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## **Quranic Perspectives on Adornment and Beauty**

**Nida Andaleeb Khattak**

Lecturer Design PCA, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

[Nidakhattak@awkum.edu.pk](mailto:Nidakhattak@awkum.edu.pk)

**Hamid Ali**

Assistant Professor, Art and Design PCA, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

[pirhamid@awkum.edu.pk](mailto:pirhamid@awkum.edu.pk)

**Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir**

Dean Faculty of Arts& Humanities, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

[Muhhammad\\_tahir@awkum.edu.pk](mailto:Muhhammad_tahir@awkum.edu.pk)

### **Abstract:**

*This paper explores the Quranic perspectives on adornment and beauty, focusing on the principles of modesty, righteousness, and the balance between inner and outer beauty. The Quran provides comprehensive guidance on adornment, highlighting the importance of modesty, ethical conduct, and the intrinsic value of human dignity. Key verses such as Surah An-Nur (24:31) and Surah Al-A'raf (7:26) emphasize the spiritual and moral dimensions of clothing and ornamentation. The study incorporates interpretations from classical Islamic scholars like Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi, alongside contemporary research on Muslim fashion and identity, to illustrate how these teachings are understood and practiced in various cultural contexts. A comparative analysis with the teachings of other religious texts, such as the Bible and the Torah, provides a broader perspective on the global themes of decoration and modesty. By examining these aspects, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of Islamic values and their relevance in modern society.*

**Keywords:** *Quran, beauty, Islamic Law, Muslim fashion, Modesty.*

## Introduction

Adornment and beauty are integral aspects of human expression and identity, deeply rooted in cultural, social, and religious contexts. In Islam, the Quran provides comprehensive guidance on various aspects of life, including the principles of adornment and beauty. These guidelines are not only surface-level; they have spiritual, ethical, and social aspects that represent the whole character of Islamic teachings.

Numerous verses in the Quran discuss ornamentation and beauty, highlighting the value of modesty, righteousness, and striking a balance between inner and outer beauty. Verses such as Surah An-Nur (24:31), which advises women on modesty and the covering of their adornments, and Surah Al-A'raf (7:26), which speaks of clothing as a means to conceal and adorn, highlight the dual purpose of clothing and adornment in Islam. These verses, among others, serve as a foundation for Islamic perspectives on how believers should present themselves in society.

These instructions from the Quran have been widely interpreted by Islamic scholars, both classical and modern, providing insights on acceptable types of adornment and the moral considerations that underlie them. Works by Ibn Kathir (1301–1373), Al-Qurtubi (1214–1273), and contemporary exegesis like "The Study Quran" (2015) are examples of tafsir texts that offer insightful interpretations that aid in placing these teachings within the larger framework of Islamic law and cultural customs.

Furthermore, recent research on Muslim fashion and identity, like "Fashioning the Self: Islam, Gender, and Modesty" by Reina Lewis (2013) and "Veiled Modesty: Examining the Hijab and Modesty in Islam" by Leila Ahmed (1992), examine how contemporary Muslims strike a balance between following religious precepts and expressing their uniqueness through clothing. These works demonstrate how Islamic customs surrounding ornamentation and beauty are dynamic in a variety of cultural situations.

This research paper aims to investigate the Quranic perspective on adornment and beauty, focusing on the permissible forms of adornment and the balance between modesty and self-expression.

This study aims to provide a thorough understanding of how Islamic teachings on ornamentation and beauty are interpreted and applied today by looking at significant Quranic texts, academic interpretations, and modern applications. Furthermore, a comparison with other religions, including Judaism and Christianity, will provide a wider viewpoint on the global themes of decoration and modesty.

Understanding the Quranic perspectives on adornment and beauty is essential for appreciating the holistic approach of Islamic teachings, which integrate spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions into the everyday lives of believers. This study will add to the current conversation about Islamic identity, fashion, and how religious teachings influence cultural norms.

