

Youth's issues

Introduction

The influx of devout Muslim youths to non-Muslim countries has increased, especially to European and American countries where they come for education, temporary visits, or for permanent residence.

The commitment of Muslim youths to Islam causes great concerns, problems, and inquires about the issues that are important to them. Therefore, it is appropriate to present the following religious laws which address some of these concerns. (See the question-answer section below.)

General Rules

494. The *mujtahids* talk about prohibition of **looking indecently and lustfully at women**. By the expression “prohibition of looking lustfully,” they mean that it is prohibited to look at them with sexual desire. By the expression “looking indecently,” they mean a glance that could lead one to a situation whereby they may be tempted to commit a *haram* act.

495. It is permissible to look without lust at the women who would not listen, if they were forbidden from exposing themselves [by not observing the *hijab*]. Therefore, it is permissible to look at the face, the hands, and the feet of the woman as well as those parts of their bodies that they normally expose in public but not those parts that some of them, against their own custom, would expose publicly. This is with the condition that the look is not combined with carnal appetite and the onlooker should not fear the temptation of getting into a situation whereby they may commit the *haram*. (See the question-answer section below and issue No. 500).

496. It is not permissible for a man to look at another man with lust; similarly, it is not permissible for a woman to look at another woman with lust.

497. Homosexuality (*Ash-shudhûdh al-jinsi*) is *haram*. Similarly, it is forbidden for a female to engage in a sexual act with another female, i.e. lesbianism. (See the question-answer section below.)

498. **Masturbation** by any whatever means is forbidden;

499. Based on obligatory precaution, one must refrain from viewing **pornographic pictures** and films, even if one looks at them without indecent intention and lust. (See the question–answer section below.)

500. The immoral establishments have produced an item that has the features of the private parts of a woman, and it is possible for a man to become intimate with it by placing it over his penis at bedtime. Based on obligatory precaution, one must refrain from using, it even if he does not intend to reach the stage of ejaculation. This law applies without any difference between a married and an the unmarried man. (See the question–answer section below.)

501. It is permissible for a man to use the **condom** to prevent pregnancy; however, it is precautionarily obligatory that he should seek the consent of his wife to using it.

502. It is not permissible for a Muslim man to go to unisex **swimming** pools and other places where people go about half–naked. That is if it entails a *haram* act. Based on obligatory precaution, one must refrain from going to such places, even if it does not entail a *haram* act.

503. A Muslim man is not allowed to **shake hands** with a woman without a barrier, such as gloves, unless refraining from shaking hands will put him in a considerable harm or unbearable difficulty. In the latter case, he is allowed to shake hands to the extent of necessity only. (See the question–answer section below.)

504. A young man is allowed to kiss his young sister or maternal aunt or paternal aunt or their small daughters out of affection and love. However, he is not allowed to kiss them, if it entails sexual arousal.

505. It is *haram* to play **chess**, regardless of whether or not the play is with betting. It is also *haram* to play chess through computerized instrument, if there are two players involved in it. Based on obligatory precaution, one must refrain from it, even if just the computer is the other player. (See the question–answer section below.)

506. It is similarly *haram* to play with instruments of gambling in which betting is involved. Based on obligatory precaution, one must refrain from it even when no betting is involved.

507. It is permissible to engage in **sports games** with balls like football (soccer), basketball, volleyball, table tennis, handball, etc. It is also permissible to watch such games at the sports stadiums or on various displays and monitors with payment or without payment as long as that does not entail a *haram* act, like looking with lust, or neglecting an obligation like *salat*.

508. It is permissible to engage in **wrestling and boxing** without betting as long as it does not lead to serious bodily harm.

509. Based on obligatory precaution it is not permissible for a man to **shave** his beard. Similarly, it is not

permissible for him to just leave the hair on his chin and shave the sides. This too is based on obligatory precaution. (See the question–answer section below.)

510. A Muslim is allowed to shave his beard, if he is compelled to do so or if he is forced to shave it for medical reasons, etc. It also allowed if he fears harm to his life by not shaving or if growing the beard would put him in difficulty (for example, if it becomes a cause of ridicule and humiliation that is not normally tolerable by a Muslim).

Questions and Answers

511. **Question:** A father asks the friend of his son to monitor his behaviour in order to know his son's character. Is the friend allowed to disclose any information regarding the character of the son to the father that might include things that the son does not want to be known to anyone?

