127858 - Ruling on websites that have sections for detailed discussion of the private marital relationship

the question

What is the ruling on books, websites and courses that speak about sexual education? Please note that the websites I am talking about – which I have seen myself – are in Arabic and are used Muslim women, and they are only for women; no men are allowed to see them at all. They talk about various kinds of marital foreplay and positions for intercourse, but without any indecent images and the like. They also warn against perverted practices and anything that is forbidden in Islam. The courses I am talking about are also only for married women and are taught by a woman; they deal with various matters, such as: increasing love and affection between the spouses, ways of tempting the husband, and creating harmony between husband and wife. I admit that I feel energised and this improves my relationship with my husband after reading these topics. What is the ruling on these matters?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Allah, may He be exalted, has instructed each spouse to treat the other well, and the sexual relationship between the spouses is included in this. There can be no doubt that both spouses need “sexual education” that will make married life easier and strengthen the ties between them.

But it is unfortunate that we find both excess and neglect with regard to this matter. As for excess, it is what has become extremely widespread of the propagation of this “sexual education” with no kind of modesty or discretion. It is dealt with in school curriculums in a theoretical sense, and it is dealt with by those who promote immorality and promiscuity in a practical sense, by making it very easy for the sexes to meet in all ways that are haraam. This knowledge and practice is made

available many years before marriage; in fact it has caused many to stay away from marriage, because they see it as pleasure without any responsibility and without ties to only one partner.

As for neglect, that is by banning teaching of the Islamic rulings having to do with this matter, and not learning what one needs to know. A girl may get married without knowing when it is permissible for her husband to have intercourse with her and when it is haraam, and what it is permissible for him to do with her and what is haraam, and so on.

It should be noted that the Islamic teachings on such matters came in different contexts and in different situations, according to what was needed and what was in people's best interests. This means that they should be spoken about in the right context and as much as is reasonably required, without going to excess or being negligent, and without turning such matters into the main focus in people's lives. Rather they are important and necessary matters, but they have their time and place, and must be handled with the proper etiquette.

Part of the Islamic etiquette in teaching such matters and speaking of them is that one should look for metaphors that are readily understood and do away with any need to state bluntly that which one would feel shy to mention, and may be embarrassed to speak of in detail, as in the following verses and hadeeth:

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and you are their garments"

[al-Baqarah 2:187]

"Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how you will"

[al-Baqarah 2:223]

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to Jaabir ibn 'Abdullah, when he found out that he had married a previously-married woman: "Why did you not marry a virgin so you

could laugh with her and she could laugh with you, and you could play with her and she could play with you?”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5052), Muslim (715).

Part of the important etiquette regarding this matter is to rely on the natural inclination of every woman, which gives her much of that which she needs of such information; in every environment there is a certain amount of information and experience that may be passed on through the women of her family, who have already gone through these experiences, within limits that do not transgress proper etiquette or modesty.

Secondly:

with regard to websites that teach women “sexual education”, there is nothing wrong with reading what they contain of material on useful, scientific, serious matters, on condition that the websites is trustworthy in terms of the material they present and is serious in fulfilling its honest educational mission, and avoids cheap provocation and useless advertising.

The same applies to books and publications that deal with this type of knowledge.

However, a girl should only start to pay attention to this kind of information when she actually needs it, which is when she is going to get married.

Thirdly:

Actual participation in such discussion groups involves several matters that are contrary to Islam; the most serious of these is the lurking of evildoers and corrupt people who use fake names and give false information, giving the impression that they are women, for the purpose of cheap entertainment and messing with people’s hearts and minds, especially when the discussion group deals with these sensitive matters.

In fact, merely reading the topics in these discussion groups should be subject to a number of important guidelines, such as the following:

1.Those websites and articles should be free of haraam images, such as pictures of women in general or hand-drawn images, especially those that show the genitals.

2.Improper language should be avoided and Islamic manners should be followed, by restricting it to that which will get the message across, without using blunt or offensive language, except when there is a need to do so.

3.These topics should not be presented verbally – as some women do in webinars! – and it is even more important to avoid presenting them verbally with pictures, because by doing this, the speakers are exposing themselves to evil, such as if the tapes of those lectures are passed around among foolish people and the speakers themselves are exposed to mockery and silly comments by evildoers.

4.The teaching should not be limited only to matters of love, affection, sex and how to bring the husband to bed. The marital relationship is too sublime to be limited only to that aspect and not others. Rather a woman should learn proper Islamic etiquette in interacting with her husband and her husband's family; she should also learn the basics having to do with raising children, her relationships with her neighbours and husband's relatives, keeping her house clean and tidy, cooking, making good use of her time to acquire more knowledge of Islam, reciting dhikr, teaching them about Islamic matters pertaining to women such as menstruation, ghusl and so on. By doing this, these websites will fulfil their mission in the best manner. We think that it is disrespectful towards women to limit teaching of them to sexual matters only. Even though these matters are very important, they are only one part of married life, not the be all and end all.

If a discussion group, book or website adheres to the guidelines mentioned above and others having to do with basic etiquette, then there is nothing wrong with reading them and learning from the beneficial topics included.

As for a woman participating directly in such discussion groups, that involves several matters that are contrary to Islam and must be avoided, especially since it is possible to gain real benefits without participating directly.

And Allah knows best.