49038 - Ruling on women looking at men

the question

Is it permissible for a woman to look at men who are not her mahrams, or is that haram?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling on a woman looking at a man on TV or looking in an ordinary fashion in the street?

He replied:

When women look at men, whether that is on TV or otherwise, one of the following two scenarios must apply:

1 – Looking with desire and enjoyment, which is haram because of the evil and fitnah (temptation) involved

2 – Simply looking with no desire or enjoyment; there is nothing wrong with this according to the correct scholarly view, and this is permissible because it was proven that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) watched the Ethiopians when they were playing in the mosque, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was screening her from them, and he approved of her doing that.

Women walk in the markets and look at men even when they are wearing hijab, so a woman may look at a man even when he does not look at her, on condition that there be no feelings of desire or fitnah (temptation). If there are any feelings of desire or fitnah (temptation) then it is haram to

look, whether the man is on TV or otherwise.