261339 - She is asking about the ruling on dancing

the question

If you don’t mind, I would like to ask whether dancing is really haram, and is a girl dancing on her own in her house haram? What harm is there if she learns to dance in front of a mirror, and is there any connection to the jinn? Is it true, as they say, that the jinn love girls with long hair?

Summary of answer

Dancing is not haram for women in principle, and no prohibition on that has been narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Rather it was narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he saw an Ethiopian woman dancing, and he let `Aa’ishah watch her, and did not tell her not to watch.
Whether the hadith about the Ethiopian woman dancing is authentic or not, the juristic principle that things are permissible unless there is evidence to the contrary supports the view that dancing is permissible.
But dancing is almost always accompanied by music and singing, provocation of desire, and going to extremes in making enticing movements. The matter has become even worse in modern times, when people have begun to imitate indecent western dances that promote immorality.
Imported dance styles wearing revealing clothing have become widespread, there is a great deal of free mixing and the temptation has become greater, and skill is measured by how much the dance resembles that of disbelievers, infamous evildoers and immoral women. Therefore all the scholars have declared this to be prohibited, so as to bar the means that can lead to this evil.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is dancing haram?

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At-Tirmidhi (3691) narrated that `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was sitting and we heard a hubbub and the voices of children, so the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) got up and saw an Ethiopian woman prancing around, with children around her, and he said: "O `A'ishah, come and look." So I came and placed my chin on the shoulder of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and I started to watch that woman from between his shoulder and his head. Then he said to me: "Have you had enough, have you had enough?" And I kept saying no, to see where I stood with him. Then `Umar appeared, and the people dispersed from around her. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "I see that the devils among humankind and the jinn have fled from `Umar!" Then I went back.

Al-Mubarakfuri said:

It is as if he said that because it is a form of idle activity and play, and there will inevitably be some reservations about that, but not to the extent that makes it prohibited, otherwise how could the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) see it and call `A'ishah to see it?

End quote from *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*, 10/124.

But the hadith in this version is odd, because it differs from all other narrations in Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere, all of which indicate that the dancers were men, and the scholars interpreted the Ethiopians' dancing as leaping with their weapons and playing with their spears.

What confirms the oddness of this narration is the fact that Kharijah ibn 'Abdillah is the only one who narrated it from Yazid ibn Ruman, from `Urwah, from `A'ishah, and this is different from all

the other chains of narration by which the hadith was narrated from `Urwah, from `A'ishah. Kharijah was subject to criticism, and some of the leading scholars classed him as da`if (weak), and others accepted his narration. See: *Al-Kamil* by Ibn `Adiy, 3/50.

Hence at-Tirmidhi asked his shaykh, al-Bukhari, about this hadith and he found it strange.

At-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I asked Muhammad (i.e., al-Bukhati) about this hadith, and he did not recognize it and he found it strange.

End quote from *`Ilal at-Tirmidhi*, p. 372.

Dancing and music

Whether the hadith about the Ethiopian woman dancing is authentic or not, the juristic principle that things are permissible unless there is evidence to the contrary supports the view that dancing is permissible.

But dancing is almost always accompanied by music and singing, provocation of desire, and going to extremes in making enticing movements. The matter has become even worse in modern times, when people have begun to imitate indecent western dances that promote immorality.

Imported dance styles wearing revealing clothing have become widespread, there is a great deal of free mixing and the temptation has become greater, and skill is measured by how much the dance resembles that of disbelievers, infamous evildoers and immoral women. Therefore all the scholars have declared this to be prohibited, so as to bar the means that can lead to this evil.

We have previously quoted Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin's prohibition on such dancing in the answer to question no. 9290.

The scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) may disallow something that is permissible in principle, if it is a means that usually leads to what is prohibited, because there is the fear that those who go around a thing and keep approaching it will fall into it (like a shepherd who grazes his flocks around the restricted area; he will soon encroach upon it).

Al-Mardawi said:

Shaykh Taqiy ad-Din also said: Every deed that usually leads to something that is prohibited is also forbidden by the Lawgiver, unless it serves a greater interest, because it will be a means of spreading evil and mischief.

End quote from *Al-Insaf*, 6/90.

Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding the hadith about the two girls who were singing in the house of `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and beating a drum on the day of Eid:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) allowed young girls to beat drums and sing some lines of poetry and the like on happy occasions, such as the Eids, weddings, and the return of travellers.

But when the Muslims conquered the lands of the Persians and Byzantines, the Sahabah discovered the traditions among the Persians and Byzantines of singing songs and tunes in certain rhythms, like music, and singing poetry that described prohibited things such as alcohol and beautiful images that provoke desires that are dormant in people, and to which people are naturally inclined, with enchanting musical instruments that make the listener behave in undignified ways.

At that time, they denounced singing and listening to it, and they disallowed it and regarded it as something very bad…

Singing and beating the daff (hand-drum) that is permissible is not the same as the singing of the non-Arabs accompanied by drums with metal rings, because their songs and drums stir up the emotions and provoke people to commit prohibited acts, unlike the singing of the Bedouin Arabs.

Whoever makes an analogy of one with the other is making a grievous mistake, and is making an analogy despite the huge difference between the two. Therefore his analogy is one of the worst analogies and one of the furthest from the truth.

End quote from *Fat-h al-Bari* by Ibn Rajab, 8/427-431.

Guidelines on women's dancing

What appears to be the case is that if we grant a concession allowing women to dance, we must differentiate between two situations or scenarios:

The first scenario is when the dancing is spontaneous and involves no temptation, and it is no more than a kind of shaking, leaning left and right and twisting. This is permissible to do for the husband or when alone, so long as she is certain that no men could be watching.

The second scenario includes that which is prohibited, such as music, revealing clothing, mixing with men, or dancing in the style of immoral women and promiscuous people, and imitating them and so on. It is not permissible to learn or teach that type of dancing, because of what it involves of evil and what it could lead to of provoking desires and causing temptation.

The first type is what is referred to by those who say that dancing is permissible.

The second type is what is referred to by those who say that dancing is prohibited.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Dancing is not prohibited. Al-Halimi said: But the dancing which involves bending and enticing movements like the actions of effeminate men is prohibited for both men and women. End quote.

It says in *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*:

Dancing is disliked (makruh) according to the majority of scholars, but the Shafa`is favour the view that it is permissible but is restricted to that in which there are no enticing movements like those of effeminate men, otherwise it is prohibited for both men and women.

As for one who dances spontaneously without putting effort into it, there is no sin on him.

It says in *Ar-Rawd*: Dancing with enticing movements is prohibited, even among women.

End quote from *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*, 23/10.

Hence we find that although Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was one of those who forbade dancing, we find that he allowed it in some circumstances, when it is free of evils and reservations.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

As for a woman dancing in front of her husband, with no one else present, there is nothing wrong with that, because that may make the husband desire her more, and everything that makes the husband desire his wife more is required, so long as it is not prohibited in and of itself. Hence it is Sunnah for a woman to beautify herself for her husband, just as it is Sunnah for the husband to beautify himself for his wife as she beautifies herself for him.

End quote from *Al-Liqa' ash-Shahri*, 12, question no. 9.

Do the jinn fall in love with a woman who has long hair?

Regarding what the questioner mentioned about a jinni falling in love with a woman who has long hair, and the jinn possessing those who look in the mirror a great deal, we know of no basis for that.

But if the mirror is in the bathroom, the woman should hasten to leave and not stay there for a long time, because bathrooms with toilets – which are places for relieving oneself – are places frequented by the devils, and in the marfu` hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam [which is attributed to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)], it says: "These outhouses are frequented [by the devils], So when one of you goes to the outhouse, let him say: A`udhu Billahi min al-khubthi wa'l-khaba'ith (I seek refuge with Allah from the male and female devils)." Narrated by Abu Dawud, 6; classed as authentic by al-Albani in *As-Sahihah*, 1070.

Shaykh al-Islam said: One should not stay there for a long time unnecessarily, because staying there unnecessarily is disliked, as it is a place that is frequented by the devils and where `awrahs

are uncovered.

End quote from *Sharh al-`Umdah*, 1/60.

So a woman should not stay for a long time in the bathroom, and she should recite the prescribed adhkar before entering it.

And Allah knows best.