



Critical Analysis of Wearing Clothes Below the Ankle from an Islamic Jurisprudential Perspective

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Introduction

Islam is the complete way of life. Its legislations and rulings include all branches and angles of human life and lifestyle. Therefore, the same manner in which Islam looks into all aspects of lifestyle it has also not left the area of clothing without having mentioned detailed discussion and elaboration. Rather, Islam has set such principal in the field of clothing which it is not permissible nor is it legal in Islam for a Muslim to oppose and act towards in disobedience.

Shaykhul-Islam Mufti Taqi (may Allah preserve him) has mentioned:

In the present day and age many people have this ideology that the aspect of clothing is from among the habitual matters (umoor-aadiyah), which is connected to the customs of each individual time, generation, area and understanding. Furthermore, the permissibility and impermissibility from an Islamic approach does not apply to this field. This is due to the fact that clothing is not from the fundamental aspects of our religion.

However, the crux of the matter and this root of such ideology comes from the lack of awareness and understanding of the broader picture which Islam has to offer. The reality is, that although clothing is from those aspects of interaction which are physical and external, yet it has an outstanding effect on a person's mental awareness, character and behaviour. This is why many clothing which may be worn can supplement towards a person's inner feeling of arrogance and pride or even humbleness and humility.

Therefore, if a person has the view that clothing is merely a materialistic matter on the physical body and it has not internal, spiritual and mental effect on one's behaviour and character, then we can conclude by testifying that such a person is not fully aware of the human nature and inner reality.

Fundamental principals in regards to clothing

It is essentially due to this reason, that Islam has not abandoned giving importance and shedding light on the topic of clothing. Rather, Islam has given clear instructions and divine guidance. Therefore, taking the human nature, natural desires and the change of style and fashion for every changing generation into consideration, we can observe and conclude by saying that Islam has merely given boundaries and principals in regard to clothing. This is also the reason why Islam has not strictly given a final verdict or explicit labelling when it comes to the aspect of clothing.

From among those fundamental Islamic principles which Islam has provided for this topic is clothing for mankind should be a means of covering (Satir). Which means that it should cover and veil at least the amount of the human body which is compulsory and obligatory to cover. So, it must be the true and ideal covering for that extent at bare minimum level. This would be the most substantial objective from among the many other objectives which clothing has. This

implies, that those clothing which do not fulfil or partially fulfil this objective are considered to be impermissible clothing in Islam.

A second fundamental Islamic principal is that clothing has the objective of not merely covering but also simultaneously beautifying the one who clothes themselves.

A third fundamental Islamic principal is that a Muslim's clothing does not resemble the clothing of another religion. For a Muslim to intentionally wear such clothing which does resemble the religious clothing of another is impermissible and haram. However, if this was done unintentionally then it would be considered disliked (markooh). Nevertheless, to the best of one's ability a Muslim should strive to abstain from the wearing of such religious symbolic clothing.

A fourth fundamental Islamic principal in terms of clothing is that for men it is impermissible and considered haram to wear pure silk. It must be noted that synthetic silk does not qualify under this title of impermissibility.

A fifth fundamental Islamic principal is that men and women are not to wear such clothing which is specific to the opposite gender. Which means that men should not resemble in clothing that which of a women's clothing and a woman should not resemble that of which is a man's clothing.

The final and sixth fundamental Islamic principal and guideline in terms of clothing is that, men should not wear clothing which the length exceeds the level of the ankle. For men to wear clothing which exceeds the level beyond the ankle is known as 'Isbaal' and this will be to topic of this dissertation.^{1 2}

Warnings for the one who adopts 'Isbaal'

Like we have previously mentioned under the title of the sixth fundamental Islamic principal in terms of clothing that, it is impermissible for men to adopt 'Isbaal' i.e., wearing clothing which goes beyond then length of one's ankle, this is also agreed upon and has been approved by the Muslim consensus.

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions:

"This with full agreement (bil-ittifaq) is impermissible...and the authentic verdict is that is it impermissible (haram)."³

¹ Takmilah Fathul-Mulhim, v.4 pg.87-89

² Taqrir-Tirmidhi, v.2 pg.331

³ Iqtida-Sirat-Mustaqeem, v.1 pg.343

There are many prophetic narrations which can be found in the hadith literature which mention severe warnings against the one who commits 'Isbaal'. Below a few of those narrations have been presented:

1. A narration which shows and expresses that Allah does not love those who do 'Isbaal'

عَنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ بْنِ شُعْبَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " يَا سُفْيَانَ بْنَ سَهْلٍ لَا تُسْبِلْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْبِلِينَ

It was narrated from Mughirah bin Shu'bah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "O Sufyan bin Sahl, do not let your garment hang, for Allah does not like those who let their garments hang below the ankles."⁴

2. For such a person their prayer (salat) is not accepted (despite the obligation being uplifted)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يُصَلِّي مُسْبِلًا إِزَارَهُ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " اذْهَبْ فَتَوَضَّأْ " . فَذَهَبَ فَتَوَضَّأَ ثُمَّ جَاءَ ثُمَّ قَالَ " اذْهَبْ فَتَوَضَّأْ " . فَذَهَبَ فَتَوَضَّأَ ثُمَّ جَاءَ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكَ أَمَرْتَهُ أَنْ يَتَوَضَّأَ فَقَالَ " إِنَّهُ كَانَ يُصَلِّي وَهُوَ مُسْبِلٌ إِزَارَهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَا يَقْبَلُ صَلَاةَ رَجُلٍ مُسْبِلٍ إِزَارَهُ "

Abu Hurairah said: while a man was praying letting his lower garment trail, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: Go and perform ablution. He, therefore, went and performed ablution and then returned. He (the prophet) again said: Go and perform ablution. He again went, performed ablution and returned. A man said to him (the prophet): Messenger of Allah, why did you order him to perform ablution? He said: he was praying with lower garment trailing and does not accept the prayer of a man who lets his lower garment trail.⁵

Imam Mulla Ali Qari (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions that the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made the man repeat his ablution due to 'Isbaal'. This is to indicate that 'Isbaal' can also have a spiritual effect on one's purity. This was not a legal issuing but rather a command towards that which was better and richer for his deen.⁶

Imam Teebi (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions that the prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) ordered the man to perform ablution was to allow him the opportunity to reflect on the impermissibility of his actions, i.e., 'Isbaal'. And that the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had ordered him to perform the external purification (wudu/ablution) whilst

⁴ Ibn Majah, hadith no.3705

⁵ Abu Dawood, hadith no.638

⁶ Mirqatul-Mafateeh, v.2 pg.234

providing for him his internal purification (from kibr and pride). This is because the external purity has an effect on the internal purity.⁷

Imam Khalil Ahmed Sahranpuri (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions the reason why the man was commanded to repeat his ablution and not his Salah was because the wudu (ablution) itself is an expiator for sins (mukaffir zunoob).⁸

Hafiz Ibn Al-Arabi (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned that the man was commanded by the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to learn etiquettes (tadeeb) and out of emphasis (takeed).⁹

3. Isbaal is a sign of defiant in the shariah towards Allah, if it is done out of self-pride (khuyala') in Salah (prayer).

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " مَنْ أَسْبَلَ إِزَارَهُ فِي صَلَاتِهِ خِيَلَاءَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي جِلِّ وَلَا حَرَامٍ "

Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him): I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: He who lets his garment trail during prayer out of pride, Allah, the Almighty, has nothing to do with pardoning him and protecting him.¹⁰

The quotation "Allah, the Almighty, has nothing to do with pardoning him and protecting him" has many interpretations as to what it means. Below are a number of them which have been mentioned for more clarity on the topic:

- A. That Allah has no care for keeping such a person away from sin and false actions.
- B. That Allah has no care for making Jannah (paradise) permissible for such a person nor for making Jahannam (hell) impermissible.
- C. In the sight of Allah, none of his actions hold legal value nor will they be honoured.
- D. For the one who intentionally does this out of pride and arrogance (takabbur), it is as though he has accepted pride and arrogance as something permissible (halal). Therefore, permissibility and impermissibility have no value for such a person.
- E. This quotation expresses that such a person has no faith (Iman) in halal and haram anymore.

