

Evidently the head must be covered in salah. We have already quoted the hadith:

"Allah does not accept the salah of an adult woman (i.e. one who has reached puberty) except with a scarf."

1.3.2

It is at least precautionary for a woman to cover the tops of her feet in salah. Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), said,

"A woman should pray in a shift that reaches down and covers the top of her feet." [Narrated by: Imam Malik in his *Muwatta'* (8.10.37), Abu Dawud ("Chapter : In how much should a woman pray", p. 101) and Bayhaqi (vol. II, p. 232).]

Scholars have differed regarding the feet of the woman : are they `awrah in salah, or outside salah, or both or neither? There are differences among the Hanafis themselves, and there exist three authentic opinions in the madhhab :

1. 1) That the feet are nakedness

This is based on the direct implication of the hadith,

"When a girl reaches puberty, it is not appropriate that any of her should be seen, excepting her face, and her hands upto the wrists." [Narrated by : Abu Dawud; It is a *mursal* narration at the level of *hasan*.]

It is also strengthened by the narration that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was asked, when he mentioned the prohibition of dragging the lower garment, about what women should do with the ends of their garments.

He said, 'They should extend them a span.' Umm Salamah said, 'Then, their feet will be uncovered!' He said, 'Then, they should extend them a cubit, not exceeding that.' [Narrated by: Tirmidhi, who graded it as *hasan sahih*, Nasa'i and Abu Dawud, with the words, "then she will be uncovered."]

This opinion was presented as the madhhab of Abu Hanifah by al-Quduri in "Bidayat al-Mubtadi", and is also espoused by al-Jassas in "Ahkam al-Qur'an" and by Qadi-Khan. Similarly, in Sharh al-Aqta`, it is stated, "The authentic [opinion] is that it is `awrah, from the apparent [implication] of the report." [See al-Bunayah, vol. II, p. 63] Of the latter Hanafi scholars, al-Ghunaymi has inclined towards this view in "al-Lubab." The feet are also considered nakedness by Imams Malik, al-Shafi`i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

2. That they are not nakedness.

The argument for this is based on two points:

- i. If the establishment of the nakedness is by the saying of Allah, the Exalted, (translated), "And let them not show their beauty, except

that of it which is apparent," then the foot is not customarily a location of beauty (it may be for a minority, but regulations are set according to the general rule), and thus Allah, the Exalted, has said, (translated), "And let them not strike their feet in order to make known that adornment which they are hiding," i.e. the ringing of anklets, and this conveys that the feet themselves are of the beauty which is apparent. This is fortified by the fact that the Mother of the Believers, `A'ishah, said, commenting on the verse, (translated), "And let them not show their beauty except that of it which is apparent", "the toe-ring, a silver ring which is [placed] on the toes." [Narrated by Ibn Abi Hatim, as quoted by Ibn Taymiyyah in "Hijab al-Mar'ah", p. 17.]

- ii. If the establishment is by the Prophet's saying, "The woman is to be covered," along with it being established that some of her body is excluded due to hardship of [avoiding] exposure, then, by analogy, it should necessitate that the feet also be excluded, due to the corroboration of hardship. This is because she would be put to hardship by her foot showing when she walked barefooted or with shoes, for she may not always find khuffs or socks with which to cover them. Along with this, desire is not aroused by looking at the foot such as is aroused by looking at the face, and so if the face is not `awrah, in spite of the plentiful arousal of desire, then the foot is more appropriate to remain uncovered in view of the hardship associated with covering it. [See "Fath al-Qadir" : al-Hidayah with its commentaries, vol. I, p.225, and al-Bunayah, vol. II, p.63.]

This opinion has been reported by al-Hasan from Abu Hanifah. Al-Marghinani graded it as the more authentic opinion in "al-Hidayah", and Ibn al-Humam and al-`Ayni acknowledged this in their commentaries thereof. This view has been presented as the madhhab by latter *mutun*, such as "Nur al-Idah" and "al-Durr al-Mukhtar". al-Thanvi concluded in "I`la al-Sunan" that it is sounder from the point of rationale.

