

﴿وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ
بِخُمْرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ
أَخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ
الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الْطِفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا
إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

And tell believing women to lower their gaze, away from what is not lawful for them to look at, and to guard their private parts, from what is not lawful for them to do with them, and not to display their adornment except for what is apparent, namely, the face and the hands, which may be seen by a stranger, when there is no danger of [either or both falling into] temptation — this being one of two opinions. The second [of these] is that [even] this is forbidden because there is a presumption that these [parts] will cause temptation — and this is the preferred opinion, if one must settle this topic [with a definitive opinion]; and let them draw their veils over their bosoms, that is, let them cover up their heads, necks and chests with veils, and not reveal their, hidden, adornment, namely, all that is other than the face and the hands, except to their husbands (bu'ūl is the plural form of ba'l, 'male spouse') or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or what their right hands own, all of whom are permitted to look thereat, except for the part from the navel down to the knees, which is unlawful for any other than their husbands to see; 'their women', however, excludes disbelieving women, for it is not permitted for Muslim women to reveal themselves to these; 'what their right hands own' comprises slaves; or such men who are dependant, on what food may be left over, not (ghayri, read as an adjective, or read ghayra as an exceptive) possessing any sexual desire, [not] those men who are in [sexual] need of women, so for example those whose male member cannot become erect; or children who are not yet aware of women's private parts, in [the context of] sexual intercourse, and so to these they may reveal themselves except for that part from the navel to the knees. And do not let them thump with their feet to make known their hidden ornaments, as in a rattling anklet [and the like]. And rally to God in repentance, O believers, [repenting] of the occasions on which you may have looked at what is forbidden [to look at] of such [parts] and otherwise, so that you might be prosperous, [so that you might] be saved from such [sinful acts] when your repentance thereof is accepted — in this verse the prevalent address is to males over females.

Tafsir al-Jalalayn, trans. Feras Hamza

© 2008 Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Amman, Jordan (<http://www.aalalbayt.org>) ® All Rights Reserved
Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, this work may not be reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the Great Tafsirs Project, Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (aalal-bayt@rhc.jo)