that the Jilbab should be wrapped and fixed from above the forehead and made to cover the nose, (although the eyes are to show) and the chest and most of the face are to be covered.

The Tabi'ee Ali bin Abu Talha (Rahimahullah)

Quotes from Ibn Abbaas (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu) that he used to say it was allowed to show the hands and face when Surah Nur ayah #31 was revealed but after Surah Al-Ahzaab, Verse #59 with the word "Jalabib" was revealed then after this Ibn Abbaas (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu) said that That the Muslim women are ordered to cover their head and faces with outer garments except for one eye." And this was also the opinion of Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu). (This is quoted by Ibn Taymiyyah (Rahimahullah) in his book of fatwaa and by Shaikh AbdulAziz Bin Bazz (Rahimahullah) in the book "Hijaab wa Safur" Page # 60)

Imam Muhammad bin Sirin (Rahimahullah) One of the most knowledgeable tabi'een)

"When I asked Ubaida bin Sufyan bin al-Harith ('Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu' Other well known and knowledgeable Companion of Rasulullah) the meaning of this verse about "Alaihinna" and how the jalbaab was to be worn, he demonstrated it to me by pulling a sheet of cloth over his head to cover his entire body, leaving the left eye uncovered. This was also the explanation of the word 'Alaihinna in this verse"(Commentary by Ibn Jarir and Ahkam-ul-Quran, Vol # 3, p.457 also in

"hijaab wa Sufur" quoted by Shaikh AbdulAziz Bin Bazz under the chapter of his fatwaa on hijab on page #54)

From the Mufasireen of Quraan...

The Mufasssir, Imaam Al-Qurtubi (Rahimahullah), Cites in his Tafseer of the Ayah on Jilbaab (Al-Ahzab 33:59), that the Jilbaab is: "a cloth which covers the entire body... Ibn 'Abbaas (Radhiallaahu Ã • nhu) and 'Ubaidah As-Salmaani (Radhiallaahu Ã • nhu) said that it is to be fully wrapped around the women's body, so that nothing appears but one eye with which she can see." (Tafseer Al-Qurtubi Surah Al-Ahzab ayah # 59. This was also agreed upon by Imam Wahidi Imam Neishapuri in the book of tafseer of Quran "Gharaib -ul-Quran" and "Ahkam-ul-Quran", Imam Razi, in his tafseer of Surah Azhab in the book "Tafsir-i-Kabir" Imam Baidavi in his tafseer of Quran "Tafsir-i-Baidavi" and by Abu Hayyan in "Al-Bahr-ul-Muhit" and by Ibn Sa'd Muhammad bin Ka'b Kuradhi and they have all described the use of jalbaab more or less in the SAME way as the two described by Ibn Abbas (Radhiallaahu Ã • nhu).)

Also from Imaam Qurtubi (Rahimahullah) in his Al-Jamia li Ahkaamul Qur'ân states: "All women are in effect covered by the terms of the verse which embraces the Shar'î principle that the whole of a woman is *â€~Ã ¯ wrahâ€™™* (to be concealed) *â€“* her face, body and voice, as mentioned previously. It is not permissible to expose those parts except in the case of need, such as the giving of evidence*â€|*" ("Al-Jamia li Ahkaamul Qur'ân")

At-Tabari and Ibn Al-Mundhir described the method of wearing the jalbaab according to Ibn Abbas (Radhiallaahu Ã • nhu) and Qatadah (Radhiallaahu Ã • nhu). The sheet should be wrapped around from the top, covering the forehead, then bringing one side of the sheet to cover the face below the eyes so that most of the face and the upper body is covered. This will leave both eyes uncovered (which is allowed in necessity).(Rul-ul-Ma'ani, Vol 22, p.89)

Ibn Kathir (Rahimahullah) said...

"Women must not display any part of their beauty and charms to strangers except what cannot possibly be concealed." (Quoted by Mufti Ibrahim Desi in his article on hijab)

Maoulana Abul A'la Maududi (Rahimahullah) In his tafseer of Surah Azhab ayah #59 "In verse 59 the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well covered with the outer garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need." (From Tasfeer of Quran by Maoulana Abul A'la Maududi in tafseer of ayah # 59 of Surah Al-Ahzaab)

From the 4 Madhabib (4 madhabs).....

Mufti Anwar Ali Adam Al Mazahiri (Mufti A'azam (Head Mufti) of Madrasa Madinatil Uloom Trinidad & Tobago.)

"Imam Shafi, Malik and Hanbal hold the view that niqaab (covering the face

and the hands completely with only a small area for the eyes to see) as being compulsory (fard). Imam Abu Hanifa says that niqaab is Wajib and the face and hands can be exposed provided that there is not fear of desire if one looks at the female face, otherwise if there is the slightest chance of desire developing in the looker (the meaning of desire is that the looker would see the female face and think that she is beautiful, sexual thought is not what is meant) then exposing the face and hands is Haraam.

(This is from the fatwaa issued by Mufti Anwar Ali Adam Al Mazahiri on 13/9/99. He derived the opinions of the 4 Imaams from these sources Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Tafseer Ma'rifatul Qur'aan, Durre Muhtaar, Fatawa Shami, Al Mabsoot, Fathul Qadeer. And the opinion of Imaam Abu hanifah is directly derived from his statements in the Famous book of hanafi Fiqh Fatwaa Shami)

Shaikh AbdulAziz Bin Bazz (One of the greatest scholars of our times. He passed away 26th of Muharram 1420 Hijrah. (12th of May 1999) Rahimahullah. He belonged to the Hanbali School of jurisprudence.) "It is compulsory for a woman to cover her face in front of non mahram men" (This has been quoted in Shaikh Bin Bazz's pamphlet on Hijab and in the book 'Islamic Fatwas regarding Women' and in the Arabic version of the book "hijaab Wa Safur" page #51)

Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (Rahimahullah)

Relates that the correct opinion for the Hanbali and Malki madhaib is that it is wajib to cover everything except one or two eyes to see the way.

(from the Arabic book "Hijaab wa Safur" under the fatwaa of Ibn Taymiyyah on hijab, page # 10)

Shaikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

Quotes All of the woman is awrah based on the hadith of "Rasulullah (Sallallahu Ã• layhi Wasallam) said "All of a woman is awrah." (Narrated by Tirmidhi with a sahih isnaad). This is the correct view according to the madhhab of the Hanbalis, one of the two views of the Maalikis and one of the two views of the Shaafa'is. (Quoted in his book of fatwaa and on his web site)

Jamiatul Ulama Junbi Africa state that the proper opinion for the Hanafi madhab is that "A woman must be properly and thoroughly covered in a loose outer cloak which totally conceals her entire body including her face!"

