
ISLĀMIC ‘ĤIJĀB’ FOR MEN

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A LONG WITH THE TOPIC OF ĤIJĀB for women, there is also another discussion which is hardly ever mentioned and that is of the Ĥijāb for men. Although the term Ĥijāb is used for the clothing of the Muslim man it is not the same style and type of ‘Ĥijāb’ that women have been commanded to wear. For many reasons which Allāh (SWT) in His infinite wisdom has laid out, women must cover their entire body from the eyes of those who are her Non-Maḥrams, and men too, to an extent must also observe this rule, which we briefly mention here.

Information for this writing has been taken from “Paradise of our Youth” and “Islamic Rulings related to Men and Women” which contains the rulings of eight Marā’ja Taqlid, both originally in Farsi, translated into English.

From the aḥādith of the Prophet and the Holy Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon all of them, regarding the type of covering that men must observe including the impressibility of imitating the non-Muslims (Kuffar), and the various other conditions, we can draw this conclusion that the man too, just like the Woman must not wear clothing that is not appropriate, tight fitting, and those that show off his body. Keeping this in mind, the Muslim man must not let his ego and desires get the best of him and in all instances, must not wear clothing that is referred to as “Shuhrah” or clothing that is not commonly worn which would make him stand out in a crowd. This clothing will obviously differ according to where a Muslim is living, thus for a Muslim living in the “West”, wearing the long Arab shirt outside on the streets may be classified as Shuhrah, but wearing the same in a Muslim gathering will be permitted.

It must also be mentioned that the term Ĥijāb, in relation to men, does not have the same technical meaning as it does in reference to Women, since the human-nature of a Man and Woman are quite different, thus too are their ‘Ĥijāb’. What must be pointed out is that the word Ĥijāb simply means ‘covering’ and thus,

Men too must cover their bodies from the view of Non-Maḥram women.

We read the following rule in the Tawdhiul Masaa’il that; “It is ḥarām for a woman to look at the body of a man, with the exception of his face and hands; and that it is ḥarām for a woman to look at the body of a non-Maḥram man – whether with the intention of lust or without it. Thus, according to the late Ayatullah Khomeini, which has been mentioned above and can be found in both his ‘Tawdhiul Masaa’il’ and “Tahrir al-Wasilah”, we see that in the ruling of looking at the opposite sex, both men and women are counted as equal.

In a tradition mentioned in the book Mustadrak al-Wasā’il, volume 2, page 558, there is a hadith from the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his family in which he stated that, “It is not allowed for women to look at men.”

In the same way that a man looking at a non-Maḥram women will lead to corruption and evil in the society, so too a woman must not look at the body of a non-Maḥram man. Insha-Allāh, this is one of the first steps to prevent corruption and immorality from spreading throughout our societies.

It should be mentioned though that it is not waajib for the man to completely cover his body as it is for the woman, but it is ḥarām for the woman to look at the body of a non-Maḥram man. Thus, in order for women not to fall into this sin, it has been recommended by our ‘Ulamā that men cover their entire body, and should refrain from wearing short-sleeve shirts, and clothing that shows off their bodies.

To end this discussion, we quote from a few of the Marā’ja Taqlid of the Shi’a world regarding the covering (Ĥijāb) of Men.

The following codes refer to the Marja’ Taqlid whose opinions we have quoted:

[G]

Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Muḥammad Riḍā Gulpāyḡānī

[K]

Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Rūḥullāh Khumaynī

[L]

Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Muḥammad Fāḍil Lankarānī

[M]

Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Nāṣir Makārim Shirāzi

[S]

Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā ‘Alī al-Ḥusainī as-Seestānī

Covering for Men in the presence of non-Maḥram Women

Rule: Men must cover their private parts while in the presence of non-Maḥram Women, but it is not Waajib to cover the rest of the body. G/K/L/M/S

(Behjat): According to obligatory precaution (Iḥtiyaat Waajib), a man must cover his body from non-Maḥram Women even if it (not covering the body) does not lead one to a ḥarām act, and if it does lead one to it, then without doubt it is Waajib to cover it in the same way that covering the private parts from the view of non-Maḥram Women is Waajib.

Rule: According to recommended precaution (Iḥtiyāt Mustaḥab), men must cover other parts that are normally covered by men while in the presence of non-Maḥram Women, especially if the man knows that the non-Maḥram Women will look at them with a lustful intent. K/L/M

(Behjat): According to obligatory precaution (Iḥtiyāt Wājib), men must cover their body from the view of non-Maḥram Women, even if it does not lead one to a ḥarām act, and if it does, then without doubt it is Waajib to cover it.

(Gulpaygani): According to obligatory precaution (Iḥtiyāt Wājib), a man must cover those parts that are commonly covered by men in the event that they know that a non-family member woman will look at him.

Therefore: Men must cover the area above their wrist, the chest, feet and other parts that men usually cover from non-Maḥram Women who are in their presence. As for covering the other parts such as the head, face, and hands, it is not necessary.

Rule: It is ḥarām to expose any part of the body with the intention of sexually arousing non-Maḥrams. A/G/K

(Behjat): If it helps or leads one to commit a ḥarām act, then without a doubt it is Waajib to cover the body.

Therefore: It is ḥarām for a man to expose his arms, chest or any other part of his body with the intention of

having non-Maḥram Women look at him. Also, it is ḥarām from him to wear a see-through shirt with the intention of having non-Maḥram Women look at his body, thus he must also refrain from these acts. If clothing such as a short sleeve shirt is worn, but not with the intention of arousing others, but it is known that others will fall into sin, then according to recommended precaution (Iḥtiyāt Mustaḥab), one should not wear such clothing.

Question: Can a non-Maḥram Woman give an injection to a man, take their blood pressure, or take an x-ray of them?

Answer: If it necessitates touching or looking at the body of the man, then it is not allowed, except in the case of necessity. A/G/K/L/M/S

(Behjat): If looking at the body of a non-Maḥram man, does not lead one to commit a ḥarām act then, according to obligatory precaution (Iḥtiyāt Wājib) it is not allowed to look at his body, and if it will lead one to commit a ḥarām act, then without doubt, it is ḥarām (to look). In either scenario, it is not allowed to touch the body of a non-Maḥram Man except for in the case of necessity.

Question: In the event that a man knows that a non-Maḥram woman will look at him, can he expose a bit more of his body than that which is normally covered by men? For example, can they (men) be in the house with their underclothes on, go out to wash carpets, car, etc... and roll up their pants in the event that they know that non-Maḥram women will look at them, or swim in the presence of non-Maḥram women?

(Gulpaygani): If it is with the intention of leading others into something forbidden, then it is ḥarām, and if not, then according to obligatory precaution (Iḥtiyāt Wājib) one must still cover that which is normally covered. ●