Professional Notes
Qabeelat Wasat | AlMaghrib Institute Chicago
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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah ﷻ the Lord of the universe. And peace and blessings be upon His beloved Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, his family, and his pious followers who follow his guidance.

By the grace and mercy of Allah ﷻ, we have compiled notes for Shaykh Saad Tasleem’s class “Trends: Culture, Identity, and Fashion.” These notes are student notes published by Qabeelat Wasat. They have not been approved by AlMaghrib Institute or Shaykh Saad Tasleem. Therefore, we cannot attest to the complete accuracy of this material. Any Islamic ruling pertaining to your personal situation needs to be discussed with your local scholar. These notes are by no means a substitute for a personalized fatwa.

Any benefit you obtain from these notes are from Allah ﷻ while any shortcomings are from ourselves. Please be aware that these notes have Arabic verses of Qur’an. If you are to print these notes and then dispose of them, please do so appropriately.

If you find any errors in these notes, please contact us at ameerah.wasat@almaghrib.org so that we may make the appropriate revisions. JazakamAllahu Khairan.
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INTRODUCTION

Shaykh Saad said that if he was going to teach a new seminar, it had to fulfill the following two conditions:

1.) Relevant/Applicable

Many times with Islamic studies, we discuss topics and they become theoretical. The goal of these seminars is not to make us scholars! That is not how it works – the bigger goal of AlMaghrib seminars is to teach us Islam in a way that we can practice in our everyday lives. So, when we go back to work or school, we know how to apply the knowledge we gained.

People often hear about "the fiqh of fashion" and they say that it is interesting, but they question its importance. Do we have to devote a whole weekend to it? When we talk about clothing, it is VERY applicable and relevant. If we compare the Fiqh of Clothing to other chapters in Fiqh or Islamic Law, we notice that it is more applicable than others. For example, the Fiqh of Salah is extremely important, but how many hours of our day do we actually spend in salah? Maybe an hour in total, or even less than that – we study salah, but we may only apply it for 20-30 minutes a day. When we analyze the Fiqh of Fasting, we notice that we may only fast for one month in the whole year. In regards to Hajj and 'Umrah, we may only go once or twice in our lives. The Fiqh of Clothing is something we are constantly applying and making decisions about – consciously or subconsciously. We all made a choice today about what we wore.

How we present ourselves is something we apply 24/7 – even when we shower and we do not wear clothes, that is a decision we make. People develop an opinion about us based on the way we look and the way we present ourselves. In any relationship, in any situation, the clothes we wear influence the first impression we give. Shari'ah addresses clothing, and Allah gives us guidelines for a reason. There is a strong connection between our spirituality and what we wear.

Our actions, including what we eat and what we wear, influence the relationship we have with Allah. People often belittle such things by asking, “Is God really going to send me to Hell because I wore this particular clothing?” People actually ask this! If we do not care about the clothing we put on our bodies, it will ultimately affect other parts of our life and even weaken our relationship with Allah. Everything we do in life affects our spirituality, including the decisions we make about clothing. A person who wants to please Allah will choose clothing that is pleasing to Allah.

2.) Something that he is Passionate About

Shaykh Saad wanted to make sure that he was personally passionate about a topic that he teaches. If we do not truly care about something, we will not spend much time talking about it! The topic of clothing is something that Shaykh Saad is very passionate about.
**KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, AND WISDOM**

When people first start practicing Islam or become religious, it is very convenient for them to look at everything in a black and white way, or *halal* vs. *haram*. Due to convenience many times, we gravitate towards the strictest opinion to be on the safe side.

Sometimes, when people become unnecessarily harsh, it is a matter of three things:

1. Lack of knowledge
2. Lack of understanding
3. Lack of wisdom

This topic may seem like it is just clothing, but knowledge of our daily life practices is VERY important. People often live in an unsure territory when it comes to clothing. There is always a sense of uncertainty. We have to ask ourselves if we are dressing in a way that is pleasing to Allah (ﷻ). Our doubts can be removed with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. We should be comfortable with the way we live our lives, and we can make adjustments as necessary.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**THE BROADER ISSUES**

Shaykh Yasir Qadhi taught “Precious Provisions: Fiqh of Food and Clothing.” Both of these topics are very important, and we need to be educated about them. However, it is difficult to teach both of them in one weekend because there are so many more angles and issues now. Shaykh Saad realized that it is impossible to talk about clothing without talking about the broader issues related to it. We cannot talk about the physical without talking about the internal – how we look and how we present ourselves has an effect on us internally as well.

**SECTION 1: BODY IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM**

*We do not discuss the issues of body image and self-esteem enough.* Our society tells us that our value is dependent upon how people perceive us – for example, through our clothing. When we look in the mirror and are unhappy with what we see, this affects us! We are bombarded by the Internet and social media – we scroll through Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, and what we see is a glossy, perfect image. We then believe that if we do not match that image, there is something wrong with us. **We start comparing ourselves to perfection and we do not realize how much that affects us.**

Why do we think depression is on the rise? It’s not just one problem – people like to oversimplify matters and say that if someone was a better Muslim, then he or she would not be depressed. In reality, the way we feel about ourselves and where we place our self-worth are important aspects of our lives.

The very first section in this course revolves around body image and self-esteem. We have to get personal with ourselves – look in the mirror and ask yourself how you feel about
If you think that our happiness is affected by what we see in the mirror, there is a problem! This is a spiritual problem as well – we need to be introspective.

SECTION 2: CULTURE AND IDENTITY
Another big, broad issue is the issue of culture and identity – the youth of this generation whose parents are immigrants are dealing with multiple identities. We may have the culture of our parents who were raised elsewhere, but maybe we were born here and identify with the culture we are living in. People often say that we are Muslim, and nothing else should matter, but that is not the case.

People struggle with having multiple identities and cultures. Parents say that being a good Muslim means that you are good with your own culture. From their perspective, “Muslim culture” is adopting customs of where your parents are from.

Once we have our culture and identity sorted out, we can deal with other issues. Parents need to understand what their children are dealing with – they do not necessarily identify with their parents’ culture to the extent their parents do. They need knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in order to help them through the struggles they face.

SECTION 3: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES
If we look at the Shari’ah and the Sunnah, most of it does not deal with specific items, like different types of shirts, pants, or hats. However, we do have principles and guidelines as Islam is meant for every time, place, and generation. What we wear today is different from what people wore 100 years ago. Principles and guidelines can be applied in every generation and every place until the Day of Judgement. If we understand the principles, then everything else becomes easy.

We will cover 12 different principles throughout this course. One such principle states that Allah is Beautiful, and He loves beauty. Are we supposed to dress nicely? Yes!

Another principle explains that simplicity is part of Iman. How do we properly understand these two principles? People will usually pick one or the other! The problem is that people only look at one principle or one evidence on its own. We must analyze evidences holistically to obtain a proper understanding of the Shari’ah.

For example, extravagance is prohibited in Islam. People often say that it is haram. Technically, they are not wrong, but what does extravagance mean? Do you think that spending $500 on a shirt is extravagance? We will discuss this later on in sha Allah.

Is it permissible to imitate the opposite gender? The Prophet cursed men who imitate women and women who imitate men. One of our principles is that we should not imitate the opposite gender.
Is it permissible for a man to wear a skirt? One that comes right on top of the knees? **This is a cultural issue!** Depending on where you are and where you live, this matter can change. Ironically, a kilt is one of the most manly things one can wear in **Scottish culture.**

What about men wearing ornate necklaces and bangles? Is it *haram*? There are tribes in Africa where the chief or leader wears ornate necklaces, and that is considered masculine; it is a sign of leadership. **These answers depend on context.**

What about the imitation of non-Muslims? What exactly does this refer to? Many people claim that we cannot wear anything that non-Muslims wear, but then what is left for the Muslims!?

**SECTION 4: SPECIFIC ISSUES RELATED TO FASHION AND CLOTHING**

This last section is the “leftover chapter.” People think that this whole seminar is the last chapter – individual fiqh issues: hair, beards, makeup, jewelry, specific types of clothing, etc. This is actually the lesser important section of the seminar. The purpose of this chapter is to end on a lighter note after discussing principles, culture, identity, and body image. **This chapter is about common fiqh issues and questions.** The most common question now is “Is that haircut *haram* or not?” This section discusses questions like these.
Section One

Body Image and Self-Esteem

WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

Body image is the mental representation we create of ourselves; it may or may not bear close relation to how others actually see us. **Body image is not about how you look; rather it is about how you feel about the way you look.**

It relates to the perception you have of yourself. When you look in the mirror, what do you see? What traits come to mind? **The way you describe yourself refers to body image.** It can be close to reality, or it can be distorted. **Body image also encompasses the way we feel about our looks.** For example, some people may feel that they are good looking while others feel that they are not good looking. Different events in life have the potential to alter body image.

**Body image can be positive or negative;** it will be more positive if it is closer to reality, and it will be more negative if it is further away from reality. This also encompasses positive and negative feelings we have about ourselves.

WHAT DOES HAVING A NEGATIVE/UNHEALTHY BODY IMAGE FEEL LIKE?

1.) **One continually compares their bodies to others**

When people have a negative body image, they constantly compare themselves to others.

2.) **Feeling shame, anxiety, and self-consciousness about one's body**

They may become very self-conscious about the way they look as they obsess over certain body parts such as their nose, arms, or face. Often times, they pick one, or two, or even multiple traits in their body, and this obsession can take over their life.

3.) **Having a distorted perception of one's shape and size**

For example, people may describe themselves as chubby, but the rest of the world sees them as fit. They may describe themselves as too short or too tall, but the rest of the world does not view them like that.

THE INFLUENCE THAT PARENTS HOLD

Parents can greatly influence the body image of their children. Their comments can sometimes hold great weight and affect their children’s perception of themselves. For example, parents may tell them that their skin color is too dark; children will then associate darker skin color with an undesirable trait as they view fairer skin as more beautiful. Even if parents don’t explicitly state this, the general attitude in the household and conversations about complexion can cause children to develop such opinions. The mind can take such ideologies much further than what the reality is.
PEOPLE CAN SUFFER FROM NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE IN VARYING DEGREES

If negative body image becomes very severe, it can transition into a mental disorder called body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) in which a person becomes extremely preoccupied with his or her appearance and perceived defects. Imagined ugliness refers to the mental representation of being ugly or unattractive, and it can be a part of negative body image.

We all suffer from negative body image to a certain degree at some point in time, and this is normal. However, when it worsens to the point in which it affects relationships, interaction with other people, and the ability to properly function, it becomes a clinical problem.

Sadness is a normal emotion which everyone experiences; it often has a trigger such as loss of a loved one or moving away. When sadness becomes so severe and crippling, it becomes depression, a mental illness that requires treatment. Depression does not have a trigger, and it is not considered a normal feeling.

People who suffer from BDD obsess over supposed defects in their body. There may be some shortcomings present, but it becomes distorted and amplified to a greater degree than normal. Such a trait is always the topic of discussion for them. About 2% of the population suffers from BDD. There is actually a link between BDD and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

The mirror is a companion to those who suffer from negative body image. They spend long amounts of time in front of the mirror, analyzing and critiquing themselves, pondering over what features they can change. The more these people look in the mirror, the worse it gets. Such a mentality can ultimately lead to BDD, at which time professional help is required.
A NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE CAN LEAD TO:

1.) Unhappiness, anxiety, and depression
Many people in our society look fine on the outside, but in reality, they suffer from clinical depression.

2.) An obsession with weight loss
Weight loss in this context does not refer to getting into shape and staying fit. Rather, it refers to people jeopardizing their health in extreme measures to obtain the body they desire. Society often portrays one body type of how a man or woman is supposed to look, and some people believe they are not good enough unless they look like that body type.

We often find ourselves at one of the two extremes concerning “fat shaming.” At one of the spectrum, some believe that everyone should be comfortable with the way they look and there is no need to discuss the topic. On the other end of the spectrum, some believe that being overweight or obese poses health risks and necessitates change to ensure health and well-being. Society at times does not want you to develop nuanced opinions, instead preaching the “for or against” mentality. However, there exists a middle path: strive for health and wellness while upholding a high level of spirituality and emotional well-being at the same time. Our goal is not to look a certain way, but rather to be healthy while upholding the best version of ourselves. Keep in mind that skinniness does not equate with good health as there are some very slim people who are extremely unhealthy.

Many resort to fad diets in an attempt to lose weight. Such diets may lead to temporary results, but they are often followed by regression and even a worsening of one’s weight. Some will also take weight loss pills and supplements to obtain the body they desire. Many of these medications are not regulated by the FDA; so, the manufacturers can put whatever substances they want into the pills, make unverified claims, and sell them in the market. Some of these medications are oftentimes dangerous with adverse side effects.
3.) **Taking drastic measures to change one’s appearance**
Steroid use is becoming quite common these days, but no one is talking about it. An *8-week transformation through “hard work and believing in yourself” can actually be from steroids.* And when young kids don’t see the results they want from their efforts, they can develop low self-esteem and a distorted body image.

Steroids are not without risk. They cause several side effects such as hair loss, bacne, mood swings, and breast development in men. Some will resort to taking other pills to mask such side effects.

Some people will even develop a steroid addiction. Steroids allow an individual to work out longer with more energy and power, and results come in sooner. Building muscle entails tearing the muscle fibers and then rebuilding them. This requires rest. But with steroid use, the body recovers much faster, allowing an individual to work out at the gym 2-3 times a day.

As we age, it becomes harder to gain muscle mass and lose fat. The body also becomes more prone to injury. So, steroid use can be very appealing to certain people who wish to work out like they were in their 20s. About 90% of celebrities we see on TV take steroids, including may superhero actors.

Cosmetic surgery is another example of a drastic measure to change one’s appearance.

4.) **Low self-esteem**
Negative body image affects self-esteem as a whole.

**WHAT DOES HAVING A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE FEEL LIKE?**

1.) **One feels comfortable and confident in his or her body**
The body is not a source of depression or anxiety.

2.) **Have a generally true perception of one’s size and shape**
The way people see themselves is the way most people would see them.

3.) **Understanding that their physical appearance does not define them**
People understand that there is far more to their self-worth than the way they look and how they feel about their appearance. When we link our self-esteem to the way we look, it will eventually lead to a negative body image.

4.) **One feels comfortable knowing that they will never be “perfect”**
We are deluding ourselves if we think we can achieve the perfect body, perfect eyebrows, perfect hair, etc. *Nothing in life is perfect because our idea of perfection is constantly changing.* You may attain society’s definition of “perfection,” but that will change in 1-2 weeks. Or you may see someone with better eyebrows or better hair. Positive body image does not equate with complacency, but we understand we will never be perfect.
WHAT INFLUENCES A PERSON'S BODY IMAGE?

1. Puberty and Development
When children go through puberty, they undergo many physical changes. Some may point out certain traits to them which can make them feel self-conscious.

2. Families and School
Family may critique our physical features. Parents must give their children proper tarbiyyah to prevent the development of negative body image. Such tarbiyyah also plays a role in preventing their children from ridiculing other kids at school.

3. Societal Expectations and Standards of Beauty
In the past, society established certain expectations and standards mostly for females. However, in our times, society has also established expectations and standards for males. We are told what we are supposed to look like; when we compare ourselves to others, it affects our body image.

4. Media and Entertainment
Dr. Raymond Lemberg says, “The media has become more of an equal opportunity discriminator. Men’s bodies are not good enough anymore either.”

5. Social Media
We are constantly online spending time on social media, whether it be Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. People show a glossy filtered version of themselves, when in reality, their real life is not like that. Kids see beauty pages and fitness tutorials of models; they link such pages to perfection, thinking they need to look like that to experience acceptance by society. They are taught they need to have followers online to be happy in life.

Most of us have some type of body image issue, at least to a certain degree. After all, society teaches us that we should look a certain way, which is often times unattainable.

6. The Two Main Culprits: Comparison and Fantasy
When we chase fantasy, we will never be happy.
HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR BODY IMAGE?

1.) *Remember that Health and Appearance are Two Different Things*

Our goal is not to look a certain way but to improve ourselves and be healthy.

2.) *Accept and Value your Genes*

There are certain traits you inherited, and you can’t change them. You can either fantasize about looking like someone else, or you can accept and value your genes. Everyone is different! Allah ﷻ has given everyone strengths and weaknesses; sometimes, your weaknesses can actually become strengths.