(This from the book Islamic Hijab by Jamiatul Ulama P.12)

Mufti-e-Azam Rasheed Ahmad Ludhyanvi (Rahimahullah, one of the head Muftis of the hanafi Madhab of his time This opinion is taken to be the correct opinion of the hanafi madhab today)

Explained in his tafseer of Surah Al-Ahzaab, Verse #59.

"Allah Ta'ala is telling them that whenever out of necessity they have to go out, they should cover themselves with a large cloak and draw a corner of it over their faces so that they may not be recognised.

(From his article "A Detailed, analytical review on the Shar'ee hijab")

Shaikh Abul A'la Maududi (Who was the founder of "Jamat-ul-Islami" also a known and respected scholar of the Hanafi madhab)

It is enjoined on the women to cover their face with a veil in public • (In the book "Purda" by Shaikh Abul A'la Maududi)

From the known and respect authentic Ullima.....

Ibn Al-Hazam (Rahimahullah)

"In arabic language, the language of the Prophet (saw), the word jilbaab (as mentioned in the Quran Surah Ahzaab ayah # 59) means the outer sheet which covers the entire body. A sheet smaller than that which would cover the entire body, cannot be catagrizd as jilbaab. (Al-Muhallah, Vol 3. Pg 217)

Ibn Al-Mandhur (Rahimahullah)

"Jalabib is plural for Jilbaab. Jalbaab is actually the outer sheet/coverlet which a woman wraps around, on top of her garments to cover herself from head to toe. This covers the body entirely." (Lisan ul-Arab, VOL 1. Pg.273)

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalanee (Rahimahullah)

A tradition reported on the authority of Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ā • nha) says: "A woman in a state of Ihram (during Hajj and Umrah) should stretch her head cloth over to her face to hide it." (In Fathul Bari, chapter on Hajj)

Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (Rahimahullah) relates:

"Women used to room about without Cloaks (Jilbaabs) and men used to see their faces and hands, but when the verse stating 'O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks over themselves.' (Surah Al-Ahzaab, Verse #59) was revealed, then this was prohibited and women were ordered to wear the Jilbaab. Then Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to say "The word Jilbaab means a sheet which Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhu) explained as a cloak covering the entire body including the head, face and hands. Therefore, it is not permissible for the women to reveal the face and hands in public. (Ibn Taymiyyah's book on fatwaas Page# 110 Vol # 2 also in the book Hijaab Page # 15)

Shaikh AbdulAziz Bin Bazz (Rahimahullah)

"According to the understanding of the best generations (the "Salaf") after the ayah of hijab was revealed than Muslims women must cover everything including the face and hands. they can show one eye or two eyes to see the way. this was the opnion held by many of the sahaba like Ibn Abbaas, Ibn Masud, Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ā • nhuma) and others and this opnion was upheald by the Tab'ieen who followed than as Ali bin Abi Talha and Muhammad bin Sirin (Rahimahullah) and by the ritious ullima who followed them as Ibn Taymiyyah and Imaam Ahmed bin Hanbal (Rahimahullah)" (Quoted from the book "hijaab wa Sufor")

Shaikh Abubakar Jassas (Rahimahullah)

states "This verse of Surah Ahzab shows that the young women when going out of their homes are ordered to cover their faces from strangers (non-mahram men), and cover herself up in such a manner that may express modesty and chastity, so that people with evil intentions might not cherish hopes from her". (Ahkum Al-Quran, VOL. III, p.48)

Imaam Ghazaali (Rahimahullah) "Woman emerged (during the time of Rasulallah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) with NIQAABS on their Faces" (From his famous book of Fiqh "Ihyaal Uloom")

Qazi Al-Baidavi (Rahimahullah)

"to let down over them a part of their outer garments" means that they should draw a part of their outer garment in front of their face and cover themselves" (Tafsir-I-Baidavi, Vol 4, p.168)

Jamia Binoria Pakistan (This is a Question and Answer from a Mufti at one the highly respected hanafi Islamic Universities of Pakistan)

Ques: Under which conditions are women allowed to leave the home?

Ans: The principle command for women is that they should remain in their home and should not go out without any extreme need because mischief is feared in their going out. However if they have to go out in extreme necessity then they should go with a Mahram and duly covered in Burqa' (a "Burqa" covers the whole body including the hands and face) or large overlay so that their body including their cloths should not be visible and after buying the required article they should come back at once. In this condition there is no Haraam.

It is also stated in the Famous books of Fiqh Durrul Mukhtar...

"Young women are prohibited from revealing their faces in the presence of men."

Hakimul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (Rahimahullah) states in his famous book of Hanafi Fiqh "Bahishti Zewar."

"It is not permissible for a young woman to expose her face in the presence of ghayr mahrams, nor should she stand in a place where she could be observed. We learn from this, that the custom of exposing the bride's face in public where all the men can observe her is also not permissible. To do so is a major sin." (Bahishti Zewar)

Shaikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid (One of the great scholars of our time.

click here for the full fatwaa on covering the face and who can you uncover the face in front of--

>[Fatwaa on niqaab](#)

"The most correct opinion, which is supported by evidence, is that it is obligatory to cover the face, therefore young women are forbidden to uncover their faces in front of non-mahram men in order to avoid any mischief"

An other fatwaa when he was asked about is it preferred for sisters to wear the niqab, he said....

"The fact is that it is obligatory for women to cover their faces" as to how to wear the niqaab the Shaikh said "A woman may uncover her left eye in order to see where she is going, and if necessary she may uncover both eyes. The opening should only be wide enough for the eyes."

Yet in an other Fatwaa he explained what was the Awrah of a woman with..."Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ā • layhi Wasallam) said "All of a woman is Āwrah." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi with a saheeh isnaad). This is the correct view according to the madhhab of the Hanbalis, one of the two views of the Maalikis and one of the two views of the Shaafa'is.

Shaikh ibn Uthaimin

(In the book 'Islamic Fatwas regarding Women' Page # 289)

Question: What is the Islamic hijab?

Response: The Islamic hijab is for the women to cover everything that is forbidden for her to expose. That is, she covers everything that she must cover. The first of those bodily parts that she must cover is her face. It is the source of temptation and the source of people desiring her.