3. That they are nakedness outside salah, but not in salah. Ibn `Abidin reported this as one of the authentic views in "Radd al-Muhtar".

It may be noted that Hafiz Ibn Taymiyyah, the Hanbali, also favored this opinion. He says,

"And similar [is the case with] the foot. It is permissible for her to show it [in salah] according to Abu Hanifah, and [this] is the stronger [position], for `A'ishah considered it of the apparent beauty. . . . So, this is an evidence that women used to show their feet initially, just as they used to show their faces and hands . . . for they used not to walk in khuffs or shoes. [Moreover], to cover these in [salah] poses a great hardship, and Umm Salamah said, 'A woman should pray in an ample garment which covers the tops of her feet,' and so when she makes sajdah, the bottoms of her feet may show." [Hijab al-Mara'ah wa-Libasuha fi al-Salah, pp. 17-18]

Some scholars opined that the feet are not nakedness in that she is not required to cover them, but they are nakedness for the purposes of looking and touching, i.e. it is not permissible for stranger men to look at or touch her feet.

2.0 Outside Salah

2.1 Its obligation

It is obligatory upon every sane adult to cover his / her nakedness outside salah, from himself, as well as from others for whom it is not lawful to look at his nakedness. Excepted from this are cases of necessity, such as medical treatment, for which it is permissible for him/her to expose such portion of his/her nakedness as is necessary. Similarly, it is permissible for him to expose it for *istinja'*, bathing, answering the call of nature and the like if he is alone to the extent that nobody can see him. It is not permissible to look at the nakedness of a man or a woman, whether attached to the body or severed.

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said,

"A man shall not look at the nakedness of [another] man, nor shall a woman look at the nakedness of [another] woman." [Narrated by : Muslim (in Kitab al-Hayd), Tirmidhi, who rated in *hasan gharib sahih*, Ibn Majah, Ahmad]

And, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) told Mu`awiyah ibn Haydah,

"Protect your nakedness [from all] except from your wife and your slaves."

.....

He said, "How about if one of us is alone?"

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied,

"It is [even] more appropriate that modesty be shown for Allah than for people." [Narrated by: Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, who graded it *hasan*, Ibn Majah, Ahmad]

2.2 For Men

The nakedness of the man outside salah is what is between his navel and his knees, based on the evidences we have already mentioned. It is permissible for other men or women to look at anything beyond that, provided there is immunity from temptation, although according to Imam Abu Hanifah, a woman may not look at a man's belly or back. [al-Hidayah] In any case, men should not leave their chests or backs exposed if there is a danger of their being seen by women and of *fitnah* ensuing subsequently.

The thigh is a nakedness, and hence Muslim men may not, in public, wear shorts which expose the thighs.

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said,

"Cover your thigh, for the thigh is [part] of the nakedness." [Narrated by : Tirmidhi, who graded it as *hasan*, and also by Abu Dawud, Ahmad, Malik and Ibn Hibban. Similar narrations are also narrated by Ahmad, and by Tabarani in "al-Mu`jam al-Kabir." Tirmidhi also

narrated, "The thigh is a nakedness" and graded it *hasan gharib*. Bukhari quoted this as ta` liq.]

2.3 For Women

The fundament here is the words of Allah the Exalted, (translated),

"And let [the believing women] not reveal their beauty, except that of it which is apparent, and let them clasp their scarves over their bosoms. And, let them not reveal their beauty except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women [i.e. Muslim women], or their slaves, or male servants free of desire, or children who have no sense of the shame of women's nakedness." [Qur'an, 24:31]

2.3.1

If she is in the presence of stranger-men (*ajnabiyy*, i.e. non-mahram men, viz. men other than her permanently-non-marriageable male relatives, such as father, brothers and sons.), or non-Muslim women, then her nakedness is all her body, except for her face and palms. This is also the view of Imam Malik, and one of the views of Imam al-Shafi`i. Ibn `Abbas said that the 'apparent beauty' referred to in Allah's saying, (translated),

"And let them not expose their beauty, except that of it which is apparent." is antimony and a ring, (i.e. the face and the hands).

[Narrated by: Tabari, Bayhaqi, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abdur-Razzaq, Tahawi. It has a solid chain.]

