

Quran & Hadith on **Hijab** (Screen from Strangers), **Jalabib** (Outer Covers) and **Khumur** (Head Covers)

Hijab Dress Essentials: Head Covers (**Khumur** in Quran), Outer Covers Garment (**Jalabib** in Quran), Face and Hands (exempted in Hadith)

Public usage words: Purdah (Veil), Burqa (Outer Cover & Face Veil), Niqab (Eyes Uncovered), Hijab (Head Cover over Shoulder & Chest)

Arabic Words in the Quran on Hijab with Transliteration and Translation

حِجَابٌ ط

hijab-in
a screen

[33:53]

جَلَابِيبُهُنَّ ط

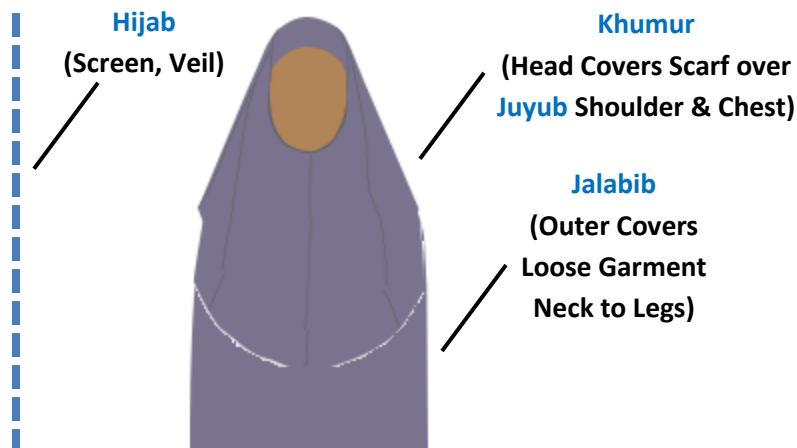
jalabib-i-hinna
their outer garments

[33:59]

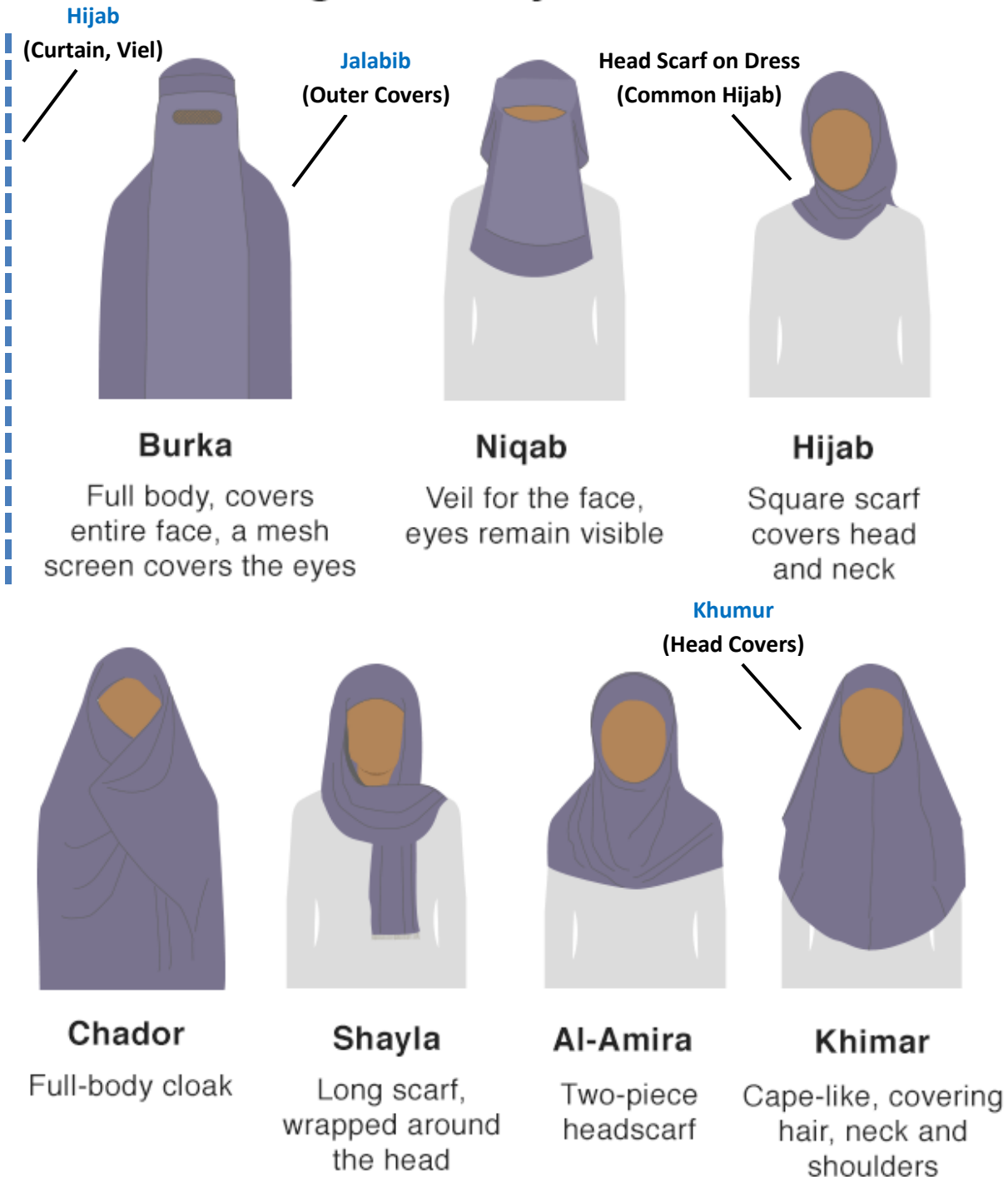
بِخُمُرِهِنَّ

bi-khumur-i-hinna
their head covers

[24:31]



Head coverings worn by Muslim women



Dawatul Quran Commentary on

Surah 33. Al-Ahzab Verse 53, 59 & Surah 24. An-Nur Verse 31

Surah 33. Al-Ahzab

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ
 نَظِيرِينَ إِنَّهُ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا
 مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
 يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ
 أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ
 تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٣﴾

Translation of Verse 53

53. O you who believe ! Do not enter the dwellings of the Prophet without permission, and (on being permitted) do not wait ¹¹⁹ for meal to be served; but when you are invited (for a meal), then enter and after eating disperse¹²⁰----linger not for conversation.¹²¹ Verily that would cause annoyance to the Prophet, and he would be shy to ask you to go, and Allah is not shy of telling the truth.¹²² And when you ask them (his wives) for anything, ask them from behind a **curtain**. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. ¹²³ And it is not proper for you to hurt the messenger of Allah, nor ever to marry his wives after him.¹²⁴ Verily that would be a very grave offence in the sight of Allah.

Surah 33. Al-Ahzab

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ
جَلَابِيزِهِنَّ^ط ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا^{٥٩}

Translation of Verse 59

59. O Prophet! Tell your wives, and your daughters and the women of the believers that they should cast upon them their **cloaks**. That is more proper, so that they may be recognised and not molested.¹³⁰ And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.¹³¹

Commentary

130. In this ayah the general Muslim women are directed to draw close to their bodies **cloak (Jilbab chadar)** whenever they may go out from their houses, as is clear from the sentence that follows. And its advantage has also been stated that it will enable them to be recognised, that is it will show that they are respectable and chaste women, and therefore, mischief-making elements will not expect any response from them and will not tease them. This chadar of modesty will keep them comparatively safe.

Jilbab means broad cloth (Lisan-ul- Arab Vol.1 page 272). This word is used for a sheet of cloth, chadar, which is bigger than dupatta, which women use for covering their bodies and dress. The word 'min' is not used here as a preposition, as it is not used in the hadith narrated by Um Atiyyah:

“Um Atiyyah says: ‘When the Prophet persuaded women to join the prayer for Eid, I said : O messenger of Allah: if some one of us has no cloak (chadar), what should we do? He said: Her sister should cover her with her cloak.”- (Fathul Qadeer, Vol.4, page 304, as quoted from Bukhari).

In this hadith also the words ‘Min Jilbabiha’ do not mean part of the cloak of her but it means her full chadar. And ‘Yudneena Alaihinna’ means to draw it on oneself. Similarly at another place in the Quran it is stated:

“Wa Daniyatan Alaihim Zilaluha” which means its shadows will be on them. (Al-Insan 14).

