Should I not feel shy of a man whom the angels feel shy of?

‘Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was lying in my house with his thighs or shins uncovered. Abu Bakr sought permission to enter, and he allowed him in, still in that state. Abu Bakr talked (to him). Then ‘Umar sought permission to enter, and he allowed him in while in that very state. ‘Umar talked (to him). Then ‘Uthmān sought permission to enter, so the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) sat down and set right his clothes - Muhammad (one of the narrators) said: I do not say that it happened on the same day - and he (‘Uthmān) then entered and conversed with him. When he left, ‘Ā'ishah said: "Abu Bakr entered and you did not care and did not arrange your clothes, then ‘Umar entered and you did not care and did not arrange your clothes, then ‘Uthmān entered and you got up and set your clothes right!" Thereupon, he said: "Should I not feel shy of a man whom the angels feel shy of?"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

‘Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was lying in her house, and his thighs or shins were uncovered. As Abu Bakr asked for permission to enter, he allowed him in, and his thighs or shins were still uncovered. Abu Bakr conversed with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Then ‘Umar asked for permission to enter, so the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) allowed him in, without changing his position. He talked to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Then ‘Uthmān asked for permission to enter, so the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) sat down, arranged his clothes, and covered his thighs or shins. Then he allowed him in. When ‘Uthmān left, ‘Ā'ishah remarked that when Abu Bakr entered, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not mind, and so did he when ‘Umar got in. However, when ‘Uthmān entered, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) sat down, straightened his clothes, and covered his thighs or shins. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: ''Should I not feel shy of a man whom the angels feel shy of?'' Now, this Hadīth cannot be taken as a proof that the thighs are not ‘Awrah, for there is uncertainty in the Hadīth about the parts of the body that were uncovered: the thighs or shins. So, it cannot be said with certainty that it is permissible to uncover the thighs. Also, the Hadīths where the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was reported to have uncovered his thighs indicate a practice rather than a saying of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). These Hadīths were reported by young Companions. There are other Hadīths reported by senior Companions, however, in which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) stated that the thighs are ‘Awrah. So precaution entails that these Hadīths are to be complied with. The rule is that a

statement outweighs a practice. Also, the practice is subject to possible interpretations. Another reason is that the uncovering, as the Hadīth indicates, was done in the presence of one's close relatives, so, it does not apply to everywhere. As per the Fatwa of the Permanent Committee, thighs are ‘Awrah.

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