3.) *Keep a List of your Positive Qualities that have Nothing to do with your Appearance*

Instead of focusing on traits you perceive to be negative, focus on your positive characteristics. Realize that you have certain strengths that others don’t. Contemplate how those positive qualities can bring you closer to Allah ﷻ.

4.) *Surround yourself with the Right People*

You want to surround yourself with people who are supportive, positive, and encouraging. These people are not there to stroke your ego, but rather to make you feel good about yourself. If the people you currently surround yourself with negatively influence your *deen* and *dunya*, you need to find people who will support you and help you improve. You don’t need to completely cut off ties with the people who negatively influence you, but it’s important to search for positive reinforcement from a new network of individuals.

*AlMaghrib classes* are not just weekend seminars; they are also a place to meet new people. You learn together with people who share a similar perspective on many matters, and it’s a great opportunity to surround yourself with the right people who will support and encourage you. Never let *Shaytan* convince you that you don’t deserve good friends. You do. Start off by being a good friend to others, and *in sha Allah* you will develop a strong social network.

5.) *Treat your Body with Respect and Kindness*

Your body is a gift from Allah ﷻ, and it ultimately belongs to Him. He created your form, and moreover, **He created you in the best of form:**

> “We have certainly created man in the best of stature.” *Surah Al-Tin, 95:4*
Just because you don't fit society's standards of beauty, it doesn't mean that you're not beautiful or handsome. You have a responsibility to take care of your body while treating it with kindness and respect.

**CAN CHANGING OUR APPEARANCE HELP IMPROVE OUR BODY IMAGE?**

1. **Lifestyle changes**

   “You want people to be concerned enough about their weight to make healthy decisions, but not so concerned that they're willing to take whatever means it takes – healthy or unhealthy – to achieve their desired physique,” says Dr. Wilson Field.

   In general, changing yourself is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as the goals are appropriate. For example, changing yourself to achieve a better and healthier version of yourself is an appropriate and positive goal. Fitness is important, but you shouldn't work out beyond your capacity and make yourself prone to injury; stay balanced in your goals.

2. **Fashion makeovers...?**

   As long as people are fulfilling Islamic guidelines, it is not our job to change the way people dress or make them fit our personal sense of style. If people have a positive body image, we should not interfere; going up to people and wanting them to change their fashion can be problematic. When we impose our ways upon others, it can actually limit their creativity.

   It doesn’t matter what other people say. **As long as your sense of style is pleasing to Allah ﷻ, then you should be comfortable.** However, we need to be conscious of where we are and who we are speaking to; for example, the Imam needs to have a certain level of honor and dignity in his clothing while delivering a khutbah.

**SELF-ESTEEM: WHEN IT GOES BEYOND THE PHYSICAL**

Body image is a part of self-esteem, the latter being a broader issue. Self-esteem is a state of mind, and it comprises two main factors:

1. **How you think and feel about yourself**

2. **How you see yourself in relation to others**
WHAT LOW SELF-ESTEEM CAN FEEL LIKE
1.) Feeling unworthy of happiness, respect, honor, or dignity
2.) Doubting one’s self worth
3.) Doubting one’s abilities in life
4.) Lack of confidence or hope to achieve what one yearns to attain
5.) Pessimistic and negative outlook on life
   For example, one may think “I’m just going to fail anyway.” Such a mentality can affect one’s outlook on his or her body, career, and relationships.
6.) The need for constant approval and reassurance
7.) Being chronically dissatisfied with others
   Low self-esteem affects how people relate to others. People with low self-esteem will try to bring others down in order to make themselves feel better.

HOW LOW SELF-ESTEEM CAN MANIFEST ITSELF IN OUR BEHAVIOR
1.) Being overly serious
2.) Avoiding communication and dialogue about oneself
   They don’t want to focus on themselves because that would require them to acknowledge how they feel in addition to certain problems they may have.
3.) Evading or outright denying one’s own problems
   It’s more convenient for them to be in denial and avoid addressing their issues.
4.) Being extremely defensive when receiving criticism
   They cannot stand being criticized. They view something like counsel as an attack, and their first response to criticism is usually a counter attack.
5.) Assuming the worst intentions behind people’s words and being overly sensitive
6.) An excessive need to control and criticize others
   This ties in with the chronic dissatisfaction with others: they try to bring others down.
7.) Easily becoming jealous and envious

8.) Constantly complaining about others
Again, the focus is away from one’s self.

9.) Being overly critical or dismissive of others

10.) Being resentful and bitter towards others

11.) Being unable to forgive others

People can have low self-esteem in varying degrees and varying aspects of their life. For example, it can affect one’s career, relationships, and even spirituality. Self-esteem can be anywhere on a scale, and it can change from time to time.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN INCREASING SELF-ESTEEM

The relationship we have with Allah remains the most powerful and most important aspect of our self-esteem. When we link our self-worth to the spiritual connection we have with Allah, we will increase our self-esteem.

If we link our self-worth to anything else, we are destined to fail because nothing in life stays constant. Our looks fade. People change – one day they may love you, the next day they may hate you. Careers come and go. Relationships have their ups and downs. Even the best relationships have problems. So, when such factors change, it can destroy a person who has attached his or her value to them.

Some people will attach their self-worth to their children. When you have children, it changes the way you view the world; you reach a new capacity of love. Allah says that children are the pleasure of this life. Children can be a great source of happiness and an integral part of your life. However, we don’t know how our children will turn out at the end of the day despite our efforts of good upbringing. For example, Prophet Nuh came with the message of truth, yet his own son chose disbelief. The decisions that our children make can be out of our hands, and Allah Alone guides whom He wills.

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مِنْ أَحَبَّتْكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهُ يُهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills.”

Surah Al-Qasas, 28:56
YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ALLAH DETERMINES YOUR NOBILITY

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."

Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13

This verse was revealed to a people who viewed nobility as everything; family tribe and lineage determined their societal standing. Allah dispels such a notion as He explains that nobility is determined by your relationship with Him. And every person has the ability to work on his or her spirituality and constantly improve his or her relationship with Allah.

DESIRE THE LOVE OF ALLAH OVER EVERYTHING ELSE

The Prophet said, “When Allah loves a servant, He calls out to Jibril and says, ‘I love so-and-so; so love them.’ Then Jibril loves them. After that he (Jibril) announces to the inhabitants of heavens, ‘Certainly, Allah loves so-and-so, so love them.’ The inhabitants of the heavens also love them, and acceptance for this person is placed upon Earth.” [Bukhari and Muslim]

When it comes to our self-esteem, we first look internally to analyze our relationship with Allah. We look to our hearts because that is where change first starts.

WAYS TO INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM

1.) Identify what success in life means to you

If we can understand what we equate success with, we can start taking the steps necessary to achieve that success. Take into account the various aspects of the life wheel:

- Spiritual
- Family
- Spousal
- Social
- Career
- Financial
- Health
- Intellectual

The Life Wheel
On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, determine what a 10 looks like for you. For example, a score of 10 in the spiritual category may entail the following: praying 5 times daily on time, avoiding major sins, having a relationship with the Qur’an, fasting at least 2 days a week, giving in charity, praying Qiyam ul-Layl at least once a week, etc.

Then rate yourself for each of the above categories, and see where you are in relation to your score of 10. **Make changes as necessary to get as close to your 10 as possible, and this will help you increase in confidence and self-esteem.** When getting married, it’s important to compare your ideal score of 10 in the various categories with your spouse to assess compatibility.

### 2.) Clearly define your goals

Often times, we set vague undefined goals. When there are no parameters or solid goals, we cannot accomplish them! Therefore, we should use SMARTER goals:

- **Specific**
  - E.g. I want to understand the Qur’an

- **Measurable**
  - E.g. I will read X amount of pages of Qur’an daily

- **Achievable**
  - E.g. I will read half a page of Qur’an daily (instead of – I will finish the entire Qur’an in 1 week with my busy schedule)

- **Realistic**
  - An example of an unrealistic goal would be: I want to become a scholar of the Qur’an in 1 year

- **Time bound**
  - E.g. I want to finish reading the Qur’an within the next year

- **Exciting**
  - If it doesn’t excite you, you will be less likely to accomplish your goal

- **Slightly un-Realistic**
  - It should be challenging
  - If it’s too easy, then it can become boring and easy to put off

Allah has given us so many ways to reach Him! Take advantage of the different avenues to come closer to Him, such as giving in charity, learning the *deen*, fasting, etc. Try to identify 2 SMARTER goal you will commit to for the next 90 days.

### 3.) Start becoming conscious of your unique blessings

Allah created us all different, and it is those differences that make us special. We all have unique blessings that are specific to us, but we have to take time to identify those blessings.
4.) **Embrace your “shortcomings”**
Try to identify 1-2 “shortcomings” and contemplate how you can turn them into strengths.

5.) **Build a support system**
We want to surround ourselves with the right people: those who will encourage and support us, not criticize and condemn us for our faults. As mentioned before, they are not there to stroke your ego, but rather to support you while advising you when you veer off. Identify at least 2 people by name who can be your support system. If you can’t name at least 2 people, then you need to reevaluate your life and friends.

**IMPORTANCE OF TAWAKKUL**
At the end of the day, while we strive to increase our self-esteem through various means, we remember that we need to have complete trust and dependence on Allah ﷻ. We understand that we cannot be perfect in accomplishing our goals. When we say that nothing in life is perfect, that translates as: we always need the help of Allah.

*Tawakkul* is to depend upon Allah while taking the means He has given you. **Training to skydive, having a parachute, and then jumping out of the plane with dependence on Allah is an example of tawakkul.** This is in contrast to *tawaakul* in which a person depends upon Allah while taking no means to reach the goal. **Jumping out of a plane without a parachute, expecting Allah to save you is an example of tawaakul.**
IS THERE SUCH A THING AS “MUSLIM CULTURE?”

If we were to say yes, that would mean that anyone who identifies as Muslim would identify with that culture. There are norms that are common among Muslims, but they are from Islam – we would call this Shari’ah. If we want to call that culture, that is fine, but there is a set of factors that Muslims have in common. One example would be saying salaam – more importantly, this is part of the Shari’ah and Islam. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught this to all Muslims, regardless of anything else. If we were to say that there is ONE culture that applies to ALL Muslims, it would have to be from the deen of Allah ﷻ.

What people refer to as Muslim culture is simply Islam/Shari’ah. It’s not really a culture, but a religion. In order for something to be considered Islamic culture or Muslim culture, it has to apply to all Muslims everywhere. There is no one culture that is a Muslim culture. Customs like clothing and food differ from place to place. We tend to think of certain cultures as “Muslim culture,” but that’s just because the majority of people in that area happen to be Muslim. It becomes problematic when we force our culture on others, arguing that it represents the “Muslim culture.”

Muslims in China look Chinese. Muslims in Africa look African. Muslims in India look Indian. A lot of the culture is taken from the Shari’ah, but culture itself is with the people – it evolves and changes. Shari’ah is meant for all times and all places. Some rulings will go back to the norms of a specific culture. Historically, there has never really been a clash between Islam and culture; when Islam would come to an area, the culture didn’t really change. Yes, certain aspects of the culture that were un-Islamic would be altered, but much of the culture would remain intact.

Islam is like water on a riverbed. It is clear water, so you can still see the rocks on the bottom. And while it flows, it washes and purifies the area. This is what Islam is supposed to be like when it enters a land: you should still see the culture of the people, but it is purified. You can try to force and mold a culture, but it will ultimately evolve and develop naturally. You can’t force people to do something.
CULTURE AND THE PROPHET

The Prophet had a culture. There were aspects of him that were part of his culture that were not necessarily legislated by Allah. Some people say that just because something is not found specifically in Islam or amongst the Muslims, then it is wrong by default. However, the concept of halal vs. haram has nothing to do with you, or your culture, or your preferences, or what you like or dislike – it goes back to what Allah and the Prophet said.

Are we supposed to dress exactly how the Prophet dressed? Is the thobe considered sunnah? Did the Prophet actually wear a thobe? Not really – his normal dress was two sheets of cloth (ihraam), one tied at the bottom, one tied at the top. He would occasionally wear a qamees (shirt) on top with an izaar at the bottom. Sometimes, they would stitch the izaar in the middle to create what we know as pants – that is what the sunnah of Prophet was. Does that mean the thobe is wrong? Not necessarily! It is a part of culture.

HADITH OF THE LIZARD

‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas reports that a roasted lizard was brought to eat for the Prophet while Khalid b. Walid was with him. When the Prophet was informed of what it was he withdrew his hand. Khalid b. Walid said, “O Messenger of Allah, is the lizard forbidden (to eat)?” The Prophet replied, “No, but it is not found in the land of my people so I do not find a liking for it.” Khalid said, “I then chewed and ate it, and Allah’s Messenger was looking at me and he did not forbid me.” [Muslim]

Why did Khalid b. Walid add the extra detail that he ate the lizard while the Prophet was watching him? It serves a purpose! This detail shows a distinction between the personal preferences of the Prophet and the deen of Allah. Imagine if the Prophet said this to us and we went ahead and ate the food in front of him – 50 people would jump up and tell us to fear Allah! They would question how we could eat it when the Prophet does not like it. Khalid b. Walid, however, made the distinction between culture and Islam.

THE ANSAAR LOVE ENTERTAINMENT

The Prophet said, “O ‘A’ishah, was there any entertainment (in the gathering)? For the Ansaar love entertainment.” [Bukhari]

One of the Ansaar woman was getting married, so the Prophet asked ‘A’ishah if there was any entertainment. He wanted to make sure the Ansaar carried out the celebrations based on their norms which entailed playing the duff (hand drum) and singing – this was a way of announcing a wedding. So, the Prophet not only allowed for culture, but he also encouraged people to follow their culture, as long as it does not contradict the morals and principles of Islam.
In another hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said, “That which differentiates between the *halal* and the *haram* is the *duff* and the voice during the *nikkah.*” (i.e. the *duff* and the voice signify that a *nikkah* took place, which establishes the relationship as *halal*).

**MISUNDERSTOOD EVIDENCES**

1.) *Islam started as something strange*

> إنّ الإسلامَ بدأ غريبًا، وسُعُودٌ غريبًا كمَا بدأ، فَطُوْبَى لِلغريبَاءِ

> “Islam started as something strange, and it will return to be something strange, so glad tidings to the strangers.” [*Sunan Ibn Majah*]

People use this hadith and say that there should be a difference between us and non-Muslims since we are supposed to be strange.

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ was asked, “Who are the strangers?” He said, “Few people amongst the many” or “Few people of *Iman* amongst the many.” [*Tirmidhi, Muslim, Imam Ahmed*] This hadith does not really refer to how we look. It can, but the main meaning refers to the numbers within people – **glad tidings to those who are few.** Islam started with a small number of Muslims, and as we come closer to the Day of Judgement, the numbers will become small again.

Our *Ummah* is going through difficult times, but at least we have the numbers. We are not at that stage yet, but there will come a time when there will be few Muslims again.

Qadi’ ‘Iyad said that the hadith refers to Islam starting off as a small group of people, and then it spread and became common; then another time will come in which the Muslims will be few in number and weak.

In the western society, it is common and acceptable for people to drink alcohol. As Muslims, we find such a practice unacceptable, and thus, we are strange in this regard. However, there is no merit in wearing a *thobe* just to stand out, thinking it will make you look Muslim and “strange.” The Prophet ﷺ did not select his clothing just to differentiate himself from others. In fact, Allah ﷻ sent Prophets from among the people so they could recognize them; it’s easier to identify with people who are familiar.
2.) You will follow the ways of the nations who came before you

"لَتَتَبَعُنَّ سَنَنَّ مَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ شَيْئًا يُشَيْبَهُ، وَذَرَاعًا بِذَرَاعٍ، حَتَّى لَوْ سَلَكْنَا جُحُورًا ضَمًّا لَسَلَكْتُمُوهُ " قَالَنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودَةَ وَالنَّصَارَى ؟ قَالَ: "فَمَنْ؟ ".

The Prophet ﷺ said, "You will follow the ways of the nations who came before you, hand span by hand span, arm’s length by arm’s length, so much so that even if they were to enter a lizard’s hole you would follow them.” We said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, (Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?’ He said, Whom else?” [Bukhari]

This hadith is specifically referring to the evil or bad that occurred in nations before us – as their deen was distorted, ours will be too – as their beliefs moved away from what is correct, we will too.

