

12879 - Ruling on a man hugging a woman

the question

Is hugging permitted in Islam? to be specific hugging females be them your relatives or not?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allaah.

If the brother who is asking this question knows that shaking hands with a non-mahram woman is not permitted, then it is obvious that hugging or embracing her is also haraam and is more forbidden. The ruling on a relative who is not a mahram is the same as the ruling on a "stranger" (non-mahram).

With regard to relatives who are mahrams, such as paternal aunts and maternal aunts, it is permissible for a man to shake hands with them, but as for hugging and embracing and kissing on the mouth, this is not allowed because that may provoke desire, and disallowing it closes the door to evil. It is sufficient to kiss the head or nose.

There follow some questions posed to Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, and his responses:

1 - Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz was asked:

I am currently living in Riyadh where I have some relatives; the relationship between them and me is very close. Among them there are the daughters of my maternal aunts and the wives and daughters of my paternal uncles. When I visit them I greet them and kiss them and they sit with me with their faces uncovered. I am bothered by this, knowing that this custom is widespread in most areas of the south. What is your opinion of this custom, and what should I do? Please advise me, may Allaah reward you with good.

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

He replied:

This custom is bad and reprehensible, and it goes against the pure sharee'ah. It is not permissible for you to kiss them or shake hands with them, because the wives of your paternal uncles, the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal uncle, etc., are not mahrams for you. They must observe hijab in front of you and not appear in front of you wearing their adornments, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen, that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts”

[al-Ahzaab 33:53]

This verse includes both the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and other women, according to the more sound of the two scholarly opinions. Whoever says that it applies only to the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is saying something false for which there is no evidence. Allaah says concerning women in Soorat al Noor:

“and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers”

[al-Noor 24:31 - interpretation of the meaning]

You are not one of those for whom an exception is made, rather you are a “stranger” for the daughters of your paternal uncle and the daughters of your maternal uncle and the wives of your paternal uncles, in the sense that you are not one of their mahrams. So you have to tell them what we have said and read this fatwa to them, so that they will excuse you and will know the shar'i ruling on this matter. It is sufficient for you to greet them with words, without kissing them or shaking hands with them, because of the verses that we have quoted above.

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And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, when a woman wanted to shake hands with him: "I do not shake hands with women." And 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "The hand of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) never touched the hand of a woman; when he accepted their oath of allegiance it was by words only." And it was narrated in al-Saheehayn from 'Aa'ishah, in the story of the slander (al-ifk), that she said that when she heard the voice of Safwaan ibn al-Mu'attal, "I covered my face, but he had seen me before hijab [before the command of hijab was revealed]." This indicates that women used to cover their faces after the verse of hijab was revealed.

May Allaah set the affairs of the Muslims straight and bless them with understanding of their religion. And Allaah is the Source of strength.

Fataawa Islamiyyah, 3/77, 78

2 - The Shaykh also said:

There is nothing wrong with a man kissing his daughters, whether they are young or grown up, without desire, so long as that is on the cheek if she is grown up. It was narrated that Abu Bakr kissed his daughter 'Aa'ishah on the cheek. Kissing on the mouth may lead to provoking desire, so it is better and more on the safe side not to do that. By the same token a daughter may kiss her father on the nose or his head, without desire. But if there is desire then that is forbidden to all parties, so as to ward off fitnah (temptation) and block the way to evil and immorality.

Fataawa Islamiyyah, 3/78, 79

And Allaah knows best.