



PSSST...!



MODULE 9: HALAL & HARAM



PROHIBITIONS OF THE EYES

One of the greatest blessings of Allah upon us is our eyes. It is through the eyes that we are able to see His creation and register the images of what He asks us to reflect upon. Allah has referred to the eyes as a person's 'dear ones.'

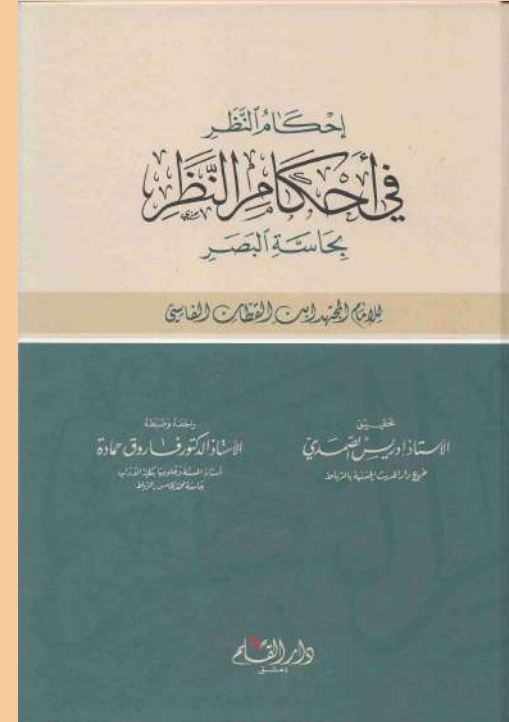
Anas related that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘

إن الله قال: إذا ابتليت عبدي بحبيبتيه فصبر عوضته منهما الجنة

‘Allah said: “When I afflict my servant with respect to his two dear things (i.e. his eyes), and he endures patiently, I shall compensate him for them with Paradise.”’ (Bukhari)

PROHIBITIONS OF THE EYES

‘The sense of sight is one of the doors to the heart. It is the most well-trodden path leading to the heart. After breathing, the eyes are the frequently used part of a person’s body.’ –Imam Ibn Qattan al-Fasi (*Ahkam al-Nazar*)



LOWERING THE GAZE (*GHADD AL-BASAR*)

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

‘Tell the believing men that they must lower their gazes and safeguard their private parts; that is purer for them. Verily Allah is All-Aware of all that they do.’

The command to lower the gaze is not exclusive to males. In the next verse Allah says:

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ...

‘And tell the believing women that they must lower their gazes and safeguard their private parts...’

LOWERING THE GAZE (*GHADD AL-BASAR*)

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘Avoid sitting on roadsides.’ His Companions said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, there is no other alternative but to sit there to talk.’ Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, ‘If you must sit, then fulfill the rights of the road.’ They asked: ‘What are their rights?’ Thereupon he said, ‘**Lowering the gaze**, refraining from doing some harm to others, responding to greeting, and commanding the good and forbidding the evil.’ (Bukhari and Muslim)

LOWERING THE GAZE (*GHADD AL-BASAR*)

Fadl b. 'Abbas rode behind Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) as his companion rider on the back portion of his she-camel on the day of Nahr (slaughtering of sacrifice, 10th Dhul-Hijja) and Fadl was a handsome man. The Messenger of Allah stopped to give the people verdicts (regarding their matters) In the meantime, a beautiful woman from the tribe of Khatham came, asking the verdict of the Messenger of Allah. Fadl started looking at her as her beauty attracted him. The Messenger of Allah looked behind while Fadl was looking at her, so **the Messenger of Allah held out his hand backwards and caught the chin of Fadl and turned his face (to the other side) in order that he should not gaze at her...**(Bukhari)

LOWERING THE GAZE (*GHADD AL-BASAR*)

The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, ‘O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty; and whoever is not able to marry should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual desire.’ (Bukhari)

Jarir b. ‘Abdillah: ‘I asked the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) about the sudden glance at a non-Mahram. He commanded me that I should avert my eyes.’ (Muslim)

LOWERING THE GAZE (*GHADD AL-BASAR*)

‘The unrestrained glance is a poisoned arrow from the arrows of Iblis. Whosoever forsakes it out of fear of Me, I shall replace it with faith whose sweetness he will find in his heart.’ (weak hadith recorded by Ibn Hibban)

‘The son of Adam has been destined his share of fornication, which he will inevitably acquire. The eyes fornicate by looking, the ears fornicate by listening, the tongue fornicates by speaking, the hand fornicates by hitting, the foot fornicates by stepping. The heart loves and wishes. The genitals prove or disprove that.’

‘The eyes fornicate; the hands fornicate; the feet fornicate; and the private parts fornicate.’
(al-Bazzar)

‘The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said to ‘Ali, “Do not follow up the first glance with a second look, for the first is yours, while the second is not. (Abu Dawud)

LOWERING THE GAZE—INTENTION REQUIRED

Lowering the gaze is not something sought after in and of itself (*maqsuda fi dhatiha*) like fasting. It is only considered a good deed when there is an intention to leave something haram for the sake of Allah.

‘*The deception of the eyes*’—furtive glances at the haram when in the presence of others in a way they will not notice (as opposed to open staring).