⁷ Sharh-Teebi on Mishkat-Masabeeh, v.2 pg.267-268

⁸ Bazlul-Majhood, v.12 pg.412

⁹ Aridatul-Ahwazi, v.7 pg.238

¹⁰ Abu Dawood, hadith no.637

F. Such a person is free and independent of his religion and outside the boundaries of Allah.¹¹

4. The one who adopts Isbaal will not be able to smell the fragrance of Jannah.

عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) قال: قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) في كلام له: إياكم وعقوق الوالدين فإن ريح الجنة توجد من مسيرة ألف عام ولا يجدها عاق ولا قاطع رحم ولا شيخ زان ولا جار إزاره خيلاء إنما الكبرياء لله رب العالمين

Narrated by Abu Ja'far (may Allah be please with him) he said, that the messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Be aware of disobedience towards the parents. For surely the fragrance of Jannah can be found from as far as the distance a thousand years, and disobedient towards the parent, the breaker of relationships, the elderly adulterer and the one who drags his garments below the ankle out of pride will not be able to smell the fragrance. Pride is only for Allah, the master of the entire universe."¹²

5. Isbaal is the means of one being deprived from the merciful glance of Allah on the day Qiyamah.

"عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى مَنْ جَرَّ إِزَارَهُ بَطْرًا

Narrated Abu Huraira (may Allah be please with him): Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), "Allah will not look, on the Day of Resurrection, at a person who drags his Izar (behind him) out of pride and arrogance."¹³

The quotation "Allah will not look, on the Day of Resurrection" has many interpretations. Some of which have been mentioned below for more clarity on the subject:

- A. Allah will not show mercy towards him on the day of Qiyamah.
- B. Allah will be disappointed with such a person on that day.
- C. Allah is expressing that such a person is not worthy of Allah's glance and thus, no generosity will be shown towards him.¹⁴

¹¹ Bazlul-Majhood, v.4 pg.297

¹² Al-Kafi, v.2 pg.349

¹³ Bukhari, hadith no.5788

¹⁴ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.270

6, 7, 8. Allah will not speak to such a person, Allah will not purify such a person and Allah will give a severe punishment for such a person.

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الْمَنَّانُ الَّذِي لَا يُعْطِي شَيْئًا إِلَّا مَنَّهُ وَالْمُنْفِقُ سَلْعَتُهُ بِالْخَلْفِ الْفَاجِرِ وَالْمُسْبِلُ إِزَارَهُ "

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Dharr (may Allah be please with him) who narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) observed: Three are the persons with whom Allah would not speak on the Day of Resurrection: the bestower of gift who does not give anything but by laying obligation on him, the seller of goods who sells them by taking false oath and one who hangs low his lower garment.¹⁵

9. It is also mentioned in an authentic narration:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَا أَسْفَلَ مِنَ الْكَعْبَيْنِ مِنَ الْإِزَارِ فَفِي النَّارِ "

Narrated by Abu Huraira (may Allah be please with him): The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The part of an Izaar which hangs below the ankles is in the Fire."¹⁶

This narration has many meanings which were understood by the scholars of Islam. A few of them have been presented below for further clarity on the matter:

- A. His action resembles the actions of those in the hell fire.
- B. The amount of which the clothing below the ankle was in contact with will end up in Jahannam.
- C. Such a person for dragging the garment below the ankle has made his abode in Jahannam.
- D. If the portion of clothing which went below the ankle ends up in Jahannam then the person who wore such has a more certainty of resulting in the fire of Jahannam.¹⁷

It must be noted, that all the previously mentioned warnings are specifically for the one who has left this worldly life and has returned back to his Lord without having repented for Isbaal. Therefore, as no one but Allah knows when each individual will leave this world and pass away, every person who has adopted Isbaal must strive to rectify it as soon as possible without any delay.

¹⁵ Muslim, hadith no.200

¹⁶ Bukhari, hadith no.5787

¹⁷ Fathul-Bari, v.10, pg.268-269

Are the warnings only for the lower garments which fall below the ankle?

Now the question arises that are the narrations which mention warnings in relation to the one who commits Isbaal specific for only the lower garments or does it include more than this?

The answer and solution to this question is that, these warnings are not limited to just the lower clothing. Rather, the word 'Izaar' can indicate towards any clothing which has the possibility of hanging below the ankle level, such as a 'Qamees' which is generally understood to mean a thobe or a long shirt. The evidence for 'Qamees' being included by which the wording in the prophetic narration 'Izaar' is mentioned has been presented below:

عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ أَبِي سُمَيَّةَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عُمَرَ، يَقُولُ مَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْإِزَارِ فَهُوَ فِي الْقَمِيصِ

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be please with him): What the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said about lower garment 'Izaar' also applies to 'Qamees'.¹⁸

Imam Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) in his collection of authentic narrations has titled a chapter within 'The Book of Garments' as:

باب مَا أَسْفَلَ مِنَ الْكَعْبَيْنِ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ

Chapter: that which is beyond the ankles is in the fire¹⁹

The famous commentator of Sahih Bukhari; Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions in regard to this chapter title:

كذا اطلق في الترجمة ولم يقيده بالازار كما في الخبر اشارة الى التعميم في الازار و القميص و غيرهما

Likewise, he has kept the chapter heading generic and has not restricted it to mean 'lower garments', the same way it has come in the prophetic narration indicating towards vastness in meaning for the word 'Izaar' and 'Qamees' and etc.²⁰

Imam Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions:

انما ورد الخبر بلفظ الازار لان اكثر الناس في عهده كانوا يلبسون الازر و الاردية فلما لبس الناس القميص و الدراريح كان حكمهما حكم الازار في النهي

¹⁸ Abu Dawood, hadith no.4095

¹⁹ Bukhari, Book no.77, Chapter no.4

²⁰ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.268

The prophetic narrations merely have the word 'Izaar' mentioned within them. This is due to the fact that the majority of people at the time of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to wear 'Izaar' (lower garment) and 'Ridaa' (cloak). However, when people started to wear 'Qamees' (shirt/thobe) and 'Diraa' (Armor), then the same ruling for impermissibility would apply to these too.²¹

It is not incorrect to say that Imam Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) was right and correct in his analogy. Although the prophetic narrations do not mention explicitly the word 'Thoub' which refers clothing. This is because the word 'Thoub' would include all forms of clothing. Hence, in Bukhari there is a narration which mentions:

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ إِلَى مَنْ جَرَّ ثَوْبَهُ خِيَلَاءَ "

Narrated `Abdullah bin `Umar (may Allah be please with him): Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, 'Allah will not look at the person who drags his garment (behind him) out of pride.'²²

There is a narration which explicitly not only mentions 'Qamees' but also about the 'Amamah' i.e., turban as well.