Therefore, the woman must cover her face in front of those men that are not mahram. As for those of who claim that the Islamic hijab is to cover the head, shoulders, back, feet, shin and forearms while allowing her to uncover her face and hands, this is a very amazing claim. This is because it is well known that the source of temptation and looking is the face. How can one say that the Shariah does not allow the exposure of the foot of the woman while it allows her to uncover her face? It is not possible that there could be in the Esteemed, Wise and Noble Shariah a contradiction.

Shaikh Jamaal Zarabozo

In Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 59, Allah has ordered the believing women to wear a jilbab. A jilbab as defined in all the books of tafseer is a cloak that covers the woman's body from the top of her head to her feet. It is also described in those books, from the scholars of the earliest generation that after that verse was revealed, the women would completely cover themselves, leaving, for example, just one eye exposed so they can see the road. Hence, this is the outer garment of the woman that she must wear when she is in front of men she is not related to.

Shaikh Ibn Jibreen

(Taken from the book "Islamic Fatwas regarding Women")

Question: I am married to a woman who wears, praise to Allah, hijab. However, as is the custom in my country, she does not wear hijab in front of her sister's husband and her sister does not wear hijab in my presence. This is the custom. Furthermore, my wife does not wear hijab in the presence of my brother or her cousins. Does this go against the Shariah and religion? What can I do while it has become the custom in my country not to wear hijab in the presence of those people that I mentioned. If I tell my wife to wear hijab in front of those people, she will accuse me of not trusting her and being suspicious about her and so forth.

Response: All of those groups of men that you mentioned in the question are not mahram for her. It is not allowed for her to uncover her face and beauty in front of them. Allah has only allowed her to uncover in front of the mahram men mentioned in the verse in surah al-Nur,

"[Tell the believing women] not to reveal their adornments except to their husbands, their fathers" (al-Nur 31).

First, you should convince your wife that it is forbidden to uncover her face in front of non-mahram men. Make her abide by that even if it goes against the customs of your people and even if she makes accusations against you. You should also make this point clear to your close relatives that you mentioned, that is, the brethren of the husband, the husband of the sister, the cousins and so forth. All of them are non-mahram and they all may marry her if she gets divorced.

Refutations from Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin

This is taken from the book "Hijaab" by Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin from Saudi Arabia. Printed by

The Ullima who are of the opinion that it is permissible to look at the face and hands of a strange woman (who is not mahrrum) say so mainly for the following reasons.

The hadith of Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) when Asmaa (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) the daughter of Abu Bakr came to the Rasulullah (Sallallaahu Ã • layhi Wasallam) while wearing thin clothing. He approached her and said: 'O Asmaa! When a girl reaches the menstrual age, it is not proper that anything should remain exposed except this and this. He pointed to the face and hands. But this hadith is WEAK because of 2 main weaknesses.

1. There is no link between Aisha (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) and Khalid bin Dareek, who narrated the hadith from her. And in every chain of narrators Khalid bin Dareek is mentioned.
2. In the chain of narrators Sa'eed bin Basheer appears, who is known by most of the Muhaditheen as being a weak narrator. This has been mentioned by Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal (Rahimahullah), An-Nasai (Rahimahullah), Ibn Madeeni (Rahimahullah) and Ibn Ma'een (Rahimahullah). This is also why Imaam Bukhari (Rahimahullah) and Muslim (Rahimahullah) did not except this hadith to be in their books.

(From Shaikh Ibn Uthaimin in the book "Hijaab" pages # 17 and 18.)

We also have to see that the Muhadith Abu Dawood when he quoted this hadith put with it that it is Musal (with a broken chain that does not lead up to the Sahaba).

(From The Book "Hijaab wa Safur" under the fatwaa of Shaikh AbulAziz Bin Bazz on Page #61. Also stated as being weak by Shaikh Nasiruddin Al-Albaani in his Da'eef Sunan Abu Dawud in Kitab-ul-Libas under hadeeth number 4092 (which is the original hadeeth number.) It has also been mentioned in the magazine called "Al Hijrah" that Ullima agree this hadith is weak.)

An other thing that shows the weakness of this hadith is that after the ayah for hijab (Surah Al-Ahzaab â€œ Verse #59) was revealed then the women of Sahaba wore a complete veil and covered the faces and hands. This includes Asmaa (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) the daughter of Abu Bakr, who is supposed to have narrated this hadith. Asmaa (Radhiallaahu Ã • nha) covered herself completely including the face, this has been narrated in authentic hadith in Imaam maliks "MUWATTA Book 20 Hadith # 20.5.16."

My View

I have tried to cover this issue as objectively as possible and here I would like to present my point of view. I believe very strongly that all Muslimahs should wear Hijab at least to very minimum accepted by Islam. The covering of the face (Niqaab) is I believe an issue that a Muslimah must decide on her own. I feel that the women whom voluntarily wear Niqaab have made a statement to the depth of their belief. Although scholars have different views on this, in the west a woman who wears Niqaab will draw unnecessary attention to herself and this also could be argued not appropriate. I admire and applaud any Muslimah who is willing to follow the rules of Islam in western society even to the point of wearing Niqaab. All Muslimahs whether new or not, should seriously consider what their answer will be on the Day of Judgment when they are asked why they did not cover.

1. The Muslim Woman's Hand Book, by Huda Khattab Page 17
2. Rebels With A Veil by Azar Nafisi from The New Republic Reader's Digest Page 176

Question:

Is it haram or not preferable to wear colorful ornately decorated hijabs? Should one stick to solid colors? I have oftentimes heard different views. I was told that wearing solid, colored, undecorated scarves is "good hijab" because it is more modest. On the other hand, I have heard others argue that wearing beautiful scarves is being modest enough, and that although the ornate scarves are obviously more pleasing to the eye than the solid colored scarves, that is acceptable because women should not look horrible either. I am confused. What then really constitutes good hijab?

Answer:



In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful Praise be to Allah. May the peace and blessings of Allah shower upon our Beloved Messenger, his family, companions, and those who follow them.

Our understanding of hijab comes from two verses of the Qur'an. The first, in Surat al-Nur, reads, ﴿And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons, or their women or the servants whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex, and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you Believers, turn you all together towards Allah, that you may attain Bliss.﴾ (Quran 24:31).

