

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>ما ترَكْتُ بَعْدِي فِتْنَةً أَصَرَّ عَلَى الرِّجَالِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common sense necessitates a distance between the source of the trial and the one being tried</li> </ul>
Definition	<p>The term 'intermixing' cannot be found in the books of fiqh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no comprehensive definition that includes all forbidden forms and excludes all permitted forms</li> </ul>
Tahqīq al-manāṭ	<p>Ascertaining the presence of 'illah (an effective cause for the ruling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The 'illah for the prohibition of wine is intoxication, therefore, if a drink is ascertained to be intoxicating then it is prohibited</li> </ul>
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"> <li>- This hadith indicates that such a level of intermixing is permissible when there is no seclusion</li> </ul>
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"> <li>- 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</li> </ul>
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"> <li>- Hadith of the Ansari man and his wife who hosted the guest of the Messenger ﷺ</li> </ul>
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>

	three times
Hadith regarding a woman serving guests Ibn Hajar	<p>On the occasion of his marriage, Abu Usayd invited the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. The wife of Abu Usayd RA made and served the food to them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- According to the hadith it is permissible for a woman to serve her husband and those whom he has invited. This can happen only where is safety from temptation and appropriate attire</li> </ul> <p>وفي الحديث جواز خدمة المرأة زوجها ومن يدعوه ولا يخفى أن محل ذلك عند أمن الفتنة ومراعاة ما يجب عليها من الستر</p>
Reasons given by proponents of intermixing	<p>Intermixing disciplines the instincts and prevents repressed emotions and separating the genders only makes the yearning stronger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This can be true when the separation between sexes becomes extreme leading to difficulty in marriage</li> <li>- However, in permissive societies, the rates of divorce and marital infidelity and sexual deviance are rising</li> <li>- Permitting some of what is forbidden will not curb people's desires and will lead to the violation of more restraints</li> </ul> <p>Intermixing provides an opportunity for a man to get to know a woman in order to propose marriage. In certain conservative societies few men can actually get to know women</p>
وإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مُتَّعِنِّينَ فَسُنُونَهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ Ibn Kathīr	<p>"And when you ask his wives for something, ask them from behind a partition"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If one of you wants to get something from them, do not look at them or ask them for anything, except from behind a barrier</li> <li>- Many scholars have said that this hijab (screen) is particular to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ</li> </ul>
Hadith of 'Ā'ishah RA regarding women of her time	<p>"Had Allah's Messenger ﷺ seen what the women have started to do, he would have prevented them from going to the mosque, just as the women of Banī Isrā'il were prevented"</p> <p>لَوْ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَأَى مَا أَحْدَثَ النِّسَاءُ لِمَنْعِهِنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا مُنْعِتْ نِسَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ</p>
Hadiths regarding women's concealment Al-Nawawī	<p>"The woman is 'awrah and when she goes out the devil makes her appealing in the eyes of men"</p> <p>"The prayer of a woman in the family part of her home is better than her prayer in the formal reception area, and her prayer in her own private quarters is better than her prayer in the family part of her home"</p> <p>"The best of the men's rows are the first, and the worst are the last, while the best of the women's rows are the last, and the worst are the first"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The last rows of the women attending with the Messenger were preferred due to their distance from intermixing with men</li> </ul> <p>وَإِنَّمَا قَضَى أَخْرَى صُفُوفَ النِّسَاءِ الْحَاضِرَاتِ مَعَ الرِّجَالِ لِيُعْدَهُنَّ مِنْ مُخْلَطَةِ الرِّجَالِ</p>

	<p>“When Allah’s Messenger ﷺ had performed the <i>taslīm</i>, the women would stand immediately, while he would linger briefly before getting up”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- He would linger in order to let the women leave before the men</li> <li>- The Prophet took precautions to prevent the intermixing of men with women even in mosques</li> </ul>
<p>Reasons given by opponents of intermixing</p>	<p>Blocking the means (<i>sadd al-dharā’i’</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If Allah SWT prohibits something, He also prohibits the ways and means which lead to it</li> </ul> <p>Dissatisfaction with one’s spouse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People are at their best and in full form in front of strangers</li> <li>- People’s eyes inevitably wander to what is in the hands of others</li> </ul> <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>
<p>Principle</p>	<p>The strength of the ruling of prohibition depends on the weight of the evidence in terms of authenticity (<i>thubūt</i>) and textual implication (<i>dalālah</i>)</p>
<p>Matters that are agreed upon</p>	<p>Prohibition of seclusion due to the hadith, “No man is alone with a woman but the Shaytan is the third one present”</p> <p>لَا يَخْلُونَ رَجُلٌ بِامْرَأَةٍ إِلَّا كَانَ ثَالِثُهُمَا 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...”</p> <p>وَلَا يُبَدِّلْنَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِيُعَوِّلُهُنَّ</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”</p> <p>فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْفَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعُ الَّذِي فِي قُلُوبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قُولًا 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”</p> <p>وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمُ مَا يُخْبِئُنَّ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before Islam, women would wear anklets and stamp their feet so that the sound of their anklets would draw the attention of men</li> </ul> <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"> <li>- Falls under the category of prohibiting the means leading to the haram, it is not in its essence haram</li> <li>- 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</li> </ul> <p>Prohibition of looking at the 'awrah of another whether that is with lust or without lust or repeating a coincidental glance without need</p> <p>فُلَّلَّمُونَيْ يُعْضُوْ مِنْ أَبْصَرْهُمْ ... وَفُلَّلَّمُونَتِ يُعْضُضُنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرْهُنَّ</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"> <li>- However the default instruction for women is to remain at home due to the verse "and stay in your homes"</li> </ul> <p>وَقَرْنَ فِي بَيْوِنَكَ</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 <i>takhfif</i> in the matter of <i>ikhtilāt</i> with the advancing age of those involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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</li> <li>- Samrā' bint Nuhayk was an elderly woman who would enjoin good and forbid evil in the marketplace</li> <li>- Prophet ﷺ joked with an elderly lady</li> </ul> <p>It seems the scholars are stricter in settings involving recreation and entertainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In a masjid setting, by contrast, it is more lenient</li> <li>- "Intermixing of women with men, if it is not in seclusion, is not <i>harām</i>"</li> </ul> <p>أَنَّ النِّسَاءَ كُلُّ بُصَيْلَنَ حَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي مَسْجِدِهِ حَلْفَ الرِّجَالِ وَلَاَنَّ اخْتِلَاطَ النِّسَاءِ بِالرِّجَالِ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ خُلُوَّةً لَّيْسَ بِحَرَامٍ</p>
Reasons that permit a woman to leave her home	Acquiring knowledge, attending the daily congregational prayers, the Friday congregational prayer, the two 'Id prayers, and buying and selling even if involving men
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	'Āishah RA used to pray with the rest of the women in the mosque of the Messenger ﷺ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Later she put up a screen because of crowding in the Haram</li> </ul>
Hadith	"The prayer of a woman in the family part of her home is better than her prayer in the formal reception area" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A woman is thus able to combine the privacy of a barrier with the reward of congregational prayer</li> </ul>
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-dhārī'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	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 style="text-align: right;">قالت النساء للنبي صلي الله عليه وسلم غابنا عليك الرجال، فاجعل لنا يوماً من نفسك. فوعدهن يوماً لقيهن فيه، فوعظهن وأمرهن</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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