Answer: It is not allowed, except when he is involved in an evil act from which he must be stopped and that stopping him is not possible through anything other than disclosure of his behaviour (which would embarrass and hurt him).

512. **Question:** What is the meaning of the statement from the *hadith* that “the first glance is [permissible] for you, but the second one will [be held] against you”? Is it permissible to prolong the first glance while looking at a woman on the basis, as claimed by some, that it is still “the first permissible glance”?

Answer: Apparently the meaning of the statement mentioned above is to differentiate between the two glances in the sense that the first was just an accidental and a passing one, and so it is considered guiltless since no lustful desires were involved in it, as opposed to the second glance which was naturally intentional and accompanied with an element of desire, and therefore is detrimental. It is because of this that a statement has been quoted by Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) in which he says, “The glance after the [first] one creates in the heart the desire and that is sufficient as a temptation for the person.”

It is, however, clear that the statement quoted in the question does not intend to define the permissible glance on the basis of numbers, in the sense that the first glance is permissible, even if it is intentional and guileful from the very beginning. Or that it becomes such, if it is prolonged and more persistent because the on-looker cannot control it by casting his glance away from the woman that he is looking at. Nor does it mean that the second glance is forbidden, even if it is for a single moment without any lust at all.

513. **Question:** While discussing the issue of looking at a woman, many expressions are used that are not clearly defined for most people. So, what is the meaning of “*ar-rayba*, *at-taladh-dhudh*, and *ash-shahwa*”?

Answer: *At-Taladh-dhudh* and *ash-shahwa* mean lustful and sexual desire, not just any lust or any desire that is part of the human instinct that appears when one sees beautiful scenes.

Ar-rayba means the fear of temptation or the falling into *haram*.

514. **Question:** What is the limit of forbidden lust?

Answer: Its minimum limit —if what is meant is the ranking order— i.e. it is the first stage of sexual arousal.

515. **Question:** In British government schools and also in other Western countries the students, male as well as females, are taught sex education which includes detailed description of sexual organs with or without model. Is it permissible for a young student to attend classes like this? Is it necessary for the parents to prevent the young child from attending such classes when the child expresses interest in by claiming that it will be useful for him in the future?

Answer: If attending such classes does not entail other *haram* deeds like looking lustfully and, as a result of studying that unit, would result preventy him from deviant behaviour, then there is no problem in it.

516. **Question:** Is it permissible to recite erotic poems in presence of women without intending to woo them, or with such an intention, if they are unmarried and can be influenced by such recitation?

Answer: This is not allowed.

517. **Question:** Is it permissible to talk to women about love without lustful intention or fear of temptation or encouraging a *haram* act?

Answer: Based on obligatory precaution, it is not allowed.

518. **Question:** Is it permissible to praise in erotic poetry, or in prose, a unspecified woman or women in general?

Answer: If it is devoid of intent to commit *haram* or similar acts and entails no other harm [in moral and ethical sense], then there is no problem in it.

519. **Question:** Is it permissible to talk with women without lustful intention for the purpose of gaining satisfaction with one of them and then to propose temporary marriage to her?

Answer: If the talk is devoid of what one should be talking about to a strange [i.e., non-*mahram*] woman, then there is no problem in it.

520. **Question:** A new craze has spread in Europe in which men wear ladies' earrings in one or both ears. Is this allowed for them?

Answer: It is not permissible if it is made of gold; rather not at all, based on obligatory precaution.

521. **Question:** If a person commits *haram* by shaving his beard by razor blade on day one, is it permissible for him to do the same on the second, the third, the fourth day and so on?

Answer: It is precautionarily compulsory to refrain from it.

522. **Question:** At times the big companies in Europe discriminate —among those who come to them seeking jobs— between those who shave their beards and those who don't shave them. If this is true, then is it permissible to be clean shaven in order to get the job?

Answer: Shaving the beard —whose prohibition is based on obligatory precaution— would not become permissible just by the desire to get a job with these companies.

523. **Question:** Is it permissible to shave the two sides of the face and leave the hair on the chin?

Answer: Shaving the beard is *haram* based on obligatory precaution, and this includes the hair that grows on the sides of the face. However, there is no problem in shaving the hair that grows on the cheeks.

524. **Question:** Is it permissible to play games of chance of all kinds on electronic machines (computers) without betting or with betting?