The “reformations” that the Jews and Christians went through, we are going through them today. People are trying to change Islam and modernize it. In the bad, you will follow the ways of the Jew and Christians.
3.) Imitating Non-Muslims

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

"من تشبه يقوم فهو منهم"  
"He who imitates any people (in their actions) is considered to be one of them."

[Abu Dawud]

People say that things are haram because they are an imitation of non-Muslims. But is this hadith referring to all types of imitation? No – it is referring to imitating non-Muslims in those matters that are specific to them and by which they identify themselves with.

The scholars say the following:

- **Impermissible imitation** is imitation of non-Muslims in beliefs that go against Islam or in customs and practices that are specific to them and that they are identified by e.g. cross around the neck.

- **Permissible imitation** is what doesn’t go against our beliefs as Muslims but also possesses goodness, e.g. the church next door feeds the homeless every week, someone on the masjid board says we should do it too – that would be recommended! We see some goodness and we take part in it.

- There were a couple of scholars and speakers recording themselves doing the ice bucket challenge for ALS – was that a cause that brought goodness? Yes

Important note: We hear people using evidence to say that people are wrong – if someone has limited knowledge, they might be convinced about it! It’s important to take a step back and go to those who are qualified – it’s very easy to take a hadith out of context or quote only half of it.
UNDERSTANDING THE TERM “SUNNAH”

1.) In the field of hadith:
- That which is attributed to the Prophet ﷺ from speech, actions, tacit approval (or disapproval), and physical or character traits

2.) In the field of fiqh:
- A religious ruling, a matter that is optional but recommended and liked

When we say something is sunnah, we have to clarify whether it is from a hadith perspective or fiqh perspective. To not eat a lizard is sunnah according to the first definition, but not according to the second.

This seminar is about clarity, about being comfortable in practicing the deen – we will in sha Allah be able to differentiate between cultural norms and things which have religious significance as we study the principles.

Using the siwaak/miswaak, is that sunnah? We need more detail! Was it from the habit of the Prophet ﷺ? Yes. Was it the cultural norm? Yes. But, is it sunnah according to scholars of Islamic law? In order to say yes, we need evidence, it’s not for us to decide – is there evidence to say that the Prophet ﷺ encouraged it? Yes, there are numerous evidences, and he said:

"لَوْلَا أَنْ أَشْتَقَّ عَلَى أَمْتِي لَأَمْرُهُم بِالْسِّوَاكِ"

"Were it not that it would be too difficult for my Ummah, I would have commanded them to use the Siwak at (the time of) every Salah." [Sunan an-Nasa’i]

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

"السِّوَاكُ مَطْهَرٌ لِّلَّفَمِ،َ مَرْضَاةً لِلَّلَّهِ"

"The Miswak (tooth-stick) cleanses and purifies the mouth and pleases the Rubb." [Sunah An-Nasa’I, Ibn Khuzaimah]

So, now it goes from being a normal habit of the Prophet ﷺ to being something that has religious weight!

Riding a camel to work, is that sunnah? According to the first definition, yes. But do we say it’s encouraged to get rid of your car? No, that would be ridiculous – we can differentiate between a cultural norm at that time and something that has religious significance.
DRESSING AS THE PROPHET DRESSED

Ibn Qayyim said, "The custom of the Prophet with regards to clothing was that he would wear whatever Allah had facilitated for him of the clothes of his people. So he would wear a qamis, a turban, an izar, a rida’, a shawl, etc. He would wear cotton and wool, and other garments, and he would also wear what was imported from Yemen and other lands. So his Sunnah actually necessitates that a man should wear whatever Allah has facilitated for him in his land, even if it be more luxurious (than this)..."

If we somehow got a time machine right now, and we go back to meet the Prophet Muhammad at the Battle of Badr, it would take us a moment to figure out who the Muslims are because both sides would look the same! (Assume we didn’t know details from the Seerah such as the number of people on each side.)

Think about it— the Prophet wore the same clothes that Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab wore. Yes, there are times when we do differentiate ourselves, but otherwise, we don’t need to do that.

5 RULINGS IN SHARI’AH

1.) Fardh/Wajib
   - Required
   - If you act upon it, you are rewarded
   - If you leave it, you are sinful

2.) Sunnah/Mustahabb/Mandub
   - Matter that is optional, but recommended and liked
   - If you act upon it, you are rewarded
   - If you leave it, you are not sinful

3.) Mubah
   - Neutral, permissible, allowed
   - Action that has no religious weight to it
   - If you act upon it, you are neither rewarded nor are you considered sinful

4.) Makrooh
   - Disliked
   - If we leave it, we are rewarded
   - If we act upon it, we are not sinful

5.) Haram
   - Forbidden
   - If you act upon it, then you are sinful
   - If you leave it, then according to the majority of scholars, you are rewarded
CUSTOMS AS A LEGAL SOURCE IN THE SHARI’AH

The Legal Maxim:
‘Customs can be used as a legislative source for rulings’

It is permissible to take part in our own culture and customs, and it can also hold religious weight and religious significance from the perspective of legal maxim.

Usul Al-Fiqh

➢ At the very top, we have the science known as Usul Al-Fiqh
➢ The sources of rulings are the Qur’an and Sunnah
➢ It addresses the question: how do we derive rulings from the sources?

Fiqh

➢ From Usul Al-Fiqh, we derive fiqh rulings
➢ What is halal and haram?
➢ E.g. How do we pray? Is it halal to eat this?

Qawa’id Fiqhiyyah

➢ This can be translated as Islamic legal maxims
➢ They are a set of rules or principles that are derived from fiqh
➢ These principles are not for laymen
➢ Scholars use general maxims and principles for convenience
  o E.g. One major maxim/principle states that certainty is not negated by doubt. Say that someone wakes up for Fajr and makes wudu, and Dhuhr time enters. He does not remember if he still has wudu or not; the certainty is that he made wudu for Fajr while the doubt is whether he broke his wudu or not. Because certainty is not negated by doubt, a scholar would say he still has wudu.
  o Say that someone makes wudu for Fajr, uses the bathroom, and then Dhuhr time enters. He does not remember if he made wudu after using the bathroom or not. The certainty is that he used the bathroom while the doubt is whether or not he made wudu again. A scholar would say that he needs to remake his wudu.
1.) Understanding the Wording of the Maxim
- Al-‘Aadah
  - Linguistically means to return, to come back, or to do something over and over again
  - Technically, for this class and our usage, it means: every statement or action that is frequently reoccurring, whether it be from and individual or a group, good or bad
  - E.g. In America, one of the customs is to hold the door open for the person behind you – this is an action that is frequently reoccurring from a group
  - E.g. Someone who stops for coffee every morning on the way to work – this is an action that is frequently reoccurring from an individual
- Muhakkamah
  - Comes from the verb hakkamah, which means to judge or appoint as a ruler
  - The word tahkim or hukm means judgement

2.) General Meaning and Understanding of the Maxim
- Customs can be used to establish a religious ruling as long as it does not go against a religious text
- So, the 5 rulings in Shari’ah can be determined using customs
  - E.g. You buy a phone from someone in Canada for 500 dollars. When you’re ready to send the 500 dollars via PayPal, the seller says that he wants 500 US dollars even though he lives in Canada. (The US dollar is worth more than the Canadian dollar) You take the case to a judge. There is nothing in the Shari’ah that would define such a scenario. Because the trade took place on Canadian terms, the judge would rule that the Canadian dollar would be used since that is the Canadian custom. So, the Shari’ah can return to the customs and culture of the people at times.
  - However, say we are having a restaurant cater our Eid party. They bring food and drinks, but the drinks they bring are alcoholic drinks. Can the judge just say, “Al-‘Aadah Muhakkamah.” The custom is that the restaurant would bring alcoholic drinks. No, he cannot say that because alcoholic drinks is not an acceptable custom because it goes against our religion.

3.) Difference Between ‘Aadah and Ijmaa’
- Definition of Ijmaa’: agreement of the mujtahidun of the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ on a religious ruling after his death
- Who are the mujtahidun? People who can derives fiqh from the usul. They make ijtihad as they derive rulings from the Qur’an and Sunnah. These individuals have studied, grounded themselves in a madhab, graduated, studied comparative fiqh, and then became qualified to make rulings, especially on new matters. Most people are not mujtahidun.
- Ijmaa’ is established when all the mujtahidun agree on a matter – not the majority, not most, but all.
5 major differences between ‘Aadah and Ijmaa’:
I. *Ijmaa’* only comes from the mujtahidun while an ‘Aadah can come from anyone. An ‘Aadah can come from ignorant people, laymen, students of knowledge, or mujtahidun. Even if all the fools agree on something, that would be the custom of those fools.

II. *Ijmaa’* is only established when all of the mujtahidun agree. With an ‘Aadah, this is not the case.

III. *Ijmaa’* only takes place after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. There is no such thing as *Ijmaa’* during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. All the Sahaba could agree on a matter during his lifetime, but if the Prophet ﷺ disagreed, their opinion is irrelevant. But if the Sahaba agreed upon a matter after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, then that becomes *Ijmaa’*. An ‘Aadah, on the other hand, is not related to the life of the Prophet ﷺ; it can be before, during, or after his life.

IV. *Ijmaa’* is considered daleel Shari’i (religious evidence) while an ‘Aadah is not necessarily daleel Shari’i – it can be at times, but not always. So, it is enough for a scholar to give a ruling and state that the evidence is *Ijmaa’*. Once *Ijmaa’* is established, it does not change, nor is it replaced. For example, there is *Ijmaa’* that 5 daily prayers are mandatory upon us. If all of the mujtahidun come together today and say there are only 4 daily prayers, then that opinion is invalid because *Ijmaa’* has already established 5 daily prayers.

V. Once *Ijmaa’* is established, it is true and correct. As opposed to an ‘Aadah – just because people agree on something, doesn’t make it true or correct. There needs to be overwhelming evidence that *Ijmaa’* exists on an issue.

**CATEGORIZATION OF CUSTOMS ACCORDING TO THEIR PREVALENCE**

*General Customs:* everyone takes part

*Majority Customs:* the majority of people take part it, more than 50%

*Shared Customs:* half and half of people take part

*Rare Customs:* less than half of people take part, just a few
CONDITIONS FOR CONSIDERATION OF A CUSTOM AS LEGAL EVIDENCE

1.) It does not go against invariable (i.e. does not change) and established rulings and principles of the Shari’ah
   - E.g. Say that the majority of society considers tattoos to be normal, and thus it becomes a custom. Does this custom have religious significance with legal weight? No, because it goes against an established ruling.

2.) It is not a religious custom
   - E.g. Wearing a cross – even if this becomes common in our society, we are not allowed to partake in this custom due it’s religious background.

3.) It is either a general or majority custom
   - It can’t just be a few people taking part in the custom

4.) NOTE: In matters mentioned by the Shari’ah without specifics, nor are the specifics found in the language, in that case we turn to the customs
   - Language refers specifically to the Arabic language
   - If the Shari’ah has not given us specifics about a matter, and it is not found in the Arabic language, then we turn to customs
   - E.g. Person X wants to buy a coffee table from person Y on Craigslist. Person X sends the money via Venmo. Person Y tells him to come pick up the table, but person X says it should be delivered to him. So, they take the case to the local Sheikh; he does not find anything pertaining to the matter in the Shari’ah or in the Arabic language. So, he looks to the customs which state that if you’re the buyer through Craigslist, you pick up your merchandise. This is how the Shari’ah takes into account local customs and culture; the ruling can change depending on the society.
   - You cannot properly practice the deen without taking into account the culture you live in.

WHAT CAUSES SOME MUSLIMS TO REJECT THE NOTION OF ALL “NON-MUSLIM CUSTOMS?”

1.) Practices that go against Islam
   - E.g. growing up in a culture where the majority of people are non-Muslims – they have practices that go against Islam such as alcohol, gambling, and sex outside of marriage

2.) Ill feelings towards western culture
   - Certain lands have been colonized and subjugated by western countries, creating animosity towards those cultures
3.) Fear of dividing the Ummah

- Some think that partaking in non-Muslim cultures may compromise the unity of the Ummah, when in reality it can add to the beauty of our Ummah (when it is within the folds of Islam)
- Even amongst the Sahaba, we find different cultures. Salam Al-Farisi had the title “The Persian.” The Prophet did not forbid him from using this title, and he respected it even though the Persians at that time were fire worshippers.
- Differences can add to our Ummah as opposed to subtracting from it

THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

We have a group/shared identity in addition to a personal identity. Most people link their personal identity to being Muslim, but that doesn’t mean we all have to be the same. We should be united as one Ummah as we share common beliefs, morals, and ethics. As different individuals, we have specific traits and characteristics that make us unique. Islamically, we celebrate these differences. The beauty of Islam allows us to still come together and unite through the deen; Allah states that He made us into different people and tribes that we may know one another.

Our spirituality and Iman are not defined by imitating others in terms of dress and physical appearance. The Sahaba did not look the same. It's natural and normal to be different. Life would be boring if we all looked the same, and many have a desire to express their individuality.

Islam offers so much room for differences within the guidelines of the Shari’ah. We should not restrict our kids, wanting them to be the same as everyone else. When we restrict them in halal matters, they will think the deen is narrow. Many times, we inadvertently speak on behalf of Allah. It is He Alone who defines what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Sometimes we restrict people in matters that we just personally don’t like; we try to use the deen to validate our personal distaste on an issue. We need to avoid this kind of mentality because it’s very dangerous to attribute something to Allah and His Messenger, when in reality, there is no basis for it in the deen.
CASE STUDIES IN CUSTOMS AND CULTURE
The Wedding Dowry

“And give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously.” Surah Al-Nisa

Allah ﷺ refers to the mahr by using the word sadaq, which comes from the word sidq (truthfulness). So, the mahr is a testament to the person’s intention to marry someone; he displays sincerity and truthfulness both in his intention of marriage in addition to his commitment to fulfill his obligations towards his wife.

The mahr is not meant to make the bride secure or offer financial stability. It is a very common misconception that the mahr is given as security in case of a divorce. This is not the purpose of the mahr.

Islam does not specify an amount for the mahr, but it can’t be nothing. It must be something of value, and value is relative. A Companion once wanted to get married, so the Prophet ﷺ asked him if he had anything to offer; the Companion said no. So, the Prophet ﷺ asked him what he knows of the Qur’an, and he explained that he knows Surah Al-Fatiha. So, the Prophet ﷺ told him to teach that surah to his wife as the mahr.

Islamically, there is no maximum or minimum for the mahr. It is based on the concept of bil ma’ruf which refers it back to culture/customs and that which is good amongst the people. The Prophet ﷺ said the best of mahr is that which is the easiest and most convenient. So, the mahr should never be a burden, either to the one giving it or the one receiving it. But if someone can afford and is willing to give one million dollars as the mahr, that’s fine too.

In certain cultures, people use the concept of muqaddam and muakhir in which one mahr is given at the time of the nikkah while the other mahr is given later on (i.e. code for divorce). There is nothing in the Shari’ah that mentions this, and we do not find the Prophet ﷺ or any of the Companions doing such a thing. Some scholars allow for it, but Sh. Saad personally discourages it, saying that it is detrimental and goes against the spirit of the mahr. As we discussed above, the purpose of the mahr is not to ensure financial stability. Even when analyzing it from such a perspective, we understand that security is in the Hands of Allah ﷺ. It’s problematic if the husband stays in a relationship due to a financial amount he would have to pay if he divorced his wife.

Marriage does not solve problems; if problems exist before the marriage, it is highly likely that problems will exist after marriage. Some parents marry off their children due to problems like dating and zina, but that only brings another person into the problem who has to suffer. People need to solve their problems before they get married. Fiqh of marriage
explains that certain issues need to be disclosed before the nikkah takes place (e.g. terminal illness, ailments, addictions). Sh. Saad believes that issues such as additions and mental illnesses need to be disclosed beforehand since the other party needs to know that potential challenges lie ahead.

**Cultural practices during weddings**

A dabka is a dance done in certain cultures. If the Islamic guidelines are met, then this cultural practice is not a bad thing. In fact, if this is part of a person’s culture, then they are encouraged to do so.

We should not hold the Qur’an over the newlyweds’ heads. Some cultures will hold a mushaf over the bride’s head, thinking that she is “walking under the shade of the Qur’an.” In order to attribute goodness, reward, and piety to a religious practice, we need proof.

The notion of attaching a belief to a custom is problematic. For example, some believe that whoever catches the bouquet will get married next. We should not believe in things like this.