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " الْإِسْبَالُ فِي الْإِزَارِ وَالْقَمِيصِ وَالْعِمَامَةِ مَنْ جَرَّ مِنْهَا شَيْئًا خِيَلَاءَ لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ "

It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be please with him) said: "The Messenger of Allah [SAW] said: 'Al-Isbal may apply to the Izaar, the Qamees and the turban. Whoever drags any one of these out of vanity, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection.'²³

And in regard to why the turban is mentioned we see that the scholars did not leave this out of their detailed research and exhaustive discussions:

وفي تصوير جر العمامة نظر إلا أن يكون المراد ما جرت به عادة العرب من إرخاء العذبات فمهما زاد على العادة في ذلك كان من الإسبال وقد أخرج النسائي من حديث جعفر بن عمرو بن أمية عن أبيه قال كأي أنظر الساعة إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على المنبر وعليه عمامة قد أرخى طرفها بين كتفيه وهل يدخل في الزجر عن جر الثوب تطويل أكمام القميص ونحوه محل نظر والذي يظهر أن من أطالها حتى خرج عن العادة كما يفعله بعض الحجازيين دخل في ذلك قال شيخنا في شرح الترمذي ما مس الأرض منها خيلاء لا شك في تحريمه قال ولو قيل بتحريم ما زاد على المعتاد لم يكن بعيدا ولكن حدث للناس اصطلاح بتطويلها وصار لكل نوع من الناس شعار يعرفون به ومهما كان من ذلك على سبيل الخيلاء فلا شك في تحريمه وما كان على طريق العادة فلا تحريم فيه ما لم يصل إلى جر الذيل الممنوع ونقل عياض عن العلماء كراهة كل ما زاد على العادة وعلى المعتاد في اللباس من الطول والسعة

In short, in the scenario of lengthening the turban, this has to be seen to, except that what is meant is what the Arabs have done in terms of stretching the tail of the turban. The teacher of

²¹ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.273-274

²² Bukhari, hadith no.5783

²³ Nasai, hadith no.5334

Imam Tirmidhi has stated that if it reaches a length by which it touches the ground then no doubt, this is forbidden. This is also outside the norm and customs of the generation and era. To do so would not be permissible, as this will be a sign of defiance and arrogance. Thus, when the Shariah has placed a limit as to how much one may lengthen a clothing, then to exceed the boundaries would undoubtedly be from among that which is prohibited.²⁴

Imam Mulla Ali Qari (may Allah have mercy on him) quotes “that it is the customs of the shariah which will be taken into consideration and not the customs of the general-norm”²⁵

Shaykhul-Hind Mahmudul-Hasan Sahib (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned that Isbaal can be present in all forms of clothing. Therefore ‘Izaar’ is not restricted nor is it limited to any specific clothing.²⁶

Should the ankles be visible or not?

Previously we have elaborated based on the scenarios where the clothing drags beyond and below the ankle level. However, when we look at this topic from a deeper perspective, we can derive another scenario in which we have not shed some light on. This is the matter of the ankles themselves. Does the clothing have to be above the ankle to the extent where the ankle becomes visible or is it permissible to level the ankle in which it may not be fully visible?

Below a variety of prophetic narrations from our beloved prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) have been mentioned and from these narrations we can benefit, understand and draw the conclusion that, having the clothing lengthened to the point of one’s own ankle level is still within the scope of haram (impermissibility). Therefore, the clothing must not be at such length and to ensure that we can imply that the ankle must be visible.

عَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ، قَالَ أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِعَضَلَّةِ سَاقِي أَوْ سَاقِهِ فَقَالَ " هَذَا مَوْضِعُ الْإِزَارِ فَإِنْ أَبَيْتَ فَأَسْفَلَ فَإِنْ أَبَيْتَ فَلَا حَقَّ لِلْإِزَارِ فِي الْكَعْبَيْنِ "

Narrated Hudhaifa (may Allah be please with him): "The Messenger of Allah took hold of the calf of my shin - or his shin - and he said: "This is the place of the Izaar, if you must lower it, then the Izaar has no right to be on the ankles."²⁷

²⁴ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.274

²⁵ Mirqatul-Mafatih, v.8 pg.239

²⁶ Taqirir-Tirmidhi Muqaddimah on Jami' Tirmidhi, v.1 pg.43

²⁷ Tirmidhi, hadith no.1783

Shaykhul-Muhaddith Zakariyah Kandhelwi (may Allah has mercy on him) mentions that this prophetic narration is a clear and explicit proof and evidence that to cover or hide the ankle is not permissible.²⁸

It must be noted, that this prohibition is referring to the original length of the clothing which by default exceeds or reaches and covers the ankle. However, if the clothing was made and by default it does not cover the ankle, then this will not come under the umbrella of impermissibility. For example, when one is standing the clothing is above the ankle and the ankle is clearly visible. However, when the person bends down or sits down then the clothing covers the ankle, this is not impermissible and is not included within the objective of the previously mentioned prophetic narration.

Is the prohibition for Isbaal restricted to only men?

To answer this topic simply, the garment which should not drag below the ankle nor should the ankle be covered by it is specifically intended for the men and not for the women. We understand this clearly from a prophetic narration:

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْخَلَّالُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنْ أَيُّوبَ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَنْ جَرَّ ثَوْبَهُ خِيَلَاءَ لَمْ يَنْظُرِ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ " . فَقَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ فَكَيْفَ يَصْنَعْنَ النِّسَاءُ بِذِيُولِهِنَّ قَالَ " يُرْخِيْنَ شِيْرًا " . فَقَالَتْ إِذَا تَنَكَّشِفَ أَقْدَامُهُنَّ . قَالَ " فَيُرْخِيْنَهُ ذِرَاعًا لَا يَزِدْنَ عَلَيْهِ " . قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ²⁹

That the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever arrogantly drags his garment, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Judgement." So, Umm Salamah (may Allah be please with her) said: "What should the women do with their hems?" He said: "Slacken them a handspan." So, she said: "Then their feet will be uncovered." He said: "Then slacken them a forearm's length and do not add to that."

He said: This Hadith is Hasan Sahih. In the Hadith there is a concession and an agreement of the Muslim nation for women to drag their Izaar because it covers them better.

It is also mentioned by Imam Qadi Iyaadh (may Allah have mercy on him) that the consensus and agreement of the Muslim nation (ijmaa') is that the impermissibility and prohibition in regard to Isbaal is restricted to the men and it is not applicable to the women.³⁰

²⁸ Abwabut-Tarajim, v.6 pg.72

²⁹ Tirmidhi, hadith no.1731

³⁰ Fathul-Baari, v.10 pg.270

Is the prohibition of Isbaal restricted to only when one has pride?

When we take a critical look at the previously presented prophetic narrations, we can see that they were restricted with the wordings of 'pride' or 'arrogance' for the one to adopts Isbaal. And from this, it seems that all the prophetic narrations which mention severe warnings are limited to when one drags their clothing below the ankle level only out of pride or arrogance, and for the one who does not do such action out of pride or arrogance is not qualified and counted within these narrations. So, is the reality of the matter as such or is it unrestricted regardless of if one posse's pride or arrogance or not?

The answer and conclusion to this is that if the clothing was dragged below the ankle level out of pride and arrogance, then this is highly disliked and should be avoided (makrooh-tahreemi). The scholars of Islam have no difference of opinion for this scenario.

It must be noted and clarified that the terminology of 'highly disliked' (makrooh-tahreemi) is very close to the term 'haram' (impermissible).