And, we have already mentioned the hadith,

"When a girl reaches puberty, it is not appropriate that any of her should be seen, excepting her face, and her hands upto the wrists."

Thus, the hands and face are not nakedness, and it is lawful to look at them if one is immune from temptation. It is worth pointing out this does not grant a license for indiscriminate looking, for one will generally not know whether or not one will be allured by a woman's looks before one has looked at her. In fact, even accidental glances should be brought in check as soon as one realizes them, for the gaze is one of Iblis' poisoned arrows.

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I asked the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) about an accidental look, and he told me to avert my gaze." [Narrated by: Muslim]

It is not lawful to touch a woman's face or hands, even if one considers oneself secure from lust. [al-Hidayah]

"The hand of Allah's Messenger did not touch any woman's hand except the hand of that woman his right hand possessed." [Narrated by : Bukhari]

And, it is reported that Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

"It is better for any of you that an iron spike be rammed into his head than that he should touch a woman who is not lawful to him." [Narrated by: Bayhaqi and Tabarani]

The head and hair must be covered, without any disagreement. There is *ijma`* (consensus) of the scholars on this, and hence any claim to the contrary is a *bid`ah*. That there is support for the *bid`ah* from a handful of contemporary individuals is of no consequence, because the *ijma`* was enacted prior to that, and also because of the clear evidences the dissenters have contradicted. Allah says, (translated),

"And let [the believing women] not reveal their beauty, except that of it which is apparent, and let them clasp their scarves over their bosoms."

The application of this verse to covering the head is twofold:

- i) Women are prohibited from revealing their beauty, and the hair is certainly a site of beauty. The exception from covering (viz. for that beauty which is apparent) does not apply to the head or hair, because of the lack of any evidence to indicate it. The phrase 'that which is apparent' is *mujmal* (not of well-defined import), and requires specification (*bayan*), which is provided in the hadith in the form of clarification that it refers to the hands and the face. No such specification exists to exclude covering of the head.
- ii) Women are commanded to clasp their scarves over their bosoms, i.e. to cover their chests and necks with the scarves, in addition to the head - as opposed to merely covering the head while leaving the neck and chest exposed as was the practice of women of Jahiliyyah. [Narrated by Ibn Abi Hatim]

As for the claim that one could cover one's neck and chest, but leave the head exposed, this is inadmissible on at least two counts:

- i) The word used in the verse is *khumur*, plural of *khimar*, which is a head covering. [Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Ruh al-Ma`ani] If a piece of cloth is used for covering some other part of the body, it is not a head covering. Should it be contended that it is still, in essence, a head covering being put to another use, we shall respond that this is even further-removed from acceptability. Were it to be true, it suggests redundancy and vainness in the words of Allah, the Exalted, which is inadmissible without disagreement. If it be claimed that any type of covering can be called a *khimar*, we reply that :

- a) the verse talks not about '*khumur*' in general, but about 'their *khumur*', i.e. the women's *khumur*, and these are the scarves which they were wearing on their heads, and thus it is established that the *khimar* here is a scarf, and not merely some covering.

- b) one cannot look at the Qur'an in isolation; the [sunnah](#) must necessarily be consulted to explain, clarify and specify the Qur'an, and the sunnah clarifies that the head is part of the nakedness.

- ii) It is against *ijma`*

2.3.2

When a woman is alone, or in the presence of Muslim women, her nakedness is that between her navel and her knees. In the presence of mahram men, she must, in addition, cover her belly and back. [al-Hidayah / Fath al-Qadir] The obligation of covering the back is understood from the legislation concerning *zihar* - a pagan custom in which a man would liken his wife's back to his mother's back to indicate that he no longer had desire for sexual relations her. The Qur'an

condemns *zihar* and stipulates an atonement for it [Qur'an, 58:1-4]. This indicates that the wife's back cannot become like the mother's back, and hence that it is not permissible to look at one's mother's back. If the back is a nakedness in this regard, it is fitting, by analogy, that the belly also be. By further analogy, this regulation is extended to other mahram women.

