

## THE CONCEPT OF *AURAH*: ISLAMIC DRESSING CODE AND PERSONAL GROOMING ACCORDING TO FIQH LAW

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### ABSTRACT

The method and manner of dressing, whether it is halal or haram have been extensively discussed by many scholars to ensure that the clothes Muslims wear go beyond covering their bodies; it also has to do with the well-being of the individuals as well as the community. All the dress codes specified by Allah and His Messenger form the guiding principles for Muslims as part of their way of life. This article discusses the dressing code in terms of clothing and accessories in Islam for both men and women. This code illustrates what is allowed and not allowed in the selection of clothing and accessories as well as the justifications for obeying this code in daily life. This study covers the actual definition of the concept of *aurah* according to Islam, women's hijab and veil, jewelry for women and men, and the dress codes of women and men. The findings of the study indicate that in Islam, fashion involving clothing and accessories can fulfil the current needs of society as long as the dress code is adhered to.

**Keywords:** Dress, Adornment, Halal, Haram,

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Islam is a holistic (*syumul*) religion that encompasses all aspects of life. All the guidelines clearly specified by Allah and His Messenger act as guides and codes for Muslims. Islamic scholars and intellectuals continue to debate and discuss emerging issues that may appear to be vague and debatable from the point of view of the Quran and al-Sunnah to fit in the claim that Islam is a religion that is applicable in all eras. Matters relating to halal, haram and *syubhah* ( ) need to be given clarity so Muslims can act according to the principles and abide by the divine rule of Allah.

Islam, for example, urges Muslims to adorn suitable and clean attire when going to the mosque. It should not be soiled by things deemed unclean (*najis*) in Islam, and the clothes should not be made of silk or gold. In Islam, all food and clothing are permissible (halal) unless declared forbidden (*haram*) according to the *shar'i* scripture (*nas shar'i*), not based on divine law (*ijtihad*). It is very clear that *nas shar'i* stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah, explains that as far as clothes are concerned, they are governed by five laws. They are: obligatory (*wajib*), recommended (*sunat*), unlawful (*haram*), detestable (*makruh*) and permissible (*harus*). Clothing can be defined as everything that men and women use to cover the entire body or parts of the body, a dress made of cotton, silk and accessories can be made of gold and silver.

According to the Quran: "Ye Adam, We have sent down clothing to cover your nakedness and yours finery of clothing. This will apparently to the means of piety. That is part of Allah's signs, hopefully they will always remember. "

## 2.0 THE CONCEPT OF AURAH IN ISLAM

According to the Arabic definition, the root definition of *aurah* is disgrace or humiliation. It refers to the damage and deficiencies that must be guarded against being exposed to avoid embarrassment or humiliation. While according to *shar'i*, *aurah* refers to certain parts of the human body that must be covered or protected from the gaze of others (who are not permitted to see them). In other words, the defects or shortcomings that need to be protected (al-Mu'jam 1999: 877). It involves parts of human anatomy (which include both males and females) that are required by *shar'i* to be hidden from the eyes of the public. *Aurah* is derived from the Arabic word 'embarrassment'. While in terms of fiqh, *aurah* can be defined as parts of the body, which need to be hidden or covered from view.

Based on the *naqli* evidence (the Quran) and the hadith, Allah decrees in Surah an-Nur: 31 which means:

"... they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms..."

*Zahir* here means the face and the hands according to the traditions of the Prophet from Aisyah RA:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ دَخَلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَعَلَيْهَا ثِيَابٌ رِقَاقٌ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَقَالَ « يَا أَسْمَاءُ إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْمَحِيضَ لَمْ تَصْلُحْ أَنْ يَرَى مِنْهَا إِلَّا هَذَا وَهَذَا ». وَأَشَارَ إِلَى وَجْهِهِ وَكَفَيْهِ.

"That Asma', has entered the house of the Prophet Muhammad and on his thin clothes. Then he turned away from him and said, "O Asma ', women who have reached puberty cannot be seen from this except that this and while he showed his face and hands in."

(Narrated by Abu Dawud)

These conditions should be met to fulfil the requirements of covering the *aurah* of Muslim males and females, according to Muslim scholars from the point of view of *fiqh*:

i. Covering the *aurah* area:

- a) The parts of the body of a man that need to be covered are between the navel and the knee. Navel to the knee (man).
- b) The parts of a woman that need to be covered are the entire body except for the face and the from the wrists to the finger tips. The entire body except for the face and her palms (woman).

