

## Woman's 'Awra when being with Muslim women

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Article taken and slightly adapted from: ferkous.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

**Question:** What are the parts of the woman's body that are permissible to be unveiled in front of women? May Allaah reward you.

**Answer:** All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

The predominant opinion [of the scholars] concerning Al-'Awra<sup>1</sup> of the woman with her Mahram<sup>2</sup> and Muslim women is the permissibility of showing her concealed [places of] represented in: the lower of the legs, the hands including the forearm, the brachium, the head and the other places where she adorn herself and needs to display if she meets them in accordance with the verse in which Allaah تعالى says:

وَلَا يَبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءُ مَا حَلَائِلُهُنَّ أَبْنَاءُ مَا حَلَائِلُهُنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانُ مَا حَلَائِلُهُنَّ أَوْ بَنِي مَا حَلَائِلُهُنَّ

[And not display their adornment [i.e. beauty] except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women]<sup>3</sup>

Those are the ones in front of whom it is permissible for her to show some of her concealed beauty but for each one there is a specified limit. This is indicated in the hadeeth reported by Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ brought to Faatimah a slave as a gift. He added: and she wore a garment, when she covered with it her head, it did not reach her feet and when she covered with it her feet, it did not reach her head. So when the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saw her struggling, he said: "**There is no blame upon you: Here is only your father and your slave**"<sup>4</sup>.

As for her other concealed beauty like the belly and the back, it is more precautionous to cover them and there is no need to show them except the former parts where there is difficulty to cover. Indeed, the difficulty is repelled according to the verse in which Allaah تعالى says:

<sup>1</sup> For woman, all her body is 'Awra except her face and her hands, and she is not allowed to uncover her 'Awra before strangers (men that are not Mahram). Here, it means the parts of the woman's body that she is not allowed to reveal before other women. Translator's note.

<sup>2</sup> Mahram (plural: Mahaarim): a male whom a woman can never marry because of close relationship (e.g. a brother, a father, an uncle etc.); or her own husband. Translator's note.

<sup>3</sup> Soorah an-Noor [24:31]

<sup>4</sup> Reported by Aboo Dawood (4106) on the authority of Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه. This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwa'" (1799) and judged Hassan (good) by Al-Waadi'ee in "Saheeh Al-Musnad" (60).

## Woman's 'Awra when being with Muslim women

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ

[And Allaah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]]<sup>5</sup>

Also His saying سبحانه وتعالى:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ

[Allaah intends for you ease and does not intent for you hardship]<sup>6</sup>

In addition to His saying عز وجل:

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

[and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship]<sup>7</sup>,

and other clarified verses.

Moreover, the hadeeth that indicates, from one side, the precaution; and from the other side, the weakness of the opinion of: the majority of scholars that the woman's 'Awra in front of Muslim women is limited between the navel and the knee, and the opinion of the Hanafee [School] who added the knee to Al-'Awra, and also that of Ibn Hazm who restricted her 'Awra when being with Muslim women to the behind and the vagina, is the hadeeth of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "The woman must not see a woman [her 'Awra] then describes her to her husband as if he is looking at her"<sup>8</sup>. This hadeeth warns against the action that leads the husband to admire the description mentioned to him that results in his wife (the woman who describes) being divorced or the fascination with the described one. That is why there must be precaution regarding the parts of her 'Awra that there is no need to show in order to stand against the ways of temptation.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عز وجل. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers, Rabee' Al-Awwal 8th, 1428 H. Corresponding to: March 15th, 2008 G.

<sup>5</sup> Soorah an-Nisaa'[4:28]

<sup>6</sup> Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:185]

<sup>7</sup> Soorah al-Hajj [22:78]

<sup>8</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhaaree (5240) on the authority of 'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنه.