276983 - Ruling on mixed da‘wah groups

the question

What is the ruling on mixed da‘wah groups on Facebook and WhatsApp? If they are not permissible, then is the ruling different if the women merely follow the group without participating in it?

Summary of answer

But if there is some benefit to be gained from a study group or a da‘wah group, and she thinks that there is something in it from what she may benefit, then there is nothing wrong with her taking part in these beneficial study groups or da‘wah groups, whilst ensuring that she adheres strictly to proper etiquette and remains completely serious, and shuts the door to any kind of temptation for herself or others. And she should pay attention to the guidelines mentioned in the detailed answer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Islamic teachings aim to close the door to evil and temptation in order to protect people’s religious commitment and piety, and to keep their hearts free of the traces of desires and sin.

Direct conversations and correspondence between specific men and women on the Internet – whether by speaking or writing – are among the doors that lead to temptation and evil, because of what results from these conversations of getting carried away in talking, which usually leads to admiration and infatuation.

How often have such conversations brought about evil and calamity for those who participate in

them, until they ended up falling in love and becoming infatuated, and – in some cases – has led to what is even worse than that, for the Shaytaan makes each party imagine about the other things that lead to infatuation which brings about negative consequences in both worldly and spiritual terms.

Islamic teachings close the doors that lead to temptation. Islam forbids women to speak softly, and it forbids a man to shake hands with a non-mahram woman or look at her, or to be alone with her. Islam explains that these matters are among the causes that lead to temptation. This is something that is proven by experience and well-known.

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Dhamm al-Hawa (p. 582):

Among the reprehensible carelessness that leads to the most serious trouble for individuals is speaking to non-mahram women and being alone with them. That was customary among some of the Arab tribes, who thought that that was not shameful, and they were confident that they would refrain from zina, so they were content to look at and speak to [those women]. But these things had an impact on the heart and soul without them realizing, until that led them to trouble and doom. This careless attitude caused many problems for “Majnoon Layla” [a figure in ancient Arabic literature who went mad because of his unrequited love for a woman called Layla] and others like him, and led them to insanity and doom.

They erred on two counts:

1. They went against Islamic teachings which forbade looking at non-mahram women and being alone with them.

2. They exposed themselves to that to which they were naturally inclined, then they suffered in their attempts to restrain themselves, because human nature will usually have its way; so if a person’s natural inclination is strong and he cannot resist it, he will end up falling into sin. But if he resists his natural inclination, then that will lead to his ruin, like preventing a thirsty person from drinking water. End quote.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. 277583 and 34841.

Secondly:

The basic principle is that a woman should keep away from chat rooms and other groups on social media and apps, and she should avoid wasting her time and protect her dignity.

But if there is some benefit to be gained from a study group or a da‘wah group, and she thinks that there is something in it from what she may benefit, then there is nothing wrong with her taking part in these beneficial study groups or da‘wah groups, whilst ensuring that she adheres strictly to proper etiquette and remains completely serious, and shuts the door to any kind of temptation for herself or others. She should pay attention to the following things:

1. She should not post anything that may provoke desire in these groups; rather she should only post that which is useful and beneficial.

2. Comments should only be as much as is needed or is beneficial, and participants should avoid making any comment that could provoke desire or attract the attention of the opposite sex.

3. The women’s participation should only be as much as is needed. So she should post her question or topic, then leave and not comment except when absolutely necessary, because the basic principle is that she should refrain from speaking to men or mixing with them.

4. There should be nothing in her words that could provoke desire, such as joking or speaking softly, or laughing (such as writing “hahahaha”), or using smiling emojis, because that may lead to coveting on the part of one in whose heart is disease, as Allah, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah , then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech”

[al-Ahzaab 33:32].

5. She should avoid giving out her email address, or corresponding privately with any man, even if that is for the purpose of seeking help, because of what such correspondence usually leads to of infatuation and temptation.

6. If a woman joins the group in order to follow only, in order to benefit without participating or commenting, there is nothing wrong with that, and it is safer for her.

7. Over and above all of that, each individual is responsible for his own self. So each person should check his own self and his actions, and he should check his heart and be aware of what influences him. If he notices any trace of temptation, evil or corruption, he should hasten to leave and close the door to corruption, for there is nothing of greater worth than being safe.

See also the answer to question no. 82196.

And Allah knows best.