The requirement to cover themselves is mandatory for Muslim men and women.

ii. Not to expose the skin color and body shape. The clothing should be thick enough not to be sheer to avoid the skin colour from being seen. The clothing should be loose and not tight, especially for women.

iii. The clothing should not resemble the clothing of Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and the clothes worn by the opposite sex. The evidence is from Prophet Muhammad as narrated by Abdullah b.Amru:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: " لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِالرِّجَالِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ، وَلَا مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِالنِّسَاءِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ

"I heard the Prophet of the Messenger of Allah said: It is not one of us (believers) those who resemble men than women and not also those who resemble women than men."

(Narrated by Ahmad)

According to the views of fiqh scholars, Muslim females' *aurah* can be divided into the following:

a) A Muslim woman's *aurah* in front of the other Muslim women (family members, relatives, friends), is between the navel and the knee (Abbas). It is permissible for a Muslim woman to reveal parts of her body, apart from the areas restricted, in front of other Muslim women or Muslim slaves (Imam Fakhru Razi). If doing so could lead to slander or lust, the entire body except for the face and palms should be covered.

b) A Muslim woman's *aurah* with non-Muslim women. All parts of the body except for the parts of the body that can be seen while working and doing housework (Imam Nawawi). It is permissible for a Muslim woman to show her face, head, neck, arms, and hands to the feet, right up to the knee (Sheikh Khatib Syarbini). If doing so could lead to slander or lust, the entire body except for the face and palms should be covered.

c) A Muslim woman's *aurah* in front of the males. Male members of the family, as well as certain male relatives (*muhrim*), is between the navel and the knee (according to the Shafi'i sect). It is permissible for other parts of the body to be seen with the condition that it will not cause any slander or lust. If it can cause the possibility of slander and lust, then the entire body except for the face and the palms is her *aurah*. The *aurah* of a Muslim woman with *ajnabi* males (all males who are not her *muhrim*) is her entire body including her face and palms whether she has reached puberty or otherwise. If her face and her palms can cause slander or lust, they are considered as her *aurah* as well. It is permissible for a Muslim woman to reveal her entire anatomy in front of a male child (*mummayyiz* & *ghair Mumayyiz*) if it does not cause any lust. If it can cause slander and lust, she must cover her body except for her face and her palms.

Rasulullah (PBUH) said that:

"A man cannot see the nakedness of the other men and women likewise cannot see another female's *aurah*. Two men cannot stay in one blanket and women are also forbidden to do so."

(Narrated by Muslim, Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi)

d) The *aurah* of a Muslim woman when they are being treated by a male doctor or medical practitioner. In the circumstances of a medical emergency or when no other female doctors are available, it is permissible in Islam for her *aurah* to be seen. However, it is limited to the areas that require medical treatment. According to the *fiqh* scholars, the only males that are allowed to see the *aurah* of a woman are her husband, father, maternal grandfather and father, father-in-law, children, grandchildren of a son or daughter, stepson (without the possibility of lust), siblings, sons of her siblings (nephews), among women, slaves and children who would not be aroused by it. Having said that, the Muslim etiquette of

clothing is highly encouraged among Muslims to avoid incest. Islam also urges the separation of space for sleeping between boys and girls when they become teenagers. The *aurah* of a male Muslims is between the navel and the knee.

### 3.0 CLOTHING THAT MUST BE WORN

Clothing is worn by men and women to cover parts or the entire body; the clothing can be made out of cotton, silk, and the accessories can be gold or silver jewelry. Shirts, blouses, sarongs, and pants are also examples of clothing. It is a must for Muslims to cover their *aurah*, wear clothes that are permissible during prayers and protect themselves from heat and cold. The protection of life and soul from harmful elements is part of a Muslim's obligation. Similarly, covering one's *aurah* during prayers is a strict requirement. One's prayer will not be valid unless the *aurah* is properly covered. Apart from that, they also need to be suitably covered when going to toilets.

Nevertheless, many Muslim women are not properly committed to the clothing etiquette prescribed by Islam. They wear clothings that reveal their *aurah* in public, similar to those worn by non-Muslim women. Some Muslim women openly display revealing clothes, wear makeup, and show behaviors, which to them represent modernity. They might be wearing clothes that are too tight and sheer to the point that it is as if they appear unclothed. The Muslim women may be aware of the Muslim dress code which differentiates them from non-Muslim women, yet they choose not to abide by it. However, in Islam, a Muslim woman has a specific code of dressing and behavior. Clothes act as protection for the sake of safety, social control, and to maintain the dignity of Muslim women from slander. Muslim code of clothing reflects pious Muslim women. The person who is displaying *tabarruj* (display of beauty) by exposing her *aurah* and showing her clothing on the body is considered *haram* (forbidden) according to the Qur'an.