It means that when Muslim women go out of the houses, they should draw close over their bodies such cloak or sheet of cloth which should be bigger than the odhani (head-cloth), which should cover their bodies and dress. This cloth should either be in the form of a sheet or in the form of ‘burqa’, the purpose is to conceal the open parts of the body, the ornamentation and the cut and fit of the clothe, so that the woman may not pass before strange men with her charm and attraction. She should go in a way which would meet the demands of modesty and which would show her to be a respectable woman. This is an outline of command concerning purdah, and it is not clarified in it whether a woman can keep her face and hands open, because as Quran proposes to stop the mischief, it also tries to remove the difficulties in practicing it. Accordingly in the [Surah Noor which was revealed after this Surah](#), where the women have been commanded to conceal their ornamentation, there the exception has also been allowed: ‘except what becomes manifest.’ (See Surah Noor, ayah 21, Note No.42). Therefore, in the command concerning jilbab’ this concession will be kept in view, especially when this command is in the nature of an outline. If the purpose were to essentially conceal the face and the hands, then the clarification would have been given in the ayah.

In the absence of this clarification, insistence on concealing the face and the hands and covering the body with the chadar in such a way that no part of the dress be visible to the outsider is nothing else but trying to make an outline command to be as very as detailed and severe. If such a severity were adopted in the past, then it would have been tolerated conditions then prevailing, but in the present condition when women have to meet so many of their needs and fulfill their responsibilities by going out of the house, making the command of the purdah so severe can create a lot of difficulties and problems for them. And it may also result in the women giving up purdah altogether, considering it to be totally unpracticable. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the correct balance.

131. Hints at the point that if in following the command concerning jilbab sincerely, if any defects are found unwittingly, then Allah will forgive and will show mercy.

Surah 24. An-Nur

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاؤِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَى إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

Translation of Verse 31

31. And tell the believing women (also) to lower their sight ⁴⁰ and to guard their private parts, ⁴¹ and not to display their adornment except what is apparent, ⁴² and to draw their **scarves** over their bosoms, ⁴³ and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands or their fathers, or husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers or brother's sons or sister's sons, or their women or their slaves, or male attendants who lack natural vigour, or children who have no knowledge of sex. ⁴⁴ And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment ; ⁴⁵ And repent and turn to Allah together, ⁴⁶ O believer! so that you may succeed. ⁴⁷

Commentary

40. The command for lowering the sight as given to men is also given to women. When any man may enter the house after taking permission, the women of the house should not stare at him, and whenever they go out of the house, they should keep their sight lower. They should avoid looking at strange men without

necessity.

If the purpose of this command is understood and it is followed with sincerity, then the needs of men seeing women and women seeing men in connection with their daily life, are not disallowed to be met by Islam, because the purpose is not to create hindrances, for example to look at men for identification or for evidence or to look at the general gathering of men, etc.

41. Guarding of private parts is inclusive of covering the private parts of the body.

42. By adornment (zeenat) is meant clothing, as well as articles or aids for beautification. In the Qur'an clothing has been termed as adornment (zeenat):

“Dress well for attendance at every mosque.” - (A'raf-31)

“We have sent down to you raiment that may cover your private parts and may (also be an adornment.” - (A'raf-26).

And in the Lisanul Arab, “zeenat (adornment) is described as a thing through which something is adorned.” (Lisanul Arab, Vol. 13, page 202)

Examples of adornment are kohl, henna (menhdi), ring, etc.

The ayah commands that women should not display their adornments except what is apparent. This exception means that the adornment or the part which remain uncovered during working or moving about should be allowed to remain uncovered, for its purpose is not to display it for others but it is to keep them open for necessity. Although this exception is related to the display of adornment, but naturally it includes those parts which are the spots of adornment that is hands and face, because the adornment to be displayed are henna and rings, whose place or spot is hand and kohl and mascara whose place of application is the eye, which are the part of the face. Therefore, if the hands and the face are displayed with their adornments; women are permitted to do so. This permission has brought a balance in the commands for purdah and the hindrance which could have occurred in the daily work for women has been removed. From the ahadith it is proved that in the time of the Prophet, Sallal Lahu Alaihi Wa Sallam, women used to observe purdah of the face, and also did not observe purdah of the face. As an example a hadith from Sahih Muslim is quoted below.

“Abdullah bin Abbas Says that Fadhl (bin Abbas) was riding behind the Prophet (Sallal Lahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). A woman of the Bani Khash’am tribe came and Fadhl started looking at her and she also began looking at him. The Prophet turned Fadhl’s face to the other side. The woman said: ‘O messenger of Allah! Allah has made Hajj compulsory for His slaves, and it is compulsory for my father too, but he is very old and he cannot ride. Then can I perform it on his behalf ?’ The Prophet replied : ‘Yes.’ This event occurred at the time of the Last Hajj.” (Muslim Kitabul Manasik).

It is thus learnt that the face of the woman was open and the sight fell on it. There is another hadith of the Sahih Muslim only:

“Jabir bin Abdullah says that he was a participant in the salat with the Prophet on the occasion of Eed. He led the salat before khutba, without Azan and Aqamat. Then he stood up leaning on Bilal (R) and directed to adopt Allah’s taqwa (fear) and exhorted for His obedience. He advised people and explained to them. He said to women to give in charity as many of them would become the fuel of the Hell. On hearing this a woman, from amongst the women, who had dark deflated cheeks, stood up, and asked: ‘O messenger of Allah! Why will such thing happen?’ He replied: “Because you complain too much, and you are ungrateful toward your companion.” The narrator says that on hearing this women began giving in charity their jewelry. They began dropping their earrings and rings in the cloth of Bilal (R)”. - (Muslim Kitab Salatul Eedain). It is obvious that the face of the woman who questioned was open. For this reason the narrator could see her cheeks deflated.

From the hadith it is proved that the face and the palms of the hands are not included among the private parts. Accordingly in the state of ‘Ihram , during the Hajj women are forbidden from covering their faces behind the veil and wearing gloves. A hadith in Bukhari states:

“A woman should not put on veil on her face in the state of Ihram nor should she wear gloves.” - (Bukhari, Kitabul Manasik).

And comand has been given in the Hadith about prayer :-

“The salat of an adolescent woman is not acceptable without her using the head-covering cloth.” - (Tirmizi-Abwabus salat). And with the head-covering cloth (odhni) head, ears, neck and bosom are covered, the face is not covered. It is a

proof of the fact that for a woman it is not necessary to cover the face. Accordingly the jurists have explained it. In 'Mughni' it is stated:

"In this school of Fiqh (Hanbali) there is no disagreement about this : that the woman has to keep her face uncovered during salat, and that except the face and the palms, it is not lawful to keep uncovered any other part of the body— And on this point also scholars are agreed that a free woman should cover her head during salat." - (Mughni, Vol.1 page601).

The 'Hidayah' states : "The whole body of a free woman is to be covered, except her face and her palms." - (Hidayah, Vol.1, page 39).

Ibn Rushd writes: "Many ulema are agreed on this point that a woman's whole body should be covered, except her face and palms." - (Bidayatul Mujtahid, Vol. I page 111).

As for the feet, from Um Salma's hadith it is learnt that if the clothing is so long that it may cover the apparent part of the feet, then it is sufficient.

From these arguments it has become clear that a woman's face and palms are not among private parts which need to be covered, but it does not mean that it is lawful for the 'ghair mahram ' to look at them without necessity. The command for keeping the gaze lower does not provide any reason for permissibility to look at women without necessity, nor does it mean that women should necessarily keep their face uncovered all the time. The holy wives of the Prophet used to observe the purdah of face, and it is better that women should, as far as possible, cover their faces under a veil. We have described the permission given by the Qur'an in this respect in greater detail so that people may not be under the wrong impression that Islam prescribes such restrictions of purdah on women that in the modern times they are not practicable. Under this wrong impression women generally give up the purdah. Therefore, it is necessary that this aspect of the permission should also be presented so that the minimum requirements of purdah which Islam has prescribed may be observed by women.

The fact is that in the present day the growing rate of traffic accidents has compelled women to keep their faces open. The journey by bus, rail, etc., for hours, and days together creates suffocation for a woman wearing veil. Therefore, there is no other alternative but to lift the veil. On the occasions of shopping and trading the uncovering of the palms of women is a well known fact.

Therefore, to be unduly strict in the matter of enforcing the command for purdah in such a way that the permission given by the Shariah are also undermined is neither right nor profitable.