**“Non-Muslim” Names**

When people say “non-Muslim” name, they usually mean non-Arab names. Islamically, we cannot take any name that belongs to Allah ﷺ, a name that is enslavement to other than Allah ﷺ, or a name that has a bad meaning.

There are some preferred names. For example, the Prophet ﷺ said that the most beloved names to Allah ﷺ are ‘Abdullah and ‘Abdurrahman. And the worst names are Harb (war) and Murrah (bitterness). The Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to name our children with the names of the Prophets.

**There is no such a thing as Muslim name or non-Muslim name.** It goes back to culture. Some names we know as Muslim names were actually non-Arab names; for example, the name Salman was actually a Persian name.
When people convert, they are often told they need to change their name to an Arab name. If they themselves want to pick a name of a Companion or a Prophet, that is their decision. But we cannot simply tell them to change their name because our name goes back to our culture. Encourage converts to use whatever name they want, as long as it does not go against Islam. Remember that Islam transcends culture.

Should we give our children Arabic names or “American names?” If we give them an American name, and they are practicing Muslims, that will represent Islam well. On the flipside, it would be pretty amazing if our next president is named Muhammed or ‘Abdullah. We could have names of Prophets and Companions integrated into American society just like the Hispanic name Jose is now a part of the American fabric. There are two sides to the argument.

Names like Muhammed should not be turned into nicknames like Mo because of the significance behind the name Muhammed. If a nickname is used out of affection, then that may be permissible. But a nickname should not be given due to an inferiority complex. Sh. Saad personally discourages people from naming their children Osama due to the challenges the children will face. If you are going to name your child Osama, you need to educate him from a young age about how to deal with certain issues.

**Gender Interaction**

Cultural norms influence the way we interact with the opposite gender. Different gestures, words, and phrases have different meanings in different cultures. We need to uphold certain guidelines when interacting with the opposite gender:

1.) **Sincerity**

This factor is the most important guideline for gender interaction. Sincerity ties in with the relationship you have with Allah ﷺ. You must assess your intention when having a conversation with the opposite gender and ask yourself, “Why is this conversation taking place?” If the intention is to please Allah ﷺ while the communication itself is within Islamic guidelines, then it is permissible.

However, if the intention is corrupted and the heart impure, no amount of guidelines will make a difference. For example, some may put a physical barrier in a room when both men and women are present. Such physical restriction may help for a short period of time in that space, but men and women have other ways to access one another, especially after they leave that room.

Our focus should be to purify the hearts while bringing people closer to Allah ﷺ. If people understood the implications of inappropriate gender interaction, they would understand the dangers it poses in addition to its effect on spirituality. We need to constantly renew our intentions. When speaking to the opposite gender, do we desire that he or she likes us and accepts us? Or do we desire that Allah ﷺ likes and accepts us?
2.) Purposeful and Professional
This aspect can be affected by culture and society. For example, in the US, it may be acceptable to say, “Good morning” or “Have a good one” to the opposite gender. People in the US do not view such statements as inappropriate. However, such behavior would not be acceptable in Saudi Arabia because of the different culture.

Keep in mind that just because society deems a specific “professional” aspect as normal, doesn’t necessarily make it so. Certain leeway exists depending on the culture, but we have our own Islamic guidelines to follow.

3.) Guarding our Gaze
Allah ﷻ gives the command to lower the gaze before the command of hijab.

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision...” Surah Al-Nur, 24:30

“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision...” Surah Al-Nur, 24:31

People can take two extremes on the issue of lowering the gaze. Some will say there is no way to lower the gaze in this kind of society and that it’s impossible to not make eye contact. On the other extreme, some will say we need to lower our gaze completely by looking at the ground the whole time. Allah ﷻ says min absaarihím, which means we lower from amongst the gaze. So, when we fear temptation or fitnah, or when the situation is becoming uncomfortable, we lower our gaze (it is also permissible to look to the side). Even in American society, people don’t stare at each other in the face for the entire conversation. That is called a staring contest! Lowering the gaze goes back to our intention and our heart.

4.) Pay Attention to the Way your Dressed
Is our ‘awrah properly covered? Are we even dressed appropriately? We need to be aware and conscious of the Islamic guidelines of proper dress which we try to uphold to please Allah ﷻ.
5.) Avoiding Physical Contact

We have multiple evidences in the Shari‘ah that discuss the seriousness of physical interaction with a non-mahram. For example, the Prophet ﷺ said that it is better for an iron rod to be driven through a person’s head than to touch a woman who is not permissible for him. The Prophet ﷺ would not touch or make physical contact with non-mahram women.

Concerning shaking hands, the default is that we avoid it. There are some shyukh who allow for exceptions, such as for a job interviews. But remember, those are exceptions, not the rule.

We are not responsible for other people touching us when we don’t want to be touched. For example, if a waiter at a restaurant touches us, we are not responsible for that.

6.) Pay Attention to your Speech and Language

CELEBRATING “NON-MUSLIM” HOLIDAYS

Anas  narrates:

قَدَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ
الْمَدِينَةَ وَلَهُمْ يَوْمًا يَلْعَبُونَ فِيهِمَا، فَقَالَ

ما هَذَا الْيَوْمَانِ ؟ " قَالُوا : كَنَّا

نَلْعَبُ فِيهِمَا فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمُ : " إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ
ْأَبَدَلَكُمُ الْيَوْمَانِ بِمَنْهَامًا : يَوْمَ الأَضْحَكَيْنِ
وَيَوْمَ الْفَطْرِ.

“That when the Prophet ﷺ came to Madinah, the people had two days on which they celebrated. The Prophet ﷺ asked, ‘What are these two days?’ They said, ‘We used to celebrate these two days in the pre-Islamic period.’ The Prophet ﷺ then said, ‘Allah has replaced them with that which is better than them; the day of al-Adha (the sacrifice) and the day of al-Fitr (the breaking of the fast).’” [Abu Dawud, al-Nasa‘i]
People sometimes use this narration to state that we as Muslims can only celebrate 2 holidays: Eid ul-Adha and Eid ul-Fitr. However, when we analyze this hadith further in the proper context, we understand that the religious holidays are restricted to Eid ul-Adha and Eid ul-Fitr. So, holidays that have a religious belief or religious significance attached to them are restricted to what the Prophet taught us.

In the above hadith, the Prophet was referring to 2 pagan holidays the people would celebrate as they worship their idols. These 2 holidays were known as Yawm an-Nayrouz and Yawm al-Mahrajjan. The Prophet told them that Allah has replaced these 2 holidays with something better: Eid ul-Adha and Eid ul-Fitr.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS VS. CULTURAL HOLIDAYS**

There is a difference between cultural holidays and religious holidays. We are not allowed to celebrate non-Islamic religious holidays, holidays that have beliefs or superstitions attached to them, or holidays that have bad practices. Examples of religious holidays include the following: Christmas, Easter, Hanukkah, Saint Patrick’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Halloween, and Holi.

We are allowed to celebrate cultural holidays, even if they are not found amongst the Muslims. However, we must practice caution and ensure there are no beliefs or superstitions attached to them.

*New Year’s*

Some Asian cultures believe they can use fireworks for New Year’s to caste off demons and evil spirits; in this case, we should not celebrate New Year's or watch the fireworks. In American, we don’t have such superstitions, so it’s ok to watch the fireworks for fun.

*Mother’s Day/Father’s Day*

Some will say that every day is Mother’s Day, but we don’t really treat our mom like that every day. As long as we don’t attach any religious significance or superstition to it, there is nothing wrong with celebrating Mother’s Day. The same holds true for Father’s Day.
Anniversaries
It is permissible to celebrate anniversaries as long as there are no beliefs or superstitions attached and as long as you are not doing anything *haram*.

Thanksgiving
This is not necessarily a religious holiday per se, but we can trace its origins back to a “religious” group of people who killed indigenous people, took their resources, and enjoyed plenty of food. As a result of such resources and food, they showed thanks. Shaykh Saad will not say it is *haram* to celebrate Thanksgiving, but he is very reluctant to condone such celebrations since its origins are rooted in the slaughter of people. We need to be aware of the plight of others in addition to history, especially since history repeats itself. In general, Shaykh Saad discourages celebrating Thanksgiving.

Birthdays
If the birthday celebration carries beliefs and superstitions, then this is impermissible. For example, if someone blows out the candles on a cake with a wish, this impermissible. However, Shaykh Saad does not really see a problem with simply making someone feel special on the day he or she was born (e.g. buying a present). There are different opinions on this matter between various shyukh.

OTHER TOPICS RELATED TO HOLIDAYS
Gatherings for non-Muslim Holidays
If someone has converted to Islam, and his or her non-Muslim family gathers for a non-Muslim holiday such as Christmas, one can attend as long as there is no pressure to participate in customs that go against Islam. If the family is convening simply to celebrate the holidays in general, then it is permissible to attend. However, the family should understand that you are Muslim and don’t celebrate Christmas. Shaykh Saad says that it is permissible to attend holiday parties at work. More and more companies are having holiday parties as opposed to Christmas parties.
Giving Gifts to Neighbors on Holidays
Shaykh Saad believes that we should give our neighbors gifts in general, not on Eid. It’s not really fair to give them gifts on our religious holidays and then reject the gifts they give us for their religious holidays such as Christmas. The most important thing to a Muslim is belief in Tawheed. We should strive to have a good relationship with our neighbors while educating them about our Islamic principles, and in sha Allah they will be understanding.

School Activities Related to Holidays
We should have a conversation with the teacher about such school activities and how they go against our religious beliefs. Most schools are quite understanding, and one of the benefits of a liberal democracy is the fact that people don’t force their beliefs upon others.

Receiving Religious Gifts
It is not permissible to receive religious gifts (e.g. something that is slaughtered for other than Allah ﷻ). Some scholars say to give such a gift in charity. For example, if someone gifts you food on Christmas, don’t throw it away; rather, give it to someone else as charity.
Section Three
General Principles and Guidelines Related to Fashion and Clothing

Principle 1

THE DEFAULT RULING REGARDING FASHION AND CLOTHING IS THAT ALL MATTERS ARE PERMISSIBLE EXCEPT FOR THOSE WHICH ARE PROHIBITED IN THE SHARI'AH

When it comes to fashion and clothing, we refer to principles which are based on evidences. It's rare to have an issue dictated by a single hadith. Principles are used, as opposed to specific examples, because principles can be applied across time, culture, and generations.

From the Fiqh of Chillin’, we discussed a similar concept for entertainment. Both entertainment and clothing fall into the same category of “non acts of worship.”

We divide matters into two broad categories: acts of worship and everything else. For acts of worship, the default ruling is that such acts are haram unless proven halal. We don't make up our own acts of worship because Allah has taught us how to worship Him. If we make up our own acts of worship with our own standards of piety, chaos would exist in the religion!

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى الَّتِي صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "مَنْ أَحْدِثَ فِي أَمْرِي هَذَا مَا لَيَسْ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدُّهُ.

On the authority of ‘A’isha, who said, “The Messenger of Allah said, ‘He who innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e. Islam) that is not of it will have it rejected (by Allah).’”

[Bukhari, Muslim]

So, if you bring a new act of worship that the Prophet did not teach us, it will be rejected. For example, say we go to a masjid where we find a brother jumping up and down and spinning in circles. He explains that he is praying Maghrib and that his actions are correct; it would be upon him to bring the evidence and burden of proof.
We see the mercy of Allah in the *deen*, as it’s not an endless list of rituals. There are a few ritual acts of worship, but not that many. Some people make the religion too complicated and difficult upon themselves. For example, some believe they should recite a certain *du’a* or *adhkaar* 10,000 times to combat certain hardship. However, we need evidence for such things! Yes, there are certain *adhkaar* that are said a specific number of times, but the highest is 100 times as explained in the *Shari’ah*.

**What about the dunya matters?**

For non acts of worship, the default ruling states that everything is *halal* unless proven *haram*. So, anything that is not a ritualistic act of worship is permissible unless there is evidence to prove otherwise.

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"It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth." *Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:29*

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The Prophet taught us a principle in his response to the question about fat, cheese, and fur, as opposed to a specific ruling. If we don’t find mention of a specific aspect, the general ruling holds that it is allowed; the term “pardoned” means allowed in this context. The “Book” also refers to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet .

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IN ORDER FOR US TO SAY THAT SOMETHING IS IMPERMISSIBLE

We need evidence which is:

1.) Authentic
2.) Clear + clearly applicable

So, general vague evidence does not count, and neither does a weak *hadith*.

> إنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فَرَضَ فَرَضَاتٍ فَلَنَّا نَتَصِبِّيِّعُوهَا،
> وَحَدَّحَ حُدُودَ دَافِلَاتَ تَعْتَدُوْهَا، وَحَرَّمَ أَشْيَاءَ فَلَنَّا نَتَأْتِهِمْ
> وَسَكَتْ عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ رَحْمَةَ لَهُمْ
> عَلَى نَسِيَانِ فَلَلَّهِ تَبَحَّثُوْا عَنْهَا.

“Verily Allah the Almighty has laid down religious obligations (fara'id), so do not neglect them. He has set boundaries, so do not overstep them. He has prohibited some things, so do not violate them; about some things He was silent, out of compassion for you, not forgetfulness, so seek not after them.” [Daraqutni]

So, for matters which Allah has made prohibited, we must not indulge in them or come close to them. But for matters that have not been mentioned, we should not go out of our way to investigate them and try to find some way to make them *haram*. Many people adopt such a mentality, thinking that it is the safer route; however, in reality, the safer route is to stick to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

THE APPROACH OF IMAM AHMED

Imam Ahmed said that when it came to the acts of worship, we (i.e. he and the scholars of his time) always restrained themselves and only did that which Allah allowed and legislated. To legislate such rights in terms of acts of worship is a right that belongs to Allah Alone. He and the other scholars feared falling into the category of people mentioned below:

> أَمْ لَهُمْ شَرَكُواْ شَرَكُواْ لِهِمْ مِنَ الْدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنَّ يِهَوِىٓ إِلَى اللَّهِ

“Or have they other deities who have ordained for them a religion to which Allah has not consented?” Surah Al-Shura, 42:21
Imam Ahmed said that for the regular acts (i.e. non-acts of worship), we would act freely and with forgiveness. He said that we were cautious with only those things which Allah has forbidden so that they would not fall under the category of the following people:

> قُلْ أَرَاءَتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ فَزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُ حَرَّمًا وَحَلَّلَ اللَّهُ أَذَّنَ لَكُمْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ ۡخَلْقَتْ ۡيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۡرَحْمَةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

“Say, ‘Have you seen what Allah has sent down to you of provision of which you have made [some] lawful and [some] unlawful?’ Say, ‘Has Allah permitted you [to do so], or do you invent [something] about Allah?’” Surah Yunus, 10:59

We cannot take it upon ourselves to dictate what is halal or haram. Who has given you permission to do this? Has Allah come and spoken to you, giving you such revelation? Or are you just making things up?

Keep in mind that Imam Ahmed was one of the most knowledgeable people, and this is the stance he took on issues pertaining to halal and haram. Therefore, we need to practice caution when we approach such matters.

So, for someone to come and say that something is haram, he or she needs evidence which is authentic, clear, and clearly applicable to what it’s being used for. Also, we do not take these matters into our own hands; rather, we leave them for qualified individuals such as mujtahidun.

**Principle 2**

**COMMON CULTURE IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, AS LONG AS IT IS WITHIN THE GUIDELINES OF SHARI’AH**

As discussed previously in Section 2: Understanding customs and Culture.

**Principle 3**

**THE SHARI’AH CONTAINS CERTAIN RULINGS THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO MEN AND CERTAIN OTHERS THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO WOMEN**

In general, the vast majority of rulings in Islam apply to both men and women. However, certain minority rulings exist specifically for men and specifically for women.
In the above *ayah*, the wife of ‘Imran is speaking. She was expecting a boy who would dedicate his life to the service and worship of Allah. However, she delivered a girl, and Allah says that He is fully acquainted with what she delivered; it was not an accident that she delivered a girl, as this was the will of Allah. So, a daughter will serve Allah as well. But He states that men and women are different: men possess certain strengths and women possess certain strengths, and each gender worships Allah in certain ways.