Allah SWT :

"And stay in your houses and do not ornate and behave like people who formerly Ignorance and set up prayer and give regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only wishes to remove uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and purify you thoroughly. "

(Surah al-Ahzab: 33)

The shape and pattern of *tabarruj* are already known to man since ancient times. In interpreting verse 33, ulama tafsir (religious scholars dealing with the issues of linguistics, jurisprudence, and theology) define *tabarruj* as:

1. Sheikh Mujahid -Women walking outside and in front of men
2. Sheikh Qatada - Women who intentionally walk in a specific way to attract attention.
3. Sheikh Muqatil- To take off the headscarf so that the necklace, earrings, and neck can be revealed.

The above are forms of *tabarruj* in the olden days of ignorance, while ignorance in the present is not significantly different from the olden days despite the time span. In Islam, the *aurah* of a Muslim must be covered before a person leaves the house. As mentioned earlier, the *aurah* of a Muslim woman with men who are not her *muhrim* or with non-Muslim women is her entire anatomy apart from her face and palms,

according to the more conservative school of thoughts. The two parts can be exposed to allow flexibility during working or when taking or handing something to others. In conclusion, a Muslim woman must cover parts of her body which are required to be concealed yet given the flexibility to expose certain parts of the body that are difficult to conceal.

Allah SWT (May He be glorified and exalted) commands the female Muslim believers to wear headscarves outside the confines of their homes to differentiate them from the disbelieving women. Allah SWT has ordered the Prophet to deliver this decree to His followers.

Allah SWT has given the command: "O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters and wives of the believers of all let them stretch their hijab-veil over them. That is up to them to know that they are not disturbed. "

(Surah al-Ahzab: 59)

Islam takes a firm stand on the issue of covering the *aurah* and protecting the dignity of Muslim women. Only a few are given a waiver from the decree, for example, elderly women (waivers). Allah SWT has said:

"And older women who have been suspended (from menstruation and contain) the never wanted to marry (again), it is no sin they take off their clothes with no (intended) to show the jewelry and be polite is better for them. and Allah is Hearing, All-Wise. "

(An-Nur: 60)

The verse explains that this refers to women who are menopausal and no longer have the ability to bear children. They may no longer have the desire to marry or a desire for a man, and may no longer attract the attention of men. God gives them leeway and revealing their *aurah* is not considered a sin. The words 'taking off their clothes to show their adornments or accessories' do not mean that the women should take off their clothes, but it means displaying their beauty.

Although flexibility is given, it is better in Islam for Muslim women to maintain appropriateness and to avoid *syubhat* (areas of contention). It is to help them maintain themselves by always wearing permissible clothes to seek perfection and so avoid all *syubhat*. In Islam, there are clothing and accessories that can be viewed and some that cannot be viewed. Women's accessories comprise of anything that is used to decorate and beautify the body, either in the form of original creations such as the face, hair and body parts, or artificial ones such as clothing, accessories and jewelry.

Allah SWT decrees that Muslim women hide their accessories to prohibit them from showing them off in public. Allah SWT gives no exceptions except the usual accessories that are ordinarily visible. Scholars differ about the meaning of 'ordinary' as well as the amount that is allowed. Most of the *salaf* (the first three generations of Muslims) scholars, including Ibn Abbas RA, who believed that women's accessories categorised as ordinary include kohl and rings. This was supported by Anas R.A. The sites of the eyeliner and ring automatically indicate that the areas that are permissible to be seen are the face and the hands. Similar claims were also made by Said bin Jubayr, Ata, Awzai, and other scholars.

Saidatina A'isha RA, Abu Qatada and others argued that two bracelets can be defined under permissible accessories for Muslim women that can be seen. This will simultaneously exclude the arms. However, the restrictions from the wrist to the elbow are still disputed by scholars. Apart from the flexibility, some conservative scholars such as Abdullah bin Mas'ud and Nakha'i interpreted the 'ordinary accessories' as scarves and plainly designed clothes. This was supported by a more forceful opinion (*rajih*) that whatever

appears on the face, palms, and accessories that are plain and not worn for the purpose of vanity and extravagance like kohl on the eyes and rings on the fingers are considered 'ordinary'. That was confirmed by the decisions of the Islamic scholars (*ijtimak*), and contemporaries of the companions (*tab'in*).