³¹ المكروه تحريماً: وهو ما كان إلى الحرام أقرب، ويسميه محمد حراماً ظني

According to Imam Muhammad Ash-Shaybaani (may Allah have mercy on him) he categorises this term 'highly disliked' as 'analogical impermissibility' (haram-zanni).³²

Due to dragging one's clothing beneath the level of the ankle out of pride and arrogance, it is narrated in the prophetic hadith that a person was concealed by the earth and this is ongoing until the day of judgement:

عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، أَخْبَرَنِي سَالِمٌ، أَنَّ ابْنَ عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَجْرُ إِزَارَهُ مِنَ الْخَيْلَاءِ خُسِيفَ بِهِ، فَهُوَ يَتَجَلَّجُلُ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ". تَابَعَهُ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ خَالِدٍ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ

Narrated Ibn `Umar (may Allah be please with him): The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "While a man was walking, dragging his dress with pride, he was caused to be swallowed by the earth and will go on sinking in it till the Day of Resurrection."³³

Furthermore, if the clothing being dragged below the ankle level was not out of pride and arrogance then there are three scenarios in this regard:

1. That is the clothing was not previously beneath the level of the ankle and due to any movement and loosening it fell below and beneath the ankle level. In this scenario, the ruling of impermissibility and prohibition does not apply and come to effect. Allamah

³¹ Raddul-Muhtar, v.1 pg.257

³² Qamoosul-Fiqhi, v.1 pg.318

³³ Bukhari, hadith no.3485

Shibbir Ahmed Usmaani (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions that in this scenario one is obliged not to persist and continue to do this action of Isbaal. Rather, as soon as the person becomes aware of his or her clothing they must rectify and correct their situation.³⁴

2. That is the clothing was from before below and beneath the ankle level. However, it was not done out of pride and arrogance. Then in this scenario, Imam Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) inclines more towards the opinion of being 'lightly disliked' (makrooh-tanzeehi)

....لا يجوز اسباله تحت الكعبين ان كان للخيلاء، فان كان لغيرها فهو مكروه

It is impermissible and prohibited to do Isbaal below the ankles if it was done out of pride and arrogance. However, if it was for any reason other than pride and arrogance then this would be disliked (makrooh)...³⁵

From among the specialist in the field of hadith sciences and the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence, Allamah Ayni (may Allah have mercy on him) adheres to the same opinion:

قال شيخنا زين الدين: و اما جوازه لغير ضرورة لا لقصد الخيلاء فقال النووي: انه مكروه و ليس بحرام

Our Shaykh Zainud-Deen (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned: the permissibility was for other than an essential, not the objective of pride and arrogance. Imam Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned: it is considered to be disliked (makrooh) and not impermissible and prohibited (haram).³⁶

Similarly, from among the fatawa text books of the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence we see that a verdict of the same nature is mentioned in Fatawa-Hindiyyah:

اسبال الرجل ازاره اسفل من الكعبين ان لم يكن للخيلاء، ففيه كراهية تنزيه

The dragging of garment for men below and beneath the ankle if it was not done out of pride and arrogance, then this would be lightly disliked (makrooh-tanzeehi)³⁷

3. Another opinion is of a large group of scholars such as Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani, Shaykh Abdul Ghani Muhaddith Dehlawi, Shaykhul-Hind Mahmoodul-Hasan Sahib, Muhaddithul-Asr Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Hakimul-Ummat Hazrat Ashraf Ali Tahnwi and Faqeehul-Asr Hazrat Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Sahib are of the opinion which Imam Bukhari is mostly inclined towards, that it is impermissible and prohibited to wear

³⁴ Fathul-Mulhim, v.1 pg.264

³⁵ Sharh-Nawawi on Sahih Muslim, v.2 pg.194-195

³⁶ Umdatul-Qari, v.21 pg.295

³⁷ Fatawa-Hindiyyah, v.5 pg.333

clothes below and beneath the ankle level regardless of it being done out of pride and arrogance or not.³⁸

In regard to the evidences and textual proofs which the group who claim Isbaal without pride and arrogance is lightly disliked (makrooh-tanzeehi) is: firstly, they base their opinion on those prophetic narrations which mention the restriction through the wordings of 'pride' and 'arrogance'. Their methodology of deriving is that, the prohibition and impermissibility is limited and restricted to the description which is found in those prophetic narrations i.e., 'pride' or 'arrogance'. So, in their opinion the restriction is a precautionary-restriction (Qaid-Ihtiraazi). Imam Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) has quoted:

ظواهر الاحاديث في تقييدها بالجرّ خيلاء تدلّ على أنّ التحريم مختص بالخيلاء

The prophetic narrations in which restrictions of dragging (the garments) out of pride are mentioned, apparently indicate towards the prohibition being specific to the one who does this out of pride and arrogance.³⁹

Secondly, the evidences and textual proofs which the group who claim Isbaal without pride and arrogance is lightly disliked (makrooh-tanzeehi) is that, they take the incident of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) into consideration. Where he enquired regarding his clothing and when due to being loose it would go beyond the level of his ankle. Although he would always be cautious about it. The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) responded to him, that you are not from those who lower their garments below the ankle out of pride and arrogance. Which shows that the impermissibility is connected and restricted to have pride and arrogance.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَنْ جَرَّ ثَوْبَهُ خِيَلَاءَ لَمْ يَنْظُرِ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ". فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ إِنَّ أَحَدَ شِقْيَى ثَوْبِي يَسْتَرْجِي إِلَّا أَنْ أَتَعَاهَدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِنَّكَ لَسُنْتٌ تَصْنَعُ ذَلِكَ خِيَلَاءَ " قَالَ مُوسَى فَقُلْتُ لِسَالِمٍ أَدَكَرَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ مَنْ جَرَّ إِزَارَهُ قَالَ لَمْ أَسْمَعُهُ ذَكَرَ إِلَّا ثَوْبَهُ

Narrated by `Abdullah bin `Umar (may Allah be please with him): That Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Allah will not look on the Day of Judgment at him who drags his robe (behind him) out of pride." Abu Bakr (may Allah be please with him) said "One side of my robe slacks down unless I get very cautious about it." Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "But you do not do that with a pride."⁴⁰

As for the refutation for the above proof and evidences from behalf of the panel of scholars which say Isbaal without or without pride and arrogance is highly disliked (makrooh-tahreemi)

³⁸ Faidul-Bari, v.4 pg.373-374

³⁹ Sharh-Nawawi on Sahih Muslim, v.2 pg.195

⁴⁰ Bukhair, hadith no.3665

is: firstly, the additional description mentioned in the prophetic narrations such as 'pride' and 'arrogance' is not a precautionary-restriction (Qaid-Ihtiraazi) but rather, it is a firm restriction (Qaid-Waqi'ee).

Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri (may Allah be pleased with him) mentions:

في كتب الحنفية النهي عن جر الازار بلا تقييد، و في كتب الشافعية ان النهي جر الازار خيلاء - و قال الحنفية ان قيد الخيلاء واقعي و قال الشافعية انه احترازي

In the text books for the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence, the prohibitions mentioned in regard to Isbaal are without any restrictions. However, in the text books for the Shafi School of Islamic jurisprudence, there are mentioning of restrictions for the prohibition which is connected to having pride or not. The Hanafi School believe the restriction to be a firm restriction (Qaid-Waqi'ee) whilst the Shafi School believe it to be a precautionary restriction (Qaid-Ihtiraazi).⁴¹

Hakimul-Ummat Ashraf Ali Tahnwi (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned that the additional description of pride and arrogance was mentioned in the prophetic narrations not for the objective to demonstrate the cause of prohibition and impermissibility, but rather to demonstrate the natural cause of why one may do Isbaal i.e., drag their garments below the length of their ankle. This is very commonly used among the Arabic language where the origin is intended by the mentioning of the cause (سبب بول كر مسيب مراد ليا گيا بے).⁴²

Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmaani (may Allah preserve him) is also of the opinion that Isbaal is forbidden and impermissible:

و الحاصل عند عبد الضعيف عفا الله عنه انّ العلة الاصلية من وراء تحريم الاسبال هي الخيلاء، كما صرح به رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم في حديث الباب، ولكن تحقق الخيلاء امر مخفي ربما لا يطلع عليه من ابتلى به، فاقيم سببه مقام العلة، و هو الاسبال.....⁴³

The same opinion and insight have been displayed by the footnote author of Faidul-Bari in his word most commonly known as Badrus-Sari.⁴⁴

Furthermore, if there were to be anyone who can claim with full certainty that they are free from the slightest amount of pride and arrogance, then this would be non-other than the blessed prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings be upon him). Which means even the one for whom to wear the clothing below the level of one's ankle would have been permissible and allowed has stated mentioned the statement. Which demonstrates that fact that, if Isbaal

⁴¹ Urfush-Shazi on the footnotes of Tirmidhi, v.1 pg.209

⁴² Imadatul Fatawa, v.4 pg.122-123

⁴³ Takmilah Fathul-Mulhim, v.4 pg.123

⁴⁴ Badrus-Sari the footnotes of Faidul-Bari, v.4 pg.374

was connected to if one did it out of pride and arrogance or not, then for sure the prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) would have at least mentioned or demonstrated one incident throughout his entire lifespan just to show the permissibility and allowance of Isbaal. However, this is not the case. Rather, we cannot find any authentic narration where the prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) has ever done this action, even once.