Lowering the gaze out of shame/shyness in front of others is not obedience to Allah. It is only obedience when it is out of shame/shyness before Allah.

IS LOOKING AT THE HARAM A MAJOR OR MINOR SIN?

- Minor sins are expiated through good deeds, etc.
- Major sins are removed through tawba.

‘When a believing servant or Muslim servant performs wudu’ and washes his face, every sinful thing he looked at is washed from his eyes with the water...’

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ

‘Those who avoid major sins and shameful deeds, despite ‘stumbling on’ minor sins.’

Ibn ‘Abbas said, **‘I don’t see anything more resembling stumbling than furtive glances.’**

WHEN IS LOWERING THE GAZE OBLIGATORY?

- 1] Looking at anyone (regardless of where on their person) other than one's spouse, with sexual desire.
- 2] Looking at that which is legally considered nakedness ('awra) of anyone besides one's spouse (with or without sexual desire).

THE LEGAL LIMITS OF 'AWRA

- **Men:** The area between the navel and the knees (knees are included according to the majority) is considered nakedness for a male.
- **Women:** The entire body of the female is considered naked except for the face, hands, and feet.

RULINGS ON THE GAZE

Men looking at Men: Men can see other men the entire body except that which is between the navel and the knees.

Men looking at Women: A man can see of a non-direct relative woman only the face, hands, and feet. A man is permitted to see his spouse's entire body.

Women looking at women: Women may see another woman's entire body except that which is between the navel and the knees. It is not permissible for a Muslim woman to expose any part of her hair or other parts to a **non-Muslim woman** or a **corrupt Muslim woman**, without need, as they may describe how she looks to others.

Women looking at Men: A woman can see a man's entire body except that which is between the navel and the knees. A woman is permitted to see her spouse's entire body.

RULINGS ON THE GAZE

Any looking that is accompanied by sexual desire, or will likely lead to sexual desire, is prohibited regardless of **where** on the person one looks. Thus, if a woman looks at a man's chest or a man looks at a woman's hands with sexual desire, this is prohibited (haram), even though that part of the body is not considered nakedness and would be permissible had there not been any sexual desire.

(Ibn 'Abidin notes that there is a difference between actual sexual desires and 'noticing of beauty' (*istihsan*)).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEEING AND LOOKING

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) advised us to lower our gaze if we see something impermissible and stated that we are not accountable for that first (unintentional) glance. Still, we are accountable if we look again.

Unintentional glances and seeing something in our peripheral vision are excused, and everything goes back to one's intention. For this reason, one should not be overwhelmed with their surroundings, as they are only accountable for looking, not merely seeing.

THE BENEFITS OF LOWERING THE GAZE

- 1] It is obedience to Allah.
- 2] It prevents the poisoned arrows of Shaytan from reaching his heart.
- 3] It strengthens the heart and enables it to focus on Allah. Letting the gaze wander and look at the haram distracts the heart and fills it with images.
- 4] It brings life to the heart, while looking at the haram deadens the heart.
- 5] It brings light to the heart, just as looking at the haram brings darkness to the heart. Allah mentions the Verse of Light (Ayat al-Nur) right after the command to lower the gaze from the haram.

THE BENEFITS OF LOWERING THE GAZE

- 6] It generates true insight which can distinguish between truth and falsehood. Whoever leaves something for Allah's sake, Allah replaces it with something better.
- 7] It strengthens one's will.
- 8] It blocks Shaytan from a means of entering his heart.
- 9] Between the eyes and the heart there is a connection which means that the one is affected by the other, and if one of them becomes good, the other will also become good, and if one becomes corrupt the other will become corrupt. If the heart becomes corrupt the gaze will become corrupt, and if the gaze become corrupt the heart will become corrupt, and similarly if one is sound the other will also be sound. (Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Jawab al-Kafi*)

OTHER PROHIBITIONS OF THE EYES

Looking into People's Homes without permission

A person's house conceals his body just as his garments conceal him. Allah has mentioned lowering the gaze and guarding one's private parts after the verse about asking for permission to enter, because the house covers a person just as the clothes on his body do. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'Were a man peer into your home without permission and you pelted him with a stone that took out his eye, you would not be criminally liable.' (Muslim)

OTHER PROHIBITIONS OF THE EYES

Looking up in the Sky when praying or making du'a

Jabir related that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'People must desist from raising their gazes to the heavens during prayer lest their eyesight is snatched away.' (Bukhari)

OTHER PROHIBITIONS OF THE EYES

Looking at dunya with eyes of covetousness and greed

لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

‘Look not with your eyes ambitiously at what We have bestowed on certain classes of them (the disbelievers), nor grieve over them. And lower your wings for the believers’ (15:88)

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: ‘Look to those who are lower than you [in worldly status] and do not look to those who are higher than you...’ (Muslim)

CONCLUSION

كَيْفَ يُشْرِقُ قَلْبٌ صُورَ الْأَكْوَانِ مُنْطَبِعَةً فِي مِرْآتِهِ

‘How can the heart be illumined while the forms of creatures are reflected in its mirror?’

–Ibn ‘Ata’illah, *al-Hikam*