

Woman dancing in front of her husband or in front of other women

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question: We know that a woman's dancing in front of her husband, and likewise her dancing with women, which is swaying, and the dabkah¹ of men are forbidden, but what is the proof for that? Please provide us with some insight on this, may Allaah reward you.

Answer: Shaykh al-Albaanee (رحمته الله)²: This question consists of three parts:

First: A woman dancing in front of her husband

Second: Her dancing in front of other women

Third: The dabkah performed by men

As for the first part, which is a woman's dancing in front of her husband. If her dancing is natural and not professional – i.e. she did not learn how to dance, as is the fashion of this time – even if she stirs the desires of the man, then there is no text that can be found that forbids this. But this is on the condition that it occurs between her and her husband only. As for the case where she has learned to dance and she applies the rules of modern-day dancing, then this is not permissible. This is because I believe that if she will do that in front of her husband, then she will surely also do it in front of other men besides her husband.

As for her dancing in front of other women, then I also say that if her objective in dancing is to dance this modern style of dancing, then it is clear that it is not permissible. And if it is said: "What is the proof for what you have stated?" I say: Moderation in matters is very rare; there is either excessiveness or there is negligence. This is especially the case with people who have lived a long period of time in deviation of a specific nature. Then when it becomes clarified to them that this matter was a deviation and that the Religion rejects it, they turn away from it and introduce in place of that, a severe reaction.

This is what has befallen us in this present time with regard to the issue of demanding the proof in place of the liberation from blind following. The Muslims, both special and common people, have lived long generations not knowing anything but the madh-hab of so and so and the madh-hab of so and so – four madh-habs, the madh-habs of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. And this is not to mention the other madh-habs, those that have deviated from the Sunnah and the Jamaa'ah. As for relying on what Allaah and his Messenger, (ﷺ)³, said for support, then this was only found in the generations that have received testimony of their excellence. Then that affair came to an end for a point in time until there came the time of Ibn Taymeeyah (رحمته الله) and those of his students who were devoted to him. So they informed the Muslims of the obligation of returning back to what the first Salaf (predecessors) were upon, such as relying on the Qur'aan and the Sunnah for support.

¹ A dabkah in Arabic is a dance in which people form a line by holding each other's arms. The question is with regard to this dance being performed by a group of men.

² (رحمته الله) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

³ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

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There is no doubt that the Call of Ibn Taymeeyah (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ) and his students had a positive effect. However, its scope was very weak during his time and intellectual impassiveness (i.e. not reflecting on proofs) took over and became dominant amongst the special classes of people, not to mention the common ones.

Then there followed succeeding generations in which this re-awakening that Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymeeyah (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ) ignited died out. And the Muslims turned back to their indifference of comprehending and understanding (i.e. the evidences), until this present time and a brief period before it, for many scholars rose to take charge of the Da'wah's revival, due to the need of returning to the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. They were preceded in some of that by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn 'abd-il-Wahhaab (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ), for in reality, he called to the following of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. But looking at the areas in which the Arabs of Najd during Shaykh Muhammad's (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ) land used to live in, and considering the paganism that took place in their lands, his greatest effort was in showing strong concern for Tawheed.

And as is very natural, in my opinion, such that mankind's ability is limited, he was not able to wage his war on every front, as they say. So because of this, all of his efforts were geared towards spreading the call of Tawheed and waging war against paganism and idolatry. And he received all the success in that and his splendid Call was spread all over the Islaamic world afterwards. And this was even though, unfortunately, there occurred battles between him and his opponents. But this is the Sunnah (Way) of Allaah with regard to His creation. And you will not find any change in the Sunnah (Way) of Allaah.

However, in current times, the scholars have renewed their call to the Book and the Sunnah and thus many of the common and special people in the Arab lands have re-awakened. As for the non-Arab lands, then unfortunately they are still in a state of sleep.

However, these Arab lands have been tested by a reversal, which is what I have indicated previously, such that some of them do not stop at the middle point of moderation. Instead they know of one thing and are ignorant of another thing. So you will see the common man who doesn't understand anything, when he asks the scholar on any subject "What is its ruling?", regardless of whether the answer is a denial and a negation, he begins with his demand: "What is the proof?"