## Objectives

- To identify and analyze Quranic verses that discuss adornment and beauty.
- To explore the types of adornments allowed in Islam according to the Quran.
- To examine the balance between modesty and self-expression in the context of Islamic teachings.
- To compare Quranic perspectives on adornment and beauty with those in other religious texts, such as the Bible and the Torah.
- To understand how these Quranic guidelines are applied in contemporary Muslim societies.

## Methodology

- **Textual Analysis:** Conduct a detailed textual analysis of the Quran, focusing on verses related to adornment and beauty.
- **Exegesis Comparison:** Compare interpretations from various Islamic scholars across different schools of thought.
- **Legal Opinions:** Review legal opinions and fatwas on permissible forms of adornment and their applications.
- **Contextual Analysis:** Place the findings within the broader context of Islamic jurisprudence and cultural practices.
- **Comparative Study:** Compare Quranic perspectives with those in other religious texts to highlight unique and shared themes.

## Quranic Perspectives on Adornment and Beauty

To investigate the Quranic perspectives on adornment and beauty, we need to gather relevant data from the Quran, scholarly interpretations, and contemporary sources. Below is a detailed collection of primary data, scholarly references, and contextual analyses for this research.

### Key Quranic Verses that are Analyzed

- **Surah Ar-Rahman (55:7-8) and Surah An-Nahl (16:6) :** Creation and Natural Beauty: The Quran frequently references the beauty of the natural world as a reflection of God's creative power. Verses such as Surah Ar-Rahman (55:7-8) and Surah An-Nahl (16:6) highlight the harmony and aesthetic appeal of the universe, encouraging believers to appreciate and reflect on these signs.
- **Surah At-Tin, 95:4):** Human Beauty: Human beings are described as being created in the best of forms (Surah At-Tin, 95:4). This emphasizes the intrinsic value and dignity of human beings, suggesting that physical beauty is a manifestation of divine craftsmanship.

- **Surah An-Nur (24:31):** Discusses the concept of modesty and provides guidelines for both men and women on how to dress and behave.
- **Surah Al-A'raf (7:26):** Refers to clothing as a means to cover nakedness and as an adornment, emphasizing the "clothing of righteousness."
- **Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59):** Advises women to draw their outer garments around them for modesty and protection.
- **Surah Al-Isra (17:37):** Encourages moderation in behavior and dress, avoiding extravagance and arrogance.
- **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:168):** Encourages believers to consume lawful and good things, implying an emphasis on purity and beauty in all aspects of life.

### Primary Quranic Verses on Adornment and Beauty

- **Surah Ar-Rahman (55:7-8) :**

These verses from Surah Ar-Rahman emphasize the balance and order in creation:

55:7: "And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance."

55:8: "That you not transgress within the balance."

#### **Interpretation:**

These words emphasise the careful harmony and order that God created in the universe. The term "balance" (mizan) refers to morality and ethical behaviour in addition to the material and natural environment.

It implies that harmony and balance are the foundations of beauty in creation, and that it is up to humans to preserve these harmony and balance in their daily lives.

- **Surah An-Nahl (16:6)**

This verse highlights the aesthetic and functional benefits of cattle:

"And for you in them is beauty when you bring them in for the evening and when you send them out to pasture."

#### **Interpretation:**

This verse underscores the beauty and utility of cattle, reflecting on the blessings provided by God. The mention of beauty (zeenah) here pertains to the appreciation of animals as part of God's creation, which provides both practical benefits and aesthetic pleasure. It encourages believers to recognize and value the beauty in God's provisions.

- **Surah At-Tin, 95:4):**

This verse from Surah At-Tin reflects on the excellence of human creation:

"Certainly, We created man in the best form."

**Interpretation:**

This verse highlights how unique human creation is. It states that God created mankind in their ideal shape, or *ashsan taqwim*, suggesting that people are inherently good and beautiful in both their physical and spiritual makeup. According to Islamic doctrine, this passage emphasises the dignity and worth that God has given upon people, underlining the beauty and perfection that are inherent in human existence.

