20406 - When is it permissible to beat the daff?

the question

This question is about the instrument called "the duff". This is, I believe the only instrument that was made halal for muslims to listen to. Recently I have read that there are restrictions to listening to it, such as, only women can liten to it, it should only be played at weddings and 'Eid and that in all other circumstances it is Haram. The places where I read this didn't really have any proofs or evidences. Are these true restructions and are there any more?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Al-Bukhaari narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There will be among my ummah people who will regard adultery, silk, alcohol and musical instruments as permissible.”

This hadeeth indicates that all musical instruments are haraam, including the daff.

‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The daff is haraam, stringed instruments are haraam, drums are haraam and flutes are haraam. Narrated by al-Bayhaqi, 10/222

But there are some ahaadeeth which indicate that it is permissible to beat the daff in some circumstances, which are:

Eid, weddings, and when one who has been away returns.

The evidence is given below.

1 – It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah that Abu Bakr (may Allaah be pleased with him) entered upon her and there were two girls with her during the days of Mina beating the daff, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was covering himself with his garment. Abu Bakr rebuked them, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) uncovered his face and said, “Leave them alone, O Abu Bakr, for these are the days of Eid.” That was during the days of Mina.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 944; Muslim, 892

2 – It was narrated that al-Rubayyi’ bint Mu’awwidh ibn ‘Afra’ said: “After the consummation of my marriage, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came and sat on my bed as far from me as you are sitting now, and our little girls started beating the daff and reciting verses mourning my father, who had been killed in the battle of Badr. One of them said, ‘Among us is a Prophet who knows what will happen tomorrow.’ On that the Prophet said, ‘Omit this (saying) and keep on saying the verses which you had been saying before.’”

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4852).

3 – It was narrated that Buraydah said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out on one of his military campaigns, and when he came back, a black slave woman came and said, “O Messenger of Allaah, I vowed that if Allaah brought you back safe and sound, I would beat the daff before you and sing. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “If you vowed that, then do it, otherwise do not do it.’” So she started to beat the daff, and Abu Bakr came in whilst she was doing so. Then ‘Ali came in whilst she was beating the daff, then ‘Uthmaan came in whilst she was beating the daff, then ‘Umar came in and she threw the daff beneath her and sat on it. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “The Shaytaan is afraid of you, O ‘Umar. I was sitting and she was beating the daff, then Abu Bakr came in when she was beating the daff; then ‘Ali came in when she was beating the daff; then ‘Uthmaan came in when she was beating the daff, but when you came in, O ‘Umar, she put the daff down.”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3690; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 2913.

These ahaadeeth indicate that it is permissible to beat the daff in these three situations. Apart from that, the principle remains that it is haraam. Some scholars made the matter broader and said that it is permissible to beat the daff when a child is born and when he is circumcised; others take the matter further and say that it is permissible on all occasions that are a cause for expressing joy, such as the recovery of a sick person and the like.

See al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 38/169

But it is better to limit ourselves to what was narrated in the text. And Allaah knows best.

Secondly:

The correct view is that it is not permissible to beat the daff except for women. If a man does that, he is imitating women, which is a major sin.

Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyah – may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

In general, it is a well known principle of the Islamic religion that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not prescribe that the righteous men, devoted worshippers and ascetics of this ummah should gather to listen to verses of poetry chanted to the accompaniment of handclapping, rhythm sticks or daffs. It is not permissible for anyone to go beyond the limits of Islam and follow something other than that which was narrated in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, whether that has to do with inward matters or outward, whether for the common man or the elite. But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) granted a concession for some kinds of entertainment on the occasion of weddings and the like, and he also granted a concession to women allowing them to beat the daff at weddings and on other joyous occasions. But with regard to the men of his time, none of them used to beat the daff or clap his hands, rather it was proven in al-Saheeh that he said, 'Clapping is for women, and Tasbeeh is for men,' and he cursed women who imitate men and men who imitate women.

Because singing, beating the daff and clapping the hands are actions of women, the salaf used to

call a man who did that mukhannath (effeminate), and they used to call male singers makhaaneeth (pl. of mukhannath). This is well known.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 11/565, 566

Ibn Hajar said:

The strong (qawiy) ahaadeeth indicate that this is permissible for women, but that does not include men, because of the general meaning of the prohibition on men imitating women.

Fath al-Baari, 9/226

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Rather the concession allowing women to use the daff is for them only. With regard to men, it is not permissible for them to do any of that, whether on weddings or on other occasions. Rather Allaah has prescribed for men to train in the instruments of war and skills needed for battle, such as shooting and horse riding, and competing in that.

Majallat al-Jaami'ah al-Islamiyyah (Magazine of the Islamic University in al-Madeenah al-Munawwarah), 3rd edition, 2nd year, Muharram, 1390 AH, p. 185, 186

And he also said:

With regard to weddings, it is prescribed to beat the daff and sing regular songs which do not call for or praise anything that is haraam. This is to be done at night, by women only, to announce the wedding and to emphasize the difference between this legitimate marriage and zina (adultery) which is done in secret, as was narrated in the saheeh Sunnah from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Al-Tabarruj wa Khataruhu (Wanton display and its dangers)

And Allaah knows best.