5011 - Ruling on so-called “Islamic” songs with musical instruments

the question

i would like to know if muslims are allowed
to lisen to islamic songs with instruments in it. please answer by using the quran and the sunnah or ijmaa.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The aayaat of the Quraan and the Ahaadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) indicate that musical instruments are condemned, and warn us against them. The Quraan teaches that playing these instruments is one of the things that leads people astray and constitutes mockery of the Signs of Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

And of mankind is he who purchases idle talk to mislead (men) from the Path of Allaah, without knowledge, and takes it (the Path of Allaah, the Verses of the Quraan) by way of mockery. For such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hell-fire). [Luqmaan 31:6]

Most of the scholars interpreted lahw al-hadeeth (idle talk) as meaning singing and musical instruments, and every voice that diverts people from the truth.

Al-Tabari (Jaami al-Bayaan, 15/118-119), Ibn Abil-Dunya (Dham al-Malaahi, 33) and Ibn al-Jawzi (Talbees Iblees, 232) all reported that concerning the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

[Allaah said to Shaytaan;] And istafziz [literally means befool them gradually] those whom you can with your voice, make assaults on them with your cavalry and your infantry, mutually share with them wealth and children, and make promises to them. But Shaytaan promises them nothing but deceit [al-Isra 17:64]

1. Mujaahid said, This refers to singing and flutes.

Al-Tabari reported that al-Hasan al-Basri said:

His voice is the tambourine.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in Ighaathat al-Lahfaan (1/252):

The grammatical structure here (idaafah genitive or possessive) is used to make something specific (idaafat al-takhsees), and in all these words in the aayah it refers back to the Shaytaan [addressed here as you by Allaah, may He be glorified]. Everyone who speaks about anything other than obedience of Allaah or plays a reed pipe, flute, tambourine or drum, all of this is the voice of Shaytaan.

Al-Tirmidhi reported in his Sunan (no. 1005) from Ibn Abi Layla from Ata from Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went to to al-Nakhl with Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Awf, when his son Ibraaheem was dying. He took the child in his lap and his eyes filled with tears. Abd al-Rahmaan said, Are you weeping when you have forbidden us to weep? He said, 'I do not forbid weeping. What I have forbidden is two foolish and evil kinds of voices: voices at times of entertainment and play and the flutes of the Shaytaan, and voices at times of calamity and scratching the face and rending the garments and screaming.

Al-Tirmidhi said: this is a hasan hadeeth. It was also reported by al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak, no. 1683, al-Bayhaqi in al-Sunan al-Kubra (4/69), al-Tayaalisi in Musnad (no. 1683) and by al-Tahhaawi in Sharh al-Maaani, 4/29, and it was classed as hasan by al-Albaani.

Al-Nawawi said: What is meant here is singing and musical instruments. See Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi, 4/88.

It was reported in a saheeh hadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: In my ummah there will be people who allow fornication/adultery (zina), silk, wine and musical instruments [maaazif]. Some people will stay at the side of a mountain, and they will have flocks of sheep. When a poor person comes in the evening to ask them for something he needs,

they will say. Come back to us tomorrow. Then during the night Allaah will destroy them by causing the mountain to fall upon them, while He changes others into apes and swine. They will remain in such a state until the Day of Resurrection.

(Reported by al-Bukhaari in al-Saheeh muallaqan, 51/10. Reported mawsoolan by al-Bayhaqi in al-Sunan al-Kubra, 3/272; al-Tabaraani in al-Mujam al-Kabeer, 3/319; and Ibn Hibbaan in al-Saheeh (8/265-266). Classed as saheeh by Ibn al-Salaah in Uloom al-Hadeeth (32), Ibn al-Qayyim in Ighaathat al-Lahfaan (255) and Tahdheeb al-Sunan (5/270-272), al-Haafiz in al-Fath (10/51) and al-Albaani in al-Saheehah (1/140)).

Al-Haafiz said in al-Fath (10/55): Maaazif refers to musical instruments. Al-Qurtubi reported from al-Jawhari that maaazif meant singing, and what it says in his book al-Sihaah is that it refers to musical instruments. It was also said that it is the sound of musical instruments. In a footnote by al-Dimyaati it says: maaazif is tambourines and other kinds of drums. The word azif is applied to singing and all other kinds of instruments that may be played.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in Ighaathat al-Lahfaan (1/256):

The evidence for this is that maaazif refers to all kinds of things used for entertainment. There is no dispute among scholars of the Arabic language on this point. If they were halaal, he would not have condemned those who permitted them, or compared permitting them to permitting wine and zina.

