

# **GARMENT OF FIRE**

**Zeya Khan**

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You may contact at:

**zeyakhan@rediffmail.com** for electronic files.

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***In The Name Of Allah,  
The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful***

***“The virtue of knowledge lies in acting upon it.”***

*“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example...” (Al Qur’an, 33:21)*

*Isbaal* (wearing garments below the ankle)

*Izaar* (lower garment)

The issue of *Isbaal* has been debated in the past and is still being debated among the Muslim Ummah, despite evidences of its emphatic prohibition. A majority of Muslims wear garments below the ankle. Many argue about it being a trivial issue. Most claim it is prohibited if it is done with pride and say, I am not one of those.

Let us start this discussion on *Isbaal*, with the fatwa of Sheikh bin Baaz (rahimaullah) who was asked about *Isbaal*.

## **The Fatwa of Sheikh bin Baaz (rahimahullah)**

When he was asked what is the ruling for letting the garment fall below the ankles out of arrogance or without arrogance? What if one is forced to do this by one's family or by custom?

### **Answer:**

“The ruling is that it is prohibited in the case of a man (for women it is the opposite) due to the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ),

*“Whatever is below the ankles is in the fire.”* (Al-Bukhari, No. 5787)

And Abu Dharr (r.a) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

*“There are three (types of) people that Allah will not speak to on the Day of Judgment, will not look at them, will not purify them and for them is a painful punishment: one who lets his Izaar hang below his ankles, one who reminds others of his gifts and the one who sells his goods by means of false oaths.” (Sahih Muslim, no. 106)*

These are two hadiths, and their meaning is general, applying to one who drags his garment out of arrogance as well as the one who does it without arrogance. This is because the Messenger (ﷺ) stated it in a general manner without qualification. He (ﷺ) also did not restrict that in another hadith, when he (ﷺ) said to his companions, **“Beware of Isbaal, for it is from pride.”** (Abu Dawud, No. 4084).

So he (ﷺ) made all cases of *Isbaal* arrogance. As for the case when Abu Bakr (r.a) said, “O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), “My *Izaar* goes down unless I take care (to hold it up).” The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him, “You are not one of those who do so out of arrogance.” (Abu Dawud, No. 4085).

So his (ﷺ) point is that whoever tries to raise his garment when it is loose, then he is not doing *Isbaal* out of arrogance, he merely cannot prevent it, it goes down while he takes care to raise it. So there is no doubt that this is a valid excuse. As for the one who purposefully makes it below the ankle, be it a *Bushta*, pants, shirts, *Izaar* then this falls under the threat, and he is not excused from *Isbaal*. This is because the authentic hadiths that prohibit *Isbaal* are general in wording, meaning, and objective. So it is obligatory

for every Muslim (male) to be aware/warned of *Isbaal* and to have *Taqwa* of Allah in this matter, not allowing his garments to be below his ankles in accordance with the authentic hadiths that warn him of Allah's anger and punishment." (Fatawa Islamiyah, Vol. 7, p. 373-5).

**Now taking this discussion further let us go through some hadiths and their analysis.**

### **First, The Hadith of Abu Bakr (r.a)**

This hadith is the basis of the practice of *Isbaal* among the majority of Muslims. Abdullah ibn Umar narrated, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "*Whoever trails his garment on the ground out of pride, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection.*" Abu Bakr said to him, "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), one side of my

*Izaar slips down if I don't pay attention to it. He (ﷺ) said, "You are not one of those who do it out of pride."* (Al-Bukhari, No. 5784).

From this hadith, we can derive the following points:

1. Abu Bakr (r.a) knew the prohibition of letting the garments below the ankle that's why he was mindful of keeping them above the ankles.
2. It used to slip down because of his slender waist. (Contrary to popular belief Abu bakr (r.a) was a slender man and not a person with a big belly as many believe to justify their enormous bellies).
3. He didn't get his garment made long enough to go beyond his ankles. It used to slip down.



When the Prophet (ﷺ) informed them about pride, he (Abu Bakr) told the Prophet (ﷺ) that if he is not mindful it slips down because of his slenderness and he pulls it back, it also proves that he knew the obligation of having the *Izaar* above the ankle that's why he was mindful to keep it above the ankle (he also had an example in the Prophet (ﷺ) who used to keep his *Izaar* at shin level/mid-calf).

Abu Bakr did not tie his *Izaar* in such a way that it hung below his ankles in the first place, rather he tied it so that it was above his ankles, but it slipped down.