In regard to the refuting of those who use the incident of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) is that, by default the length of Abu Bakr's clothing was not beyond the ankle level, rather due to movement and loosening it would unintentionally and while unaware go beyond the ankle's level. Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani (may Allah be pleased with him) confirms this by saying:

فأما لغير الخيلاء فيختلف الحال فإن كان الثوب على قدر لابسه لكنه يسدله فهذا لا يظهر فيه تحريم ولا سيما إن كان عن غير
45 قصد كالذي وقع لأبي بكر

Hakimul-Ummat Ashraf Ali Tahnwi (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions that the incident of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) cannot be used to derive such conclusions. This is due to his own statement (إِلَّا أَنْ أَتَعَاهَدَ ذَلِكَ) "unless I get very cautious". Which indicated that the entire statement of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was in response to his specific scenario.⁴⁶

However, Mufti Taqi Usmaani (may Allah preserve him) describing the benefit which we can derive from the incident of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) mentions that, even if our garments were above the ankle and due to unawareness and unintentionally from loosening it goes beyond the ankle, then we too are excused for such short-coming.⁴⁷

Now, in relation to evidence and proofs of the group of scholars who follow the opinion of prohibition and impermissibility, their discussion has been presented below for further critical analysis:

Shaykh Abdul-Ghani Muhaddith Dehlawi (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned:

قلت: اول الدليل على المنع منع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الصحابة مثل ابن عمر وغيره مع علمه بانهم براء عن مخيلة

I say: the first evidence regarding the impermissibility is the prohibition of the prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) himself towards the likes of Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased

⁴⁵ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.275

⁴⁶ Imdadul-Fatawa, v.4 pg.122

⁴⁷ Taqrir Tirmidhi, v.2 pg.341

with him) and towards those other than him, knowing very well and having kept in mind that they are free from pride and arrogance.⁴⁸

A collection of proof and evidence for the opinion of prohibition (tahreem) has been brought forward by the famous Bukhari commentator Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani (may Allah have mercy on him)⁴⁹ which has been mentioned and presented below along with additional quotations:

1. That is contains wastefulness which is clearly known to be considered impermissible (haram). Although this might seem like a very small amount at a personal and individual level, but collectively when the few inches of clothing and material from millions of Muslims around the globe are counted then this has a huge significant number.

Allah (the all mighty and majestic) mentions:

وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

and do not be wasteful; indeed, He does not like the wasteful.⁵⁰

إِنَّ الْمُبْتَدِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

Indeed, the wasteful ones are brothers of Satans, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord.⁵¹

The prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) has mentioned this theme in his hadith as well.

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " كُلُوا وَتَصَدَّقُوا وَالْبُسُوا فِي غَيْرِ إِسْرَافٍ وَلَا مَخِيلَةٍ "

It was narrated from 'Amr bin Shu'aib (may Allah be please with him), from his father, that his grandfather said: "Eat, give charity and clothe yourselves, without being extravagant, and without showing off."⁵²

2. It has the resembling of the opposite gender. The divinely ordained Shariah of Islam has explicitly mentioned that men should not wear the clothing of women and vice versa.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الرَّجُلَ يَلْبَسُ لِبْسَةَ الْمَرْأَةِ وَالْمَرْأَةَ تَلْبَسُ لِبْسَةَ الرَّجُلِ

Narrated Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him): The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) cursed the man who dressed like a woman and the woman who dressed like a man.⁵³

⁴⁸ Injahul-Hajah on Sunan Ibn Majah, v.1 pg.263

⁴⁹ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.275

⁵⁰ Surah Anam, ayah no.141

⁵¹ Surah Isra, ayah no.27

⁵² Nasai, hadith no.2559

⁵³ Abu Dawood, hadith no.4098

3. That the clothing is not free from the touch of impurities found on the ground. The beloved prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) as mentioned this in regards to this:

عَنِ الْأَشْعَثِ بْنِ سُلَيْمٍ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَمَّتِي، تُحَدِّثُ عَنْ عَمَّهَا، قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا أَنَا أَمْشِي بِالْمَدِينَةِ، إِذَا إِنْسَانٌ خَلْفِي يَقُولُ: ازْفَعْ إِزَارَكَ، فَإِنَّهُ أَتَقَى وَأَبْقَى فَإِذَا هُوَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا هِيَ بُرْدَةٌ مَلْحَاءٌ، قَالَ: أَمَا لَكَ فِيَّ أُسْوَةٌ؟ فَتَنَظَّرْتُ فَإِذَا إِزَارُهُ إِلَى نِصْفِ سَاقَيْهِ

Al-Ash'ath ibn Sulaim (may Allah be please with him) said: "I heard my maternal aunt relate, on the authority of her paternal uncle; 'While I was walking in Medina, someone behind me said: 'Raise your loincloth, for that is more pious and conducive to longer wear.' Lo and behold, he was Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace)', so I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, it is simply a black garment with white stripes!' He said: 'Do you not have an example in me?' so I looked and noticed that his loincloth reached the middle of his shins'." ⁵⁴

4. Dragging the clothes beneath the ankles is at minimum resembling those who have pride and arrogance. Shaykhul-Hind Hazrat Maulana Mahmud Sahib (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned:

و ان كان بدون تكبر فممنوع ايضا لانه شعار المتكبرين، و من تشبه قوما فهو منهم

And if it is done without the sense of pride and arrogance, it still remains forbidden (mamnoo') due to the fact that it is a resembling of the signs of the arrogant. And whoever imitates a group is from among them.

5. The prohibition is also from the angle of theoretical pride and mental arrogance. As Ibnul-Arabi (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned:

لا يجوز لرجل أن يجاوز بثوبه كعبه ويقول: لا أتكبر فيه ؛ لأن النهي تناول له لفظاً ، وتناول علته ، ولا يجوز أن يتناول اللفظ حكماً فيقال إني لست ممن يمثله لأن العلة ليست فيّ ، فإنه مخالفة للشريعة ، ودعوى لا تسلم له ، بل من تكبره يطيل ثوبه وإزاره فكذبه معلوم في ذلك قطعاً

It is not permissible for a man to let his garment go beyond his ankle and say that he is not being arrogant by doing so, because the text mentions the prohibition and refers to the reason, and it is not permissible for anyone to say I am not one of those referred to in the text, because the reason does not apply to me, because that attitude goes against shariah and is an unacceptable claim. It is a kind of arrogance to make one's garment and Izaar longer, so he is definitely lying. ⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Shamail Tirmidhi, pg.9

⁵⁵ Aridatul-Ahwazi, v.7 pg.238

So, from the statement of Ibnul-Arabi (may Allah have mercy on him) we understand and can draw the conclusion that, Isbaal implies that one is dragging their garments below the ankle. And dragging the garment below the ankle implies that one has pride and arrogance. Although one might not have the intention or awareness of it within their own selves.