We may understand from the hadeeth that all kinds of musical instruments are forbidden. This is clear from the hadeeth for a number of reasons:

1. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said there will be people who allow It is clear that the things listed here, including musical instruments, are forbidden in shareeah, but those people will allow them.
2. He compared musical instruments to things that are definitely known to be haraam, namely zina and alcohol. If instruments were not haraam, he would not have made this comparison. The evidence of this hadeeth that singing is haraam is definitive. Even if no other hadeeth or

aayah spoke about musical instruments, this hadeeth would be sufficient to prove that they are haraam, especially the kind of singing that is known among people nowadays, the essence of which is obscenity and foul talk, based on all kinds of musical instruments such as guitars, drums, flutes, ouds, zithers, organs, pianos, violins and other things that make it more enticing, such as the voices of these effeminate singers and whores.

(See Hukm al-Maaazif by al-Albaani, Tas-heeh al-Ahkta wal-Awhaam al-Waaqiah fi Ahaadeeth al-Nabi alayhil-salaam by Raaid Sabri, 1/176).

Shaykh Ibn Baaz said in Majmoo al-Fataawa, 3/423-424):

Maaazif refers to singing and musical instruments. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us that at the end of time there will come a people who will allow these things just as they will allow alcohol, zina and silk. This is one of the signs of his Prophethood, for all of this has happened. The hadeeth indicates that [musical instruments] are haraam, and condemns those who say they are halaal, just as it condemns those who say that alcohol and zina are allowed. The aayaat and ahaadeeth that warn against singing and musical instruments are many indeed. Whoever claims that Allaah has allowed singing and musical instruments is lying and is committing a great evil. We ask Allaah to keep us from obeying our desires and the Shaytaan. Even worse and more seriously sinful than that are those who say it is mustahabb. Undoubtedly this stems from ignorance about Allaah and His Religion; it is insolent blasphemy against Allaah and lying about His Laws. What is mustahabb is to beat on the daff [simple hand drum] at weddings. This is mustahabb for women only, in order to announce the wedding and to distinguish it from fornication. There is nothing wrong with women singing amongst themselves, accompanied by the daff, so long as the songs contain no words that encourage evil or distract people from their duties. It is also a condition that this should take place among women only, and there should be no mixing with men. It should also not cause any annoyance or disturbance to neighbours. What some people do, of amplifying such singing with loudspeakers is evil, because of the disturbance it causes to other Muslims, neighbours and others. It is not permissible for women, in weddings or on other occasions, to use any instrument other than the daff, such as the oud, violin, rebab (stringed

instrument) and so on. This is evil, and the only concession that women are given is that they may use the daff.

As for men, it is not permissible for them to play any kind of musical instrument, whether at weddings or on any other occasion. What Allaah has prescribed for men is training in the use of instruments of war, such as target practice or learning to ride horses and competing in that, using spears, shields, tanks, airplanes and other things such as cannons, machine guns, bombs and anything else that may help jihaad for the sake of Allaah.

Shaykh al-Islam said in al-Fataawa (11/569):

I know that in the golden age, the first and best three centuries, in the Hijaaz, in Syria, in the Yemen, in Egypt, in the Maghreb, in Iraq, in Khorasan, none of the religious and righteous people, the ascetics and those who worshipped Allaah much, would gather to listen to this whistling and clapping and drum-beating and so on. This was innovated after that at the end of the second century, and whenever the imaams saw it, they denounced it.

As for these anaasheed which are described as Islamic but are accompanied with musical instruments, giving them this name lends them some measure of legitimacy, but in fact they are singing and music, so calling them Islamic nasheeds is falsehood and deception. They cannot be a substitute for singing, as an evil thing cannot be substituted for another evil thing. We should replace something evil with something good. Listening to it on the grounds that it is Islamic and an act of worship is bidah, and Allaah does not allow this. We ask Allaah to keep us safe and sound.

For more information, see:

Talbees Iblees (237) and al-Madkhil by Ibn al-Haaj (3/109); al-Amr bil-Ittibaa wal-Nahy an al-Ibtidaa by al-Suyooti (99 ff); Dham al-Malaahi by Ibn Abil-Dunya; al-Ilaam bi-anna al-Azif haraam by Abu Bakr al-Jazaairi; Tanzeeh al-Shareeah an al-Aghaani al-Khaleeah wa Tahreem Aalaat al-Tarab by al-Albaani.