

113137 - Is it permissible for a woman to be an admin in a public chat forum?

the question

Does it come under the heading of a position of authority if a woman is an admin in charge of men on websites?

Detailed answer

It is not permissible for a woman to be appointed to a position of public authority. The evidence for that is the report narrated by Abu Bakrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “No people will ever prosper who appoint a woman in charge of their affairs.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4163.

The scholars of the Permanent Committee for Ifta’ said: The Sunnah, the objectives of sharia, scholarly consensus and real-life experience indicate that a woman should not be appointed to a position of public office, such as a ruler or governor, and she should not be appointed as a judge, because of the general meaning of the hadith of Abu Bakrah, which narrates that when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) heard that the Persians had appointed a woman as their ruler, he said: “No people will ever prosper who appoint a woman in charge of their affairs.” The word *qawm* (people) and the word *imra’ah* (woman) both appear in the indefinite and in the context of negation, so it is general in meaning, and what matters is the general meaning of the text, not the reason for which it was said, as is well known in the field of *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence). That is because women are innately lacking in reason and understanding, and they are very emotional, so their emotions will affect their reasoning; moreover, leadership requires checking on the situation of those under the leader’s care and running the general affairs in a manner that serves their best interests.

Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Baz, Shaykh `Abd ar-Razzaq `Afifi, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Ghadyan.

Fatawa al-Lajnah ad-Da’imah, 17/13.

What appears to be the case is that what is meant by not allowing women to be appointed to positions of authority is positions of public office, such as being a president, governor, judge or minister, and the like.

With regard to being appointed to positions of authority in a specific, limited field, there is nothing wrong with a woman being appointed to such positions.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih al-`Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The basic principle is that accountable people, both men and women, are subject to the same rulings, except when there is evidence to the contrary, such as being appointed to positions of public office, such as a ruler, judge and the like. These positions are only for men, but a woman may be appointed to a position of limited authority, such as if she travels with a group of women and is appointed as the leader during the journey, or being appointed as principal of a school and the like. (*Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 3/218).

In *al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah* (7/93, 94), it says:

Positions to which a woman may be appointed include giving testimony, guardianship, and supervision of a waqf (endowment). Ibn `Abidin said: A woman may be appointed as supervisor of a waqf, guardian of an orphan, and acting as a witness. End quote.

It was narrated that `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) left instructions that Hafsah (may Allah be pleased with her) was to be appointed to take care of his waqf after he died.

The two hadiths are to be found in al-Bukhari and Muslim. See: *Fat-h al-Bari*, commentary on hadith no. 2772.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, al-Qadi Abu Ya`la al-Hanbali and al-Istakhri ash-Shafa`i favoured the view that a woman may look after the wealth of her orphan child after his father and grandfather die.

See: *al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 7/93, 94.

What appears to be the case – and Allah knows best – is that being in charge of a chat forum or website comes under the heading of specific and limited authority, which it is permissible for a woman to be appointed to.

If this website or chat forum is only for women, there is no problem, but if it is public and is frequented by both men and women, then we need to examine the nature of the admin's work. If this work requires her to contact men and meet with them, or talk with them, even by phone or email, then what is appropriate is closing the door that may lead to temptation (fitnah) and keeping the woman away from such positions, so as to protect her from temptation and to avoid going against the teachings of her religion.

How often has such correspondence and contact caused trouble to the people who engage in it, even though in the beginning the woman was innocent of any evil intent.

Islam teaches us to close the door that may lead to temptation and evil as much as possible.

And Allah knows best.