Are there any exceptions for Isbaal?

Previously we have mentioned that the women are not included within the prohibition of Isbaal. Other than this category, if a person covers their ankle to safeguard themselves from any particular harm, then this will also be allowed and would not be included from among the prohibition mentioned before. For example, if a person had an injury on the ankle and by uncovering the ankle there is a possibility of infection due to it being exposed. In this scenario, it will be permissible for such a person to cover their ankle with whatever clothing they may be wearing. This would not be impermissible to do. Likewise, during combat in the battlefield, Isbaal is not prohibited.⁵⁶

A medical perspective on the issue of Isbaal

Previously we have mentioned the causes and reasonings to refrain and abstain from Isbaal in light of the sacred texts and the divinely ordained Islamic Shariah. Now, briefly in light of medical science and technology let's take a glance at the same topic and how it has an effect on human life.

Tahir Munir was a foam businessman. Once him and his friend travelled to America for a tour. They went specifically to the area known as 'Michigan State' in which they visited a health centre. The health centre was very big and it had many sectors and branches. Whilst they were looking around, they came upon a sector which was known as the 'sector of clothing'. Furthermore, they glanced at a sign board which drew their minds away, it said "wear your clothes above the ankles, it will help ease any ankle inflammation, internal nerve inflammation and increase mental positivity". He asked his friend if this health centre was managed by Muslims and to his amazement his friend replied in the negative. Added that it is mostly Christian populated who do higher research in all aspects of health.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Al-Itihaf of Zabidi, v.8 pg.348

⁵⁷ Sunnah of Nabi and Modern Science, v.1 pg.154

Various misconceptions and their solutions regarding Isbaal

There are many students of the sacred knowledge as well as the general Muslims of our time and generation who have a vast variety of misconceptions and incorrect ideologies in relation to the issue of wearing the garments below the ankle level. Sometimes, these understandings which they may hold very close to their heart are shown through their day-to-day activities and interactions, although they may not be aware of their own doings. Therefore, we have listed a range of commonly found misconceptions in regard to Isbaal along with their solution below:

1. Some people have this misconception that the hadith talks about for the one who does Isbaal out of pride and arrogance is not permissible. Their belief is that they do not do this out of pride nor out of arrogance so there is no harm and prohibition in doing Isbaal for them.

The simplest answer to this would be, that if one truly contemplates, they will no doubt reach the conclusion that, the claim itself of being free from pride and arrogance is a claim full of pride and arrogance. It expressing the mentality that one is without any form of slipups and is not willing to accept the possibility of them.

It is due to this reason that firstly, to make such a claim and statement is incorrect. Otherwise, what could be the reason holding such a person back from wearing clothing above their ankles. Why would they not desire to adapt the ideal sunnah methodology of the garment's length? If this is not a sign of pride and arrogance then what else is it?

Secondly, the prophetic narration in which the additions of wordings are mentioned, there still remains a possibility that the restriction is not out of mere precaution (Qaid-Ihtiraazi) but rather, they are firm restrictions (Qaid-waqi'ee). This is why the blessed prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made it clear and presented the statement of not to wear garments below the ankle. This is why it is mentioned:

"عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ . عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَا أَسْفَلَ مِنَ الْكَعْبَيْنِ مِنَ الْإِزَارِ فِيهِ النَّارُ

Narrated by Abu Huraira: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The part of an Izaar which hangs below the ankles is in the Fire."⁵⁸ Which has no addition of any restricting wordings. This is an unrestricted prophetic narration (Mutlaq-riwayah). Which establishes the fact, that regardless of having pride and arrogance or not, in every and any situation the action of Isbaal is prohibited and forbidden. So, the summary would be, that each action has their own level of sin and defiance towards Allah. Pride and Isbaal. When both are found together, then the result of such action is more sever in the akhirah (next life). They both need to be refrained from and avoided at the same time just like they both need to be refrained from and avoided individually and separately.

⁵⁸ Bukhari, hadith no.5787

2. Another misconception is that, some prophetic narrations contain the restriction of Isbaal to pride and arrogance whilst other prophetic narrations do not contain it. Then the fundamental rule is to elaborate on the general unrestricted with the restriction of the addition (مطلق کو مقید پر محمول کیا جاتا ہے). This applies that Isbaal is not generally prohibited, only when pride and arrogance is found will it be considered as impermissible.

The response to this statement is, that according to the fundamental principles of the Hanafi school of Islamic fiqh (Usool-fiqh), to act upon both with a balance is wajib when it is possible to do so. Otherwise, the unrestricted will be acted upon without restriction and the restricted will be acted upon its restriction (المطلق على اطلاقه و المقيد على تقييده). Furthermore, it is mentioned in Noorul-Anwar:

في نور الانوار بحث حمل المطلق على المقيد في حكم واحد ما نصه و في صدقة الفطر ورد نصان في السبب و لا مزاحمة في الاسباب فوجب الجمع بينهما يعني ان ما قلنا انه يحمل المطلق على المقيد في الحادثة الواحدة و الحكم الواحد انما هو وردا في الحكم للتضاد و اما اذا وردا في الاسباب او الشروط فلا مضايقة و لا تضاد فيمكن ان يكون المطلق سببا باطلاقه و المقيد سببا بتقييده....

And in regard to the topic which we are discussing is the ruling of impermissibility. The unrestricted Isbaal and the restricted Isbaal to pride and arrogance are the causes here (asbaab). It is due to this that the unrestricted (mutlaq) will not be limited with the restriction (muqayyad) as there is not possible method to balance the both. This means, that the unrestricted Isbaal and restricted Isbaal both will be considered impermissible and prohibited. Of course, when it is considered that the two have a difference within them, the we can say that some narrations mention one prohibition (manhi-anhu) meaning just Isbaal and other narrations mention two (manhi-anhu) meaning Isbaal with pride and arrogance.⁵⁹

3. Many people have the ideology that the reason for why the blessed prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade wearing clothes below the ankle was due to the reason that people at the time did not have as much wealth and were not generally well-off. This is why Isbaal would be with no doubt about it an open display of wastefulness (Israaf) which is explicitly forbidden as we have mentioned previously in the discussion. However, nowadays we have enough income and revenue generating. Therefore, in our current time it would not be counted as wastefulness (Israaf) and hence why Isbaal should not be forbidden and prohibited.

⁵⁹ Imdadul-Fatawa, v.4 pg.122-123

In response to this we can bring forward the statement that firstly, that there is no clear and explicit textual proof for this claim that due to less wealth and well-off standard of the people the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had forbade from doing Isbaal.

Secondly, if it was due to this reason why the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had forbidden the doing of Isbaal, then we can observe that during the later period of the prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) lifetime wealth and resources were more available than ever before. However, despite the significant difference in the increase of wealth, the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not verbally or through his own actions ever demonstrate the permissibility of Isbaal. Furthermore, not even the rightly guided representatives (khulafa-rashideen) (may Allah be pleased with them all) have ever permitted nor allowed it to proceed. Rather, we find the very opposite, that there are statements which demise those who do Isbaal in their clothing.

Thirdly, even if we accept hypothetically that the reason for the impermissibility was due to lack in wealth of the time and era. This is still not free from wastefulness in our day and age.

(كالاسراف في الوضوء و لو على شاطئ النهر)

Fourthly, even though in our time and generation the amount of wealth and revenue is well-off. However, the poor and the needy and the poverty throughout the globe is no less than as it was during the time of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

Fifthly, the reason for it is not merely limited to wastefulness (Israaf) as we have mentioned many other reasons and cause before.

