214107 - Permissible social gatherings must be kept free of anything that is contrary to Islamic teachings

the question

We are a group of women who organize gatherings among ourselves in which to learn about Islam and discuss the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Recently some sisters came up with the idea of organizing social gatherings, then they decided to go ahead with that and began to make preparations for it. I was one of those who objected to this idea, because I thought that these events might involve some negative aspects that I think might go beyond the guidelines set out by Islam. I would like you to tell me whether I was right or not in what I think. The following may be noted about these parties: they are for women only, with no mixing, and in this regard they comply with Islamic rulings, but: 1. There is no reason to organize such parties, as there is no occasion that calls for that; the only reason is that the sisters want to hold these parties to socialize and relax, as they say. I feel that organizing such gatherings when there is no reason for it reflects a kind of weakness of faith, and complete heedlessness of the necessity to show solidarity, even if it is only emotional, when we are supposed to feel compassion for our brothers in some neighbouring countries because of what they are going through of trauma and grief. 2. In these parties, women appear with all their adornment, because they will not be wearing hijab, and I fear that there will be a lot of showing off and competing in clothes and adornment. 3. A great deal of money will be spent on these parties, for renting a hall, preparing the finest foods, and inviting women to perform Islamic nashids in which there may be vocal effects that sound like music. I think that this is a kind of extravagance and squandering of wealth, and it goes beyond the limits set by Islamic teachings. 4. They charge rather a lot of money for anyone who wants to attend, and this could lead to some kind of inequity, with some sisters looking down on others, and it could exclude those of us who cannot afford the price of the ticket, or perhaps they need that money for other things, instead of squandering it on this foolishness, at the time when we already gather frequently for free gatherings to remember Allah, from which no one will be excluded.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

There is nothing wrong with expressing joy and celebrating happy occasions, such as academic success, building or buying a new house, having a baby and so on, provided that it is free from anything that is objectionable according to Islamic teachings. This has been explained in the answer to question no. 100005.

Similarly, it is permissible to gather socially to eat a meal, strengthen bonds and chitchat, and there is nothing wrong with that in principle.

But if this social gathering involves objectionable matters that are contrary to Islamic teachings – as the sister mentions in the question – such as boasting and showing off in terms of adornment and clothing, extravagance and squandering money on preparing feasts and fine foods, singing nashids with vocal effects that resemble music, and charging a high ticket price to those who want to attend, all of that – if it really happens – is objectionable and is not allowed.

If it is possible to avoid these things, then such gatherings are permissible, for the purpose of chitchat and relaxation, and to bring joy to people and attract sisters who enjoy such things to the gatherings of righteous people, and encourage them to attend good and beneficial gatherings, provided that you refrain from the objectionable matters that you mentioned, the costs are economical, and those who are well-off help to bear extra costs so that those who are less well-off may be exempted from paying to be included, or their contribution may be reduced, and the like. In that case, this is something good, and there is nothing wrong with it, in sha Allah.

But if the objectionable matters that you mentioned cannot be avoided, meaning that you cannot organize such gatherings except in the manner described, then in that case it is not permissible to commit such infractions for the sake of something that is, at best, permissible in principle.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. 88124 and 107570.

And Allah knows best.