The other verse in Surat al-Ahzab says, ﴿O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognized and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.﴾ (Quran 33:59)

One of the most famous hadith proofs for hijab is the following, "A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings be upon him) while wearing thin clothing.

He approached her and said: 'O Asma! When a girl reaches the menstrual age, it is not proper that anything should remain exposed except this and this. He pointed to the face and hands.'
[Abu Dawud]

These are the evidences for hijab. As to what form the hijab takes, that can vary depending upon local custom. Scholars are unanimous that the hijab must cover every part of the woman's body, except for the face and hands. Some Hanafi scholars say that the face, hands, and feet are all exempted. The clothing used to cover the body should be opaque and loose-fitting. In other words, the color of the skin and the contours of the body should not show through the clothing. The head should be covered with some form of a khimar or head veil. The head veil should cover the hair, neck, ears, and bosom. Furthermore, women should not make themselves up or use perfume when they go out. Using makeup and perfume would defeat the whole purpose of hijab. It is easy to see how the West has built a whole industry revolving around making the female as seductive as possible with makeup, perfume, revealing clothing, and constantly changing hair styles. This is not an image that we Muslim women want.

As to what fabrics, colors, or styles of clothing you use, that is up to you, as long as you have satisfied these basic requirements. It is recommended to wear a jilbab, or over-garment. However, a long, loose-fitting tunic with a long skirt also satisfies the requirement for covering the body modestly. If you look at styles in the Muslim world, you will see everything from an Arab abaya to an Iranian chador, from Afghani burqas to Malaysian skirt and tunic sets, from smart business suits to Indo-Pak shalvar qamiz. You will see a diversity of fabrics, colors, and designs. All of these can fulfill the basic requirement of hijab, which is the modest covering of the hair and body. As far as color is concerned, a lot of that is cultural. While wearing black in Iran or the Arab world is customary, in Africa and Southeast Asia it is customary to be colorful and this is not inappropriate. Diversity is one of the strengths of the Umma. I don't think it's appropriate for people to tell you that if you wear a black hijab, your hijab is good, but if you wear a hijab with flowers on it, your hijab is bad. As long as you are modest and have not dressed in a way that will attract attention to yourself, you are fine. You can tell if you are wearing something that is showy or flashy. What colors you wear are entirely up to you. Just use discretion.

And Allah knows best. And Allah alone gives success.

Umm Salah (Zaynab Ansari)

The Hijab of Women and its Boundaries



By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Translated by Zameelur Rahman

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Abu Kurayb narrated to us. They said: Abu Usamah narrated to us: from Hisham: from his father: from ‘A’isha (Allah be pleased with her): she said:

“Sawdah (Allah be pleased with her) went out [in the fields] in order to relieve her need after the hijab had been prescribed upon her. She had been a bulky lady, physically taller than other women, and she could not conceal herself from one who had known her. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) saw her and said, ‘O Sawdah, by Allah, you cannot conceal [yourself] from us. Therefore, be careful when you go out.’” ‘A’isha said: “She turned back. Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was at that time in my house having his evening meal and there was a bone in his hand. Sawdah entered and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I went out and ‘Umar said to me so and so.’” ‘A’isha said: “Revelation came to him, then it was lifted from him and the bone was [still] in his hand and he had not put it [down]. He then said, ‘Permission has been granted to you that you may go out for your needs.’” (*Sahih Muslim*)

The subject of the hijab of women has, today, become a significant issue, on which discussion and debate has been ongoing, so we wish to produce an outline of the [correct] view on this [issue]. And Allah Most High gives success and is the Helper.

The Issue of the Hijab of Women and its Boundaries

Writings on the topic of the veiling and unveiling of women have proliferated in our time. The best that I have seen on this subject is a treatise by my late father Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ (Allah have mercy on him) which he called *Tafsil al-Khitab fi Tafsir Ayat al-Hijab*, which is a section from his *Ahkam al-Qur’an* (3:393-483), in which he examined the verses and hadiths cited on the subject and exhausted the positions of the *fuqaha* (jurists) and the statements of the exegetes regarding the limits of hijab and its description. The sum of what he concluded after an extensive study is that the hijab that is legislated and commanded in the Book and the Sunnah

has three levels, each above the other in hiddenness and concealment. All of them are mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah and none of them have been abrogated, but they have been prescribed for different circumstances.

They are:

[1] Hijab of the persons (*ashkhas*) of women in houses and walls, private quarters and howdahs, whereby foreign men do not see any part of their persons, garments or external or internal adornment, or any part of their body, including the face, the hands and the remainder of the body.

[2] Hijab with *burqa* and *jilbab*, whereby nothing from the face and hands, the rest of the body and the clothing of adornment are shown, so nothing is seen besides their concealed persons from above the head to the foot.

[3] Hijab with *jilbabs* and items of clothing that resemble them, while exposing the face, the hands and the feet.

The default rule in the hijab of women is hijab of the first level which is that she is concealed in the house and does not emerge, except for a need, the explanation of which is to come. This is proven by the statement of Allah Most High, “and stay in your houses” (Qur’an 33:33). It is apparent that this command is not specific to the purified wives because none of the preceding and succeeding rules in this verse are specific to the Mothers of the Believers (Allah be pleased with them) by consensus. Likewise [this is proven by] His statement Most High, “And when ye ask of them anything, ask it of them from behind a veil” (Qur’an 33:53). This verse was revealed during the *walimah* (wedding feast) of Zaynab (Allah be pleased with her), whereupon a veil was drawn between her and the men.

Furthermore, this is proven by the following hadiths:

[1] It was narrated from ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (Allah be pleased with him) that Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “The woman is *‘awrah*. When she emerges [from her house] Satan looks at her.” Al-Tirmidhi transmitted it and said, “The hadith is *hasan sahih* (sound and authentic), *gharib* (uncommon)”. Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban transmitted it in their *Sahihs* with this wording and added, “and the closest that she is to the Face of Her Lord is when she is in the depth of her home.” See *al-Tarhib* by al-Mundhiri (1:136).

[2] It was narrated from Jabir (Allah be pleased with him), he said: “Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “The woman advances in the shape of Satan and retires in the shape of Satan.” Muslim transmitted it (1:129).

[3] The hadith of the chapter transmitted by the compiler (Imam Muslim) as Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said therein, “permission has been granted to you that you may go out for your needs,” since this indicates that the permission to go out is restricted to [times] of need and in [times] other than need a woman stays in her house.