4. Many people's misconception has risen from a prophetic narration as brought forth below:

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ، قَالَ كُنَّا عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَنْكَسَفَتِ الشَّمْسُ، فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَجُرُّ رِدَاءَهُ حَتَّى دَخَلَ الْمَسْجِدَ، فَدَخَلْنَا فَصَلَّى بِنَا رَكْعَتَيْنِ، حَتَّى انْجَلَّتِ الشَّمْسُ فَقَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِنَّ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَا يَنْكَسِفَانِ لِمَوْتِ أَحَدٍ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُمَا فَصَلُّوا، وَادْعُوا، حَتَّى يُكْشَفَ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ "

Narrated Abu Bakra (may Allah be please with him): We were with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) when the sun eclipsed. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stood up dragging his cloak till he entered the Mosque. He led us in a two-rak`at prayer till the sun (eclipse) had cleared. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of someone's death. So, whenever you see these eclipses pray and invoke (Allah) till the eclipse is over."⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Bukhari, hadith no.1040

The response to this would be, that another prophetic narration has an addition which displays that the blessed prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had rushed in such a manner to reach the masjid that unintentionally and while unaware his cloak had reached the ground.

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ خَسَفَتِ الشَّمْسُ وَنَحْنُ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَامَ يُجْرُ ثَوْبَهُ مُسْتَعْجِلًا، حَتَّى أَتَى الْمَسْجِدَ وَثَابَ النَّاسُ فَصَلَّى رَكَعَتَيْنِ، فَجَلِيَ عَنْهَا، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَقَالَ " إِنَّ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ آيَاتَانِ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مِنْهَا شَيْئًا فَصَلُّوا وَادْعُوا اللَّهَ حَتَّى يَكْشِفَهَا "

Narrated Abu Bakra (may Allah be please with him): The solar eclipse occurred while we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) He got up dragging his garment (on the ground) hurriedly till he reached the mosque the people turned (to the mosque) and he offered a two-rak`at prayer whereupon the eclipse was over and he traced us and said, "The sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah, so if you see a thing like this (eclipse) then offer the prayer and invoke Allah till He remove that state."⁶¹ His reason for the state of stress and hurry has also been narrating in another prophetic narration:

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى، قَالَ خَسَفَتِ الشَّمْسُ، فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَعَا، يَخْشَى أَنْ تَكُونَ السَّاعَةُ، فَأَتَى الْمَسْجِدَ، فَصَلَّى بِأَطْوَلِ قِيَامٍ وَرُكُوعٍ وَسُجُودٍ رَأَيْتُهُ قَطُّ يَفْعَلُهُ وَقَالَ " هَذِهِ الْآيَاتُ الَّتِي يُرْسِلُ اللَّهُ لَا تَكُونُ لِمَوْتٍ أَحَدٍ وَلَا لِحَيَاتِهِ، وَلَكِنْ يَخَوْفُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَافْرَعُوا إِلَى ذِكْرِهِ وَدُعَائِهِ وَاسْتِغْفَارِهِ "

Narrated Abu Musa (may Allah be please with him): The sun eclipsed and the Prophet (ﷺ) got up, being afraid that it might be the Hour (i.e., Day of Judgment). He went to the Mosque and offered the prayer with the longest Qiyam, bowing and prostration that I had ever seen him doing...⁶²

5. Some may have the misconception of Isbaal being permissible based on the incident of Abu Bakr (may Allah be please with him).

Response to this is the evidences previously mentioned where it displays that Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) had his clothing above the ankle level and due to loosening while unaware of it, it would lower to the extent that it would go below his ankle.

6. Others may use the below narration to permit the Isbaal of clothing:

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ بْنِ سَهْلٍ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَا سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيَّ، يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " بَيْنَا أَنَا نَائِمٌ رَأَيْتُ النَّاسَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيَّ، وَعَلَيْهِمْ قُمْصٌ مِنْهَا مَا يَبْلُغُ النَّدْيَ، وَمِنْهَا مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ، وَعَرَضَ عَلَيَّ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ وَعَلَيْهِ قَمِيصٌ يَجْرُهُ ". قَالُوا فَمَا أَوْلَتْ ذَلِكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ " الدِّينَ "

⁶¹ Bukhari, hadith no.5785

⁶² Bukhari, hadith no.1059

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri (may Allah be please with him): Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "While I was sleeping, I saw (in a dream) some people wearing shirts of which some were reaching up to the breasts only while others were even shorter than that. Umar bin Al-Khattab was shown wearing a shirt that he was dragging." The people asked, "How did you interpret it? (What is its interpretation) O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)?" He (the Prophet (ﷺ)) replied, "It is the Religion."⁶³

They claim that in this prophetic narration it mentions that Umar's (may Allah be pleased with him) garment was so long to the extent that it would reach the ground. If Isbaal was to be forbidden then Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) would not have been wearing such a long garment or the blessed prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would have forbade him there and then on the spot.

In response to this statement, we can say that, this incident was an incident in a dream and dreams cannot be the source of any form of analogy (Qiyaas). Like how this narration has been explained by Hafiz ibn Hajar Asqalani (may Allah have mercy on him) when he mentioned that these are from those matters which are nice in terms of interpretation for a dream but are impermissible and prohibited in practical Shariah perspective.⁶⁴

7. It has been narrated regarding Abdullah Ibn Masood (may Allah be pleased with him) which confirm the action of Isbaal. Therefore, if Isbaal was not permissible the such a knowledgeable companion of the messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) would not have done Isbaal in terms of his clothing. Thus, Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (may Allah have mercy on him) has brought with a good narration (sanad-jayyid):

انه كان يسبل ازاره، فقيل له في ذلك، فقال: اني حمش الساقين

He would drag his garment below the ankle, when he would be asked in regard to it, he would respond by saying: my shins are skinny and dry.⁶⁵

In response Hafiz ibn Hajar Asqalani (may Allah have mercy on him) is indicating toward the narration mentioning the linguistic meaning of Isbaal i.e., clothing dragging below the shin, not the ankle which is Isbaal in the terminology from the Islamic sciences. So, it was Isbaal below the recommended (mustahab) level which was the middle of a person's shin.⁶⁶

⁶³ Bukhari, hadith no.23

⁶⁴ Fathul-Bari, v.12 pg.413

⁶⁵ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.272

⁶⁶ Fathul-Bari, v.10 pg.276

Therefore, based on the previously mentioned prophetic narrations, one cannot derive the permissibility of Isbaal and its allowance in the light of Islamic texts.

The companions and their sincere obedience in contrast to our current status

It is a golden testimony in Islamic literature how the companions of the beloved messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) would obey and fulfil the orders and commandments of Allah and his prophet to the best of their ability. The same literatures which contain the utmost detailed actions and behaviour of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them) does not shed the slightest of light on the topic of any companion doing Isbaal or considering it from among the Sunnah (prophetic way) of the holy messenger (peace and blessings be upon him).