Allah SWT proclaims that :

"Say (O Muhammad) to those men who believe that their gaze from looking at forbidden and guard their modesty. That is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do. "

(Surah An-Nur verse 30)

The text explains that women's faces must not be covered. If the whole body including the face of the woman and her palms should be covered, there should not be a decree for males to lower their gaze because there is absolutely nothing to gaze. However, a Muslim should make an effort to hide *aurah* including the face to avoid widespread damage to one's virtue and significant malevolence. More so if the woman has a beautiful appearance for fears that she may cause a rumor.

#### 4.0 THE CODE OF MUSLIM DRESS

It is recommended for every Muslim to wear fine clothes as a symbol of Allah's blessings, for example choosing beautiful clothes to wear when you want to attend major holidays, festivities and special visits because Allah loves those who appreciate His blessings because He is all magnificent and loves beautiful things. The choice of fine clothing is also recommended for Fridays and Eid.

It is recommended that adult Muslim males wear white attires when performing the Friday prayers, as is also recommended that Muslims be dressed in white shrouds when they passed away.

Ibn Abbas heard that the Prophet of Muhammad PBUH was saying that,

"Wear white clothes. Indeed, the white dress is your best clothing in which is the white colored shroud ".

(Narrated by Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)

It is also recommended for Muslims to wear new clothes during Eid which is better than wearing white clothes that are worn out. If new clothes are not available, it suffices if the clothes are clean. New and clean clothes symbolises happiness and celebration.

Muaz bin Anas related to that the Prophet of Muhammad PBUH said:

"Anyone who leaves clothes because of humility to Allah, while he is capable of it. On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will call upon the leaders of the mankind so that it selects their finery of clothing faith that she likes to wear "

(Narrated by Tirmidhi)

## 5.0 WOMEN'S DRESS CODE: HIJAB and VEIL

Muslim women are commanded to dress suitably and cover their *aurah* according to the decree of Allah, such as wearing robes, headscarves, veils, dress, scarf, pants, and fabric drapes, and they are also allowed to fulfil it according to their local cultures.

The feature of Muslim women's dressing code according to the majority of scholars is to cover the entire body except for the face and palms. Dignified, loose, unsexy, unglamorous or not provocative are allowed in Islam. The fabric should be thick and not thin. Color should not be too bright.

Allah SWT decrees that:

*"... And let their veils up to his chest."*

(Surah an-Nur: 31)

*Narrated from Ibn Abbas said:*

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمُتَشَبِّهِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ بِالنِّسَاءِ وَالْمُتَشَبِّهَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ بِالرِّجَالِ

" The Prophet cursed men who imitate as women and women who imitate as men. "

## 6.0 ACCESSORIES OF MUSLIM WOMEN

In relation to *tabarruj*, which means displaying accessories and beauty

Evidence: Surah al-Ahzab: 33, God says:

*"And stay in your house and do not ornate and behave like people of ignorance first."*

This verse refers to the wives of the prophets, and scholars use it in the matter of *qias* for Muslim women.

*Surah an-Nur: 31 "... and not display their ornaments except normal (outward) looks at him ...."*

Muslim scholars divide women's jewelry into:

- i. External jewelry such as dress, veil and make-up, eyeliner, lipstick, nail polish, hair dye & perfume.
- ii. Non-external ornaments of gold, silver, diamonds (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, etc.) Islam does not prohibit grooming, but Muslim women should not transgress and violate Islamic laws. Ornate and excessive wearing of jewelry could intentionally or unintentionally be used to attract the attention of men. This act is considered haram, according to *jumhur* scholars). *Tabarruj* also includes cosmetic plastic surgery, implants, Botox, etc.

In Surah al-Araf: 26, Allah affirms:

That is:

*"... ..Indeed We have sent down to you the materials for clothing to cover your shame and costume jewelry and clothing of piety, that's the best."*

## 7.0 ACCESSORIES FOR MALE MUSLIMS

According to the opinion of fiqh scholars, Muslim men's *aurah* is between the navel and the knees, The clothes need to be modest and loose fitting. The fabric should be be thick and not sheer. It should not resemble the clothing and jewelry of women and of the disbelievers such as Jews, Christians or Zoroastrians.

