

Can Men Wear Shorts?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

Question

What do the scholars of Islam say regarding the following: Due to hot weather and fashion trends, some men wear shorts that reveal their knees and even their thighs. Can men wear this kind of clothing in public?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

It is haram and sinful for men to wear clothing revealing their knees or thighs. This ruling remains the same irrespective of hot weather or fashion trends. It is also impermissible to intentionally look at a person's knees or thighs.

Clothing is a great blessing from Allah. Mankind can cover their privacy, beautify themselves, and draw many other benefits through this. We must utilise this blessing in accordance with Islam's enlightened teachings, and refrain from what Allah Almighty has commanded us to avoid. Yet, with the ever-growing evils in our society, Islamic rulings are ignored in the name of fashion and other excuses.

The ruling for men is as clear as day. The area of the body which a man is obliged to cover is from below his navel to the bottom of his knee. He is to cover this from everyone besides his wife. It is haram to reveal this area to anyone without a reason legislated by Islamic law. Ignoring this ruling and uncovering this area leads to Allah being displeased.

An individual who uncovers these parts of his body for all to see is also guilty of the sin of spreading immorality and immodesty. The noble Quran mentions a severe warning for those who do this. Those who cast evil glances at these exposed body parts acquire sin, but the one wearing this immodest clothing also gains the like amount of sin for being the cause of their sinning.

Men must avoid wearing clothing like shorts in public, which uncovers the body parts that are obligatory to veil. May Allah grant us the ability to act upon Islamic rulings. آمين بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ

الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Quranic verses related to this topic

Allah Almighty declares regarding clothing:

يَبْنَؤُا دَمْرًا قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيثًا

O descendants of Adam! Undoubtedly, We have sent down to you a garment that may conceal your parts of shame, and another for your adornment¹

Regarding preservation of the gaze and not looking at impermissible things, Allah Almighty states:

¹ Al-Quran, 7:26, translation from Kanz al-Īmān

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

Command the Muslim men to keep their gaze somewhat low and protect their private parts; this is much purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Aware of their actions.²

Commentary of this verse in *Tafsīr Şirāṭ al-Jinān*:

This verse commands Muslim men to lower their gazes and to not look at that which is impermissible. One meaning of *وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ* is to refrain from fornication and other forbidden acts. It also enforces the ruling of covering the private parts and the surrounding areas, which are obligatory to veil.³

Allah Almighty announces about those who spread immorality:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ^٤ - فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Indeed, those who wish that scandal should spread amongst the Muslims, for them is a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows, and you know not.⁴

Aḥādīth about the extent of the ‘awrah for males

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained:

ما اسفل من سراته الى ركبتيه من عورته

The ‘awrah (that which is obligatory to cover) of a man is from below the navel down to [and including] his knees.⁵

The Companion Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا reports:

مر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على رجل وفخذاه خارجه، فقال: غط فخذك، فان فخذ الرجل من عورته

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ walked by a man whose thigh was exposed. He said, “Cover your thigh, for indeed the thigh of a man is included in his ‘awrah.”⁶

Likewise, the Companion Sayyidunā Jarhad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ (who is from Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffah) states:

جلس رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عندنا وفخذى منكشفة فقال: اما علمت ان الفخذ عورة

Allah’s Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ sat with us and my thigh was uncovered. He said, “Do you not know that indeed the thigh is ‘awrah?”⁷

Juristic citations concerning the extent of the ‘awrah

It is written in the famous Ḥanafī text of jurisprudence, *al-Hidāyah*⁸:

وعورة الرجل ماتحت السرة الى الركبة، لقوله عليه الصلاة والسلام: ”عورة الرجل ما بين سراته الى ركبته“ ويروى ”مادون سراته، حتى تجاوز ركبته

The Ḥanafī jurist, Muftī Amjad ‘Alī al-A‘zamī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ said:

² *Al-Quran, 24:30, translation from Kanz al-Īmān*

³ *Tafsīr Şirāṭ al-Jinān, vol. 6, pp. 616-618, Maktabat al-Madinah, Karachi*

⁴ *Al-Quran, 24:19, translation from Kanz al-Īmān*

⁵ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, vol. 11, p. 369*

⁶ *Musnad Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, vol. 4, p. 295*

⁷ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd, vol. 4, p. 40, Maktabat al-‘Aṣriyyah, Beirut*

⁸ *Al-Hidāyah, Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth vol. 1, p. 45*

It is obligatory for a man to cover the area beneath the navel up to and including his knees. The navel is not included but the knees are. Nowadays, many people wear waist wrappers and pants in such a way that they leave some of the area below the navel uncovered. If the colour of the skin cannot be seen through a shirt or similar garment covering it, then this is fine, otherwise it is forbidden.

Prayer shall be invalid if a fourth of the body part remains revealed during it. Some foolish people reveal their knees and thighs when they sit with others. This is haram, and he who makes a habit of this is an open transgressor.⁹

Deliberately looking at the ‘awrah of others

The Companion Sayyidunā Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لا ينظر الرجل الى عورة الرجل ولا المرأة الى عورة المرأة

“A man should not look at the ‘awrah of another man, and a woman should not look at the ‘awrah of another woman.”¹⁰

In another Hadith, the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

لعن الله الناظر والبنظر اليه

The curse of Allah is upon those who look at indecency and those who enable it.¹¹

The fourth Caliph of Islam, Sayyidunā ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

قال لي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا تبرز فخذك ولا تنظر الى فخذى ولا ميت

“The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to me, ‘Do not expose your thigh, and do not look at the thigh of the living and the dead.’”¹²

Muftī Aḥmad Yār Khan Na‘īmī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ explains this hadith:

“Thighs are part of the ‘awrah. People who wear shorts in public and walk freely with half their thighs revealed should take heed. May Allah grant us modesty and honour.”¹³

The sin of looking at haram is also upon the one who enables it

The beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

من دعا الى هدى كان له من الاجر مثل اجور من تبعه لا ينقص ذلك من اجورهم شيئاً ومن دعا الى ضلالة كان عليه من الاثم مثل اثام من تبعه لا ينقص ذلك من اثامهم شيئاً

He who calls to guidance will be rewarded equal to all those who follow him, without that diminishing their reward in any respect. He who calls to misguidance will carry sin equal to that of all who follow him, without that reducing their sin in any respect.¹⁴

⁹ Bahār-i-Sharī‘at, vol. 1, p. 481, Maktabat al-Madīna, Karachi

¹⁰ Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shayba, vol. 1, p. 101, published in Riyadh

¹¹ Shu‘ab al-Īmān, vol. 10, p. 214, published in Riyadh

¹² Sunan Ibn Mājah, Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, vol. 1, p. 469

¹³ Mir‘āt al-Manājīḥ, vol. 5, p. 18, Na‘īmī Kutub Khānah, Gujrat

¹⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-‘Ilm, vol. 2, p. 341, printed in Karachi

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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