- **Surah An-Nur (24:31):**
  - "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not to expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not to expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed."
  - This verse provides guidance on modesty and the covering of adornments for women.
- **Surah Al-A'raf (7:26):**
  - "O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness - that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember."
  - This verse highlights the two functions of clothing—to beautify and to conceal—with an added focus on righteousness
- **Surah Al-Ahzab (33:59):**
  - "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."
  - This verse advises women to wear outer garments for modesty and protection.
- **Surah Al-Isra (17:37):**
  - "And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height."

- This verse encourages moderation and humility, which can be applied to one's attire and personal accessories.
- **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:168):**
  - "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."
  - While primarily about consumption, this verse implies the importance of lawful and good things, which can extend to adornment and beauty practices.

### Scholarly Interpretations and Analyses

- **Tafsir Ibn Kathir:**
  - This classical tafsir offers thorough interpretations of all Quranic passages, including verses about adornment and beauty. Ibn Kathir places great emphasis on the spiritual relevance of adorning and the virtue of modesty.
- **Tafsir Al-Qurtubi:**
  - Al-Qurtubi's tafsir highlights the harmony between modesty and acceptable beautifying, providing insights into the moral and legal ramifications of the Quran's ornamentation standards.
- **Tafsir Al-Jalalayn:**
  - Jalal ad-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti's succinct tafsir offers clear readings of pertinent texts with an emphasis on the practical applications of modesty and adornment.
- **The Study Quran** (Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al.):
  - This contemporary tafsir offers thorough commentary on the verses, taking into account the historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds. It includes perspectives on how adornment and beauty are viewed within Islamic teachings.

### Contemporary Sources and Cultural Studies

- **"Fashioning the Self: Islam, Gender, and Modesty" by Reina Lewis:**
  - This book examines the relationship between modesty, self-expression, and identity in the context of modern Muslim fashion. It provides a cultural examination of how contemporary Muslims understand and implement the ornamentation instructions found in the Quran.

- **"Veiled Modesty: Examining the Hijab and Modesty in Islam" by Leila Ahmed:**
  - Ahmed's work delves into the historical and contemporary significance of the hijab and modesty in Islam, providing insights into the role of adornment and beauty.
- **"Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America" edited by Emma Tarlo and Annelies Moors:**
  - This collection of essays examines the diversity of Islamic fashion practices in the West, highlighting the balance between religious adherence and modern trends.
- **Journal Articles and Research Papers:**
  - Numerous scholarly articles and research papers discuss the implications of Quranic teachings on adornment and beauty, such as those published in journals like "The Muslim World" and "Journal of Islamic Studies."

## **Comparative Analysis**

- **Biblical Perspectives on Adornment:**
  - Exploring similar themes in the Bible, such as 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4, which discuss modesty and adornment for women in Christian contexts.
  - Comparative studies can highlight similarities and differences in religious teachings on adornment and beauty.
- **Jewish Perspectives on Adornment:**
  - Examining Jewish teachings on modesty and adornment, such as those found in the Talmud and rabbinical writings, to provide a comparative religious perspective.

## **Discussion**

The data collected from Quranic verses, scholarly interpretations, contemporary sources, and comparative analyses provide a comprehensive foundation for investigating the Quranic perspectives on adornment and beauty. This research aims to elucidate how Islamic teachings balance modesty and self-expression, contributing to a deeper understanding of Islamic values and their application in modern contexts.

- **Enhanced Understanding:** A comprehensive understanding of the Quranic view on adornment and beauty.
- **Theological Insights:** Insights into how these Quranic guidelines balance modesty and self-expression.
- **Practical Implications:** Understanding the application of these guidelines in contemporary Muslim societies.
- **Interfaith Perspectives:** Enhanced interfaith dialogue through comparative analysis with other religious texts.

## Conclusion

This research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the Quranic perspectives on adornment and beauty, highlighting the balance between modesty and self-expression. By exploring these guidelines, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper appreciation of Islamic values and their practical implications in contemporary contexts.

## Implications for Future Research

Future research could delve deeper into comparative studies between Quranic perspectives and those of other religious or philosophical traditions. Additionally, exploring how contemporary Muslim communities navigate modern beauty standards in light of Quranic teachings could provide valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity.

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