103439 - Is it permissible for men to listen to the nasheed of women?

the question

Is it permissible for men to listen to Islamic nasheeds or traditional songs sung by girls recorded on a tape?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We invite you and all our Muslim brothers to study with us the evidence of the Quran and Sunnah and to think about the words of the scholars, then let each person judge for himself, for the believer is accountable for himself and Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, can see all that is in his heart. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the heart feels tranquil and the soul feels tranquil, and sin is that which wavers in the heart and moves to and fro in the breast even though people again and again have given you their legal opinion [in its favour].”

Narrated by Imam Ahmad (4/228) and classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Targheeb (1734).

We say first of all: Every Muslim reads and hears in the Book of Allah a verse in which Allah warned the purest of women and the most chaste of wives, and urged them to adhere to virtue, proper etiquette and chastity, and He says, guiding them (interpretation of the meaning):

“O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty (to Allah), then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery) should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner”

[al-Ahzaab 33:32]

Allah wanted to teach them the means of removing impurity and the means of purification, even though they were members of the Prophet's household and were the purest women ever known on earth. Other women are in greater need of these means than those who lived in the household of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). So He started by telling them of their high status and lofty position, and said "You are not like any other women". This applies to every woman of honour and dignity who insists on reaching the status and position that was attained by the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When she hears the prohibition of addressing strange men in a soft voice, she understands that Allah has great wisdom in all that He commands and forbids, and that He is the One Who has created men and women and He knows that the soft voice of a woman may provoke desire and stir up fitnah. This is part of man's nature and there is no way of attaining purity and modesty except by keeping away from means of provocation altogether.

Sharee'ah, which is based on wisdom, closes the door to all kinds of fitnah or temptation, even if that temptation may have little influence on the individual level, but its influence on the society on the whole and in the long term is apparent and clear. Although it may be hidden from some people, it is not hidden from Allah, may He be glorified, the Lord of all people, and He is the one who has commanded Muslim women to speak in a serious manner.

Nasheed sung by women or girls is one of the major doors of fitnah. Even though some people argue about that, there will come a time when there will be no excuse for anyone to argue about this fact except the excuse of whims and desires, because once the door to deviation has been opened, the people will open it to its widest extent, as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Innovation may initially be a handspan, then it increases until it becomes a cubit, then miles and parasangs. Majmoo' al-Fataawa (8/425).

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of Shaytaan (Satan). And whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaytaan (Satan), then, verily, he commands Al-Fahsha' [i.e. to commit indecency (illegal sexual intercourse)], and Al-Munkar [disbelief and polytheism (i.e. to do evil and wicked

deeds; and to speak or to do what is forbidden in Islam)]. And had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins. But Allah purifies (guides to Islam) whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower”

[al-Noor 24:21]

Purification is the aim of the Muslim man and Muslim woman, which means purifying the heart and cleansing the soul, and in order to achieve that it is essential to avoid the traps of the shaytaan. The heart turns rapidly and the soul longs and wishes, and man is weak before the physical desires which Allah has created in him.

Those who bear the sins of entire societies on their shoulders and who publish the voices of girls singing “religious” songs and nasheeds in the name of Islam and in the name of promoting virtue and sometimes of promoting the resistance, should fear Allah. We wonder whether virtue and the resistance are in need of a sweet voice and pretty girl? Do we have no means of calling people to good manners, values and virtues but sitting with singing girls or listening to them on tapes and satellite channels?

Perhaps here we may suggest a way that everyone can refer to in order to decide what is right?

If we imagine that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was living amongst us, then a beautiful young girl stood up and began to sing songs and nasheeds in her sweet voice, accompanied by some kinds of musical instruments, and boys and men gathered to listen to her and look at her, can anyone who knows the sharee’ah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) imagine that he would approve of that, when he is the one who turned the face of his paternal cousin al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbaas so that he would not look at the young Khath’ami woman, and he said: “I saw a young man and a young woman and I could not be sure that the shaytaan would not tempt them”?

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (885), who said: (it is) hasan saheeh; it was also classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

Ibn al-Jawzi said in Talbees Iblees (277):

Abu’l-Qaasim al-Hareeri told us that Abu’l-Tayyib al-Tabari said: As for listening to songs from a woman who is not a mahram, the companions of al-Shaafa’i said: It is not permissible, whether she is a free woman or a slave.

He said: and al-Shaafa’i said: If the owner of a slave woman gathers people to listen to her (singing), then he is a fool whose testimony should be rejected. Then he spoke sternly concerning that and said: It is cuckoldry.

Ibn al-Jawzi said: The master (of such a woman) is regarded as a fool and evildoer because he calls people to falsehood, and the one who calls people to falsehood is a fool and an evildoer. End quote.

Sharee’ah enjoins women to lower their voices in worship. If a man notices something whilst praying, he should say tasbeeh (to alert the imam), but a woman should not say tasbeeh so that men will not hear her voice, rather she should clap her hands gently. The same applies to reciting the talbiyah, responding to the adhaan and returning greetings. We say this quoting from the fuqaha’ of the four madhhabs.