[4] It was narrated from ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (Allah be pleased with him) that Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “The prayer of a woman in her house is more virtuous than her prayer in her room and her prayer in her chamber is more virtuous than her prayer in her house.” Abu Dawud transmitted it and al-Hakim transmitted it in *al-Mustadrak* from Umm Salamah (Allah be pleased with her) as [mentioned] in *Kanz al-’Ummal* (8:259). Ibn Khuzaymah transmitted it in his *Sahih*, as [mentioned] in *al-Targhib* by al-Mundhiri (1:135).

[5] It was narrated from Umm Humayd, the wife of Abu Humayd al-Sa’idi, that she came to the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I love to pray with you.” He replied, “I know that you love to pray with me. However, your prayer in your storage room is better than your prayer in your bedroom; your prayer in your bedroom is better than your prayer in your courtyard; your prayer in your courtyard is better than your prayer in the mosque of your people; and your prayer in the mosque of your people is better than your prayer in my mosque.” [The sub-narrator] said, “She requested that a prayer area be built for her in the deepest and darkest part of her house, and she prayed therein until she met Allah Most High.” Ahmad transmitted it in his *Musnad* (6:371) and Ibn Hajar in *al-Isabah* attributed it to Ibn Abi Khaythamah through this route, and this is an authentic chain. Al-Shawkani transmitted in *Nayl al-Awtar* (3:161) from Ibn Hajar that he said, “Its chain is sound (*hasan*).” Al-Mundhiri mentioned it in *al-Targhib* (1:135) and said, “Ahmad narrated it, as did Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban in their *Sahihs*”.

[6] It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar (Allah be pleased with them both) in *marfu’* form, “Women do not have a share in leaving [the home] except in [times of] need.” Al-Tabrani transmitted it as [mentioned] in *Kanz al-’Ummal* (8:263).

These hadiths prove with clarity that the default rule for the woman is that she is hidden in her house, her person is concealed from foreign men and she does not leave her house except for a need.

However, a woman may need to emerge for her natural needs. It will then be permissible for her to emerge in these kinds of situations while concealed in a *burqa’* and *jilbab* whereby no part of her body is shown. This is the second level of hijab, and indeed this level has been commanded in the Noble Qur’an where Allah Most High said, “O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their *jilbabs* over their [persons]” (33:59) and it is apparent that by casting the *jilbab* over the woman is meant concealing her entire body even her face.

Jilbab according to what was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas (Allah be pleased with them both) is that which covers from top to bottom. Ibn Hazm said in *al-Muhalla* (3:217), “*Jilbab* in the language of the Arabs, in which Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) spoke, is that which covers the entire body, not a part of it.” Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir and others transmitted from Muhammad ibn Sirin, he said: “I asked ‘Abidah al-Salmāni about this verse ‘they should cast their *jilbabs* over their [persons]’ so he lifted the blanket [draped] around him, concealed his face with it and covered his entire head until it reached the eyebrows and covered his face, then he took out his left eye from the left side of his face”. This was [mentioned] in *Ruh al-Ma’ani* (22:89).

Ibn Jarir transmitted in his *Tafsir* (22:46) from Ibn ‘Abbas in the explanation of this verse, “Allah commanded the believing women [that] when they emerge from their houses for a need, they [must] cover their faces from above their heads with *jilbabs* and reveal [only] one eye.” It was also narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas and Qatadah, “[the woman] twists the *jilbab* above the forehead and tightens it, then she folds it unto the nose even if her eyes are exposed; nonetheless, she conceals the chest and most of the face.” Al-Alusi [mentioned] it in *Ruh al-Ma’ani* (22:89). In sum, this verse proves that the woman is commanded to cover her face when she emerges at her [time of] need.

Furthermore, this is proven by His statement Most High, “Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage, there is no [blame] on them if they lay down their garments” (24:60), since Allah Most High made it permissible for old women in this verse to lay down their garments and it is clear that the intended meaning of laying down the garments here is not laying down all clothes. The intended meaning of it is only to lay down the *jilbab* or shroud from the external garments, the laying down of which will not lead to exposing the ‘*awrah*. For this [reason] ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (Allah be pleased with him) explained garment in this verse as *jilbab* and shroud, and a similar [interpretation] was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Umar, Mujahid, Sa’id ibn Jubayr, Abu l-Sha’tha’, Ibrahim al-Nakha’i, al-Hasan, Qatadah, al-Zuhri, al-Awza’i and others as mentioned in *Tafsir ibn Kathir*. Hence, this verse proves that laying down the *jilbab* which necessitates exposing the face is specific to old women who have no prospect of marriage, and that it is not permissible for young women to lay down their *jilbabs* and expose their faces before foreign men.

It is clear that when the female Companions left for their needs they would go out concealed in *jilbabs* and hidden in shrouds and would not uncover their faces before foreign men. From the [narrations] that prove this are the following hadiths:

[1] Abu Dawud transmitted in *Kitab al-Jihad, Bab Fadl Qital al-Rum* from Qays ibn Shammas (Allah be pleased with him), he said: “A woman called Umm Khallad came to the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) while she was veiled (wearing a *niqab*) enquiring about her son who was killed. One of the Companions of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to her, ‘You have come to ask about your son while you are veiled?’ She said, ‘If I am afflicted with the loss of my son I will never suffer the loss of my modesty.’ Then Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘He has the reward of two martyrs.’ She asked, ‘And why is that O Messenger of Allah?’ He said, ‘Because he was killed by the people of the book.’”

[2] It was narrated from Umm ‘Atiyyah that Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) would bring out the unmarried women, old women, the women in the private quarters and the menstruating women in the two ‘Ids. As for menstruating women they would keep back from the place of prayer and would witness the supplication of the Muslims. One of them said, “O Messenger of Allah! If one does not have a *jilbab*?” He said, “Let her sister cover her with her *jilbab*.” This hadith was transmitted by a number of collectors of authentic [narrations], and this is the wording of al-Tirmidhi (no. 539), *Bab Khuruj al-Nisa’ fi l-’Idayn*, and al-Tirmidhi said, “this hadith is *hasan sahih*.”

[3] Al-Bukhari transmitted [something] similar to it (no. 980 in *Kitab al-'Idayn*) from Hafsa bint Sirin and its wording is: “so she said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, is there harm for any of us when she does not have *jilbab* that she not come out?’ He said, ‘Her companion should cover her with her *jilbab*.’”