**Principle 4**

*RULINGS OF THE SHARI’AH APPLY TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN UNLESS SPECIFIED*

“Pray as you have seen me praying.” [*Bukhari*]

The Prophet commanded us to pray as he prays. Most of the scholars, and 3 of the 4 *madhaahib*, state that the actions and form of prayer is exactly the same for both men and women. So, they say no difference exists between a man’s prayer and a woman’s prayer because we do not have evidence to state otherwise.
“The Messenger of Allah 
رسُولُ اللّهِ صَلِّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ُوُيَّدُنُى يُهْنِيَّ نُوُّبُثُ مِنْ حَرْیرٍ،َوُيَّدُنُى الأُخرُ ذَهَبُ،ُفَقَالَ: ﴿إِنَّ هَذَيْنَ مُحَرَّمَ عَلَى ذُكُورٍ أَمْتِي، حِلُّ لَنَاثِئِهِمُّ.﴾

“The Messenger of Allah 
رسُولُ اللّهِ صَلِّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came out to us, and in one of his hands was a garment of silk and in the other was some gold. He said: ‘These are forbidden to the males of my nation and permitted to the females.’” [Ibn Majah]

The above hadith is an example of a ruling specified for a specific gender. The Prophet ﷺ didn’t say, “These are haram.” Such a statement would lead us to think they are impermissible for both men and women. Rather, he said, “These are haram to the males of my nation.”

The vast majority of rulings apply to both men and women, but people who have an agenda will focus on issues that differ between the two.

**Principle 5**

**ONE OF THE GOALS OF THE SHARI’AH IS BEAUTY**

قولُ مِنْ حَرَّمِ زِينَةَ اللّهِ آلِ آبَا وَاخْرَجَ لِعَبَادِهِ، وَأَطْلُبُتْ مِنِ الرَّزِيقِ

“Say, ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?’” Surah Al-A’raf, 7:32
We consider beauty to be given to us by Allah ﷻ. Also, the Prophet ﷺ said:

لا يدخل الجنة من كان في قلبه مثلان: دروا من كبر. قال رجل: إن الرجل يحب
آن يكون ثوبه حسنًا وفعله حسنًا. قال: إن الله جميل يحب الجمال، الكبير بطر
الحق، وعمم الناس."

“Whoever has in their heart the weight of a mustard seed of arrogance will not enter Paradise. A person said, ‘Certainly, one loves that their dress be nice and their shoes should be nice.’ The Prophet ﷺ replied, ‘Certainly, Allah is Beautiful and He loves Beauty. Arrogance is disdaining the truth and contempt for the people.’” [Muslim]

The Companion though that feeling good about nice clothes and shoes equated with arrogance. The Prophet ﷺ reassured the Companion, saying that arrogance is rejecting the truth and looking down on others. There is no blame upon us for possessing or liking nice things, as long as we attribute such blessings to Allah ﷻ, rather than ourselves. **Attribute your beauty to Allah, not to yourself!**

People can reject the truth because they think so highly of themselves. They immediately reject what others present to them, thinking, “I know better than you. Who are you to tell me?” They view themselves above others.

When they feel better than others because of what Allah ﷻ has given them, they develop disdain for people. The clothes are not the problem but rather the heart. **The most important factor remains the heart since that is where arrogance lies – and it has the potential to manifest itself through our behavior, tongues, and limbs.**

So, simply having nice clothing and nice shoes do not make us arrogant. We become arrogant if we think we are better than others because of our clothing and shoes.

Beauty in general shows the beauty of Allah ﷻ – when we see beautiful scenes in nature, we say subhanAllah, alhamdulillah, and Allahu Akbar. We attribute the beauty we see to Allah.
The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Allah loves to see the sign of His Bounties on his slave.’”

[Tirmidhi]

Allah loves that we show the blessings He has bestowed upon us, as long as we attribute such blessings to Him. We must avoid arrogance while ensuring that our hearts are intact.

“But as for the favor of your Lord, report [it].” Surah Al-Duhaa, 93:11

Some people will hide their blessings from others in an attempt to attain a certain level of humility. We need to eliminate the notion that dressing down and wearing cheap clothing will help us attain piety. Allah clearly states to report the favors He has bestowed upon you.

Work on securing a strong relationship with Allah. At times, worldly things can potentially help us come closer to Allah as we recognize that the blessings we have are from Him. Every time we see that blessing, we remember Him and say alhamdulillah. We also understand that Allah can take away those blessings at any time.

As long as the act is halal and correct, try to come closer to Allah while purifying your intention. We shouldn’t stop doing something due to fear of what others will think or say. **Riyaa is often translated as showing off (i.e. doing things for other than Allah). It is a form of minor shirk, and it is very serious.** For example, improving your salah when someone walks by is riyaa; they do not improve their salah for Allah, but for the sake of people. **Riyaa also encompasses not doing an act due to fear of what others will say or think.** For example, preventing yourself from donating at a fundraiser because you don’t want others to think you are showing off. Scholars say that doing something for the sake of people is riyaa, and **not** doing something for the sake of people is also riyaa.
Importance of Sincerity

When we find our hearts inclining to what people think and say, we need to work on our hearts instead of just stopping the action altogether. Sincerity is not an on-off switch; it needs to be constantly renewed since it remains susceptible to change. **Sincerity is to be conscious and aware of the heart diverting from Allah ❥ and pulling back to Him.** Even if we only come back half way, we have to always try! That is a struggle that Allah ❥ expects for each one of us!

As imperfect human beings, we won’t attain 100% sincerity. Our hearts waver back and forth. One moment we may be sincere, and one moment we’re not. **Tazkiyyah (purification) is not a one-time deal; it remains a life-long, continuous process.** We continue the struggle day-to-day, moment-to-moment, and this is the nature of human beings.

**Example of Ibn ‘Abbas ❥**

\[إني أحب أن أتزين للمرأة كما أحبّ أن تتزين لي المرأة\]

Ibn ‘Abbas ❥ said, “I love to beautify myself for my wife just as I love for her to beautify herself for me.”

Relationships are hard work that require much effort. If we want something from our spouse, we should be willing to offer that same thing with the same level of intensity, if not even more. For example, if we want respect from our spouse, we need to offer him or her respect. The husband and wife should each put in 100% work into the relationship while not focusing on the other’s shortcomings. Simply having the intention to please your spouse is a means of receiving reward from Allah ❥.

**Example of Mus’ab b. ‘Umayr ❥**

Mus’ab b. ‘Umayr ❥ was a young companion, and he was one of the best-dressed and most fashionable people in Makkah. When he entered a room, everyone would look at him, wanting to talk to him. They would know when Mus’ab arrived because of his fragrance. When he accepted Islam, he lost all of that – he became very poor and wore old torn clothes. When the Prophet ❥ saw him in such a state, he started to cry, saying, “I remember how Mus’ab b. ‘Umary used to be.” Some people misunderstand Mus’ab’s story, thinking that he left the **dunya** in order to become pious. **In reality, Mus’ab ❥ became poor because his family took everything away from him when he accepted Islam.** His mother was so angry that she even chained him up in the house; he didn’t throw away his wealth or belongings. This was a test from Allah ❥.
Understanding the Concept of Tabarruj

Tabarruj is to display our beauty in a way which Allah ﷻ has made impermissible. Yes, we should display our beauty and attribute it to Allah, but He has also set boundaries and guidelines in which we should not display our beauty. An example of tabarruj is to display our ‘awrah to someone who should not see it.

Is it permissible for a woman to wear a bikini? It depends. It would be considered good if it were around her husband (and they both like that). However, it would be impermissible for her to wear a bikini around non-mahrams. The clothing itself has not changed, but the environment has changed.

\[\text{وقرن في يونيكن ولا تحب بنبرح نبرح الجاهلية الأولى} \]

“...and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance.”
Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:33

Principle 6

COVERING THE ‘AWRAH IS PRESCRIBED BY THE SHARI’AH

The ‘awrah refers to something you are shy, ashamed, or embarrassed about. The word ‘awirah refers to losing sight in one eye. Linguistically, ‘awrah refers to a kind of shortcoming, defectiveness, or an area of vulnerability.

The Prophet ﷺ also referred to the word ‘awrah/‘awrat to refer to sins and shortcomings:

\[\text{اللهم استر عوراتي وآمين روعاتي} \]

“Oh Allah, veil my weaknesses and set at ease my dismay.” [An-Nasa’i, Ibn Majah]

‘Awrah is the part of the body that we don’t want to expose to the public; if it were to be exposed to the public, we would feel shy and embarrassed. One of the goals of Shari’ah is to cover the ‘awrah as Allah ﷻ says:

\[\text{يتبين ما قد أزلنا عليكم لياستا يؤري سوءكم وريدتما وليلبس الافوق ذلك خير} \]

ذللك من ابتدأ الله لعلهم يذكرون"
CLOTHING SERVES TWO PURPOSES
1.) To cover the private parts/nakedness
2.) As a means of adornment/beautification.

Some people fall into 2 extremes when it comes to clothing. Some will say that clothing only serves a functional purpose (i.e. only to cover). Others will say that clothing is just for beauty, while disregarding what is covered and what is not covered. Islam brings both of these principles together.

Allah ﷻ says, "But the clothing of righteousness - that is best." So, the best thing you can clothe yourself with is piety. So, if we possess taqwa (God-consciousness), we will be able to apply the previous section of the ayah properly: we will be able to cover our nakedness in a way that brings us spiritually closer to Allah while also adorning ourselves in a way that is pleasing to Allah.

However, if people do not possess taqwa, they will not care about the guidelines set by Allah ﷻ, let alone what they wear and how it affects them spiritually.

The Prophet ﷺ mentioned in a hadith in Al-Haakim, “Certainly, it has been forbidden for us that our ‘awrah be seen.” He also said:

لا يَنْظُرُ الرِّجْلُ إِلَى عَوْرَتِ الرِّجْلِ الرِّجْلِ، وَلَا المَرَأَةُ إِلَى عَوْرَةِ المَرَأَةِ

“Let no man look at the ‘awrah of another man, nor a woman look at the ‘awrah of another woman.” [Muslim]

The above hadith carries historical significance since the previous nations did not have laws pertaining to the ‘awrah between the same gender. So, there was no ‘awrah between a man and a man, nor was there an ‘awrah between a woman and a woman. The Shari’ah of the Prophet ﷺ changed this, establishing an ‘awrah between the same gender.

Being naked when one is alone
There is no ‘awrah between a person and him/herself. It is permissible to be naked when one is alone, however, he or she should not overdo it or indulge in it. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about the ‘awrah when a person is alone, and he said:
“Allah is most deserving of being shy from Him.” [Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud]

Out of a sense of hayaa (modesty), we generally should not walk around naked even in our own house when no one is looking. It is not haram to be naked when alone, but we should still try to cover our ‘awrah to increase in modesty while being aware that Allah and His angles are watching us.

**The ‘awrah in front of one’s spouse**

There is no authentic evidence to state that an ‘awrah exists between husband and wife. Such “evidence” is either a fabricated hadith or extremely weak. In fact, the Prophet said:

احْفِظْ عَوْرَتَكَ إِلَّا مِنْ زَوْجِتِكَ

“We protect your ‘awrah except from your wife.” [Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud]

‘A’isha said that the Prophet and she would make ghusl together from one vessel placed between the two of them. Other narration from Umm Salamah and Maimoona also state that they would bathe with the Prophet.

**MEN’S ‘AWRAH**

1.) The Various Opinions

Although there are a few different opinions regarding a man’s ‘awrah, most of the differences are regarding the thigh area specifically. In general, everyone agrees that the ‘awrah of a man is between the navel and the knee, with slight nuances in specifics.

There are two main opinions regarding the ‘awrah of a man:

- The 4 madhaahib all agree that the ‘awrah is between the navel and the knee.
- The other opinions, which come from the dhaahiri madhab, state that the ‘awrah is only the private parts.

2.) Evidences

- The Dhahiri scholars take their evidence from the Qur’an, in which we hear about the private parts only.
“O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness – that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember.” Surah al-A’raf, 7:26

“O children of Adam, let not Shaytan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts. Indeed, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them. Indeed, We have made the devils allies to those who do not believe.” Surah al-A’raf, 7:27

From these two ayat, the argument is made that Allah has told us to cover only our private parts.

- There are two additional ahadith that Dhahiri scholars use as further evidence.
  - Hadith of Jabir ibn Abdullah, mentioned in Sahih Muslim: The Prophet was traveling for Hajj and riding on a camel when his ihram split open and Jabir saw the whiteness of the Prophet’s thigh.
  - Hadith of Anas ibn Malik, mentioned in Sahih Muslim: The Prophet was riding through the streets of Khaybar, and Anas was riding so close to him that his knee touched the thigh of the Prophet. His izar receded slightly and the thigh could be seen.

Both of these ahadith narrate the Prophet’s thigh being exposed, which is why the Dhahiri madhab states that the thigh is not a part of the ‘awrah.

- On the other hand, the 4 madhaahib take their evidence from a hadith in Tirmidhi.
  - Jarhad reported that the Prophet passed by him while his thigh was exposed. The Prophet said to him, “Cover your thigh, for certainly it is from the ‘awrah.”
The scholars from these 4 madhaabib state that Allah has only mentioned the private parts in the Qur’an because it is the most severe part of the ‘awrah. They also mention that the exposure of the Prophet’s thigh was an accident, and a common incident while riding, in the hadith given by the Dhahiri scholars.

- However, the Dhahiris have one more piece of evidence.
  - Hadith of ‘A’ishah, mentioned in Sahih Muslim: The Prophet was lying down in his apartment and his thigh was uncovered. Abu Bakr sought permission to enter and ‘A’ishah allowed him to enter while the Prophet Muhammad was in the same state. A while later, ‘Umar also sought permission and he was allowed to enter to have a conversation with the Prophet while the Prophet was in the same state. After some time, ‘Uthman sought permission to enter, and the Prophet sat up and fixed his clothes before his conversation with ‘Uthman. After he left, ‘A’ishah questioned the Prophet as to why he did not fix his clothes before Abu Bakr and ‘Umar entered, but then covered his thigh before ‘Uthman. The Prophet responded, saying “Should I not be shy in front of a man whom even the angels are shy in front of?”

This evidence seems to indicate that the Prophet had his thigh uncovered in front of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar on purpose, not by accident.

So how do we deal with this? This could be a scenario which is exclusive to the Prophet Muhammad, but it is not clarified as such.

One of the main arguments presented by the 4 madhaabib is that the Prophet was unaware since he was in his home, but was reminded of ‘Uthman’s modesty as ‘Uthman was about to enter. However, this is still a problem, because if the thigh is part of the ‘awrah, then it means it would be sinful to expose it. The Prophet would never purposefully do something that is sinful, so it might have been a mistake. But, when the Prophet did something when he was unaware, the angels would remind him and would not allow him to keep making mistakes if something were impermissible.

So who is right? There are clear evidences and arguments on both sides of whether or not the thigh is part of the ‘awrah.

3.) The Stricter ‘Awrah and the Lesser ‘Awrah
The Maliki madhab has a way to combine all of these evidences.

There are two types of ‘awrah for men:
- The Stricter ‘Awrah: the private parts
- The Lesser ‘Awrah: the thigh area
In general, all of the ‘awrah should be covered, both the stricter and lesser ‘awrah. However, if the lesser ‘awrah is uncovered, due to forgetfulness or a mistake, then a person is not sinful. Sometimes, a certain type of clothing, such as the izar that the men used to wear or basketball shorts today, could accidentally expose the thigh. But, if the stricter ‘awrah is exposed, then that is a sin.

There are slight nuances regarding the differences of opinions amongst madhaahib.

• The majority consider the ‘awrah to be that which is between the navel and the knee, but not including the navel or the knee (i.e. right after the navel, and right before the knee)
• The Hanafi madhhab considers the knee itself to be a part of the ‘awrah. So, they say the ‘awrah is after navel, down to and including the knee
• The most lenient opinion is that of the Dhahiris, which state the ‘awrah as only being the private parts.
• The Shafi‘i and Hanbali madhaahib state that the ‘awrah is between the navel and knee (the navel itself is not included, and the knee itself is not included)

4.) Men’s ‘Awrah During Prayer
What is the ‘awrah of the man during prayer? Regarding the upper body, shoulders, and back, the majority of madhaahib state is that it is not obligatory, but recommended. This means that the prayer is still valid without covering these parts.

• We have evidence of this from the Hadith of Sa‘eed ibn Harith, mentioned in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim: Jabir ibn Abdullah was asked about praying in a single garment, which is wrapped around the bottom half of the body (i.e. upper body is bare). Jabir told them about a journey he took with the Prophet, where he stood next to the Prophet to pray and he only had one garment. Prophet Muhammad asked him what type of wrapping it was, and told him that if the garment was large enough, to wrap it around the body (i.e. covering the top of the body and shoulders). However, if it was too small, then to wrap it around the waist.

