9290 - Is Singing and Dancing Haram?

the question

What kind of music is permissible for women to dance to (at marriages where no men are present)? Is it only Islamic music? With only a drum beat? What are permissible music topics?

Summary of answer

It is not permissible for women to dance in front of men, non-mahrams, mahrams or women because of the fitnah that may be caused by the movements of the body.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is music haram?

With regard to music , the ruling is that it is haram to play musical instruments . Here we will explain some of the things that are permitted to women only.

Is it permissible for women to beat the daff?

It is permissible for women to beat the daff and to sing permissible songs on permissible occasions such as ‘Eid, celebrations and the like.

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is permissible for him – the bridegroom – to allow women to announce the marriage by beating the daff only, and by singing permissible songs in which there is no description of beauty or mention of immoral phrases… then he mentioned the evidence for that.” (Adab al-Zafaf, p. 93).

The evidence that the Shaykh mentioned is:

Al-Rubayyi’ bint Mu’awwidh said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered upon me on the day of my wedding and sat on my mattress as you are sitting now, and young girls were beating the daff and singing about their fathers who had been killed at the battle of Badr, until a girl said, “And among us is a Prophet who knows what will happen tomorrow.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Do not say this, but say the other things that you were saying.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3700)

`Aishah narrated that she took a woman on her wedding night to a man from among the Ansar, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to her, “O `Aishah, was there any entertainment (in the gathering)? The Ansar love entertainment.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4765)

Abu Ishaq said: I heard `Amir ibn Sa’d al-Bajali say: I saw Thabit ibn Wadi’ah and Qarazah ibn Ka’b al-Ansari at a wedding, and there was singing. I spoke to them about that and they said that a concession had been granted allowing singing at weddings and weeping for the dead, so long as there was no wailing. (Narrated by al-Bayhaqi, 14469)

Muhammad ibn Hatib al-Jamahi said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The thing that differentiates between haram and halal is the beating of the daff and voices.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1008; al-Nasai, 3316; Ibn Majah, 1886. (Classed as hasan by al-Albani in Adab al-Zafaf, p. 96)

This is what it is permitted for women to do of singing at weddings. The only musical instrument that is permissible for them is the daff, and not others such as the tabl. The difference between them is that the tabl is covered on both sides whereas the daff is open on one side and covered on the other.

The Standing Committee said:

“With regard to the tabl and other kinds of musical instruments, it is not permissible to use them with these anashid, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did not do that.” (Fatawa, no. 3259, dated 13/10/1400 AH)

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“With regard to the tabl, it is not permissible to beat it in weddings, rather the daff only should be used.” (Fatawa Islamiyyah, 3/185)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin said:

“The drum that is covered on both sides is called the tabl, and it is not permissible, because it is a kind of musical instrument and all kinds of musical instruments are haram, except that for which there is evidence that it is halal, which is the daff at weddings.” (Fatawa Islamiyyah, 3/186)

Is dancing haram?

With regard to dancing , it is not permissible for women to dance in front of men, non-mahrams, mahrams or women, because of the fitnah that may be caused by the movements of the body. It is well known that women may feel desire for one another, and even if that is not the case, there is no guarantee that one of them will not go back to her menfolk and describe to them what she has seen of the beauty of the dancer and her movement, so this may affect the men and may cause a great deal of mischief. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade such things.

‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No woman should look at another woman then describe her to her husband so that it is as if he can see her.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4839)

In the early days the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) allowed effeminate men to enter upon women, but when he saw one of them describing women and disclosing their secrets, he forbade them from doing that.

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered upon me and there was an effeminate man with me. I heard him say to ‘Abd-Allah ibn Abi Umayyah, “O ‘Abd-Allah, if Allah should enable you to conquer al-Taif tomorrow you

should look for the daughter of Ghaylan…” then he described her. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “These people should not enter upon you.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3980; Muslim, 4048)

The alluring movements of a woman are part of her `awrah, and it is not permissible for her to show them to anyone but her husband.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Dancing is makruh in principle, but if it is done in the western manner or in imitation of the non-Muslim women, then it becomes haram, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” Moreover it sometimes leads to fitnah, because the dancer may be a young, beautiful woman, so the other women are tempted. Even if she is among other women, the other women may do things that indicate that they are tempted by her. And whatever is a cause of fitnah is not allowed.” (Liqa al-Bab al-Maftuh, q. 1085)

And he said:

“With regard to dancing on the part of women, it is an evil action and we cannot say that it is permissible, because we have heard of incidents that have occurred among women because of it. If it is done by men that is even worse, because that is men imitating women, and the evil involved is well known. If dancing is done among a mixed group of men and women, as some of the foolish do, that is even worse because of the mixing and great fitnah involved, especially when that is done at a wedding party.” (Fatawa Islamiyyah, 3/187)

Is singing haram?

With regard to permissible words in songs, they are those that do not contain any haram descriptions, or provoke desire, or words that are forbidden in the Shari`ah, or some innovated adhkar, and other haram things.

There are sufficient permissible things that may be sung about, such as encouraging good morals,

the pursuit of knowledge, giving up haram things, and so on.

The Standing Committee said:

“You are correct in your ruling that songs of the modern type are haram, because they include immoral words and things that are no good, and they include idle leisure and provocation of sexual desire, and promiscuity, and the voice has a quality that inspires evil thoughts in the mind of the listener. May Allah help us and you to do that which pleases Him.

It is permissible for you to replace these songs with Islamic nashids which contain rulings, exhortation and teaching, which will increase people’s keenness and pride in their religion, and promote Islamic feelings and put people off evil and what leads to it.” (Fatwa no. 3295, dated 13/10/1400 AH)

And Allah knows best.