Allama Maqdisi writes in Mughni :

“Necessity demands that a woman should open her face while buying or selling a thing and should uncover her palms while giving or taking a thing.”
- (Mughni, Vol.1, page 601).

Allama Nasiruddin Albani has written a book of research on the problem of purdah ‘Hijabul Miratil Muslimah’, which has been published by Alkutubul Islami, Beirut. In this book he writes :

“The hadith of Ayesha, which is in Abu Dawood, is a clear proof of this point that for a woman it is [lawful to keep open her face and palms](#). If in the sources of this hadith that point were not there which we have stated in our note (it is a hint at the hadith being ‘mursal’. In this hadith this saying is ascribed to the Prophet, who on seeing Asma (R) in clothes through which slight glimpses of her body could be seen, had said that after a woman becomes adult, it is not lawful to display any part of her body except the face and the palms) except that this narrative is valuable for having been narrated by different ways, therefore, in such a case it can become an argument for the lawfulness of the said thing, especially for this reason also that during the life time of the Prophet women followed this practice. Accordingly they used to keep uncovered, in the presence of the Prophet, their faces and palms, and the Prophet never used to stop them doing so. And this is proved from various ahadith.” - (Hijabul Miratil Muslimah, p. 24).

Further on he writes:

“From whatever we have said this conclusion can be drawn that a woman’s [covering her face](#) with a burqa, etc, which is customary in the present day, is for modest women quite according to the Shariah and [desirable, though it is not compulsory for her](#), but that the one who has done it has done well, and who has not done it, nothing wrong has been done.” (ibid-p.53).

Shaikh Ali Tantawi writes :

“To sum up a woman’s face is not her private part and many jurists (scholars or the four schools of Fiqh) agree to its not being private part (sahr), but not to uncover the face is better and is more commendable.” - (Fatawa Ali Tantarwi-page 155).

Syed Qutub writes :

“As for the display of the adornment of the face and the hands, its uncovering is lawful, for uncovering face and hands is ‘mubah’ (lawful)” - (Fi Zilalil Qur’an. Vol. 4. p. 2512).

Dr. Yusuf Qarzarwi states:

“This concession has been granted in the case of the face and the palm, because to cover them is a source of hindrance for women, especially in cases where they are to go out for lawful necessities, e.g. for the widows for the needs of their children and for the poor women to go out to assist their husbands. In such cases covering their faces behind a veil and covering their palms will create difficulties and inconveniences. - (Islam mein Halal-o-Haram. p. 208).

And Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani has to say:

“From the hadith and other sources it is proved that the face and the palms are included in ‘what is apparent’ because many necessities of the world and the religion compel women to keep them uncovered. If an absolute command is given to cover them, it would create severe difficulties and hardness for women in daily dealings. Further the jurists have considered the feet to be on the same lines as these parts, and when these parts are taken as exceptions, then their connected adornments, e.g. rings, henna, (mehndi) and mascara, etc. will also have to be counted among the exceptions;” - (Tafseer Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani. p. 458).

Some ulema have taken the words ‘Ma zahara minha’ (what is apparent) to mean that chadar or sheet which is worn over the clothes, the hiding of which is not possible, or they have taken it to mean displacement of the chadar by blowing of wind, but this is too far-fetched, and as Allama Jussas has written that it is a senseless thing, because if this were the purport, Qur’an would not have mentioned it so elaborately. - (Ahkamul Qur’an Vol.3, P. 389 - 390) .

43.' **Khimar' or odhni (head-cover)** is that cloth which covers the head, and by 'juyub' is meant that part of the clothing which is cut near the neck and the bosom. To place the veil or the head cover over the bosom means that a women should put on the head cover in such a way that it may cover her head and should cover ears, neck and bosom fully. Neither the adornment of the head, nor of the ears, nor of the neck, nor the elevation of the bosom be displayed.

This command for the head cover is applicable inside the house as well as outside. And for the outdoors there is an extra command for the use of 'jilbab' (chadar). But since chadar is likely to be accidentally uncovered, which would display the neck and the bosom, therefore, head cover (odhni) is also necessary. In the present day the use of Burqa is customary. If burqa can meet the object of the head cover, i.e. if there is no danger of the display of the neck and the bosom, then burqa is adequate. (God knows best).