[4] 'Abd al-Razzaq and a group transmitted from Umm Salamah, she said, “When this verse ‘they should cast their *jilbabs* over their [persons]’ was revealed, the women of Ansar came out as if there were crows on their heads, from the tranquillity, and [draped] over them were black clothes that they would wear.”

[5] Ibn Mardawayh transmitted from 'A'ishah, she said, “Allah Most High bless the women of the Ansar. When ‘O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women ...’ was revealed they tore their thick outer garments and made veils from them, and they prayed behind Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) as if there were crows on their heads.” See *Ruh al-Ma'ani* (22:89) for the two narrations.

[6] It was narrated from 'A'ishah, she said, “Riders would pass us when we accompanied the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) while we were in *ihram*. When they came by us, one of us would let down her *jilbab* from her head over her face, and when they had passed on, we would uncover our faces”. Abu Dawud transmitted it in *Kitab al-Hajj* (no. 1833).

These hadiths clarify that the female Companions (Allah’s pleasure be on them) would, after the revelation of the [verses of] hijab, adhere strictly to covering their bodies with *jilbabs* and draw them over their faces when going out. The last hadith proves that this importance of hiddenness does not cease to continue even in the state of *ihram* in which it is prohibited for a woman that a piece of clothing touches her face.

The third level of hijab which is that women go out concealing the bodies from head to foot while uncovering the face and hands, at the time of need, is with the condition of safety (*amn*) from temptation (*fitnah*). This is proven by His statement Most High in *Surah al-Nur*, “And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their ornaments except what appears thereof.” The exegetes have differed over the explanation of “what appears thereof”. It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar and 'A'ishah (Allah be pleased with them) that they explained it as the face and hands, and this is the view of 'Ata', 'Ikrimah, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Abu l-Sha'tha, al-Dahhak, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i and others. And it was narrated from 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) that he interpreted “what appears thereof” as the shroud and *jilbab*. Hence, the verse according to the first explanation proves that the woman can uncover her face and hands at the time of need and this is further supported by the following hadiths:

[1] It was narrated from 'A'ishah (Allah be pleased with her) that Asma' bint Abi Bakr (Allah be pleased with them both) entered upon the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) while wearing thin clothing, so he turned away from her and said, “O Asma! Indeed when a woman reaches [the age of] menstruation, it is not proper that anything should be shown except this and this”, and he pointed to his face and hands. Abu Dawud transmitted it, but Abu Dawud and Abu Hatim al-Razi said: “it is *mursal*, Khalid ibn Darik did not hear from 'A'ishah”.

[2] It was narrated from ‘Ali (Allah be pleased with him) in the event of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) returning from al-Muzdalifah that he (Allah bless him and grant him peace) made al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) his riding companion. He came to the pillars to throw pebbles at them and then came to the place of sacrifice (*manhar*). It is mentioned therein: a young slave girl from Khath’am sought a verdict from him and said, “Indeed my father is an old man and the obligation to Allah to perform Hajj has reached him. Is it permissible for me to perform Hajj on his behalf?” He said, “Perform Hajj on your father’s behalf.” ‘Ali said: “he turned the neck of al-Fadl, and al-‘Abbas asked, ‘Why did you turn the neck of your cousin?’ He said, ‘I saw a young man and woman [in such a situation] that they are not safe from Satan.’” Al-Tirmidhi transmitted it in *Bab ma Ja’a anna ‘Arafata kullaha Mawqif* (no. 885).

Abu Ya’la transmitted from al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbas, he said: “I was riding behind Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and a Bedouin with whom was a beautiful daughter began presenting her to Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the hope that he would marry her”. He said, “I began to glance at her, and the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) took hold of my head and turned it.” Al-Haythami mentioned it in *Kitab al-Nikah* in *Majma’ al-Zawa’id* (4:277) and he said, “its narrators are the narrators of authentic [narrations].” Either this was another incident, or one of the narrators erred in the explanation that the girl belonged to a Bedouin. And the hadith of al-Tirmidhi is clear in that her father was not with her. And Allah knows best.

[Further] detail of this event was transmitted by al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Isti’dhan* (no. 6228) from ibn ‘Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) and its wording is: Al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbas rode behind the Prophet as his companion rider on the back of his she-camel on the Day of Sacrifice (*yawm al-nahr*) and al-Fadl was a handsome man. The Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) stopped to give the people verdicts. In the meantime, a beautiful woman from the tribe of Khath’am came, asking the verdict of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace). Al-Fadl started looking at her as her beauty attracted him. The Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) looked behind while al-Fadl was looking at her; so the Prophet held out his hand backwards and caught the chin of al-Fadl and turned his face to the other side in order that he should not gaze at her, [to the end of] the hadith.

This slave girl’s face was uncovered as is clear from the context of the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas since he said therein that she was beautiful and al-Fadl was attracted to her beauty. The hadith explains that the Prophet turned the face of al-Fadl away from glancing at her and he did not command the slave girl to cover her face because she was in the state of *ihram*, and he (Allah bless him and grant him peace) probably feared she would collapse or something else if she was required to conceal her face in such severe crowding, so he did not command her to [do] this. This is a proof that it is permissible for a woman to uncover her face according to a need when the rest of her body is concealed.

[3] It was narrated from Sahl ibn Sa’d that a woman came to Allah’s Messenger and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I have come to give you myself in marriage.” Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) looked at her. He looked at her carefully and fixed his glance on her and then lowered his head, to the end of the hadith. Al-Bukhari transmitted it in *Bab al-Nazr*

ila l-Mar'ati qabla l-Tazwij (no. 5125). It is clear in this event that the woman's face was uncovered at this time, and al-Sarakhsi adduced this as proof in *al-Mabsut* (10:152) that the face of a woman is not *'awrah*.

As for the positions of the *fuqaha* on the permissibility of looking at the face of a woman and her hands, the *fuqaha* have agreed on the impermissibility when it is with the intention of gratification (*taladhdhudh*), or if there was a fear of temptation inviting the man to be alone with her. There is no dispute in the prohibition of looking at the face of a woman and her hands in this case. As for when the man is safe from temptation and does not desire gratification by looking there is disagreement over its permissibility. The position of the Hanafis and the Malikis is the permissibility of looking at the face and hands in this case and this is the position of many of the Shafi'is and few Hanbalis. However the preferred [view] according to the Shafi'is and the Hanbalis is absolute impermissibility even if safe from desire and temptation.

