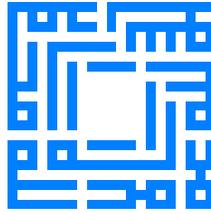




**Advanced Level Topics of Study for:
Wearing Trousers Below Ankles**



Wearing Trousers Below Ankles

"Wearing garments that hang below the ankles" is the first of the so-called "common errors" listed in the "Salafi" manual entitled *Errors in Prayers that must be Avoided*. This manual is filled with proofs that the "Salafis" are misguided and misleading propagators of errors in the guise of corrections.

It is a more than adequate illustration of their delusion that their method of reading and interpreting the hadith in "happy-go-lucky" fashion, as if it were a newspaper, regardless of the prescriptions of hadith methodology, will save them from error. How can something save them from error which proceeds from pride to begin with -- since they insist on relying on their own wits rather than on what better minds than theirs have understood from the same evidence?

They have misunderstood the caution of the Prophet against vestimentary pride to consist solely in a point about ankle-length. However, there are those who wear their the bottoms of their trousers cut short and strut with as much pride as the pagans of Jahiliyya meant by the very hadith they claim to follow. The sin does not consist in the length of the cloth but in the hidden pride it fosters:

'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud said that the Prophet said: "He will not enter the Garden of Paradise who has an atom's worth of pride in his heart." A man said: "What about someone who likes handsome clothes and handsome sandals?" The Prophet replied: "Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty. Pride is refusing to admit the truth and having contempt for people."

The Hadith of the trailing of garments

§ Muslim

§ Nawawi

§ Ibn Qudama

§ Sahih al-Bukhari and Fath al-Bari

- i. Those who trail their lower garment without arrogance
- ii. Tashammur or raising or tucking up one's clothes

- iii. "What hangs below the two ankles is in the Fire."
- iv. Chapter of the one who trails his cloth in arrogance

§ From Fiqh al-Sunna

Muslim states

Narrated Abu Dharr: The Messenger of Allah observed: "Three are the (persons) with whom Allah would neither speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor would look at them nor would absolve them, and there is a painful chastisement for them." The Messenger of Allah repeated it three times. Abu Dharr remarked: "They failed and they lost; who are these persons, Messenger of Allah?" Upon this he observed: "They are: the one who makes (his garment) hang down on the ground (*al-musbil*), the recounter of obligation, and the seller of goods by false oath."

Muslim narrates directly afterwards another version from Abu Dharr where the loin-wrap or lower garment (*izar*) is explicitly mentioned.

The following are Imam Nawawi's, Ibn Qudama's, and Ibn Hajar's commentaries on the various hadiths on this chapter. It will be seen in the light of their views that there is no basis whatsoever in these hadiths for the preposterous statement of the "Salafis" whereby "the above and many other traditions indicate clearly that wearing clothes that hang below the ankles for men is a grave sin regardless of whether such garments are worn out of habit or pride." Observe, dear reader, the sharp difference between the keen sight of the true ulama and the myopic sight of the rest:

Nawawi states

As for the Prophet's saying: "the one who makes his garment hang down on the ground" then its meaning is: The one who lets it down and drags its extremity out of arrogance (*khayla'*) as has been mentioned by way of explanation (of the same phrase) in the other hadith [in Bukhari and Muslim]: "Allah will not look at a person who drags his lower garment in arrogance." *Khayla'* is self-aggrandizement (*kibar*), and this restricted (*muqayyad*) meaning of letting down the garment as consisting in dragging it (*al-jarr*) out of arrogance reduces the general sense of the person who lets down the lower garment to a specific sense and indicates that the one meant by the threat of punishment is the one who does so out of arrogance.

The Prophet permitted Abu Bakr al-Siddiq to do so (i.e. let down his lower garment) and he said to him: "You are not of their number" [Bukhari] because he trailed it for a reason other than arrogance. Imam Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari and others said: "The letting down of the lower garment was mentioned by itself because it is their most common garment, but the ruling concerning other garments such as the shirt and others, is the same ruling." I say [Nawawi]: This has been made plain to us explicitly in the hadith from the Prophet on the authority of Salim ibn `Abd Allah from his father: "The letting down (*isbal*) pertains to the lower garment, the shirt, and the turban. Whoever

drags something out of arrogance Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection." Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah narrated it with a fair chain. And Allah knows best.