If a 'ghair mahram' (strange person) enters the house with the permission of the owner of the house, the minimum permissible limits for purdah from him are that women should be in such clothes as cover the private parts and with the head cover should cover their heads, necks, ears and bosom, and except for the faces and the hands and their adornments, no part of the body or adornment be displayed. But if in the middle a curtain is hung, or if there is arrangement of a separate room for men, then that would be a more desirable form. For the holy wives of the Prophet there were special restrictions, one of which was that there should be curtain between them and the 'ghair mahram' (strange) men. If anything is demanded, it should be done from behind the curtain. (Surah Ahzab, ayah No. 53). But for the general Muslim women some concession is given in the matter of purdah at home. The great advantage of this concession is that 'ghair mahram' male relatives can also be treated with due deference. If on their coming a curtain is hung in the middle, it is better, but if that is inconvenient then the minimum limits of purdah mentioned above would suffice. But it does not mean that the ghair mahram 'male even if he is a relative, is allowed to meet women in private, but that in the presence of their husbands or other 'mahram' relatives they can meet their 'ghair mahram' relatives with the minimum limitations of purdah mentioned above.

It may also be noted that the head cover should not be so thin that the body may be seen through it, for the head cover is for hiding the parts and not for putting it

merely across the neck and not to display a style in fashion. Therefore, the head cover should be of such a cloth as would serve the desired purpose.

44. In this verse the permission for the woman to display adornment means a woman's appearing with adornment and the persons before whom a woman can appear with adornment are detailed below:

(1) Husband,

(2) Father, father-in-law, sons, sons of the husband, i.e. step sons, brother, nephews. All these are 'mahram' for the woman (that is for the woman, nikah with them is forbidden). Therefore, before them a woman can appear with adornment (Well-dressed and with ornaments) unhesitatingly. Besides them there are to her "Mahram" e.g. uncle, maternal and paternal, son-in-law, Razai brother (who shared the milk of the same foster mother), etc., who have not been mentioned here. By not mentioning it Qur'an might be hinting at the point that a woman may come before them but she should display her adornment to the permitted limit only.

(3) By their woman means those who are friends and acquaintances and female servants. Permission is given to women to appear with full adornment before such woman only. As for the other women, the Qur'an might be hinting at the point that before them a woman should appear with the minimum permitted adornment, which may not create any mischief.

(4) Among the slaves are included male and female slaves both. The male slave has been given the position of a member of the family by Islam, and by virtue of the service that he renders it is necessary that the women of the house should not be restricted to observe purdah from the slaves. Now the slave system has disappeared, so the problem of purdah from the slaves now does not exist.

(5) By male attendants who lack natural vigour, means those servants who may lack sexual vigour on account of old age or mental deficiency. For youthful attendants this permission is not given.

(6) Those children who may not be conscious of the hidden parts of the woman or of sex. It means those children who may not know about the sexual charms of women and in whom the sexual urge may not have awakened.

45. That is : A woman should not walk stamping her feet in such a way that the sound of the ornaments worn by her in the feet may be heard by others. This is a hint at particular ornament of feet known as 'pazeb'in such an ornament there should not be any ringing device (ghungroo), nor the style of walk should be such that by the movement of the ornament ringing sound may emanate.

The words of the ayah 'what they hid of the adornment' signifies that the trinket worn in the feet-pazeb-should be covered and not openly displayed. They should not be seen by strange men. The directive of not stamping the feet is meant to be followed within the house as well as without. When a 'ghair mahram' man may enter the house, the female inmates of the house should take care to see that they do not walk stamping their feet, and when they may go out they should also keep this point in mind.

From this it can be realised that a religion which teaches to be careful in the matter of making sounds of the jewelry worn and forbids women to stamp their feet while walking, how can it tolerate the hip-swinging style of walking of women and their singing and dancing in gatherings of males ?

46.'Taubah' means to turn towards a thing, and also to repent for the sin committed. On this occasion all the people of faith are directed to turn towards Allah and to repent and give up the past sins. It means that they should strictly follow the directions that have been given strictly and pray for Allah's forgiveness for the faults committed concerning moral purity, and mend their ways for future.

47. It has become clear that prosperity lies in observing the Quranic directives and not to neglect them to become modern and fashion-conscious.