11059 - Should she cover her face and hair in front of her father?

the question

Here in the United States, many of the books available in English have conflicting messages. In regards to the dress of women some books state that the women's hands, face and feet can show, some say the hands and face only, some say the hands only, and some say nothing except the eyes if necessary. How do we reconcile these differences? Is there proof for each different opinion? I am a woman who covers my whole body including hands and face. I recently came across some books about purdah that say that a woman should cover herself in front of even her brother and father, except they can see her face and hands only. Is this true that I can not show my hair in front of my father, or is this statement just reflecting the culture of the countries that the writers are coming from? Jazakallah khairun.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The differences concerning women's hijaab mentioned here stem from ijtihad. The most correct view is that it is obligatory for a woman to cover all of her body, including the face, hands, hair and all the rest of her body in front of non-mahram men, because of the general meaning of the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“…and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…” [al-Noor24:31]

this cannot be achieved without covering the face, and it is even more appropriate that the hair and other parts of the body should be covered; it is haraam to show them.

And because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “All of the woman is ‘awrah.” And because fitnah may arise by looking at all of that. The hadeeth that says that it is permissible to uncover the face and hands is not saheeh.

With regard to a woman's 'awrah in front of her brothers, father, uncles etc., and other women, it is everything apart from that which ordinarily appears of her. So it is permissible for her to show her head, face, hands, neck and feet, because it is too difficult for her to cover them in front of them, and because there is no fear of fitnah in this case.

Shaykh Waleed al-Firyaan.

Ibn Katheer said in his Tafseer of the aayah (interpretation of the meaning)

"…and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…" [al-Noor24:31]:

"'…and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…' means that they should wear the outer garment in such a way as to cover their chests and ribs, so that they will be different from the women of the jaahiliyyah, who did not do that but would pass in front of men with their chests completely uncovered, and with their necks, forelocks, hair and earrings uncovered. So Allaah commanded the believing women to cover themselves, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

'O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (i.e. screen themselves completely except the eyes or one eye to see the way). That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed' [al-Ahzaab 33:59]

And concerning this aayah (interpretation of the meaning) –

'… and to draw their veils all over juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)' – he said: khumur (veils) is the plural of khimaar, which means something that covers, and is what is used to cover the head. This is what is known among the people as a veil.

Sa'eed ibn Jubayr said: 'and to draw' means to pull it around and tie it securely.

'their veils all over juyoobihinna' means, over their necks and chests so that nothing can be seen

of them.

Al-Bukhaari (4758) said: Ubayy told us from Yoonus from Ibn Shihaab from ‘Urwah that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said:

‘May Allaah have mercy on the early Muhaajir women. When Allaah revealed the aayah (interpretation of the meaning) –

“… and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…”, they tore their aprons and covered themselves with them.’

Al-Bukhaari also said (4759): Abu Na’eem told us, Ibraaheem ibn Naafi’ told us, from al-Hasan ibn Muslim, from Safiyyah bint Shaybah that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) used to say: when this aayah (interpretation of the meaning) –

‘…and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…’ – was revealed, they took their izaars (waistsheets) and tore them at the edges, and covered themselves with them.

Ibn Abi Haatim said: my father told us, Ahmad ibn ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Yoonus told us, al-Zanji ibn Khaalid told me, ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Uthmaan ibn Khaytham told us, that Safiyah bint Shaybah said: whilst we were sitting with ‘Aa’ishah, mention was made of the women of Quraysh and how good they were. ‘Aa’ishah said that the women of Quraysh were indeed good, ‘but by Allaah I have never seen any better than the women of the Ansaar, or any women who believed more strongly in the Book of Allaah and had more faith in the Revelation. When Soorat al-Noor was revealed –

“…and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…” [al-Noor24:31] –

their menfolk came back to them and recited to them what Allaah had revealed. No sooner had a man recited it to his wife, daughter, sister and all other female relatives, but they all went and picked up their embroidered aprons, and covered their heads with them, in obedience to the words of His Book that Allaah had revealed. The next morning they stood behind the Messenger of

Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with their heads covered, as if there were crows on their heads.’

(Narrated by Abu Dawood, 4100 with more than one isnaadfrom Safiyyah bint Shaybah).Ibn Jareer said (18120): Yoonus told us, Ibn Wahb informed us that Qarqarah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmaan told him from Ibn Shihaab from ‘Urwah that ‘Aa’ishah said:

‘May Allaah have mercy on the first muhaajir women. When Allaah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning) –

“…and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms)…” [al-Noor24:31] –

they tore the edges of their aprons and covered their heads with them.’

(narrated by Abu Dawood, 4102, from the hadeeth of Ibn Wahb). Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 3/283

What you have mentioned about some books saying that women have to wear hijaab in front of their brothers and fathers is extreme and is a mistake. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer palms of hands or one eye or dress like veil, gloves, headcover, apron), and to draw their veils all over Juyoobihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband’s fathers, or their sons, or their husband’s sons, or their brothers or their brother’s sons, or their sister’s sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of feminine sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allaah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful” [al-Noor 24:31]

And Allaah knows best.