2.3.3

The voice of the woman is not nakedness, because the wives of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to speak to the Companions, who used to listen to the regulations of the religion from them. But, it is forbidden to listen to her voice if one fears temptation, even in recitation of the Qur'an. Allah has said, (translated),

"So, do not be soft in speech [O women], lest he in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire." [Qur'an, 33:32]

See : "[Talking to the opposite sex](#)" for more details.

2.3.4

A number of scholars have regarded the woman's entire body to be nakedness, without any exception outside of *salah*. This is one of the views reported from Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and is the view of most of the latter Shafi`i scholars. They view the evidence we have cited as being abrogated, and cite other evidence in their favor, including the practice of the women of Madinah, who covered their entire bodies, with the exception of one or both eyes upon the descent of the verse, (translated),

"O Prophet! Tell your wives, your daughters and the believing women to draw their *jalabib* (outer garments) over themselves." [Qur'an, 33:59]

Thus, it is at least recommended, and certainly more precautionary, for women to cover their faces, hands and feet also. The word used in the verse, *jalabib* (plural of *jilbab*), refers to an outer garment which covers the body completely, and so this is also an argument in favor of covering the face. Also indicating the covering of the face is the verse, (translated),

"And, when you ask them (the Wives of the Prophet) for something you need, then ask them from behind a veil; that is more pure for your hearts and for theirs." [Qur'an, 33:53]

The reasoning here is that if covering the face was a requirement for the Mothers of the Believers, whom Allah has purified [See Qur'an, 33:33], and who talked to the Companions, the best of generations, and that only on matters of religion, then it is more fitting and imperative that women beneath them in station should observe the same, especially in times of greater moral decadence in society.

Even if the face is not considered a nakedness, it is obligatory to cover it if there is a danger of *fitnah*. [Radd al-Muhtar]

2.4 The `Awrah of a Child

Al-Tharvi provides the following information :

2.4.1

A very small child has no `awrah

[based on a hadith extracted by Bayhaqi. Hafiz al-Zayla`i has mentioned in Nasb al-Rayah that it is not strong. Mufti Muhammad Taqi al-`Uthmani, the editor of *I`la al-Sunan* mentions that its narrators are trustworthy, although there was some disagreement over one of them. In either case, if there is no authentic narration on a matter, many scholars take by even a weak narration.]

2.4.2

Then, when the child starts to have a sense of feeling/shame (which varies from one child to another; some suggested an age of 4 years), the `awrah is the front and back private parts.

2.4.3

The `awrah gradually increases with age (according to some) until the age of ten.

2.4.4

At the age of ten, it becomes the same as the `awrah of an adult.

This is to accustom the child to covering the `awrah, and is by analogy from the hadith about ordering children to perform salah when they are ten years old. It is not technically a fard on the child, but it is a fard on the parents to enforce it.

2.5 Further, General Regulations

In addition to covering the required parts of the body, the following should also be observed :

2.4.1 *The clothes should not be transparent.*

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

"There are two categories of the inhabitants of Hell that I have not seen: People with whips like the tails of cows, with which they beat people, and women who are clothed yet naked, swaying, and moving out of Allah's religion; their heads are like an inclined camel's hump. They will not enter Heaven, nor smell its fragrance, though its fragrance can be smelt from such and such a distance." [Narrated by : Muslim, Ahmad, Malik.]

2.4.2 *The clothes should not be tight*

The clothes should not be tight to the extent that they reveal the shape of what they are supposed to be covering.

It is reported that Usamah ibn Zaid was given a piece of *Qibtiyyah* cloth by the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Later, the Prophet asked Usamah why he was not wearing it. Usamah replied, "O Messenger of Allah! I gave it to my wife for a garment." The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Tell her to make a lining for it, for I fear it may describe her frame." [Narrated by : Ahmad and Bazzar]

2.4.3 The clothes should not be of those characteristic of the unbelievers

"Whoever imitates a people is one of them." [Narrated by : Abu Dawud, Ahmad, Bukhari, Tabarani and Bazzar]

"And differ from the allies of Satan with all that you are able." [Narrated by : Tabarani]

2.4.4 The clothing should not be characteristic of the opposite sex

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) cursed those among women who imitate men, and those among men who imitate women." [Narrated by : Bukhari]

2.4.5 The clothing should not be worn for vanity or fame

2.4.6 Men may not wear silk, gold or silver, with the exception of a silver ring.

2.4.7 Women's clothing should not be such as to attract undue attention to them, as with extremely bright colors.

REFERENCES

Much of the text of this article has been adapted from the following two sources:

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2. "*Al-Fiqh `ala al-madhahib al-Arba`ah*" by `Abdu'r-Rahman al-Jaziri. Published by Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, Beirut, in 5 vols, 1988/1409.