The Position of the Hanafis on the Ruling of Looking at a Woman

Shams al-A'immah al-Sarakhsi said in *al-Mabsut* (10:152), "It is permissible to look at the area of apparent adornment of women and not the hidden [adornment] due to His statement Most High, 'they should not display their ornaments except what appear thereof' (24:31). 'Ali and Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) said, 'what appears thereof' is kohl and the ring. 'A'ishah (Allah be pleased with her) said one of her two eyes and 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) said her shoes (*khuff*) and shroud (*mula'ah*), and he adduced as evidence for this his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) statement 'women are the snares of Satan by which he hunts men' ... and since the prohibition of looking is for fear of temptation and the greater part of her attractiveness is in her face, the fear of temptation in looking at her face is greater than it is when looking at other parts. 'A'ishah reasoned similarly but she said, 'if she finds no escape from walking on the road, then it is necessary that she opens her eye to see the road, so it is permissible for her to uncover one of her eyes due to this necessity, and what is established by necessity should not go beyond the scope of the necessity.'

"However, we [Hanafis] adopt the view of 'Ali and Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) since reports have been transmitted giving a dispensation to look at her face and hands. From these reports is what was narrated that a woman offered herself [for marriage] to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace), and he looked at her face and did not desire her.

"And when 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said in his sermon, 'Know that you may not go in excess in the dowries of women' and a woman with flushed cheeks said, 'Are you expressing [a view] using your [personal] opinion or did you hear this from Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace), for indeed we find in the Book of Allah Most High the opposite of what you say...?' Hence, the narrator mentioned that she had flushed cheeks, and this contains a clarification that her face was unveiled.

"And Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) saw the hand of a woman that was not dyed with henna and he asked, 'is this the hand of a man?'

“And when Fatima (Allah be pleased with her) gave one of her two children to Bilal or Anas (Allah be pleased with them), Anas said, ‘I saw her hand and it appeared as if a half-moon.’

“It is thus proven that there is no harm in looking at the face and hands. Furthermore, the face is the site of kohl and the hand is the site of the ring... Moreover, there is no doubt that it is permissible to look at her garment, and fear of temptation is not considered in this, and looking at her face and hands is the same. Al-Hasan ibn Ziyad narrated from Abu Hanifah that it is permitted to look at her foot also, as was mentioned by al-Tahawi, because just as she is tried with showing her face in working with men and showing her hand in receiving and giving, she is tried with showing her feet when walking barefooted or wearing sandals, and she may not find shoes on every occasion [when she goes out]. It is mentioned in *Jami' al-Baramika*, it was narrated from Abu Yusuf that it is permissible to look at her forearm also because in baking and washing clothes she is tried with showing her forearms also. It was said, ‘similarly, it is permitted to look at her front teeth also, because that appears from her when talking to men.’

“All of this is when looking is not with desire (*shahwah*). If one knows that if he looks, he will become desirous, then it is not permissible for him to look at any part of her because of his statement (Allah bless him and grant him peace), ‘whoever looks at the beauties of a foreign woman with desire, [melted] lead will be poured into his eyes on the Day of Resurrection’ and ‘Ali (Allah be pleased with him) said, ‘do not follow up a glance with another glance for indeed the first is [permissible] for you and the second is against you’, meaning by the second that one does it intentionally with desire ... And similar is the case if his preponderant opinion is that if he looks he will become desirous, because preponderant opinion in that thing the reality of which cannot be known [with certainty] is just like certainty.”

The Maliki Position

As for the Malikis, their position is what was mentioned by al-Kharshi in his marginalia on *Mukhtasar Khalil* (1:347): “The ‘*awrah*’ of a free-woman before a foreign man is her entire body, even her loose hair and forelock, with the exception of the face and hands, the outside of them and their inside. Furthermore, looking at them (the face and hands) without gratification and without fear of temptation and without a reason, is permissible, even if it is a young woman. Malik said, ‘a woman may eat with a non-near-relative (*ghayr dhi mahram*) and with her male servant, and she may occasionally eat with her husband and others of those with whom he dines’. Ibn al-Qattan said, ‘this contains proof of the permissibility of the woman showing her face and hands to a foreign man, since it is not conceivable to eat except in this manner [i.e. by showing the face and hands].’” An equivalent [passage] is [found] in *Sharh al-Muwaq* of al-Hattab (1:499) in more detail.

‘Alish said in *Minah al-Jalil* (1:133), “Thus, it is permissible for her to uncover them [i.e. the face and hands] before a foreign man, and he may look at them if he does not fear temptation. If temptation is feared then Ibn Marzuq said, ‘the well-known position of the *madhhab* is the obligation to conceal them.’” An equivalent [passage] is [found] in *Mawahib al-Jalil* by al-Hattab (1:399, 500).

The Shafi'i Position

The position of the Shafi'is is what was mentioned by al-Nawawi in *Kitab al-Nikah* from *al-Minhaj* in his statement, "It is prohibited for a mature male to look at the 'awrah of a mature foreign free woman, and similarly [it is prohibited to look at] her face and hands when one fears temptation, and also when safe from temptation according to the correct opinion."

Al-Khatib al-Shirbini said below his statement, "according to the correct opinion", "and Imam [al-Juwayni] reasoned that the Muslims are in agreement on banning women from emerging while their faces are unveiled, and [he reasoned] that looking is the act in which one would most expect temptation and the stirring of desire ... And the second view is that it is not prohibited, and Imam [al-Juwayni] attributed this to the majority (*jumhur*) [of the Shafi'is] and the two shaykhs (al-Nawawi and al-Rafi'i) attributed it to most (*aktharin*).

"[Al-Isnawi] said in *al-Muhimmat* that: It is the correct view because most have adopted it. Al-Balqini said, 'giving weight (*tarjih*) [to one opinion] depends on the strength of reason, and the verdict (*fatwa*) is given according to what is in *al-Minhaj*' ... That which the Imam transmitted regarding agreement on banning women, i.e. the rulers banning them, [from emerging while their faces are unveiled], conflicts with what al-Qadi 'Iyad related from the 'ulama that it is not obligatory on the woman to conceal her face along her path and that it is only a good practice (*sunnah*), and it is [obligatory] on men to lower their gaze from them because of the verse [i.e. 24:30]. The author (al-Nawawi) related this in *Sharh Muslim* and approved of it. One of the latter-day scholars said there is no conflict in that, rather their being banned from that is not because concealing [the face] is obligatory on them in its essence, rather because there is general benefit in it, and in leaving [the ban] is an infringement of honour (*muru'ah*). [Here] ends [the statement of al-Isnawi]. The outward purport of the statement of the two shaykhs is that concealing [the face] is obligatory in itself, so [the need for] this reconciliation does not arise, and the statement of al-Qadi is weak." See *Mughni al-Muhtaj* (3:128, 129). An equivalent [passage] is [found] in *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* (6:184, 5).