The scholars are in agreement that it is forbidden to pray with braided or plaited hair, as well as with folded up garment or sleeves or the like:... all this is forbidden and agreed upon as such by the scholars, and the prohibition is that of offensiveness of the lesser type (*karahatu tanzih*), and if one prays in this manner then he has not done well but his prayer is valid. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari has submitted the Consensus of the scholars in this question, while Ibn al-Mundhir has related that one must repeat the prayer according to al-Hasan al-Basri.

Ibn Qudama states

The *isbal* or trailing of the shirt and the pants (i.e. the baggy middle part of the *sarawil*) in the spirit of arrogance is disliked (*makruh*). The Prophet said... [he recounts the evidence already mentioned by Nawawi].

As for the statement of the "Salafis" whereby "scholars have agreed that praying with folded sleeves or pants is unlawful" it is a lie since their near totality agree that it is *makruh* not *haram*, as Nawawi states in his commentary of *Sahih Muslim* quoted below; furthermore, Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bari* states that "the prohibition of folding up the clothes in prayer concerns other than the bottom of the lower garment."

Sahih al-Bukhari and Fath al-Bari

Imam Bukhari addressed this topic in the first three chapters of the Book of Clothing in his *Sahih*, respectively entitled Chapter of those who trail their lower garment without arrogance, Chapter of raising up the bottom of the clothes, Chapter of what hangs lower than the ankles being in the Fire, and Chapter of those who trail their cloth out of arrogance. Below are some of the hadiths he included in these chapters, together with some of Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani's commentary on them from his work *Fath al-Bari*:

Chapter of those who trail their lower garment without arrogance.

[Ibn Hajar:] Meaning that they are exempted from the threat mentioned in the hadith, but only if there is an excuse, in which case they are not blamed. Otherwise there are considerations which will be mentioned further down.]

1. 1. Narrated `Abd Allah bin `Umar: The Prophet said: "Allah will not look, on the Day of Resurrection, at the person who drags his garment (behind him) out of conceit. On that Abu Bakr said, "O Allah's Apostle! One side of my *izar* hangs low if I do not take care of it." The Prophet said, "You are not one of those who do that out of conceit."

[Ibn Hajar: The reason it hanged low was that Abu Bakr was corpulent... It seems that its knot would loosen when he walked or did other things

independently of his will, but that it would not trail if he took care of it, since he would tie it again every time he noticed it... The Prophet's words indicate that there is unconditionally no blame on those whose *izar* trails on the ground without their will. As for Ibn Abi Shayba's report whereby Ibn `Umar disliked it in any case, Ibn Battal said: "This is part of his strictness. Besides, he narrated this hadith himself and so the ruling (of toleration) was not unknown to him." I say: Rather, Ibn `Umar's dislike signifies those who deliberately trail it whether out of arrogance or not, and it is in conformity with his narration mentioned by Ibn Battal. Surely Ibn `Umar would not blame those who did not intend anything. By declaring it disliked he only meant those who trail their *izar* without their will, and then continue doing so after they realize it. This is agreed upon. They only disagreed whether the offensiveness is of a near-forbidden or of a slight type.]

2. Narrated Abu Bakrah: The solar eclipse occurred while we were sitting with the Prophet. He got up dragging his garment (on the ground) hurriedly till he reached the mosque. The people turned (to the mosque) and he offered a two-Rak`at prayer until the eclipse was over. Then he faced us and said: "The sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah, so if you see a thing like this (eclipse) then offer the prayer and invoke Allah until He remove that state."

[Ibn Hajar: This hadith shows that if the trailing of the *izar* is due to haste then it does not enter under the prohibition. It intimates that the prohibition is specific to what is done out of arrogance. Yet it provides no proof for those who restrict the prohibition to arrogance only to the point that they permit the long shirts that trail on the ground.]

Chapter of *tashammur* or raising or tucking up one's clothes.

[Ibn Hajar: *tashammur* is the raising up of the bottom of one's clothes.]

Narrated Abu Juhayfa: I saw Bilal bringing a *`anaza* or small spear and fixing it in the ground, then he called for the start of the prayer (*iqama*) and I saw Allah's Apostle coming out in a suit of clothes having tucked up its end (*mushammiran*). He then offered a two-Rak'at prayer while facing the spear, and I saw the people and animals passing in front of him but behind the spear.

[Ibn Hajar: al-Isma`ili did not have *mushammir* in his narration but related it as: "and the Prophet came out and I can almost see the gleaming of his shanks" then he said: al-Thawri narrated it in the terms: "I can almost see the glistening of his shanks" which al-Isma`ili commented: "This is the *tashmir* in question." It can be concluded from it that the prohibition of folding up the clothes in prayer concerns other than the bottom of the lower garment.]

Chapter of "What hangs below the two ankles is in the Fire."

[Ibn Hajar: Bukhari in the chapter-title did not restrict the subject to the part of the *izar* as in the hadith he cites in the body of the chapter. This is a reference to the generalization of the prohibition to include the lower garment, the shirt, and others. It seems he was referring to the wording of the hadith of Abu Sa`id al-Khudri narrated by Malik, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah, which Abu `Awana and Ibn Hibban declared sound, all through al-`Ala' ibn `Abd al-Rahman... Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, and al-Hakim who declared it sound [also Ahmad] cited the hadith of Abu Jurayy [Jabir ibn Sulaym] whereby the Prophet said: "Lift up you lower garment to the middle of your shank, and if you don't wish to, then to the ankles. Beware the trailing of the lower garment, for it is arrogance, and Allah does not like arrogance." Nasa'i also cited, as well as al-Hakim who declared it sound, the hadith of Hudhayfa with the wording: "The lower garment is let down to the middle of the two shanks, and if you don't wish to, then lower, and if you don't wish to, then lower than the shanks, but there is no right to the lower garment for the ankles."]

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said: "The part of an *izar* which hangs below the ankles is in the Fire."

[Ibn Hajar: al-Khattabi said: "He means that the spot which the lower garment reaches below the ankles is in the Fire, and he has named the cloth to refer to the body of its wearer (i.e. by metonymy)... its principle being in what `Abd al-Razzaq has cited from `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Abi Dawud whereby Nafi` was asked about this and he said: What wrong did the clothes do? Rather, it concerns the feet." However, Tabarani narrated from Ibn `Umar through `Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn `Aqil: The Prophet saw me trailing my lower garment and he said: "O Ibn `Umar, every part of the clothes that touches the ground is in the Fire." Tabarani also narrated with a fair chain from Ibn Mas`ud that he saw a Beduin praying with a trailing garment and he said: "What trails in the prayer is neither lawful nor unlawful in the eyes of Allah." Such a statement is not made on the basis of opinion (i.e. it is related from the Prophet). Based on the above there is no impediment to understanding the hadith literally (i.e. as referring to the cloth alone)...

The warning in absolute terms is in fact understood as specific to arrogance according to the other evidence which has been narrated, and it is agreed upon that the threat concerns arrogance...

Exempt from the absolute understanding of lowering the garment that done out of necessity, as for instance when one suffers an ankle-wound which the flies, for example, would harm if it were not covered with one's lower garment for lack of something else. Our Shaykh [al-`Iraqi] has pointed this out in his Commentary on Tirmidhi, and he has cited as a proof the Prophet's dispensation to `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf in wearing a silk shirt because of itching.]

Chapter of the one who trails his cloth in arrogance.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said: "Allah will not look, on the Day of Resurrection, at a person who trails his *izar* out of pride."

[Ibn Hajar disagrees with Nawawi's limitation of the general prohibition against trailing the lower garment as being specific to trailing it out of pride. He then says: In conclusion there are two cases for men: one of desirability, which is to shorten the lower garment to the middle of the shanks; and one of permissibility, which is to lower it to the ankles. Similarly there are two cases for women: one of desirability, which is to add a handspan to what is permissible for men; and one of permissibility, which is to add an arm's length instead of a handspan...