This hadith shows us that it is recommended and preferable to cover the shoulders during salah, but if that is not possible, then it is still permissible to pray without covering the shoulders.

The Hanbali madhhab states that covering the shoulders is fardh (required).

• They take evidence of this from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah, mentioned in Sahih Muslim: The Prophet mentioned, “None of you should pray in a single garment of which no part covers their shoulders.”

What about while making Tawaaf? During Tawaaf, the right shoulder is uncovered, but it should be covered after Tawaaf, before praying. So technically, the shoulder is still covered in prayer.
It is important to note that the Shi'ite madhhab and the Hanbali madhhab do not consider the knee to be a part of the ‘awrah, but in prayer, they say it should be covered. The reasoning behind this is that our clothes tend to rise up when praying. One should wear clothing that covers the knee so that when someone sits down, even if the garment rises up a little bit, the ‘awrah does not get exposed.

WOMEN’S ‘AWRAH

1.) In Front of Non-Mahram Men

The word hijab, hujab, or ahjibah, comes from the root word hajab, which means prevention or barrier. The garment is called a hijab, because it prevents someone from seeing what is behind it.

The verses mandating hijab were legislated in the 5th year of Hijrah, 18 years after the message of Islam was first revealed. To put things in perspective, salah, zakat, sawm, and other acts of worship were also obligated around the 5th year of Hijrah. This timeline of events is relevant because when we talk about spirituality and being a good Muslim, we start with issues like hijab, when in actuality, there are many more important things that came before it. During the 13 years in Makkah, there were no obligations that had been legislated, since all of that time was spent in increasing people’s Iman and bringing them closer to Allah. This is why Makki verses in the Qur’an deal with Tawheed, heaven, hell, and the afterlife; all of that is there is to strengthen Iman before legislation comes. Thus, when legislation was given to the Prophet Muhammad and his people, they were prepared and ready to obey for the sake of Allah, since they already had such strong faith.

Unfortunately, we often start the other way around, especially with the rulings of hijab. Some parents do this with their daughters; they don’t teach her much Islam and little is done to strengthen her Iman or belief in Tawheed. As soon as she hits puberty, they expect her to start wearing hijab. Obviously, this will be disastrous. The proper tarbiyyah wasn’t given, and the daughter is not ready for such a commitment. Other aspects of Iman have to be taken care of before she feels like she is ready to start wearing hijab. Spirituality needs to be learned and understood first. Guidance is in the hands of Allah, but we want to call people to Islam the way the Prophets did. We have to start with tarbiyyah and strengthen our faith from the beginning. The Companions had 18 years of tarbiyyah before the hijab was mandated.
It is also just as important to keep in mind that when we give da’wah, we should know the people we are giving da’wah to. We have each had our own experiences, our own journeys, and our own timelines to Islam. We have to give others the same opportunity. Often times, we want others to be at the same level of our own religiosity, expecting that they will understand and take our advice with open arms. But that is not always the case, and we sometimes get frustrated and start telling them off. This is not the way to give da’wah. We have to be merciful and gentle with others. Everyone has different life experiences, challenges, and struggles, and we need to be mindful of that. One’s journey to Islam might be a little slower than yours, and that is okay. At the end of the day, all that matters is our commitment and effort to do our best.

There are 2 major misconceptions about Hijab:
1.) Hijab is a cultural practice and not legislated in Islam. It was a culture of the Arabs back then and has leaked into the Islamic culture of today.
2.) Hijab was only legislated for the wives of the Prophet ﷺ.

Evidences for the Legislation of Hijab:

“O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.” Surah al-Ahzab, 33:59

Although the previous ayahs specifically addressed the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, this ayah addresses all of the believing women.

There are two specific words we must pay attention to in this ayah. The word, Yudneen, comes from the word dana, which means to draw close, bring over, or draw close to oneself.

The word, Jalaabeeb, is a plural of the word jilbaab, which comes from the word jalaba: to pull something from one place to another. A jilbaab is a garment that is pulled from one side to another.

When we use Qur’anic terminology, words found in the Qur’an, or statements of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, we must define them according to the definition of that time. Words can take on different meanings through different cultures and times, so we have to go back to classical dictionaries that define the words as to what they meant in that society at that particular time.
One such classical dictionary, called *Lisaanul-Arab*, defines a *jilbaab* as a type of garment that is larger than a headscarf, but smaller than the lower garment. It is sheet that a woman uses above or over her clothes, and covers her head and chest with.

Consequently, this *ayah* tells the believing women to cover themselves with a *jilbaab*, defined earlier as a garment drawn over themselves with the purpose of covering their head and chest. Umm Salamah said that when this verse was revealed, she saw the women from the *Ansaar* leaving their houses with black garments on their heads, and they looked like crows from a distance. This is how the verse was applied during that time.

The second *ayah* regarding *hijab* comes from *Surah al-Nur*:

\[
\text{وَقَالَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضَضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ}
\]

\[
\text{فَرُوجَهْنَ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زَيْنَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَآ أَظْهَرَ مِنْهَا}
\]

\[
\text{وَلِيَضْرِينَ بِعَشْرِهِنَّ عَلَى جَيْوِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زَيْنَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا}
\]

\[
\text{لَعُولُتَهُنَّ أَوْ أَبَابَاهُنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائَهَا بَعُولَتَهُنَّ أَوْ}
\]

\[
\text{أَبْنَائِهَا أَوْ أَبْنَائَهَا بَعُولَتَهُنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُنَّ أَوْ بَنِي}
\]

\[
\text{إِخْوَانَهُنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَٰلَهُنَّ أَوْ نَسَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ}
\]
“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.” Surah al-Nur, 24:31

The verse before this ayah addresses the men, instructing them to lower their gaze. When we talk about hijab, it is often considered an issue just for women, but Allah actually begins with men. They have the first responsibility, which is to lower their gaze. Even in this ayah, it might not seem like Allah is addressing the men, but He is, when He says, “And not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof.” This part of the ayah alludes to the fact that when a woman covers herself and wears hijab, there is always going to be a part of her beauty that will remain apparent, and that is not their fault. So then, it is the responsibility of the men to lower their gaze.

Men and women each have their own responsibilities, but they do not answer to each other. Their responsibilities stem from their relationship with Allah, so they answer to Him only.
As in the previous *ayah* from *Surah al-Ahzab,* there are two words we should make note of here in the *ayah* from *Surah al-Nur.*

The word, *Khumur,* is the plural of the word *khimaar,* which comes from the word *khamara,* meaning to cover or conceal the head. Today, it is normally a larger garment that has a slit, which the head goes through, leaving only the face exposed. Classically, the *khimaar* is almost identical to that and refers to a head covering, or headscarf.

The word, *Juyoob,* is a plural of the word *jayb,* generally meaning pocket, or something that has a slit or opening, referring to the chest in this case.

Allah ﷻ instructs the women to bring their *khimaar* over their chest. The primary purpose of the *khimaar* is to cover the head, but Allah ﷻ also instructs the women to use the *khimaar* to cover their chests as well. Sometimes there is an argument that in order to wrap the headscarf over the chest, it would have to be drawn over the face. But, the *jamhooor* (majority of scholars) said that that is not necessarily the case because the head and chest can be covered without covering the face due to the fact that one version of the *khimar* is when a woman puts her face through a slit rendering the head and neck covered while revealing the face.

Regarding the issue that *hijab* was only mandated for the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, it comes down to semantics and the understanding of words. Technically, the actual word *hijab* in the Qur’an is only applied to the wives of Prophet ﷺ, as stated in *Surah al-Ahzab.*

> “…And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition…”
> *Surah al-Ahzab,* 33:53

But *hijab,* as we know it today, is not referred to as a *hijab* in the Qur’an, but as a *khimaar,* which is what a headscarf is referred to in the Qur’an. There is a difference between the classical and modern usage of the word *hijab.* Classically, during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the *hijab* meant a barrier, but in modern usage, for us today, *hijab* means a headscarf. The word for headscarf during that time and in the Qur’an was *khimaar.*

There is *ijmaa’* that the *hijab* is *fardh* upon believing women,
The default position of the woman is that she is ‘awrah as mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ when he said, “The woman is ‘awrah…” [Tirmidhi]

The difference of opinion lies in what is exempt from this hadith and pertains to being in the presence of non-mahram men whom she is not related to. It stems from the difference in the Companions’ views regarding, “that which is apparent” in terms of the woman’s ‘awrah.

1. The face and hands are not a part of the ‘awrah
Every part of the woman is ‘awrah except these two areas. This is the opinion of all 4 schools of thought. The only difference is the Hanafi madhab which adds to this the feet.

2. The face and hands are part of the ‘awrah
This opinion includes the face and hands as part of the ‘awrah.

OPINIONS ON “THAT WHICH IS APPARENT”
The Companions differed regarding the meaning of “except that which is apparent.”

- Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbas state that the face and the hands are “that which is apparent.” Ibn ‘Abbas in the Sunnah of Al-Bayhaqi also adds jewelry that is worn on the hands and face specifically mentioning rings and eyeliner (kuhul)

- ‘A’ishah states that which is apparent are the face, hands, and feet. And in the Sunan of Abi Dawud, she mentions the narration of the Prophet entering upon the daughter of Abu Bakr, Asmaa wearing thin (see-through type) clothing and the Messenger of Allah turning away stating that “when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it is not appropriate for her to display anything from herself except this and this (pointing to his hands and face).” Note that ‘A’ishah doesn’t mention Asmaa as her sister, but rather the daughter of Abu Bakr to make the issue of non-mahram even clearer.

- Ibn Mas’ud states that “that which is apparent” is referring to her clothes because when she is covered, we can see her clothes. This is in reference to the two types of beauty, hidden and apparent. So, her jewelry is an example of hidden adornment and her clothes are the apparent adornment.
EVIDENTLY APPARENT

- The Prophet mentioned in a hadith that a woman in the state of ihram should not cover her face, nor should she wear gloves. This hadith can be used as an evidence for the hands and face not being part of the ‘awrah (i.e. the Prophet would not instruct us to reveal something of the body that is part of the ‘awrah). Sometimes it is used as evidence for the opposite opinion that the Prophet went out of his way to highlight these two body parts because they are normally covered but are not supposed to be covered in ihram.

- Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah delivered a sermon on the day of Eid. Per the Sunnah of the Prophet, the second part of the khutba was addressing women specifically and as he was speaking, a woman with dark cheeks stood up from the gathering. If the face of the woman was part of the ‘awrah, it would have been covered and Jabir would not have known that she had dark cheeks.

- The Hanafi opinion states that the feet are similar to the hands so they would take identical rulings. Imam Kaasaani, a Hanafi scholar, states that it is not permissible for a man to look at a woman except the face and the hands because Allah has said, “Tell the believing men to guard from their gaze,” except for the places of apparent adornment which is the face and the hands. Concession has been given for them with Allah’s statement: “And they should not reveal their adornment except that which is apparent.” So what is meant by زينة and the places of adornment is the face and the hands because when one needs to buy and sell, or to give and take, it is not possible to do so without exposing the face and the hands. Therefore, it has been made permissible. He states that this is the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah.

- Within the Hanbali school of thought, there is an opinion that the hands and face are a part of the ‘awrah.

- The argument made in verse 59 of Surah Al-Ahzab is regarding “the outer garments.” If this outer layer is on top of their chest, then it would cover their face. The majority of the scholars have states that it can come from the side and therefore cover the chest without covering the face.

"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."

Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:59
• The hadith of 'A’ishahﷺ where she states that riders would pass by us while we were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in *ihram*. When they got close to us, we would draw out our outer cloak from our heads over our faces. And when they would have passed us by, we would uncover our faces. So, one can say that around *mahram* family members, they would allow their faces to be uncovered and cover it in the presence of *non-mahram* individuals. But the majority of scholars state that this is something specific to wives of the Prophet ﷺ. So there is no difference of opinion in the fact that the wives of the Prophet ﷺ would cover their faces in the presence of *non-mahram* men. And *Surah Al-Ahzab* verse 53 mentions “And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition/barrier (حِجَاب).”

As a whole, we take the main opinion of the 4 *madhahib* that the hands and face are not part of the ‘awrah.

**NOTES ON NIQAB**

There is no valid scholarly opinion that states it is *haram* (impermissible) or *bid’ah* (religious innovation) for a woman to cover her face. Furthermore, there is agreement on the matter that, at the very least, it is *mustahab* (recommended and praiseworthy) for a woman to don the niqab as it is a higher level of *hijab*. Finally, the scholars are in agreement that if a woman fears *fitnah* (test of temptation) or in a place where she feels vulnerable, then she should cover her face. So, it can vary based on situation and circumstance.

Our scholars, even those who hold the opinion that covering the face is *wajib* (obligatory), have also stated that, in certain circumstances, a woman should uncover her face in cases involving identification or when they go to court for example.

Imam Ahmed said that he did not allow for a woman who wears niqab to buy and sell because she cannot be identified and that she should remove her niqab when she is buying or selling.

So, in modern times, if there is a sister who holds the opinion that she must cover her face, she should uncover it in matters of identification. For example, if she gets pulled over or needs to take a picture for an ID or any official/legal purpose. That is completely permissible.
HOW MUCH FACE?
Regarding the ‘awrah of a woman, what are the parameters of the face that is allowed to be uncovered? This is defined by the Shari’ah as it is used in other instances such as the wudu. The face is from the top of the forehead (hairline) down to the jawline, including the chin, and from ear to ear. Some scholars include what is underneath the jaw line and some say that the chin has to be covered but majority say that it does not have to be covered since it is a part of the face.

‘AWRAH IN FRONT OF MAHRAM MEN AND WOMEN
Although, traditionally, these were two separate issues, they are now put together since they are almost identical. We don’t have strict or clearly defined parameters for showing the ‘awrah of a woman in front of other women. A lot of is ijtihad of the scholars and the classical opinions stand upon cultural norms and customs of their era. The four madhaahib agree that what is permissible to be uncovered in front of mahram men is the hair, face, neck, forearms, legs up till the knee and the feet.

For women, in front of other women, the ‘awrah is divided into two types. Al-‘awarah al-mughalaqa (stricter ‘awrah) is the same as what is set for men in front of other men, which is what is from the naval to knee. And Al-‘awrah al-mukhaaffafa (lesser ‘awrah) is everything other than that. An example of the lesser ‘awrah would be a woman breastfeeding her baby in front of other women.

Classically, most of the scholars of the past declared the ‘awrah of a woman in front of non-Muslim women is the same as that in front of non-mahram men. The rationale was that, in the past, Muslim and non-Muslim land was divided; customs and norms may not have been understood between the two, so they made that clear distinction (i.e. if Muslim women were in a non-Muslim land, the ‘awrah is like that in front of non-mahram men). Nowadays, we don’t have that same distinction. Shaykh Waleed Basyouni’s opinion is that the ‘awrah of the woman would be the same in front of non-Muslim women as it is for Muslim women as long as they understand your norms and guidelines. But if there is doubt, one should practice more caution (e.g. people posting pictures online from a party with Muslim women not covering their hair).

‘AWRAH OF A WOMAN IN PRAYER
The ‘awrah of a woman during prayer is the same as that in front of non-mahram men except the issue of the feet. In the prayer, the feet are not considered a part of the ‘awrah for the Hanafis, Shafi’is, and one of the opinions of Imam Ahmad. Ibn Taymiyya also declared ijma’ (consensus) in this opinion. This was also the opinion of ‘A’ishah. Some scholars have made the distinction if non-mahram men are present, then they should cover their feet whereas others have not. Shaykh Saad leans towards the side of caution and recommends covering the feet if non-mahram men are present.
CLOTHES THAT ARE TIGHT
Even if there is no additional layer of covering on your clothes, they should not be revealing.

"Two are the types of the denizens of Hell whom I did not see (possibly meaning these types of people will come later in time): people having flogs like the tails of the ox with them and they would be beating people (enforcing the law with whips), and the women who would be dressed but appear to be naked, who would be inclined (to evil) and make their husbands incline towards it. Their heads would be like the humps of the bukht camel inclined to one side. They will not enter Paradise and they would not smell its odor whereas its odor would be smelt from such and such distance."