No one is completely free of pride and arrogance, even if he claims that he is not. Such a claim is unacceptable because by claiming it, he is praising himself.

He Abu Bakr (r.a) had the honour of getting the certificate of NO PRIDE from

the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, (who can claim the same today, NO ONE), even then he used to pull his garment up.

## **Second Hadith**

Narrated Abu Hurairah, *the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The part of an Izaar which hangs below the ankles is in the fire.”* (Al- Bukhari, No.5787).

In this hadith, we don't find any mention of Pride. The Prophet (ﷺ) clearly stated that garments below the ankles are in the Fire.

## **Third Hadith**

Nullifying all of their arguments for doing *Isbaal* is the following hadith.

Jaabir ibn Sulaym said, *“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me, “Beware of wearing lower garment below the ankles, because this is a kind of showing-off, and Allah does not like*

*showing-off.*” (Sahih by At-Tirmidhi, No. 2722).

In this hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) unconditionally stated that wearing *Izaar* below the ankle in itself is PRIDE. (This hadith is irrefutable **evidence** in support of the prohibition of *Isbaal*).

## **Fourth Hadith**

Ubayd bin Khaalid (r.a) narrated, “I was walking dragging my *Burd* (a black outer garment), a man said to me, “Raise your garment, for it (will be) cleaner and last longer.” “So I looked (to see who was talking to me) and he was the Prophet (ﷺ). I said, “It is only black and white threads (of the outer garment).” So he (ﷺ) said, **“Don’t you have an example in me?”** He (Ubayd) said, “I looked (at him) (ﷺ) and his *Izaar* was (extending) ***to the middle of his shins.***” (Shamaa’il

Tirmidhi, 120, Sahih by Albani in Mukhtasar al Shamaa'il, 97).

In this hadith, we find that the Prophet (ﷺ) commanding the *Sahabi* to follow his (ﷺ) example of dressing and we ALSO find that the Prophet (ﷺ) who was titled 'Rahmatal-lil-Aalamin' by Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an, was wearing the *Izaar* way **above** his ankles *i.e.*, up to the middle of his shin.

## Fifth Hadith

Narrated Hudhayfah (r.a), "*The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took hold of my shin or his shin and said, "This is the place of Izaar, if you must lower it then the Izaar has no right to be on the ankles."* (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, No. 1783).

In this *hadith*, we find that the Prophet (ﷺ) **physically enforced** the prohibition

of *Isbaal*, without mentioning anything about pride.

## Sixth Hadith

Ibn Umar (r.a) said, “*I passed by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and my Izaar slipped down. He (ﷺ) said, O Abdullah, pull up your Izaar! So I pulled it up. He (ﷺ) said, More! So I pulled it up more, and always made sure it was pulled up properly after that.*” Some people asked, “*To where did you pull it up?*” He said, “*To mid-calf length.*” (Sahih Muslim, No. 2086).

In this *hadith* we find the Prophet (ﷺ) instructing the *Sahabi* about the length of *Izaar*. It also depicts the obedience of the *Sahabi* to the Prophet (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) didn't ask him if he had pride or not; he simply asked him to pull it up. Did the

Prophet (ﷺ) mean that he had pride?  
DEFINITELY, NO.

### **Example of Umar (r.a)**

Kharshah bin al-Hurr (r.a) narrated that, *“Umar bin al-Khattab (r.a) saw a man with his Izaar dragging below his ankles, so he said, “Are you having menses?” The man said, “O Ameerul- Mu’mineen, does a man have menses?” He said, “Yes, if you hang your Izaar down—because Isbaal (wearing garments below the ankles) is only for women .” Kharshah (the narrator) then said, “So Umar came with a **blade or scissors** and **cut** what trailed from the ankles.” Kharshah then said, “It is as if I am seeing the threads of the Izaar hanging from his ankles.” (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, 8/393).*

From this hadith, we learn that Umar (r.a) was not only linking the issue

of *Isbaal* with women's clothing but was strict enough to enforce its prohibition forcefully.

In a long hadith that describes the martyrdom of Umar (r.a), it is narrated by Amr bin Maimun,

He narrates “...when the people realized that he would not survive they came praising him... a young man came and after praising him turned back to leave, he called him back and said, “O son of my brother! Lift your clothes, for this will keep your clothes clean and save you from the punishment of your Lord.”” (Sahih Bukhari, No. 3700).

In this hadith of Umar (r.a), we have to realize that though in extreme pain and on the verge of martyrdom, he still emphasized this important issue. Umar (r.a) knew that *Isbaal* invited the threat of hellfire.