*Messenger of Allah said which means:*

*"Beware ye of the monks wear, anyone wearing it like them, he is not of my people."*

*(Narrated by Imam Al-Tabarani)*

## 8.0 THE RULES OF ISLAM REGARDING MALE CLOTHINGS THAT IMITATE WOMEN IN ISLAM

Islam does not allow men to wear clothing or jewelry that are designated to women and prohibits women to dress like men. It is punishable as a grave retribution and socially unacceptable. It is a highly embarrassing behavior of men to look like women and women to be like men in clothing and conduct (Muhammad Bakr Ismail, 2008). Based on the authentic hadith narrated in Bukhari, Tirmizi in the book *Jami'nya*, Abu Daud in his Sunan religious script and Ibn Abbas said:

"The Prophet cursed the women who imitate as men and men imitate as like women."

In the narration of Hakim, Al-Bazar and Baihaqi with an authentic chain, Abu Hurairah RA said:

"There are three people who do not go to heaven: those who are disobedient to their parents, who teach immoral things to his family and men who imitate women and drug addicts and alcoholics."

In the history of Sufism in the book of Faith Sya'bul and Tabarani with authentic Hasan chain, Amar bin Yasir RA related that the Prophet said:

"There are three people who will not go to heaven forever: those who initiate the bad deeds to their families, men who are like women and alcoholics."

Based on the narration of Ashhabus Sunan apart from Muslim RA, from Ibn Abbas, said that:

"The Prophet cursed the women who imitate men and men who imitate as women."

Then the Prophet said, "Remove them from your houses."

The Prophet PBUH once removed an unnamed person and Umar also did the same thing.

Among those included in the ban are those who showed a resemblance in terms of the conversation, movement, gait, and clothing. It is acknowledged that every man and woman has his/her own habits and special features. When men act as women and women act like men, it is a sign of immorality in society.

Clothing should be in accordance with the Islamic procedure of modesty by covering parts of the body as stated in the Quran. The material cannot be sheer, and it must not cling to the body like skin. According to what was said by the Prophet PBUH in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah r.a:

نِسَاءٌ كَاسِيَاتٌ عَارِيَاتٌ، مَائِلَاتٌ مُمِيلَاتٌ، عَلَى رُءُوسِهِنَّ أَمْثَالُ أَسْنِمَةِ الْإِبِلِ، لَا يَدْخُلْنَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَلَا يَجِدْنَ رِيحَهَا،

That is:

"And the women dressed but naked, the evil tendencies and attract other people to do evil. Their heads like the humps of camels. They will not enter the heaven. "

In addition, the dress code according to Islam should not reveal parts of the body that can cause slander such as clothing which is regarded as the cultural model of the body and those that initiate lust. It should not be similar to pants which are specific to men. they should not be clothes that can be linked to the identity of the Jews, Christians, and idol-worshippers. This is forbidden in Islam so that Muslims have distinctive characteristics which are apparent.

The Muslim women are not allowed to indulge in immoral acts that resemble the behavior of prostitutes. Forbidden as well is the intention to attract men, so they are aware of what is hidden such as the scent of women's perfume. Rasulullah said in a hadith narrated by Abu Musa which means:

"Woman when wearing perfume, are not allowed to go to an event which has the guest such as men."

Islam allows a Muslim woman to leave the house to go to the mosque to pray, to seek knowledge, carry out their needs and for religious or secular purposes. It is not mandatory for them to wear a headscarf or cover themselves when they are at home with their husband and children. But if her husband is visited by relatives such as siblings, cousins or the husband's family, it is mandatory for them to cover themselves completely except for the face and the palms when they serve food or the like. In terms of clothing and accessories, Islam does not forbid them to indulge, but they are required to maintain limitations and restrictions in the clothes that they adorn.

## 9.0 CONCLUSIONS

The original dressing code as well as the use of accessories either on the body, clothes or homes is halal and allowed, except for those stated in various specified texts (Mustafa al-Khin: 2009). This is based on general arguments which state God's favor and blessing for His servants. These claims are based on the general evidence about things that Allah has created and bestowed as a source of happiness that they can make use in their life. The dressing code that Islam outlines has specific benefits whether expressed or implied, and it is certainly beneficial to us. The same applies in terms of grooming; changing divine creation is illegal. Humans are allowed to groom themselves but not to the point of changing the creation of God. God creates man, He is the one who has the right to change the appearance of the human form. However, plastic surgery with medical intention of repairing physical features such as nasal defects caused by accidents and the likes is halal, but if done for cosmetic purpose to enhance the body such as the chin, nose and eyes, it is not permissible. Altering the creation of God is haram. It is hoped that this paper can bring awareness of the Islamic dressing code.

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