It is inferred from the narrations:

that what is highlighted in the majority of cases is the specific meaning of dragging the garment behind;

that conceit and strutting is abhorrent even for one who lifts up his garment;

that the comprehensive understanding of the evidence is that whoever means, by dressing well, to show Allah's favor upon him, in thankful awareness of it and without despising those who do not possess what he has: then it does not harm him in the least to wear whatever is permitted, even if it is extremely costly.]

Narrated `Abd Allah ibn `Umar: Allah's Apostle said: "While a man was trailing his *izar* on the ground, suddenly Allah made him sink into the earth and he will go on wailing in the earth until the Day of Resurrection."

Shu`ba said: I met Muharib ibn Dithar on horseback as he was riding to the place where he sat to judge cases and I asked him about this hadith. He said: I heard `Abd Allah ibn `Umar say: Allah's Apostle said: "Whoever drags his clothes on the ground out of conceit, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection." I said to Muharib: Did he mention the man's *izar*? He replied: He specified neither the *izar* nor the shirt.... Musa ibn `Uqba, `Umar ibn Muhammad, and Qudama ibn Musa add to it from Salim from Ibn `Umar: "Whoever drags his *izar* out of arrogance."

[Ibn Hajar: He mentioned the lower garment because in the majority of cases it is the lower garment which shows one's conceit... In these hadiths is evidence that the trailing of one's lower garment on the ground is an enormity. As for letting it down for other than arrogance then the apparent meaning of the narrations is that it is also forbidden. However: the restriction of these narrations to the meaning of arrogance furnishes proof that the unqualified criticism in the abhorrence of letting down garments must be understood in terms of its specific meaning here. Therefore neither dragging the garment nor letting it down is forbidden if one is safe from arrogance.

Ibn `Abd al-Barr said: "What is understood from the hadith is that trailing for other than arrogance is not sanctioned by the threat, except that trailing the shirt and other than the shirt among garments is abhorrent in every case."

Nawawi said: "Letting down one's garment below the ankles is due to arrogance. If it is done for other than that then it is merely disliked. This is what Shafi`i declared about the

difference between the trailing due to arrogance and that due to another reason. His words are: *What is desirable is that the logarment reach to the middle of the shanks, and what is permitted without offensiveness (bi la karaha) is between that point and down to the ankles. Whatever is below the ankles, if due to arrogance, is prohibited (mamnu`) with the prohibitiveness of what is strictly forbidden (tahrim), otherwise it is prohibited with the prohibitiveness of the lesser kind (tanzih), because the hadiths that are extant concerning the prevention (zajr) of trailing are unqualified and must therefore be restricted to trailing out of arrogance."*

Buwayti referred in his abridgment to the text of Shafi`i which Nawawi mentioned. He said: "*Sadl* -- letting down a loose cloth -- is not allowed in prayer nor elsewhere out of arrogance; but it is less (of a prohibition) if done for another reason because of the Prophet's saying to Abu Bakr." His expression "it is less" implicitly precludes strict forbiddance. The latter is definitely understood to apply for trailing out of arrogance. Other than that the case varies. If the length of the garment fits the wearer but he lets it hang down then it seems there is no *tahrim* of it, especially if this is unintended as happened to Abu Bakr. But if the length of the garment exceeds the size of the wearer then this may become prohibited from the perspective of waste (*israf*) and end up as strictly forbidden; or it may become prohibited from the perspective of resemblance to female fashion, and this is more likely than the former....

In conclusion, letting down the garment supposes dragging it behind oneself, and dragging it behind oneself supposes arrogance.]

A dubious passage from *Fiqh al-Sunna on the issue*

Concerning the related passage in the English translation of *Fiqh al-Sunna*:

Chapter entitled: "Disliked Acts in Prayer #7: Covering The Mouth and Letting One's Garment Down" whereby Abu Hurayra said: "The Messenger of Allah prohibited *as-sadl* in the prayer and covering one's mouth" which is "reported by the Five" and by Hakim who says that it is sahih according to Muslim's conditions. Al-Khattabi explains: "*As-sadl* is to lower one's garment until it reaches the ground." Al-Kamal ibn al-Hamam adds: "This also applies to wearing a cloak without putting one's arms through its sleeves."