## Individuals Whom Allah Will Not Speak To On the Day of Qiyamah

If anyone lets his garment fall below the ankle **without arrogance** then he will be **punished** with hellfire solely based on what is below the ankle, but if anyone does it with **pride** then he will be punished more severely...Allah will not Look at him, nor Speak to him, nor Purify him and he will receive more severe punishment.

Abu Dharr (r.a) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“There are three people that Allah will not speak to on the Day of Judgement, will not look at them, will not purify them and for them is a painful punishment: one who lets his Izaar hang below his ankles, one who reminds others of his gifts and the one who sells his goods by means of false oaths.”* (Sahih Muslim, No. 106).



I am aware that the scholars are divided on this issue. One group says it is *Makruh* (even those who say it is *Makruh* agree that it is *mustahab* (highly recommended *sunnah*)) to keep the garments above the ankles. The other group says it is *Haraam*. The following are some of the prominent scholars of different *Madhaib* who believe it is *Haraam*:

- *From the Hanafi Madhab-* Ashraf ali thanvi, Mufti taqi Usmani, and others said, **Haraam.**
- *From the Maliki Madhab-* Ibn Arabi and several others said, **Haraam.**
- *From the Shaf'I Madhab-* Hafiz ibn hajr Asqalani and others said, **Haraam.**
- *Hambali-* Sheikh bin baaz, Sheikh Uthaymeen, Sheikh Jibreen said, **Haraam.**

Ad-Dhahabi has mentioned *Isbaal* at No. 54 in his book '*Kitaab al- Kabaair*' which is about 70 major sins.

Hafiz ibn hajr Asqalani (rahimaullah) in his magnum opus '*Fath ul Bari*' has discussed in the *tashreeh* of this hadith (Sahih Bukhari, No. 5784) the issue of *Isbaal* in great detail and has brought most of the relevant *ahadith* and the sayings of *Sahaba* and eminent scholars on this subject, which proves without an iota of doubt that it is prohibited. He also quoted a narration recorded by Imaams Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, and Ibn Hibban on the authority of Mughirah ibn Shu'bah (r.a) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***“Do not commit Isbaal (lowering of garment over ankles) for verily Allah does not love those who do so.”*** (Fath ul- Bari, Vol. 11, p.217-19).

The well-known Maliki Scholar Hafiz ibn Arabi (rahimaullah) states, *“It is impermissible for an individual to lower his clothing over his ankles and claim that he does not do so out of pride... this claim of his is unacceptable, this practice in itself is a sign of him having pride.”* (Fath ul Bari, Vol.11, p. 217).

## Conclusion

Since pride in itself is *Haraam*, wearing garments below the ankles with or **without** pride doesn't make sense.

No one of this generation is the designer of this fashion (*Isbaal*), he is simply copying/following the fashion of others, so why not copy/follow the **BEST**, i.e., our beloved Prophet (ﷺ)

Did our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) have Pride/arrogance and we know for sure that he (ﷺ) was free from pride. Did Abu Bakr,

Umar, Uthman, Ali (r.a.a), or all the other Sahaba have arrogance, and the answer is surely NO, then are those who do *Isbaal* better than them?

As for the claims of those that such and such imam or sheikh claimed that there is no harm in *Isbaal*, then my response is, that **Imaam ul Ambiya**, who surely was a person free from pride, used to wear his *Izaar* above his ankles, till shin.

One important point is that in Islam majority opinion/practice is not the *Dalil* (evidence) but rather what is correct in the light of the Qur'an and hadith. We should follow the example of the *Sahaba* as to how they used to obey the Prophet (ﷺ) and not those who with their flowery speech/oratory take us away from his (ﷺ) example and obedience, otherwise beware, my dear brothers in Islam because Allah Says in the Qur'an:

*“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should (thereafter) have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.” (Al Qur’an, 33:36)*

and

*“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers- We will give him what he has taken and drive him into hell, and evil it is as a destination.” (Al Qur’an, 4:115).*

Finally, a sincere advise to my dear brothers, obey and follow the Prophet (ﷺ) before it becomes a trend/fashion to wear *Izaar*/Pants above the ankles because then you will not be following the Prophet (ﷺ) but the **Fashion**. Moreover, no intelligent

and humble person can risk **hellfire** just because of 2-3 inches of cloth. So think over it before it is too late.

May Allah Guide us all. And do remember us in your prayers.

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