And sometimes that scholar is not able to establish the proof, especially if the proof is deduced and adopted through thorough research, and it is not stated in a specific text in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. So in issues of this nature, it is not proper for the questioner to go deep and say: "What is the proof?" And it is required that the questioner know himself. Is he from the people that understand evidences or not? Does he have any share in knowledge of the general ('aam) and the specific (khaas), the unrestricted (mutlaq) and the restricted (muqayyad), the abrogating (naasikh) and the abrogated (mansookh). So if the person does not understand any of these things, then does he get any benefit from saying: "What is the proof"?! For what?! – For the ruling on a woman dancing in front of her husband or her dancing in front of her Muslim sister, whether it is either permissible or forbidden! And the dabkah of men! He wants the proof for that! But in reality, there is no textual proof from the Messenger (ﷺ), on that matter that exists for us. There is only investigation, deduction and the acquisition of understanding for it.

Due to this, we say at certain times: Not every issue has an explicit proof that can be presented in detail, which every Muslim can understand, whether he is a common unlettered person or a student of knowledge. But this is not for all the issues. This is why Allaah, the Most High, says: **"Ask the people of knowledge if you don't know."**

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From the extremism that we indicated previously – and due to it, the most ignorant of people has begun to decline the proof – is that many of those who attribute themselves to the Book and the Sunnah: They believe that the scholar, when he is asked on an issue, it is obligatory upon him to link "Allaah said and His Messenger said" with his answer.

I say that this is not an obligation, and that it is from the benefits of belonging to the methodology of the Salaf as-Saalih (righteous predecessors). And furthermore, their biographies and their fataawaa (religious verdicts) is a proof in action for what I have stated. So based on this, mentioning the proof is obligatory when the situation necessitates it, however it is not an obligation on him every time he is asked a question to say: "Allaah says such and such" or "The Messenger of Allaah, (ﷺ), said such and such." And this is especially if the issues are from the detailed and intricate issues of Fiqh in which there are differences of opinion.

Furthermore, the saying of Allaah:

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Ask the people of knowledge if you don't know⁴

"Ask the people of knowledge if you don't know" is first of all in the unrestricted sense, so all you have to do is ask someone whom you feel is from the people of knowledge. And when you hear the answer from him, then it is upon you to follow it, unless you have a doubt about it due to what you heard from another scholar. There is no harm in you mentioning that to him. So at that point, the scholar must make an effort, with the knowledge he has, to remove this doubt which has been presented to the questioner.

In summary: A woman dancing in front of her husband, along with the restrictive condition mentioned previously, is permissible. As for her dancing in front of other women, then it has two forms also, as we have stated before. With regard to a woman dancing in front of her husband, then if her dancing is not joined with professionalism (i.e. learned way of dancing), but rather it is just a moving and waving of hands, and there is no shaking of the hips or those sorts of things that stir the desires and causes doubts, then there is also no problem with this dancing. If it is correct to call it dancing!

But if any of those (evil) things mentioned above are found in it, then refraining from it is the original principle. As for the dabkah of men, then if it is in imitation of the dances, which we see are normally joined with singing, not to mention that there are words mentioned in them that are not from the Religion, then this is lahw (a vain pastime) and it is not encouraged. Rather, it is encouraged to stay away from it, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "**Every lahw (vain pastime) the Son of Adam engages in is falsehood, except his playing with his wife, his playing with his horse, archery and learning to swim.**" So due to this hadeeth, we hold the opinion that it is falsehood.

So if this is the condition of the pure vain pastime in that we are encouraged to refrain from it and that is not from the truthful matters, then we say that it allowable, so long as is not accompanied with something that opposes the Religion in any aspect of it. However, it is an allowance that must be weighed by the hadeeth that I have mentioned previously.

But in my opinion, and Allaah knows best for I have not witnessed any of these dabkahs, it is not possible for it to be free from any opposition to the Religion. And this is because, for example, we

⁴ Soorah an-Nahl [16:43]

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have heard the dabkah at times, and it is not just it alone. Rather, we hear along with it, music, the mu'adhdhin calling the Adhaan and the Imaam reciting the Qur'aan out loud. And they do not care about anything else but instead they are busy with their vain pastime. Therefore, the dabkah is from the vain pastimes that must be weighed and determined. And we do not say that it is Haraam (forbidden) unless it is combined with something that goes against the Religion from one of the aspects, for then it would turn without a doubt into something Haraam (forbidden).