

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (Lahore) Fiji

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“COLOUR RESTRICTIONS IN ISLAM”

It is common practice amongst many communities, when their main religious festivals are getting closer, then some initiatives are commonly taken up, such as repainting of their places of worship, repainting their dwelling houses, and buying new clothes for themselves and their families. Insofar as Islam matters, the significant festivals are Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adzah. It is respectfully noted, that certain Islamic groups have may slight variations with one or two more.

The author will not discuss details of other religious communities’ festivals, as it is not the scope and purpose of this article. It is prudent to prevent Muslims from accusations and assumptions of any link to idol worshipping, as detailed in the Holy Qur’an at 39:17 “And those who eschew the worship of the idols and turn to Allah, for them is good news. So give good news to My servants.”

Red, yellow and saffron are primitive colours. Rolling back thousands of years into history, and as still evidenced today, these three colours of red, yellow and saffron have always been associated with primitive communities. These primitive communities have used mainly red and yellow colours to paint their places of worship. These places of worship are generally temples of various descriptions, which contain several idols, and which are worshipped instead of Allah. The painting of temples in red and yellow also brings about their distinctive identification of what they are, and their purpose. These practices were in existence thousands of years before the lifetime of Rasul-Allah (pbuh).

More explicitly, amongst the Hindustani-speaking and the Urdu-speaking communities, these three specific colours of red, yellow and saffron are best described as *Sindur-red*, *Haldi-yellow* and *Pujari-orange*.

Saffron is another colour, which also has its significance. This colour has over thousands of years been associated with Asian priests and monks, wearing saffron robes. In the early days, red and yellow paints were used on temples and saffron colour attire worn by monks throughout the entire span of Asia and Southeast Asia. However, with Asian Diaspora, that reality has now spread out to almost all the major countries of this world.

Hence, it becomes fundamental expectation, that Muslims’ places where Allah is remembered and revered very much, must never be painted in red or yellow or combinations of red and yellow. Such Muslim places are generally Mosques/*masjid*, *markaz*, and *madrassa* are white, green or white and green. In the same token, Muslim imams must never be wearing saffron robes.

The festivals’ associated-activities of general upgrade, including buying new clothes for peoples in the household, have been in practice and in fact recommended by Rasul-Allah (pbuh). The Holy Qur’an states supportively at 7:26 “7:26 O children of Adam, We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty; and clothing that guards against evil — that is the best. This is of the messages of Allah that they may be mindful.”

This support is further reinforced at 7:32 “Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah, which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good provisions? Say: These are for the believers in the life of this world, purely (theirs) on the Resurrection day. Thus do We make the messages clear for a people who know.”

However, modern commercialisation of many religious activities, such as holding specially discounted prices of clothing items and general merchandise as witnessed in many countries, is something, which did not happen in the days of Rasul-Allah (pbuh). Consequently some Muslims are influentially swayed into those attractions and sometimes, obviously buy clothes of certain colours, which are not recommended to be associated with Muslims.

As a baseline, all colours are permissible in Islam, except where there may be *sharia* restricting certain colours for places of worship and clothing for women and men. Generally, *sharia* will permit certain colours circumstantially and restrict certain colours circumstantially. For example, Rasul Allah (pbuh) is on record in so many Hadith, of having preference for wearing white clothes and either a black turban or a white turban. Black and white clothes are permissible to Muslims as alternates to changing colours of clothes, but Rasul-Allah (pbuh) did not like the idea of Muslims wearing black clothes especially to indicate to the wider public that they are in mourning. Wearing black clothes as sign of mourning is really an imitation of Christian practices for the same purpose. It should be noted that this applies to both women and men, refraining from wearing black as a sign of mourning. This is considered as bid'ah (innovation into Islam).

There is also Hadith when Rasul-Allah wore green clothes and white turban on a number of occasions.

All-red (dyed completely red) is not a colour that Rasul-Allah (pbuh) was pleased with; and Hazrat Umar is on record of having taken a person aside and telling that person not to wear red. On the contrary, clothes which are of mixed colours and also contain some areas or streaks of red or yellow, or other colours were quite permissible by Rasul-Allah (pbuh).

In conclusion, clarity is given that Muslims' places of worship must never be painted in those colours of red, yellow or saffron; as these colours have been traditionally associated with places, where idols and other prohibited objects are worshipped instead of Allah.

Similarly, plain single-coloured clothes in red, yellow or saffron fabrics are not recommended for Muslims and these colours must not be worn by Muslims to Muslims' religious functions or Muslim gatherings.

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