Substantiating evidences and discussions were taken mainly from:

3. "*Fath al-Qadir lil-`Ajiz al-Faqir*", by Kamal al-Din Ibn al-Humam; a commentary on al-Hidayah, and published with it.
4. "*I`la al-Sunan*" by Muhaddith Zafar Ahmad al-`Uthmani al-Thanvi; in the light of comments from Hakim al-Ummah Ashraf `Ali Thanvi; edited and annotated by Muhammad Taqi al-`Uthmani. Published by Manshurat Idarat al-Qur'an wa al-`Ulum al-Islamiyyah, Karachi, 22 vols in 18, 1994/1414.

Other references consulted include:

5. "*al-Lubab fi Sharh al-Kitab*" by Shaykh `Abd al-Ghaniyy al-Ghunaymi al-Maydani.
6. "*al-Bunayah fi Sharh al-Hidayah*" by Hafiz Badr al-Dīn al-`Ayni
7. "*Nasb al-Rayah li-Ahadith al-Hidayah*," by Hafiz al-Zayla`i.
8. "*Hashiyat Radd al-Muhtar `ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar Sharh Tanwir al-Absar*", by `Allamah Ibn `Abidin.
9. "*Bulugh al-Maram min Adillat al-Ahkam*", by Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani.
10. "*Hijab al-Mar'ah wa-Libasuha fi al-Salah*," by Hafiz Ahmed ibn Taymiyyah
11. "Hijab" by Dr. Ismail Memon Madani (in English).

Seeing the Prophet

Seeing the Prophet in a dream (may Allah bless him and his Household and grant them peace)

Bi-smillaah wa l-hamdu li-llaah wa s-salaatu was-salaam 'alaa rasoolihi l-mustafaa. [In the Name of Allaah. All Praise belongs to Allaah. Prayers and Peace be upon His Messenger, the Chosen One.]

As-salaamu `alaykum.

As those of you in the US (and perhaps elsewhere) may know, a chain letter is circulating on the internet which is supposedly from "Shaikh Ahmed" a "watchman" of the Masjid al-Haraam in Makkah (Makkah). In this letter the "watchman" claims to have seen the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and send peace upon him) in a dream. The watchman goes on to say that in the dream the Messenger commented on the disobedience of his Ummah and encouraged Muslims to repent and mend their ways. According to the letter, the Prophet charged Shaikh Ahmad with the task of relaying this message to the Muslims around the world by requiring them to forward a chain letter! The letter ends as many chain letters do by promising blessings to those who forward the letter to a number of other people and bad luck to those who do not.

The letter came to my attention when a recent revert sent me an e-mail message asking about the letter. Our brother Suheil Laher wrote this brief but effective response, exposing the letter as a fraud. By the grace of Allah, his letter was forwarded to some of the national discussion groups and e-mail lists.

Al-hamdu li-llaah. The chain letter was also confirmed as a fraud by other trustworthy brothers who informed us that the same letter has been circulated several times in the past and declared a hoax by `ulamaa in Arabia and Jordan.

May Allah save the Muslims from attacks on their religion.

Alright, lets just clear this up in case people start forwarding this en masse in panic.

1. It is authentically established that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and his Household and grant them peace) said that whoever sees him in a dream has indeed seen him, for Satan cannot impersonate him. Hence, if Sheik Ahmed really claims that he saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in a dream, we will not refute him.

However, the way it stands, we have no way of verifying even that. All we have is an anonymous message claiming that; we don't know from whom the message originated, whether the writer is a reliable and upright Muslim or not. At this