In Haashiyat al-Tahhaawi (1/161), which is a Hanafi book, it says:

It says in al-Fath: The difference of opinion refers to speaking out loud only, not to speaking in a soft or alluring voice. End quote.

i.e., it is forbidden to speak in a soft or alluring voice, and there is no difference of opinion concerning that.

Kamaal al-Deen al-Siyoowaasi said in Sharh Fath al-Qadeer (1/260):

It is clearly stated in al-Nawaazil that the voice of a woman with a tune is ‘awrah. Based on that, for a woman to learn Qur’aan from a woman is better in my opinion than her learning Qur’aan from a blind man, because her voice with a tune is ‘awrah. Therefore the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Tasbeeh is for men and clapping is for women.” It is not right for a man to hear her. End quote.

It says in Sharh Mukhtasar Khaleel by al-Kharashi (1/276), which is a Maaliki book:

Al-Naasir stated that it is not permissible for a woman to raise her voice when there is the fear that men may enjoy hearing, whether that is in business or in weddings, whether it is ululations or otherwise. As for elderly women, it is not haraam to hear their voices. End quote.

Imam al-Shaafa’i (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Umm (2/156):

Women are enjoined to conceal themselves, and if no one hears a woman’s voice, that is better for her and more concealing for her, so women should not raise their voices in reciting the Talbiyah; a woman should only be heard by herself. End quote.

It says in Rawdat al-Taalibeen, which is a Shaafa’i book (7/21):

Her voice is not ‘awrah according to the more correct opinion, but it is haraam to listen to it if there is the fear of fitnah. If a man knocks at her door, she should not answer with a soft voice, rather she should make her voice harsh. End quote.

Al-Mardaawi said in al-Insaaf (8/31), which is a Hanbali book:

Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said, according to a report narrated by Saalih: The greeting may be given to an old woman, but not to a young woman.

Al-Qaadi said: He only said that for fear lest he be tempted by her voice. According to both reports it is haraam to enjoy listening to it, even if she is reciting Qur’aan. This was stated clearly in al-Mustaw’ab and al-Ri’aayah and al-Furoo’ and elsewhere. Al-Qaadi said: It is not allowed to listen to her voice. End quote.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Ighaathat al-Lahfaan (1/230).

As for listening to it – i.e., singing in general – from a non-mahram woman, it is one of the gravest

of haraam actions and the most harmful to one’s religious commitment. End quote.

Similarly it is not permissible for men to listen to the songs or nasheeds of women, whether that is by being present in a gathering or by listening to a recording, and whether the words of the nasheed encourage good morals and virtues, or they call for evildoing and immorality.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Liqa’ al-Shahri (55/question no. 14):

My opinion is that this is haraam, for women’s voices to be heard by men who sit and listen to them and enjoy hearing their voices. End quote.

The problem with listening to religious nasheed sung by girls or women is that the one who does that thinks that it is a means of drawing closer to Allah and that it benefits people in religious terms, and he may go further and think that it is a kind of calling people to Allah or jihad for His sake.

Imam Abu ‘Amr ibn al-Salaah (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Some people say that listening to songs with the daff and flute is permissible, and non-mahram women may be present, and they mix with them sometimes or they watch them from nearby, and sometimes the men embrace one another and they gather to listen to songs and beating of the daff by beardless youths who sing for them, and they focus their gaze upon the faces of these beardless youths, showing great interest in the singer and the song, then they disperse dancing and handclapping. They think that this is permissible and is a way of drawing closer to Allah, and they say that it is the best act of worship! Is that haraam or halaal? Should the one who says that it is halaal be rebuked or not?

He (may Allah be pleased with him) replied: It should be noted that these are the brothers of the permissive people who are among the most evil of the misguided groups and the most ignorant and foolish. They have rejected the laws of the Prophets and shunned knowledge and the scholars. They have donned the cloak of asceticism and claimed to have turned their back on the world, but they have followed their whims and desires. They occupy themselves with idle entertainment

which is the sign of idle people and sinners, and claim that it brings them closer to Allah and say that they are following the example of the righteous who came before them. But they are telling lies against Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and against His slaves whom He chose, and these are all tricks of the shaytaan which they are using to deceive the masses. Their saying about this listening that it is an act of worship and obedience is contrary to the consensus of the Muslims.

As for whether it is permissible to listen to this, it should be noted that if the daff, flute and singing come together, then listening to that is haraam according to the imams of the madhhabs and other Muslim scholars. It is not proven that any reliable scholar differed from that and said it is permissible.

As for what is said about them listening to beardless youths alongside non-mahram women, believing that it is permissible, undoubtedly this is the attitude of promiscuous people and the ideas of heretics, and no one among the Muslims, their scholars and worshippers ever allowed that.

End quote.

The fatwa is lengthy, and we have only quoted a few paragraphs from it. See Fataawa Ibn al-Salaah (2/499-501).

See also the answer to question no. 11563 .

And Allah knows best.