

Two Points of Neglect During Ḥajj (Part 2)

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The second issue which I wished to discuss, continuing from last issue's editorial, was ḥijāb. Ḥijāb is another great teaching of Islām which, unfortunately, is rapidly leaving our lives. Our neglecting this important command has not only become common in our daily lives, but it is very sad to see that it is overlooked during ḥajj by even those otherwise observant. Allāh ﷻ mentions in the Qur'ān:

'Tell the believing men that they must lower their gazes and guard their private parts; it is purer for them. Surely Allāh is All-Aware of what they do.

And tell the believing women that they must lower their gazes and guard their private parts, and must not expose their adornment, except that which appears thereof, and must wrap their bosoms with their shawls, and must not expose their adornment...' (24:30-31)

These verses are the very base of ḥijāb; they instruct both the men and women to lower their gazes, and specifically instruct the women to cover themselves.

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' ﷻ discussing ḥijāb in his tafsīr, Ma'āriful Qur'ān, writes that there are different levels of ḥijāb. One level of ḥijāb that the Sharī'ah advises is that of the actual woman herself, in that she should remain concealed totally from the view of males by occupying her house. Ideally, the woman should not leave her home without necessity.

The Sharī‘ah does acknowledge that circumstances arise when the woman has to leave the confines of her home too, to attend to her needs, and for such times, the Sharī‘ah has introduced the second level of ḥijāb, which is that she emerges covered from head to toe, in such attire that conceals her beauty.

On this same principle of ḥijāb, Islām prohibits free mixing of the two genders in any situation. On different occasions Rasūlullāh ﷺ would instruct the Ṣaḥābah to take care in this regard. It is stated that the Prophet ﷺ instructed the women to walk on the sides of the streets away from the men. The women would practice upon this instruction of the Prophet ﷺ to the extent that their clothes would brush the walls on the sides of the streets. (Abū Dāwūd) Imām Al-Bukhārī رحمه الله narrates a ḥadīth in which it is stated that after Rasūlullāh ﷺ would have completed the ṣalāh, the women would stand up and leave, and the Prophet ﷺ would remain seated for a while. The Ṣaḥābah would not stand until the Prophet ﷺ himself stood up. In one of the narrations, the narrator Imām Ibn Shihāb Az-Zuhri رحمه الله adds that he felt this was to avoid the mixing of men and women on the way back from ṣalāh, and Allāh knows best. (Al-Bukhārī)

The importance of ḥijāb can also be understood from the ḥadīth of Anas رحمه الله. Once, Anas رحمه الله and Abū Ṭalḥah رحمه الله were returning from a journey with the Prophet ﷺ, and Ṣafiyyah رحمه الله was mounted behind the Prophet ﷺ on his camel. When they reached a certain point the camel tripped, and the Prophet ﷺ and Ṣafiyyah رحمه الله fell off the camel. Abū Ṭalḥah رحمه الله immediately jumped off the back of his camel and rushed to the Prophet ﷺ, saying, “May Allāh accept me as ransom for you, are you hurt?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “No, but see to the lady.” Abū Ṭalḥah رحمه الله covered his face with a sheet, went towards her, and covered her with the sheet. She then got up. Abū Ṭalḥah رحمه الله thereafter prepared their conveyance for them and they then mounted. (Al-Bukhārī) We can see from this incident how particular the

Ṣaḥābah ؓ were in adhering to ḥijāb. Abū Ṭalḥah ؓ did not utter a word to Ṣafīyyah ؓ, and by using the sheet as cover, neither did he allow himself to look at her, nor her to look at him.

The topic of ḥijāb demands due attention, and a whole article can be penned on the subject alone. But here we are discussing the issue of ḥijāb during the journey of ḥajj, and I would like to highlight those occasions where we need to be vigilant with regards to this command of the Sharī‘ah.

• Whilst Travelling

When going for ḥajj, people – both men and women - tend to travel in groups. Naturally, as everyone travels together, bonds of friendship are created within individuals. While this is a good thing, the instruction of ḥijāb is left aside, and non-maḥārim begin to interact freely with one another. Some fall under the misconception that we are travelling with our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters for a virtuous cause, so the hearts of all are pure, therefore it is ok. This is in reality a deception. The wives of the Prophet ﷺ and the Ṣaḥābah ؓ without doubt had the purest of hearts, yet Allāh ﷻ commanded both parties in the Qur’ān, “...And when you ask anything from them (the blessed wives of the Prophet), ask them from behind a curtain. That is better for the purity of your hearts and their hearts.” (33:56) When this was the case with the Ṣaḥābah, who are we?

