

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

DOES THE QURAN PROHIBIT GOLD AND SILK FOR MEN?

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It is widely accepted by Muslims that Islam prohibits the wearing of silk attire and gold for men. This view is unsupported by the Quran.

From the Quran's perspective, clothes have been given to cover one's shame and for beauty **WITHOUT** prohibitions on type.

007:026

"O ye Children of Adam! We have bestowed clothing (Arabic: libasan) upon you to cover (Arabic: yuwari) your shame / private parts (Arabic: sawatikum), as well as to be an adornment (Arabic: risha) to you. But the clothing of righteousness, that is the best. Such are among the Signs of God, that they may receive admonition!"

يَلْبِسُنِي ۖ اَدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوْءَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ

yuwari
libasan
risha sawatikum

Illustration - Joseph Islam

The word 'Raishan' (translated above as 'adornment') comes from the root word Ra-Ya-Shiin which means an adornment, fine clothing, a source of elegance and protection, an ornament or beauty. It is an expression which is derived from the beauty of the bird's feathers.

ریش *Feathers; plumage;] a certain apper-
tenance of birds, (Ş, A, Mşb, K,) well known,
(A, Mşb,) constituting their clothing and orna-
ment; (A, TA;) as also **رَأْسُ**: (Kt, K:) n. un.
of the former with *ḥ*: (Ş, Mşb:) pl. [of pauc.]
أُرْيَاشُ (Ş, K) and [of mult.] **رِيَاشُ**. (IJ, K.) —
Hence, (B,) **رِيَاشُ**: (ISk, B:) or superb, or
excellent, clothing; as also **رِيَاشُ**: (Ş, K:) or
both signify what appears of clothing: (Kt:) the
former occurs in the Kur vii. 25, accord. to one
reading; (Ş;) and **رِيَاشُ** the latter accord. to another
reading: (TA:) and hence also, the former signi-
fies **رِيَاشُ**: (Ş, K:) or
both signify †property; and plenty, or abun-*

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [1]

There are four main points to note from this verse:

- (1) Clothing has been given to you from your Lord to cover your shame
- (2) Clothing has been given to you from your Lord as splendid vesture and to beautify yourselves
- (3) The clothing of righteousness is the best (Libas Taqwa)
- (4) There are **NO prohibitions** on the **type** of clothing from the Quran for any gender as long as it covers the directives given by the Quran including those for women specifically (24:31)

We have been clearly warned not to forbid that which has not been forbidden by God. A few verses later, we read this warning:

007:032

“Say: **Who has forbidden the adornment (Arabic: zeenata), which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He has provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who understand**”

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ

zeenata

Illustration - Joseph Islam

Therefore, no prohibitions are made on adornment or the good things God has produced for His servants. God makes it clear that these good things are for believers in this world and specifically for the righteous on the day of resurrection (Of course the unrighteous would not receive anything of the bounties that they enjoyed in this life)

The word 'zeenat' comes from the root Zay-Ya-Nun and means to adorn, to deck, grace, honour [said of an action, quality, or saying]. embellished, dressed, ornamented, decorated, decked, bedecked, garnished, beautified, graced him.

EVEN THE PROPHET WAS FORBIDDEN TO BAN SOMETHING GOD HAD NOT

066:001

“O Prophet! Why do you ban that which God has made lawful for you, seeking to please thy wives? And God is Forgiving, Merciful”

- The same warning is again reiterated in the following verse for all believers:

016:116

“But say not - for any false thing that your tongues may put forth - "This is lawful, and this is forbidden," so as to ascribe false things to God. For those who ascribe false things to God, will never prosper”

- The Prophet could never ban or introduce a law or attribute anything in God’s name which God had not sanctioned in His scripture. Here is a stark warning:

069:044-48

“And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath). But verily this is a Message for the God-fearing”

Even if the Prophet were to incline and introduce anything in God’s name, his punishment would be doubled.

017:73-75

“And their purpose was to tempt you away from that which We had revealed to you, to substitute in our name something quite different; (in that case), behold! they would certainly have made you (their) friend. And had We not given you strength, you would nearly have inclined to them a little. In that case We should have made you taste an equal portion (of punishment) in this life, and an equal portion in death: and moreover you would have found none to help you against Us!”

SO WHERE DOES THE PROHIBITION FOR MEN TO WEAR GOLD AND SILK COME FROM?

Purely on reliance of [Islamic secondary sources](#)

- The prohibition emanates from a number of alleged sayings of the Prophet and from the opinions and interpretations of men. The crux of the explanation based on some of the narratives resides on the maxim that wearing gold ornaments and attire made of silk are indications of luxury and is not approved by Islam.

- A careful study of all secondary source literature clearly indicates that the opinions of men haven't always been in agreement with regards this issue and the reliance has solely been on secondary sources. There are also some narratives which actually support the notion that there is clearly no prohibition.

Some Questions

Why are garments used to cover shame in this case made by God's creatures (silk of moth caterpillars) forbidden for use?

If the main argument centres around luxury items then why is it not forbidden for man to wear other items of seemingly greater extravagance such as Platinum or rare diamond cut rings or clothes made from other of God's creatures with seemingly greater show of extravagance?

FINAL THOUGHTS

A very fundamental question is pertinent here. Having read the Quran's narrative and position, is it conceivable that a Prophet of God could / would ever forbid something that his Lord had not revealed or would he attempt to uphold the message of what was being revealed to him (Quran) in truth?

Or is a more likely scenario, that some men have attributed things in the Prophet's name?

REFERENCES

[1] LANE. E.W, Edward Lanes Lexicon, Williams and Norgate 1863; Librairie du Liban Beirut-Lebanon 1968, Volume 3, Page 1200

Highlights marked in red on the lexicon excerpt are my own insertions. They have no bearing on the original text other than they emphasise relevance to the topic at hand. These are merely illustrations and have solely been utilised for educational and explanatory purposes.

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