For example, during the treaty of Hudaibiyah when Usman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) was sent to deliver the message in Makkah-Mukarramah, he was wearing his garments to the middle of his shin level in terms of length. His cousin Ubban ibn Saeed who was not under the umbrella of Islam at the time told him to lower his garment. The Usman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) displayed and presented Infront of his cousin the format in this by the blessed prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

قال يا ابن عم، مالي اراك متحشفا اسبل، قال: و كان ازاره الى انصاف ساقيه قل له عثمان بن عفان: هكذا ازره صاحبنا

Ubban ibn Saeed said: oh, my cousin, why is it that I can see you wearing you garment high and tight, lower it. Salamah ibn Akwa' (may Allah be pleased with him) the narrator of this said that Usman ibn Affan's (may Allah be please with him) clothing was up to the mid-section of his shin. Usman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) replied saying: our friend's garment's length would be this much (indicating towards the prophet peace and blessings be upon him).⁶⁷

Now, in contrast to the honourable companion's (may Allah be pleased with them all) of the messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) is our condition and status. In relation to this Mufti Taqi Usmani (may Allah preserve him) mentions: "we had a shaykh by the name of Maulana Ihtishamul-Haque Tahnwi Sahib (may Allah have mercy on him) who mentioned once in one of his lectures, that our current status and situation is that although the messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) has indicated to uncover the ankles and to wear the clothing above them, yet we hesitate and are not willing to act upon what he has instructed. However, when it becomes the western fashion to uncover the ankles and to wear shorts and three-quarters, we adapt it in our life style so naturally without any hesitation. This clearly

⁶⁷ Izalatul-Khafa Mutarjim, v.4 pg.294

displays the level of love the people have for the customs and fashion in contrast to the level of love they have towards the messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).”⁶⁸

Many times, our brothers roll and fold up their lower clothing at the time of salat (prayer). But it must be reminded that this is not sufficient to safeguard oneself from the previously mentioned warnings. In this regard, Hazrat Hakimul-Ummat Ashraf Ali Tahnwi Sahib (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions: some people to express their level of taqwa (god-consciousness) lift the lower clothing above the ankle level only during the time of prayer (salat). However, the action of Isbaal holds the same ruling of impermissibility outside of prayer (salat) as it does within the prayer (salat). So, how will this benefit them?⁶⁹

Likewise, the same message can be found and displayed by Shaykh Maulana Shah Muhammad Yaqoob Mujaddidi Sahib (may Allah have mercy on him): I was waiting for my car whilst I was inside a masjid. The Maulana (scholar or imam) was delivering a reminder. His topic was related to wearing the clothing above the ankle. During the reminder he once mentioned that even if a person never raises the clothe let them do so at least for the duration of their prayer. So, I could not help myself but to raise my view to him and I spoke out saying: Hazrat! This itself is another action which is a sin. The one who would be lifting the clothe above the ankle would be holding the idea and intention that as soon as the prayer (salat) finishes he will lower his garments to how it previously was. So, the action by which another sin is manifested is another sin within itself. As it is mentioned in the prophetic narration (ما لم يرجع). Furthermore, Hazrat! Is it the case that Allah (the all mighty and majestic) only observes him during his prayer (salat) and not outside of it? The understand this in depth, it is the same as saying that a person has left his bottle of alcohol to drink outside the masjid. As soon as he finishes the prayer (salat) he will entertain himself with the drink. The firm practical intention of sinning is known as defiance (tughyaan).⁷⁰

Conclusion

After extensive discussion and in-depth elaboration based upon proof and evidences, we can conclude and summarise by saying that for men, the wearing and clothing of any form of clothes can fall under one of the four categories from those mentioned and presented below:

1. That the clothing is at mid-level of the shin, this would be considered as a recommended action (mustahab).

⁶⁸ Islaahi-Khutbaat, v.5 pg.300

⁶⁹ Islaah-Rusoom, v.1 pg.35-36

⁷⁰ Suhbate-Ba-Ahle-Dil, v.1 pg.197

2. That the clothing is just above the ankle. This would be categories as permissible (jaiz).
3. That the clothing is at the ankle level and the ankle is fully or partially covered due to it. This was be classified as impermissible and invalid (na-jaiz).
4. That the clothing is lower and below the ankle. This is more severe in impermissibility and prohibition.

Therefore, since the harms of dragging one's own clothing below the ankle level (Isbaal) has been thoroughly examined, critically analysed and punctually presented throughout this research, it is a must and an obligatory responsibility towards every male Muslim brother who may fall under the above-mentioned category no.3 or no.4 to abstain and refrain from this act of sin, and to persist and adapt the following of the prophetic manner (sunnah) without any form of shyness and hesitation. As it was the established record of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that his clothing while aware and intentionally had never levelled the length of his ankle nor did it very exceed his ankle either.

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani (may Allah preserve him) has mentioned: Although many from among the Islamic Fuqaha (jurists) have written, that if Isbaal (dragging the clothe below the ankle) is done out of pride and arrogance then is it highly disliked (makrooh-tahreemi) and if Isbaal is done without any pride and arrogance then it is lightly disliked (makrooh-tanzeehi), yet the authentic verdict of the specialist of revising the textual documents from among the scholars (ulama-muhaqqiqeen) is that, to lower the garment below the ankle in every and any condition is highly disliked (makrooh-tahreemi). The reason for this verdict is that to recognise self-pride and one's own arrogance is not a matter which is simple and straight forward. It is not something physical that one can locate where it is and where it is not. So, there clear solution to this is that a person has the clothing above the ankle at all times. This will not only be a more precautious approach to safeguard our akhirah (the next life) but also it will finish the entire discussion on having pride and arrogance within oneself or not at the time of Isbaal.⁷¹

May Allah (the all mighty and majestic) through his endless mercy and compassion allow each and everyone of us to safeguard ourselves from this action of 'Isbaal', ameen (may Allah accept).

⁷¹ Islaah-Khutbaat, v.5 pg.303

Glossary

Allah – the name of god in the religion of Islam

Islam – one of the major world religions that emphasises on monotheism.

Muslim – the followers of Islam are called ‘Muslims’

Shaykh – a term to describe a scholar in Islam

Imam – a term to describe a leader of the Muslims

Shaykhul-Islam – the terminology used in the classical era as an honorific title for outstanding scholars the field of Islamic sciences.

Umoor-Adiyah – used to describe the affairs of social customs

Satir – covering, normally used for clothing and/or veil

Makrooh – an Islamic terminology which linguistically means disliked

Makrooh-Tanzeehi – lightly disliked and best to avoid

Makrooh-Tahreemi – highly disliked and should be avoided. This category is very close to impermissible

Bil-ittifaq – means ‘with full agreement’. This is used to display the consensus of the scholars

Haram – used to mean illegal, forbidden, prohibited and impermissible

Halal – used to mean legal, allowed and permissible

Salat – Muslim prayer

Rakah – a unit of salat

Qiyam – the standing position during salat

Kibr – pride and/or arrogance

Mukaffir-Zunoob – an action which removes sins in Islam

Tadeeb – manners and etiquettes

Takeed – importance and emphasis

Khuyala’ – self-pride

Takabbur – a synonymous word for ‘khuyala’

Jannah – the term used in Islam for the meaning of paradise

Jahannam – the term used in Islam for the meaning of hell

Iman – faith, also used to describe the doctrine of a Muslim

Isbaal – to drag the clothing below the ankle level

Qiyamah – the day of accountancy after resurrection

Izaar – generally refers to lower garments such as lungi, trousers, short but is not limited to only the lower clothing

Qamees – used to describe the upper garments

Ridaa – naturally displays the meaning of a cloak

Amamah – used for the meaning of a turban which is tied around one's head

Diraa' – specifically that which is worn to shield oneself during the time of battle e.g., Armory.

Hadith – the sayings, actions and silent approvals of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)

Quran – the divinely revealed sacred scripture for the Muslims and considered to be the words of Allah

Muhaddith – a specialist in the field of hadith literature and its sciences

Qaid – an additional wording which gives a restriction to what was unrestricted

Qaid-Ihtiraazi – the restriction is precautionary and may or may not be adhered to

Qaid-Waqi'ee – the restriction which is firm and strict. This must be adhered to at all time

Riwayah – a prophetic narration

Mutlaq-Riwayah – unrestricted prophetic narration. This refers to the narration which has no form of any Qaid within it

Fiqh – the name given to the branch of Islamic sciences related to jurisprudential matters

Usool-Fiqh – the fundamental principles for the science of Islamic Fiqh

Manhi-Anhu – the aspect which is prohibited. Sometimes this can also refer to the cause of prohibition

Qiyaas – the terminology used for analogical deriving of Islamic jurisprudential benefits

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