Answer: It is not permissible, and it is treated the same as normal [non–electronic] gambling instruments.

525. **Question:** Some permissible games use dice in them. So is it allowed to play with it?

Answer: If the dice is not from the tools that are exclusively for gambling, then there is no problem in using it in non–gambling games.

526. **Question:** Is it permissible to look at what the non–Muslim women normally expose of their body during the summer season?

Answer: If the glance does not entail lustful desire or temptation [to commit sins], then there is no problem in it.

527. **Question:** Is it permissible to look at the picture of a well–known *muhajjaba* woman who appears without *hijab* in that picture? [*Muhajjaba* means a lady who observes *hijab*.]

Answer: Based on obligatory precaution, one must refrain from looking at other than the face and the hands of that woman; even in the case of these two, it is permissible without lustful intent and temptation [for sin].

528. **Question:** (a) Is it permissible to look at non-Muslim women who are naked or half-naked in television and its like for the purpose of fulfilling the inquisitive nature with no guarantee whether or not sexual desire will be aroused?

(b) Is it permissible to look at them in the streets not for the purpose mentioned above but for arousing [the sexual desire of] the husband towards his wife?

Answer: It is not permissible to look with lust at the naked live scenes, on television, etc. Rather, based on compulsory precaution, one must refrain from it at all times.

529. **Question:** Is it permissible to look at arousing scenes if one is sure of not attaining arousal?

Answer: If it is a naked [indecent] scene, then based on obligatory precaution, one should refrain from looking at it.

530. **Question:** Is it permissible to view sex movies without lust?

Answer: It is not permissible at all based on obligatory precaution.

531. **Question:** There are certain television stations that offer monthly subscription for their programs that are not of immoral nature; but after midnight, it relays sexual movies. Is it permissible to subscribe in such programs?

Answer: It is not allowed, unless one is confident about himself and others [in the house] that they would not view the sexually explicit material.

532. **Question:** In some countries it is customary that the person who arrives [at a meeting or an office] will shake hands with all who are present including women, of course, without lustful intention. And if he refuses to shake hands with the women, it would be considered abnormal, and more often than not it would be considered an act of contempt and insult towards the woman. All this would reflect negatively on their view concerning the person. Is it, therefore, permissible to shake hands with women?

Answer: It is not permissible. And the problem should be tackled by not shaking the hands of anyone or by wearing gloves, for example. If this is not possible for the person and he thinks that refusing to shake hands would cause great and unbearable difficulty for him, then it is permissible at that time. All this is based on the assumption that it is necessary for him to attend such a gathering; otherwise, if it is not possible for him to refrain from *haram*, then it is not permissible for him to attend such a gathering.

533. **Question:** In Western countries, shaking hands is considered as a means of greeting and salutation. Refraining from it could sometimes lead to losing job and education opportunities. So, is it permissible for a Muslim man to shake hands with a woman or for a Muslim woman to shake hands with a man in circumstances of necessity?

Answer: When refraining from touching is not possible by wearing gloves or such like, then it is permissible, especially if not shaking hands would lead to considerable harm or great difficulty that is normally unbearable.

534. **Question:** Is it permissible for a Muslim man who resides in the West to marry a non-Muslim woman especially when Muslim women are scarce. That is, in spite of the dangers that exists in regard to children because of difference in language, religion, ways of upbringing children, values, and social customs — all this could lead to psychological problems for the children?

Answer: It is not permissible for him to marry a woman from *Ahlul Kitab* on permanent basis.

Although temporary marriage is permissible, we advise not to have children by her. This applies, if he does not already have a Muslim wife, who is away from him. In this case it would not be permissible without her consent—rather even with her consent, based on obligatory precaution.

535. **Question:** Some companies have produced an item similar to the woman's vagina that some men would place over their penis at bedtime for carnal desire. Is this classified as masturbation that is forbidden?

Answer: It is *haram* if he seeks to ejaculate intentionally or ejaculation is normal [in such a circumstance] for him. Rather, based on obligatory precaution, he must refrain from it, even if he is confident of not ejaculating.

536. **Question:** What is the view on a man embracing another man with lust, and go about kissing one another with sexual desire? What if they go even further and enter the domain of deviant sexual behaviour?

Answer: All of this is *haram* even if there might be difference in the degree of prohibition.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/a-code-of-practice-for-muslims-in-the-west-ayatullah-sistani/youths-issues>