In terms of “clothed but naked,” it can refer to the following:
1.) The clothes are so tight, that it reveals the shape of the body.
2.) The clothes are see-through.
3.) Such little clothing is worn, the person is practically naked (e.g. modern-day bikini).

All of this information applies to men and women alike. The ‘awrah needs to be covered in a fashion that does not reveal shape of body, is not see-through, and completely covers the ‘awrah.

In regards to tights, their permissibility depends on the situation. If a woman is wearing them in front of women and there is another garment covering her stricter awrah, then that is fine. For men, if their skinny jeans are too tight around their thighs, that would not be right, but around the calves would be fine. Same with rips in jeans, it depends where the rips are. Shaykh Saad doesn’t like it when people make general statements like “skinny jeans are haram” because that’s not how it works. Use the principles we learned to determine each item on a case by case basis.

JILBAB IT UP
The jilbab, as we know it today is a singular piece of garment that goes from the top of the body all the way to the bottom as one piece. It is considered an outer garment. It is normally worn on top of other clothes. But is it required or not? Some of the scholars say that it is required based on the ayah below:
"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."

Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:59

The jilbab referenced in the Qur'an was an overgarment, but it didn’t always necessarily go from the top to the bottom. Shaykh Saad does not believe there is clear enough evidence that when a woman covers her ‘awrah, a secondary cover is required on top of that – as long as the clothes are loose-fitting. Shaykh Saad also does not see a problem with two piece clothing that covers the ‘awrah because the silhouette of a woman wearing a shirt and skirt is the same as a woman wearing a jilbab.

Principle 7

MODESTY IS PRESCRIBED BY THE SHARI’AH

The word hayaa (modesty) comes from حَيَاة which means “to live.” The word حِياة means “life.” Animals are called haywanaat because they are living creatures. So, some of our scholars say that the word “life” and modesty are related because modesty gives life to our Iman (faith). It is one of the defining characteristics of Islam as evidenced by the following hadith:

"Every deen has an innate defining character. The character of Islam is modesty."

This hadith is manifested through the exemplary and visible modesty of Muslim women around the world.

Modesty is not just an external concept, it’s an internal component as well. The scholars say that if there is no modesty in the heart, then it will eventually leave the limbs as well. There is also a well-known hadith about modesty below:

The Prophet said, "Whenever there is modesty in a thing, it adorns it. Whenever there is obscenity in a thing, it debases it."

Modesty adds a level of beauty that goes beyond the physical; it adds beauty to the heart. He also said that hayaa and Iman are two companions, so when one increases, the other also increases. So as our modesty goes up, so does our faith and vice versa. If there is a problem with one, there may be a problem with the other as well. So, the solution
might not be getting someone to dress properly, but rather, it may be a matter of faith that needs to be addressed. When our Iman is suffering, we should ask ourselves how we are doing with our modesty. Modesty not only encompasses how we dress, but also how we behave, speak, and act.

External beauty is subjective as standards fade and constantly change. True beauty is not linked to clothing or the lack of it. Hayaa is something that doesn't change. It is linked to the soul. It is part of our nature to find beauty in modesty, no matter how fashion changes. So, the link will always remain since it is connected to our fitra.

**Principle 8**

**ONE MUST NOT IMITATE NON-MUSLIM RELIGIOUS CLOTHINGS**

The Prophet ﷺ said “He who imitates any people (in their actions) is considered to be one of them.” Imam Dawud narrates this hadith in chapter dealing with clothing which is one of the ways that imitation can take place.

This concept refers to the imitation of specific clothing such as religious clothing. Examples of that include: a cross necklace, a nun’s particular headdress, a Jewish yamaka, a priest’s collar, or monk’s robe. We should ensure that our clothing is not associated with beliefs of another religion.
The Prophet  used to keep his hair falling loose. The pagans used to part their hair, and the People of the Scriptures used to keep their hair falling loose. The Prophet liked to follow the People of the Scriptures (even before Islam) in matters about which he had not been instructed differently, but later on the Prophet started parting his hair.

**Principle 9**

**ONE MUST NOT IMITATE CLOTHING AND FASHION ASSOCIATED WITH SINS AND THE SINFUL**

The evidence for this is the same as that presented under principle 8.

Examples: Wearing a shirt with a playboy bunny on it, wearing a costume on Halloween, KKK hoods, sagging pants, shirts with alcohol logo, clothing with profanity on it.

**Principle 10**

**ONE MUST NOT IMITATE THE CLOTHING AND FASHION SPECIFIC TO THE OPPOSITE GENDER**

The Messenger of Allah  cursed those men who are effeminate, and women who imitate men. Another narration is: The Messenger of Allah  cursed men who copy women and cursed women who copy men. [Bukhari]
Ibn Hajr says in Fath Bari (explanation of Sahih Bukhari), the clothing mentioned in the above hadith depends on the culture of the land. So, it remains dependent on what we consider to be masculine and feminine. For example, we consider high heels to be feminine clothing, so men should not wear them.

Fashion is a fast-changing industry. The permissibility of different styles and certain trends would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis. We need to take emotions out of the decision process and go back to the evidences – it would depend on the norms of the culture and society. For example, fashion is now moving towards a more unisex category, which causes a gray area to exist between feminine and masculine clothing. If this were to become the norm, then it would be permissible to wear such clothing.

Principle 11

THE SHARI’AH PROHIBITS EXTRAVAGANCE (ISRAAF)

“And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate”

Surah Furqan 25:67
WHAT IS CONSIDERED ISRAAF?

1.) To spend on something which is haram, even if it is a single dollar

2.) To spend beyond one’s means – for someone to take money away from a necessity and spend it on something that is not a necessity. This category of israaf differs from one person to another.

- Is it considered israaf for a man to get an $80 haircut every week? It depends:
  - a. If someone is wealthy and can afford that while fulfilling his obligations, then this is NOT israaf
  - b. If someone is struggling financially and cannot provide for his family with comfort, then it would be israaf

3.) To waste wealth – to spend money on something that has zero benefit whatsoever

- E.g. Wishing well, shopping mall fountain, etc.

ISRAAF VS. ZUHD

Zuhd is praiseworthy, and it’s often translated as asceticism. In certain traditions, people such as monks, will completely abandon the dunya and seclude themselves in a monastery. Islamically, this is an incorrect mentality. Zuhd is a state of the heart; we should not allow our hearts to be consumed by materialistic possessions of this worldly life.

Imam Hasan al Basri explained that zuhd is not achieved by wasting what Allah has blessed you with, but rather, it entails holding the dunya in your hands, not in your heart. So, when you hold something in your hands, it doesn’t seriously affect you or consume you whether you have it or not.

Some scholars say that zuhd is to show gratitude to Allah when He blesses you with something and to show patience when He takes that blessing away from you while still praising Him.

Imam Sulayman Al-Darani said that we should never testify that someone possesses zuhd because it is found in the heart, and we don’t have access to people’s hearts. Regardless, the heart can flip at any moment. We must understand that it remains impossible to judge whether someone has zuhd or not.

Very wealthy people may still possess zuhd; they do not allow the dunya to consume their hearts, they give in charity, and they would still be content if Allah took away the blessings. A very poor person does not necessarily possess zuhd. For example, he or she chase after the dunya and his or heart is very attached to worldly matters.
The Example of Imam Malik

Imam Malik gave rise to the Maliki Madhab, and he served as the Imam of Madinah. At his time, many people would say that he was the most knowledgeable person alive. When he was going to compile his muwatta (collection of hadith), people asked him why, since several other muwattas existed at the time. Imam Malik replied, “That which is done for the sake of Allah remains.” This statement testifies to the sincerity of Imam Malik, and Allah knows best, because when we hear the word muwatta, we only think of Imam Malik! His statement also explains the spiritual implication of the work that we do: even if the people don’t accept it, the reward is from Allah. When we are sincere, Allah puts barakah into the work that we’re doing.

Some of the early Salaf said that they tried to seek knowledge for other than the sake of Allah, but the knowledge refused to be sought for other than the sake of Allah.

Imam Malik was known to have the nicest clothes. One of his garments cost 50 dinars; that’s equal to almost $8,277.45 today! Every time he would narrate a new hadith, he would wear a brand-new set of clothes to honor the hadith. They say that he had 200 turbans, and that when he passed away, he had 300 pairs of shoes!

Imagine how we would feel if our local Imam bought an $8,000 shirt, or even an $800 shirt! In our times, we tend to think negatively of people who possess large amounts of wealth. However, we learn from the example of Imam Malik that this does not always hold true. When trying to determine if israaf exists, the answer is usually, “It depends.” It varies from case-to-case.

**Principle 12**

**ONE SHOULD NOT BE OSTENTATIOUS IN THEIR FASHION AND CLOTHING**

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "مَنْ لَيْسَ تُوبَ تُوبَةً شَهْرَةً أَلْبْسَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُوبَ مَدْلَةً".

“The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Whoever wears a garment of shuhrah in this world, Allah will clothe them with a garment of humiliation on the Day of Resurrection.’” [Abu Dawud]

Shuhrah refers to ostentatiousness: characterized by or given to pretentious or conspicuous show in an attempt to impress others. Libas al-shuhrah (the garment of
ostentatiousness) does not refer to how much the garment costs or how it looks. Rather, it is a type of garment that is worn that makes people arrogant; they feel better than others, and they use it to show off. Scholars say that Libas al-shuhrah can even be simple and torn clothing. For example, if someone wears simple clothing to show off supposed humility, then this is shuhrah!

**IS SIMPLICITY A GOOD THING?**

أَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ، أَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ إِنَّ الْبَدَاذَةَ مِنَ الإِيمَانِ إِنَّ الْبَدَاذَةَ مِنَ الإِيمَانِ

“Listen, listen, simplicity is part of faith, simplicity is part of faith.” [Abu Dawud]

The above hadith is thrown around all the time, and people fail to understand its context and fail to take into account the other evidences. Never in Islam do we take one evidence on its own and base our entire lives on that; we study the context, other evidences, and the goals of Shari’ah.

Abu Umamah ﷺ narrated the above hadith, and he explains how some of the Companions were sitting and talking about the dunya. When the Prophet ﷺ heard them, he said the hadith above, reminding them to avoid having the dunya consume their hearts. This was part of the education he gave his Companions.

**HOW DO WE EDUCATE PEOPLE?**

1. **Push and pull to create balance**
   - E.g. In the Qur’an, we have descriptions of both Paradise and Hellfire
   - In the hadith above, the Prophet ﷺ sensed the Companions leaning more so towards the dunya, so he reminded them that simplicity is part of Iman
2.) Even if Allah has given us plenty of wealth, there should be times in our life when we are purposefully simple

- E.g. The Prophet ﷺ himself wore nice things – people gifted him nice things and he wore them. At other times, he wore simple clothes because that is what he had
- Simplicity helps us develop empathy – a core theme in our deen
  - Fasting – most likely, none of us have never known what it is like to be completely poor
  - Do we know what it is like to go hungry? For your stomach to fold in? Yes, because we have fasted
- Today, Allah has blessed us – what happens if He tests us tomorrow?

Section 4:
Specific Issues Related to Fashion and Clothing

*Note*: every topic in this chapter will be discussed in relation to both men and women unless specified*

**IS COVERING THE HEAD SUNNAH?**
If we refer to Sunnah in light of the definition of hadith, then yes. We know from a hadith that the Prophet ﷺ used to cover his head in public, and that was the norm at that time. Men would often wear a turban.

However, it is not Sunnah in terms of receiving extra reward if performed. We have no authentic evidence that the Prophet ﷺ instructed or encouraged other men to cover their head, either during salah or outside of salah. In order for us to say there is reward, we would need evidence.

Imam Al-Shatri says that the issue of covering the head returns to the customs and culture of the people. If you live among a people who consider it good and praiseworthy to cover the head, then you should do so. For example, 60 years ago in America, many men wore hats. However, times have changed.

**REGARDING MEN’S HAIR**
The Prophet ﷺ said:

من كان لله شعر فليكفرمهُ

“He who has hair should honor it.” [Abu Dawud]
LONG HAIR
Abu Qatada once went to the Prophet and said, “I have a lot of hair that comes down to my shoulders. Should I spend time combing it?” The Prophet said, “Yes, and honor it.” So Abu Qatada would sometimes oil his hair twice in one day. Honoring the hair means taking care of it and spending time on it; it is our responsibility to make it look nice.

How was the hair of the Prophet? 
- Lengthwise, it was normally between his earlobes and his shoulders. Sometimes it would rest upon his shoulders. He had thick hair, it was ‘adheemul jumma – lots of thick hair that was wavy, not curly or straight.
- At times, the Prophet’s hair was so long it would be braided – Umm Haani authentically narrated that when the Prophet came to Makkah, he had 4 braids in his hair [Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah] This was the common practice at that time, especially when they traveled – they would either braid their hair, or bunch it together by sometimes using oil or animal fat.
- The norm among the Companions at that time was that most of them had long hair. Braids were also common.
- Imam Ahmed said that he was asked about keeping long hair, and after looking into it, he found that it was narrated among more than a few dozens of Companions of the Prophet. Long hair was a normal hairstyle at that tie.

HAIRSTYLE: DHU’AABAH
Another hairstyle that was common was dhu’aabah in which a section/block of the hair would remain long and the rest of the hair was shorter.

Example of the Prophet’s Companions having dhu’aabah:
- Anas in Abu Dawud: I used to have dhu’aabah so my mother said to me, “I will never cut this hair because the Prophet would stretch it out and hold it and play with it.” Anas was a young boy when he went to the Prophet, so the Prophet would roll his hair and play with Anas’ hair out of love for him.
- This was common among young boys (that they would have a lock of hair that was grown out called dhu’aabah)

We don’t find a single narration of a Companion criticizing another Companion for their hair.
HAIRSTYLE: QAZA’

Qaza’ is the plural of Qaz’ah, which refers to clouds that are torn and tattered like wool or cotton. A sheep that has part of its wool fallen out so there are patches is referred to as qazi’.
The above is a longer narration of the following hadith:

Nafi’ reported that Ibn ‘Umar said “The Prophet prohibited performing al-qaza’.” He said to him, “What is al-qaza’?” He said, “[It is] to shave part of the head of a child and to leave part [of it].” [Bukhari]

- We have 1 hadith deliberating over the permissibility of qaza’ between multiple Companions. Issues raised in the hadith:
  1. Issue of shaving – Hadith clearly mentions shaving, not shortening
  2. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars, does this apply to everyone or just kids? Narrations mention sabbiy (young boy)
  3. Does this hadith refer to a specific type of haircut or an outcome of a haircut?
- Scholars conclusion: Either there were haircuts that certain non-Muslim boys were known to have (i.e. monk boys would shave their heads in peculiar ways as a form of humility and submission; some Christian monks would shave the middle of their head and leave hair around it), and this kind of hairstyle could be considered distortion of the hair/head/creation of Allah
- The origin of qaza’ is something bad or distorted

- Hadith refers to having the hair cut in a way that someone has messed up the hair (cut from here, cut from there, changing Allah’s creation) – which was a practice among monks of nations before us

Is having hair of different lengths considered qaza’?
- There is no evidence to say that having hair of different lengths is forbidden or included as qaza’

The way the hair was cut at the time of the Prophet
- They had long hair - they would grow their hair out, take it at the back and snip off the length – when you grow your hair out and trim it at the back, you are automatically going to have hair of different lengths
- Absolutely no evidence to show that hair of different lengths is forbidden or disliked. It is an illogical opinion to think otherwise – almost impossible not to have hair of different lengths!

Most Severe Opinion Regarding qaza’
- Imam AlNawawi quoted Ijma’on the issue that qaza’ is makrooh– we don’t find classical scholars that say that it’s haram
- It is only in our times now that people try to say it’s haram, saying it’s imitation of non-Muslims – but the only imitation of non-Muslims that’s wrong is when it’s specific to their religion. Besides, there are barely any haircuts out there that non-Muslims don’t have!
- The evidence points to qaza’ being distortion of the hair (messing up on purpose)
- BUT just because a haircut is not considered haram, if your parents do not like for you to have that particular style, it is BETTER for you to obey your parents
WOMEN'S HAIRCUTS AND HAIRSTYLES

*Today: Haircuts are becoming more unisex, keep that in mind*

Everything that applies to men’s hair applies to women’s hair as well – goes back to society and culture and what’s normal. Some of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ were narrated in Sahih Muslim to have cut their hair short to their ears.

OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO HAIR

1.) Dying and coloring the hair

Jabir ibn ’Abdullah ﷺ said that Abu Quhafah ﷺ came on the day of the conquest of Makkah and his hair and beard were white like hyssop. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Change this with something but avoid black.” [Muslim]

Abu Quhafah ﷺ was an older man who had long white hair and a long white beard. The words of the Prophet ﷺ lead scholars to adopt a difference of opinion whether or not it is permissible to dye the hair black:

a. Some say NO
b. Some say it is SPECIFIC to men, and doesn’t apply to women
c. Some say that as long as it is NOT COMPLETELY black, it’s okay
d. Some say that the Prophet ﷺ told Abu Quhafah ﷺ not to use black because it would look very ODD and could be DECEPTIVE (he was an old man). Deception is not permissible in hair or fashion/clothing. It is a means of changing our appearance to deceive someone.

There are other narrations that other Companions did dye their hair black: ‘Umar ﷺ, ‘Uthman ﷺ, Sa’ad bin abi Waqqas ﷺ, Mughira bin Shu’ba ﷺ, and others.

As for other colors, highlights, and streaks, it goes back to what the cultural norm. If the majority of society would be repulsed by it, then we shouldn’t do it.

2.) Hair extensions and wigs

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah has cursed he who joins on hair and the one who has it joined on.” [Bukhari and Muslim]

The majority of scholars say that it is impermissible to wear a wig or to get hair extensions (i.e. connecting hair to hair). Some consider the hair to be najis when it is cut. Other scholars say that adding length to the hair is a form of deception.

Asma ﷺ narrated that woman came to the Prophet ﷺ explaining that her daughter is afflicted by small pox, causing her hair to fall out. The woman asked if her daughter can wear a wig. The Prophet ﷺ said that Allah ﷺ has cursed the maker of the wig and the wearer of the wig. Shaykh Al-‘Uthaymeen explained that the Prophet ﷺ forbade the girl
from wearing a wig due to marriage (i.e. it would be deceptive – not disclosing the fact that she has an illness).

Some scholars such as the Hanbalis and Maalikis allow for extensions if it is made from other than human hair. Sh. Saad believes that if the hair being used is for medical purposes, then in sha Allah it is permissible – otherwise, hair extensions and wigs should not be worn. The same thing applies to fake eyelashes since it is considered joining hair to hair – this is not allowed. However, this does not apply to mascara since that is not joining hair to hair.

3.) Braids
There are no issues with braids – it goes back to the culture. See below for issues pertaining to ghusl.

4.) Cornrows
There are no issues with cornrows. However, we need to be careful that water can reach the scalp for ghusl. In order for the ghusl to be complete, water needs to reach the scalp. If the cornrows or braids are so tight that water cannot reach the scalp, then the cornrows and braids need to be undone.

5.) Dreadlocks
If the dreadlocks are an imitation of another religion, then it is not permissible to have them. There is also the issue of cleanliness; if one is unable to keep them clean or if water cannot reach the scalp, it is impermissible to have dreadlocks.
BEARDS

1.) Hadith in Bukhari

Nafi’ reported that the Prophet said, ‘Differentiate yourself from the pagans; let the beards grow and trim the mustaches.’ Whenever Ibn ‘Umar would perform Hajj or ‘Umrah, he would grab a fistful of his beard and would cut whatever remained.” [Bukhari]

We have many narrations and evidences that prove to us that growing a beard is indeed fardh/wajib (mandatory) upon a man who is able to do so. From a hadith perspective, it is indeed sunnah to grow the beard (i.e. it is one of the actions of the Prophet). But from a legal perspective, it is required according to the vast majority of scholars. Some scholars have even quoted ijmaa’ on the issue.

Some modern Shaafi’ scholars hold the opinion that having a beard is only mustahabb (recommended). This opinion became popular at the University of Azhar. However, Shaykh Saad has yet to come across a single statement from classical Shaafi’ scholars that say the beard is mustahabb. In fact, the majority of Shaafi’ scholars in the past said it is haram to shave the beard.

People quote Imam Ghazali as saying the beard is mustahabb and not fardh. However, Shaykh Saad has not come across this statement, and Allah knows best.

2.) Various opinions regarding the beard and its parameters

The strictest opinion states that it is haram to take anything from the beard at all, whether it be through trimming or cutting. None of the madhahib said this. It was an opinion adopted by the mufti of Saudi Arabica, Ibn Baaz. Shaykh Al-Uthaymeen also held this opinion, saying that there is no evidence that the Prophet cut or trimmed his beard.

However, there exists too much evidence which states that it is permissible to trim the beard. One such clear evidence is the hadith above reported by Ibn ‘Umar which states that he would grab a fistful of his beard and cut whatever remained when he went for Hajj and ‘Umrah. Ibn ‘Umar was very knowledge, very strict, and imitated the Prophet in everything: the way he walked, the path he took, and even undoing a button. The Companions said that if you want to know how the Prophet looked like, look at Ibn ‘Umar.

Shaykh Albani, one of the Dhahiri scholars from Syria, took the slightly strange opinion that you must trim the beard at one fist.

We have multiple narrations from the Companions such as ‘Umar and Abu Hurayrah that they trimmed their beards. There is also evidence from among the Salaf that they would take from their beard and even put braids in their beard.
An opinion that brings all the evidences together is one of the Maaliki opinions which states that it is permissible to trim the beard to a reasonable length. **If the Shari'ah does not give us specifics about a ruling, then we turn to the language.** This brings us to the following point.

### 3.) Linguistic understanding and significance of the word lihya

Classical dictionaries refer to *lihya* as hair that grown on the jawline. This is the bare minimum – that the jawline should be covered in hair. The norm at the time of the Prophet was that the jawline be covered with hair in addition to a portion of the cheek. Furthermore, there should be no doubt that it is a beard (i.e. people don’t wonder if you just forgot to shave). People should understand that you intended to grow a beard.

#### THE STATUS OF THE ‘STACHE

The Prophet said, “Trim the mustaches.” [Bukhari]

The Prophet said, “Whoever does not take from their mustache is not one of us.” [al-Nasa’i]

There are 3 different types of trimming narrated among the Companions:

1.) **Cut the mustache on the line of the upper lip**
   - They would allow the mustache to grow, but when it would start to come down over their lip, they would cut it at the top of their lip
   - This is reported in Bayhaqi

2.) **Trimming the mustache evenly**
   - They would take from all parts of the mustache and trim it

3.) **Take from the mustache like that of shaving**
   - So they wouldn’t shave it completely, but they would shave it so close that it appeared to be shaven
   - This was reported by al-Tabaraani

One could know that ‘Umar was bothered when he would do the following actions: puffing air, crossing his legs, or twirling the ends of his mustache.

#### EYEBROWS

The following applies to both men and women (many men shape their eyebrows now)

1.) **Plucking and shaping eyebrows**

   In *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, ‘Abdullah b. Mas’ud is reported to have said, “Allah curses women who tattoo and are tattooed, women who pluck their eyebrows, and women who file their teeth to make gaps for beauty, altering Allah’s creation. Why should I not curse those whom the Prophet cursed when that is in the Book of Allah:
“And whatever the messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from.” 

Surah Al-Hashr, 59:7

Some scholars explain that the main overlying message of this hadith deals with altering and distorting the creation of Allah ﷺ. Is there a difference between plucking, cutting, and shaping? No, they are all removal of hair. This specific hadith is not specifically about plucking, but rather about changing the eyebrows in general.

2.) The unibrow

For the most part, our scholars say that the section between the eyebrows (i.e. the unibrow area) is not from the eyebrows.

Also, if the eyebrow hair goes too far up or too far down, then that is not considered to be part of the normal eyebrow hair – it is permissible to remove it in this case (e.g. if someone has really thick eyebrows). This is only if it is not considered part of the eyebrow.

Removing eyebrow hair and shaping it to the point where it becomes razor-thin is not permissible according to the majority of scholars. But where do we draw the line? How do we know if we have shaped the eyebrows or not? Shaykh Saad recommends we ask our hearts. We all know the point in which we have seriously altered the eyebrow beyond simply cleaning up extra hairs. We need to be conscious of this act since it returns to our piety and relationship with Allah ﷺ.

BODY HAIR

There is no evidence that restricts the removal of body hair, and this goes back to the cultural norms.
MATTERS OF THE FITRAH
When the Prophet ﷺ says that something is part of the *fitrah*, it means that it is naturally pleasing to the *nafs*. The acts of *fitrah* are common amongst all of the Prophets.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Ten [matters] are from the *fitrah*:

1.) *Trimming the mustache*
2.) *Letting the beard grow*
3.) *Using the *siwak*
   - Goes from personal habit of the Prophet ﷺ to something that has religious significance
4.) *Cleaning the nose with water*
5.) *Clipping the nails*
6.) *Washing the finger joints*
   - Means washing between the fingers
7.) *Plucking the armpit hair*
8.) *Shaving pubic hair*
9.) *Cleaning one’s private parts with water*
10.) [One of the narrators] said, ‘I have forgotten then tenth, but it may have been rinsing the mouth.’”
    [Muslim]

Anas ﷺ said that the Prophet ﷺ set a time limit of 40 days for cutting the mustache, cutting the nails, plucking the armpit hair, and shaving the pubic hair. This applies to both men and women. This doesn’t mean we leave it for 40 days – this is just the limit.

The armpit hair does not have to be plucked; that was just the norm at that time. It is permissible to trim it.

ISBAAL
The Prophet ﷺ said, “That which is below the ankles from the *izaar* is in hellfire.”
[Bukhari]

*Isbaal* refers to allowing the lower garment to fall below the ankles. This practice was common amongst the wealthy during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. They would make their garments extra long, letting it drag behind them; this was a means to show others how rich they were since they could afford material that they didn’t even use. They also had long sleeves which they would roll up on their wrists, again as a means to showcase their wealth.
If *isbaal* is done out of arrogance, it is *haram*; furthermore, it is considered a major sin. The majority of scholars say that if it is not done out of arrogance, it is not *haram*, but it should be avoided. This goes back to the cultural norms.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "On the Day of Judgment, Allah will not look at him who drags his robe (behind him) out of pride." Abu Bakr ﷺ said, "One side of my robe gets loose and falls unless I get very cautious about it." (Abu Bakr was very slim, so his *izar* would fall down and hit the ground.) The Prophet ﷺ said, "You do not do that with arrogance." [Bukhari]

**SILK, GOLD, AND SILVER**

‘Ali b. Abi Talib said, “The Prophet ﷺ took some silk in his right hand and took some gold in his left hand and said, ‘These two are forbidden for males from my Nation.’” [al-Nasa’i and others]

The prohibition of wearing silk and gold is specifically for men. An exception may be made for silk if it is a very small amount. ‘Umar ﷺ said that the Prophet ﷺ forbade the wearing of silk except for an area the width of two fingers, or three or four. So, scholars will say if only a small part of the garment is silk, it is permissible to wear. However, if the majority of the garment is silk, it is impermissible to wear.

White gold is still considered gold.

**SPECIFIC COLORS OF CLOTHING**

Ibn ‘Abbas ﷺ said, “I was forbidden [from wearing] red garments, gold rings, and to recite [the Qur’an] while I am in *ruku’*.” [al-Nasa’i]

There are instances in which the Prophet ﷺ wore red. Al-Bara’a ﷺ said, “The Prophet ﷺ was of average height. I saw him wearing a red *hullah*, and I have not seen anything better than him.” [Bukhari]

Some scholars say that a particular shade of red is not allowed. Others say that if the whole garment is red, then it is impermissible. But if it's just part of the garment, then it is allowed. Others have said that wearing the color red was initially prohibited, but later on, the Prophet ﷺ allowed it.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “The best of your clothes are the white ones. So let your living wear it, and shroud your dead in it.” [Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi]

This doesn’t mean we have to wear white all the time, but we should try to incorporate white into our clothes. The color white was beloved to the Prophet ﷺ, but he didn't wear it all the time.
IMAGES AND GRAPHICS ON CLOTHES

Religious iconography

Religious imagery such as crosses are not allowed.

Images of animate objects

This is not permissible unless the image is very simplistic, such as a cartoon figure that is so far away from reality that it wouldn't resemble the creation of Allah ﷺ. Scholars say it is ok to have an image that does not carry any life (e.g. the eyes have been taken out).

Skulls and bones

If the skulls and bones are linked to a religious practice, then it is impermissible. But on their own, there is nothing impermissible about them. We have no evidence that the image of a skull or bone is wrong. Remember, the default ruling states that unless we have evidence that something is impermissible, we cannot say that it is haram.

COSMETICS

Makeup

In regards to women wearing makeup in front of non-mahram men, we don’t have specific evidence that prohibits it. However, we do have evidences that speak against tabarruj (beautifying oneself to attract attention). Even though there are no hard and fast rules about makeup, there are certain types of makeup that are impermissible, such as wearing wedding or party makeup in front of non-mahram men.

Shaykh Saad personally doesn’t see a problem with women wearing makeup that gives a natural look, such as concealer and foundation. He also doesn’t see a problem with women wearing eyeliner as long as it’s simple; women at the time of the Prophet ﷺ wore kuhul. Shaykh Saad stresses the importance of asking your heart.
**Nail polish and fake nails**

The problem isn’t coloring the nails, but rather, the problem lies with the issue of water reaching the nails in *wudu*. There are some nail polishes that are advertised as “breathable,” but in reality, they do not allow for water to permeate; thus, the water does not reach the nails and the *wudu* is invalid. The same issue exists for fake nails. Also, one must ensure that the fake nails do not reach the length they would grow to in 40 days.

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**JEWELRY**

**Women’s Jewelry**

Just like makeup, we don’t have specific rules about jewelry. Ibn ‘Abbas explained that what should appear from a woman is a simple ring, and that other than that is considered *tabarruj*. This concept goes back to the cultural norms we live in. Flashy jewelry that is worn at a wedding should not be worn in front of non-*mahram* men. Simple jewelry is fine.

‘A’ishah said that the *fatkh* (toe ring) could be seen on women. She held the opinion that the feet are not considered part of a woman’s *‘awrah*.

**Men’s Jewelry**

Apart from the issue of gold, men’s jewelry goes back to the culture. The Prophet used to wear a ring – some narrations say he wore it on his left hand, and others say his right hand. The Hanbali *madhab* says the left hand, but it seems like he wore it on different hands. It was common for men to wear rings at that time. Ibn ‘Umar had a ring that said ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar. Hudhayfah had a ring that said *Alhamdulillah*. And ‘Ali had a ring that said *Allahu Malik*.

‘Ali said that the Prophet forbade him from wearing rings on his index finger and middle finger. The majority of scholars say that it is *makrooh* for men to wear rings on those two fingers. Some narrations state that some of the Companions wore rings on those two fingers; if it were *haram*, they would not have done so.
**Piercings**

This goes back to the cultural norms. In America, it is fine for a woman to pierce her cartilage. In South Asian culture, it is very common for women to get their nose pierced. However, such piercings may not be acceptable by certain Arab scholars or the residents of Saudi Arabia who would view such practices as odd. We also have to keep in mind any potential harm to the body or issues of cleanliness – these would be problematic.

Shaykh Saad does not view men’s piercings to be *haram*. However, he does discourage them due to their taboo status in our Muslim communities. Society as a whole does not view men’s piercings as bad, but it would probably cause some issues in a *masjid*.

**TATTOOS**

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah has cursed the one who tattoos and the one who gets tattooed.” [Bukhari]

Tattoos permanently change the creation of Allah and are thus impermissible, and furthermore, it is a major sin in Islam. Anything that pierces the skin with ink takes the same ruling as tattoos. Semi-temporary tattoos that go away in about 6 months would also take the same ruling as tattoos. Shaykh Saad says that for tattoos that only come on top of the skin such as a sticker tattoo or a henna tattoo, then that is fine (as long as there is no image making or inappropriate designs).

**PERFUMES**


The Prophet ﷺ didn’t refuse it because he liked it. We are allowed to refuse perfume.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “If one of you (from the women) wants to attend the ‘Isha prayer, then do not touch perfume.” [al-Nasa’i]

When people wore perfume at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the fragrance could be smelled all around them. So, you could smell people’s perfume when they walked by. It is not permissible for a woman to wear this kind of perfume in front of non-*mahram* men. However, if it is applied in such a way that one can only smell it if they come close to you or hug you, then it is permissible to wear it in such a manner. And Allah knows best.