‘Ā’ishah ؓ says that whilst travelling during ḥajj, groups of other travelling pilgrims would pass by the female companions of the Prophet ﷺ. When they would draw near, the ladies would cover their faces with their jilbābs until the men had passed. (Abū Dāwūd) Most definitely, we must ensure that we observe their level of ḥijāb during our journey for ḥajj.

- **During the five days of Ḥajj**

Before and after the days of ḥajj, when the groups are situated in hotels, there is often mass violation of the rules of ḥijāb. Men and women mix freely, chatting in the hotel lounges, dining halls, or visit each other's rooms. This should never be the case, especially on such a blessed journey.

Whilst in Minā and 'Arafāt, the ḥujjāj camp in tents. There are arrangements for separate tents for males and females. However, these tents are situated not far from each other. Consequently, it is observed that non-maḥārim men and women freely mix with one another. If there is a need to communicate with a maḥram from the other tent, it should be done within the guidelines of ḥijāb. Similarly, in Muzdalifah, there are no tents at all, and the night is spent out in the open. Again, we should be vigilant in matters of ḥijāb.

- **In Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām**

As we all know, both men and women are allowed inside the Ḥaram. Due to this, one needs to be extra vigilant in his/her conduct. The gaze should always be lowered, and one should avoid proximity with the opposite gender especially at times of ṣalāh and crowd congestion. One should always remember the sanctity of the place he/she is occupying; one is in the Ḥaram, very close to the Ka'bah, the House of Allāh, a place which was attended by almost all the prophets of Allāh ﷺ, thousands of Ṣaḥābah, and millions of pious people.

- **During Ṭawāf**

Although this already falls under the sub-heading of the Ḥaram, it is worthy of being singled out, as it is an occasion wherein much neglect is shown. Because of the nature of ṭawāf and the number of people performing it, the possibility of coming close to the opposite gender

arises. At this time, again, there are many people who completely ruin their ṭawāf due to casting lustful glances at the opposite gender or purposefully trying to come into contact with them. May Allāh ﷻ protect us.

Ideally, men and women should perform ṭawāf completely away from each other. The Prophet ﷺ instructed Umm Salamah ؓ to perform ṭawāf on the outside of the normal flow of people, so that she may stay a distance away from the menfolk. (Sharḥ Muslim)

- **Ṣalāh**

Whilst performing ṣalāh with jamā‘ah, the men should form rows at the front, and the women should form rows behind the men, leaving a considerable gap so as not to draw too close to them. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The best of the men’s rows [in ṣalāh] are the first, and the worst are the last; and the best of the women’s rows are the last ones, and the worst of them are the first ones.” (Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and others) We can learn from this ḥadīth and others addressing the same issue, that the Prophet ﷺ demanded the instruction of ḥijāb to be strictly observed during ṣalāh also, despite it being a sacred act of worship, where each individual is meant to be concentrated on Allāh ﷻ only.

In the Ḥaram, there are sections designated for men and women separately for ṣalāh. Despite this, many women are seen performing ṣalāh amongst the rows of men, resulting in the invalidity of the men’s ṣalāh in many situations. They should ensure they perform ṣalāh in the areas designated for them.

These are just some situations where neglect in ṣalāh and ḥijāb has been observed. In general, these two are very important in the daily life of a Muslim, not just during ḥajj, and so should be observed at all times. If we have been neglectful of these two up till this point in our lives, then there is

no better starting point than ḥajj, because ḥajj is such an act of ‘ibādah that if performed properly, changes the religious life of a person for the better. If we neglect these two important teachings of Islām during ḥajj, then what hope can we have of implementing them into our daily lives? Further, what hope can we have of our ḥajj being accepted by Allāh ﷻ?

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the ability to perform a ḥajj free from any disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, and may He accept the ḥajj of all those who have and will perform it. May He also make the journey of ḥajj easy for all those intending it, and remove all obstacles in their path. May Allāh also grant us the opportunity to visit the blessed lands time and time again, and may we breathe our last in the blessed city of His beloved Prophet ﷺ. Āmīn.

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