The author of *Fiqh al-Sunna* omits clarification in several respects of his paragraph above:

- The hadith of Abu Hurayra in actuality is only reported by four: Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, and Darimi, and all of their chains contain `Isl ibn Sufyan al-Yarbu`i who is weak, which is pointed out by Tirmidhi when he says: "We do not know this hadith through the chain from `Ata' [ibn Abi Rabah] from Abu Hurayra from the Prophet except through `Isl." Also Abu Dawud, directly after citing this hadith, cites the report by Ibn Jurayj whereby "Most of the time I saw `Ata' pray as he let down his garment" after which Abu Dawud comments: "This weakens the previous

narration" because `Ata' is in all the chains. Furthermore only Abu Dawud's narration mentions the covering of the mouth.

The author seems to imply that *sadl* in the weak hadith of Abu Hurayra is the same as *isbal* in the sound hadiths of Muslim previously quoted. It should have been made clearer that *sadl* in the hadith of Abu Hurayra means the letting down of a single loose garment from the head, as the Wahhabis do as well as the uneducated who imitate them, and as Tirmidhi reports is the manner of the Jews. The narration also implies that in some cases it is done without wearing any other garment. It is different from the *isbal* which consists in trailing the *izar* or lower garment behind oneself while walking. This is confirmed by the explanations of the authorities cited below.

- o Tirmidhi said after citing the hadith in his *Sunan*:

The People of Knowledge differ concerning letting down the garment. They said: It is the fashion of the Jews. Others said: It is only disliked when, in prayer, one does not wear other than a single garment. If he is also wearing a shirt then there is no harm in it. This is the position of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. As for Ibn al-Mubarak, he dislikes it in prayer (unconditionally).

- o Abu Bakr ibn al-`Arabi said in his commentary on Tirmidhi concerning the hadith of Abu Hurayra:

It requires further consideration (i.e. its meaning is not evident). al-Shafi`i and others disliked it (unconditionally) while Malik said it is permissible, but there is difference as to its interpretation.

Some said it refers to the trailing of one's clothing on the ground. Those who allowed the letting down in the prayer said that in such a case one neither walks nor trails it because at that time one stands firmly on the ground whereas what is forbidden is pomposity or conceit (*tabakhtur*) while walking, and arrogance (*khayla'*).

Others said what is forbidden is letting down the garment without wearing a shirt (i.e. letting down a sleeveless garment from the head). In this case if one lets it down (loose) over the chest then he remains uncovered, whereas if he is wearing a shirt then it is permitted for him to let down a cloak and he does not need to tie it to himself.

- o Muwaffaq al-Din ibn Qudama said in his *Mughni*:

Sadl is disliked, and it consists in letting down the two extremities of a cloth on both sides of oneself without throwing either extremity on the opposite shoulder nor gathering them up in one's hand. It is disliked by Ibn Mas`ud, al-Nakh`i, al-Thawri, al-Shafi`i, Mujahid, and `Ata'. It is reported that Jabir and Ibn `Umar permitted it, and that al-Hasan and Ibn Sirin used to let down a garment over their shirt. Ibn al-Mundhir said: "I don't know of a single hadith that can be established concerning it," while it is narrated from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet "prohibited letting down the garment in the prayer and covering one's mouth." Abu Dawud narrated it through the narration of `Ata', then he narrated from Ibn Jurayj: "Most of the time I saw `Ata' pray as he let down his garment."

[Also] disliked is the *isbal* or trailing of the shirt and the pants... [already cited above].

It is correct that `Umar permitted *sadl* as Ibn Qudama said, however, he considered it offensive because it resembled the manner of Jews, as reported from him by Ibn Abi Shayba and confirmed by Shawkani. Still we know that he permitted it because Ibn Abi Shayba reports and Nawawi confirms that he was seen doing it at least once. This apparent contradiction between the respective reports that he disliked it and yet practiced it, similar to that reported from `Ata' dislike of *sadl* and the fact that he did it, is resolved by the fact that for one reason or another they may have done it while nevertheless considering it offensive. This is established by Ibn `Umar himself when he was seen leaning against a wall in prayer, although he had declared it offensive to do so. When asked about it he said: "Yes, we do it, but it diminishes the reward."

And Allah knows best.

