

A Guide to Male-Female Interaction in Islam	
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Difficulty of the topic	It is almost as if everyone who speaks on the subject faces one of two accusations: extremism or laxity
Fitnah	<p>"I have not left behind me a trial more harmful to men than women"</p> <p>مَا تَرَكْتُ بَعْدِي فِتْنَةٌ أَضَرَّ عَلَى الرِّجَالِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common sense necessitates a distance between the source of the trial and the one being tried
Definition	<p>The term 'intermixing' cannot be found in the books of fiqh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no comprehensive definition that includes all forbidden forms and excludes all permitted forms
Tahqīq al-manāṭ	<p>Ascertaining the presence of 'illah (an effective cause for the ruling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'illah for the prohibition of wine is intoxication, therefore, if a drink is ascertained to be intoxicating then it is prohibited
Shar' man qablana	The correct position in the principles of jurisprudence is that the religious laws that came before us also apply to us as long as our Sharia does not specifically abrogate them
The five prime objectives of Sharia	Protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage and property
Hadith regarding visiting a woman	<p>"Let no man visit a woman whose husband is absent, except when he has with him one or two other men"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This hadith indicates that such a level of intermixing is permissible when there is no seclusion
Hadith regarding women visiting the masjid	<p>"Do not prevent Allah's slave-women from going to Allah's mosques"</p> <p>لَا تَمْنَعُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no doubt that coming to mosques leads to some intermixing because the women's rows are not very far behind the men's rows
Man and his wife eating with another man	<p>Imam Malik said there is nothing wrong with that if it is the known custom of the people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hadith of the Ansari man and his wife who hosted the guest of the Messenger ﷺ
Hadith about visiting women	<p>Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to visit Umm Ḥarām while she was married to 'Ubādah bin Ṣāmit RA and she would feed him</p> <p>Al-Sha'bī said we visited Fātimah bint Qays RA and she welcomed us with fresh dates... I asked her about a woman who has been divorced</p>

	<p>“When Allah’s Messenger ﷺ had performed the taslīm, the women would stand immediately, while he would linger briefly before getting up”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He would linger in order to let the women leave before the men - The Prophet took precautions to prevent the intermixing of men with women even in mosques
Reasons given by opponents of intermixing	<p>Blocking the means (sadd al-dharā’i’)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If Allah SWT prohibits something, He also prohibits the ways and means which lead to it <p>Dissatisfaction with one’s spouse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People are at their best and in full form in front of strangers - People’s eyes inevitably wander to what is in the hands of others <p>Intermixing does not curb the desires nor discipline the instincts but rather worsens it as can be seen in societies where intermixing is common</p>
Principle	<p>The strength of the ruling of prohibition depends on the weight of the evidence in terms of authenticity (thubūt) and textual implication (dalālah)</p>
Matters that are agreed upon	<p>Prohibition of seclusion due to the hadith, “No man is alone with a woman but the Shaytan is the third one present” لَا يَخْلُونَ رَجُلٌ بِامْرَأَةٍ إِلَّا كَانَ ثَالِثَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ</p> <p>Prohibition for Muslim women to display those parts of her adornment which should remain covered due to the verse: “And tell the believing women that they must not expose their adornment, except to their husbands...” وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ</p> <p>Prohibition of speaking with men in a soft, flirtatious voice due to the verse: “Do not speak too softly in case the sick at heart should lust after you, but speak in an appropriate manner” فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا</p> <p>Prohibition of intentionally attracting attention to herself due to the verse: “And let them not stamp their feet in a way that the adornment they conceal is known” وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before Islam, women would wear anklets and stamp their feet so that the sound of their anklets would draw the attention of men <p>Prohibition of non-mahram individuals of opposite sexes touching</p>

Shaking hands with the opposite gender	<p>each other by the agreement of the jurists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Falls under the category of prohibiting the means leading to the haram, it is not in its essence haram - If one were to shake hands on rare occasions when someone initiates a handshake, in order to avoid significant embarrassment, we hope they would be forgiven <p>Prohibition of looking at the 'awrah of another whether that is with lust or without lust or repeating a coincidental glance without need قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ ... وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ</p> <p>Permissibility of a woman leaving her home in order to work, study or fulfill some other need due to the hadith in which the divorced woman was allowed by the Prophet to leave her home to attend to her date palms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - However the default instruction for women is to remain at home due to the verse "and stay in your homes" <p>وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ</p>
<p>Factors considered in the ruling on intermixing</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Type of situation</p> <p>Al-Nawawī</p>	<p>The ruling on the intermixing of men and women differs according to the age of the men and women, type of situation, nature of interaction and the degree of necessity</p> <p>There is takhfif in the matter of ikhtilāt with the advancing age of those involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Prophet ﷺ permitted Umm Sharīk to receive guests but prevented Fatimah bint Qays from spending her waiting period there because of the influx of guests - Samrā' bint Nuḥayk was an elderly woman who would enjoin good and forbid evil in the marketplace - Prophet ﷺ joked with an elderly lady <p>It seems the scholars are stricter in settings involving recreation and entertainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In a masjid setting, by contrast, it is more lenient - "Intermixing of women with men, if it is not in seclusion, is not harām" <p>أَنَّ النِّسَاءَ كُنَّ يُصَلِّينَ خَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي مَسْجِدِهِ خَلْفَ الرِّجَالِ وَلِأَنَّ اخْتِلَاطَ النِّسَاءِ بِالرِّجَالِ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ خَلْوَةٌ لَيْسَ بِحَرَامٍ</p>
Reasons that permit a woman to leave her home	<p>Acquiring knowledge, attending the daily congregational prayers, the Friday congregational prayer, the two 'Id prayers, and buying and selling even if involving men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A single woman may attend Islamic conferences and meetings in order to be known if she needs to get married
Looking at women	It is permitted to look at women for a need such as education, testimony, judicial proceedings and medical care
Justification for	It is a means of implementing certain Islamic injunctions

having a screen/barrier	It was not prohibited by the Messenger
Precedent in the time of the Companions	<p>‘Ā’ishah RA used to pray with the rest of the women in the mosque of the Messenger ﷺ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Later she put up a screen because of crowding in the Haram
Hadith	<p>"The prayer of a woman in the family part of her home is better than her prayer in the formal reception area"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A woman is thus able to combine the privacy of a barrier with the reward of congregational prayer
Why did the Prophet never do it?	There was no need for it at his time, but the need arose later. He left some things to be carried out by his Companions after him, such as the compilation of the Qur’an into one book
Sadd al-dharī’ah	This rule lends support to the legitimacy of using a screen since women nowadays go to mosques fully adorned
Hadith regarding private classes for women	<p>Some women requested that the Prophet ﷺ set aside a day for them because the men were taking all his time. The Messenger ﷺ promised the women one day a week in which he would meet with them, preach to them and advise them</p> <p>قَالَتِ النِّسَاءُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ غَلَبْنَا عَلَيْكَ الرَّجَالَ، فَاجْعَلْ لَنَا يَوْمًا مِنْ نَفْسِكَ. فَوَعَدَهُنَّ يَوْمًا لَقِيَهُنَّ فِيهِ، فَوَعَظَهُنَّ وَأَمَرَهُنَّ</p>
Virtual meetings	The meeting of a man and woman alone in a virtual room should be exclusively for a specific need and no longer than necessary

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