The Hanbali Position

The position of the Hanbalis is what was mentioned by Ibn Qudamah in *al-Mughni* (6:558,9) in *Kitab al-Nikah* in his statement, "As for men looking at a foreign woman without a reason, it is prohibited entirely according to the apparent statement of Ahmad ... and al-Qadi [Abu Ya'la] said, 'it is prohibited for one to look at anything besides the face and hands because this is 'awrah, and it is permitted for him to look at her with reprehensibility (*karahah*) when safe from temptation and the look is without desire. This is the position of al-Shafi'i ... [In support] of our view is Allah's statement Most High, "And when ye ask of them anything, ask it of them from behind a veil" (33:53) ... As for the hadith of Asma, if it is authentic, it is possible that it was before the revelation of [the verses of] hijab, so we understand it as such.'"

By considering these four positions it is clear that they all agree on the prohibition of looking at the face of a woman with the intention of gratification or when there is fear of temptation. The preponderant view in the *madhhab* of the Shafi'is and the Hanbalis is its prohibition when safe from temptation also. The Hanafis and Malikis only allow it with the condition of safety from temptation and the intention of gratification. Meeting this condition is very difficult, particularly in our age in which corruption has become prevalent, to the degree that it has become a condition

that almost cannot be met in most situations, and for this [reason] the latter-day scholars from the Hanafis prohibited it absolutely.

Its reprehensibility was transmitted in *Al-Durr al-Mukhtar*: “If one fears desire or has doubts, looking at her face is prohibited. Thus, the permissibility of looking is conditional on the absence of desire and otherwise it is prohibited. This was in their time. As for our time, Quhustani and others prohibited looking at [the face of] young girls except when looking is due to a need, like when a judge and a witness judge and witness over her...”

Al-Haskafi said in *Shurut al-Salah*, “and it is prohibited for a young woman to uncover the face among men, not because it is ‘*awrah*, but for fear of temptation.” And he said in *Bab al-Ta’zir*, “the master may reprimand his slave, and the husband his wife if she doesn’t beautify [herself]” to his statement “or she uncovers her face before a non-close-relative.”

Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas said in *Ahkam al-Qur’an* (4:458) under His statement Most High, “they should cast their *jilbabs* over their [persons]”, “in this verse is an indication that the young woman is commanded to conceal her face from foreign men and to display the concealment and modesty when going out so that suspicious people do not desire them.”

My father, ‘Allamah Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ (Allah have mercy on him), said in his *Ahkam al-Qur’an* (3:469), “and by this explanation we offered, the texts and narrations that are apparently contradictory are in agreement. As you know from what we cited to you of the verses and narrations that some of them allow uncovering the face and hands, either with certainty and conviction like the hadith of al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbas according to al-Bukhari and the hadith of Asma bint Abi Bakr in [Abu Dawud’s] *al-Sunan* and the hadith of the one who offered herself [for marriage] according to al-Bukhari and [other narrations] like them; and some [of the verses and narrations] allow it as a possible interpretation due to the disagreement that occurred between the Companions (Allah be pleased with them) in the explanation of His statement Most High ‘except what appear thereof’, the details of which have passed.

“And some [of the verses and narrations] prohibit uncovering the face and hands, and foreign men looking at them, like His statement Most High ‘and stay in your houses’ (33:33) ... and His statement Most High ‘ask it of them from behind a veil’ (33:53) and His statement ‘they should cast their *jilbabs* over their [persons]’ (33:59) according to the explanation of the majority of the Companions and His statement Most High ‘except what appear thereof’ (24:31) according to the explanation of ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud ...

“Thus, these texts of the Book and narrations of the Sunnah apparently conflict and contradict and in what we have mentioned to you, with the help of Allah Most High, this problem is resolved, for when you realise what we said, you will understand that all of these texts are in agreement in meaning, well-coordinated in the rulings, and all of them are in effect (*muhkam*) and are not abrogated, but a [particular] ruling is preconditioned by conditions, so wherever the conditions are met, it is made permissible, and wherever they are not, then it is not [permissible]

...

“All of this is when the reality of the difference between the explanations of Ibn ‘Abbas and ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud is conceded. Our teacher, the noblest of teachers, Ashraf ‘Ali al-Thana’wi (Allah illuminate his resting place), said in a volume devoted to this subject called *Ilqa’ al-Sakinah fi Tahqiq Ibda’ al-Zinah* that there is no difference between their explanations upon an in-depth and close examination, since the phrase ‘what appears’, although it was explained [by Ibn ‘Abbas] as the face and hands, but what is cited as the exception [in the verse] is on the [morphological] pattern of *zuhur* (passive appearance) not *izhar* (active showing). This clearly indicates that the objective [of the verse] is making an exception of what cannot be concealed. Rather, [it is an exception] when adornment appears upon exertion and work, without an intention to show it, because harm may be inflicted upon them by concealing [the face and hands] upon exertion and work. In this case, the exception would also be in accordance with the explanation of Ibn ‘Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) which is the face and hands may appear due to a need, and this does not contradict the statement of ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (Allah be pleased with him). I say: and this meaning is supported by what Ibn Kathir said in his explanation of His statement Most High, ‘they should not display their ornaments except what appear thereof’, ‘i.e. they should not reveal any part of their adornment to foreign men except what they are unable to conceal.’”

The upshot is that a woman is commanded in the Noble Qur’an to stay in her house and not emerge except when there is a need. Moreover, if she were to emerge due to a need, then she is commanded to conceal the face by donning the *jilbab* or *burqa’* and in [a manner] that she does not unveil her face. Yes, there are two situations that are exceptions to this: first, the situation of needing to show the face because concealing it will inflict harm upon her as in a [large] crowd or for another need like providing testimony. Second, her face becomes exposed unintentionally during exertion and work. Men are commanded in these two situations to lower their gaze. And Allah Most High knows best.

Takmilah Fath al-Mulhim, vol. 4, pp. 225-234