

138040 - The Muslim has to pay attention to good manners and modesty when he mixes with people

the question

What is the ruling on deliberately passing wind loudly in front of people?.

Detailed answer

Undoubtedly feeling embarrassed with regard to things that people usually feel embarrassed about and try to avoid is something that is required, and paying attention to people's customs and what they regard as good or bad is part of good manners; whatever people customarily regard as disliked is blameworthy, and whatever people customarily regard as offensive is offensive – so long as Islam does not teach anything to the contrary.

Al-Bukhaari (3484) narrated that Abu Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Among the words of the earlier Prophets that still remain with people are: If you feel no shame, then do as you wish."

Al-Haafiz said: The words "then do as you wish" appear in the imperative (a command) but what is meant is a threat, i.e., do as you wish and Allah will requite you.

Or the meaning may be: look at what you want to do; if it is something that one would not feel ashamed of, then do it, but if it is something that one would feel ashamed of, then do not do it. End quote.

A Bedouin came to 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and said: O Ameer al-Mu'mineen, teach me the religion. He said: (It is) to bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish prayer, to pay zakaah, to perform pilgrimage to the House (the Ka'bah) and to fast Ramadan; be open and do not be secretive; beware of doing everything that one may feel ashamed of.

Sharh Usool I'tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah by al-Laalkaa'i (1/333); Shu'ab al-Eemaan, 3976

At-Tabaraani narrated in al-Mu‘jam al-Kabeer (312) from ‘Ikrimah ibn Khaalid that Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqaas (may Allah be pleased with him) said to his son, when he was dying: O my son, you will never meet anyone more sincere towards you than me. When you want to pray, do your wudoo’ properly, then pray as if you think you will not pray again. Beware of greed, for it is akin to poverty, and you should have a lack of interest (in worldly matters) for it is richness. Beware of doing or saying anything for which you have to apologise. (If you heed this advice), then do what you like.

A wise man said: Beware of what you may have to apologise for and what you may feel ashamed of being mentioned, for the only thing you have to apologise for is sin and the only thing you have to feel ashamed of is abhorrent actions.

Makaarim al-Akhlaaq by al-Kharaa’iti, 1/484

No doubt deliberately passing wind in front of people without any excuse is contrary to modesty and decency. It is a kind of bad manners, the like of which no one does except foolish people. It was narrated from one of the salaf that this action was one of the evils that the people of Loot (peace be upon him) did.

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, said (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) Lout (Lot), when he said to his people: ‘You commit Al-Fahishah (sodomy, the worst sin) which none has preceded you in (committing) it in the Alameen (mankind and jinns).

‘Verily, you do sodomy with men, and rob the wayfarer (travellers, etc.)! And practise Al-Munkar (disbelief and polytheism and every kind of evil wicked deed) in your meetings.’”

[al-‘Ankaboot 29:28-29].

Ash-Shawkaani said in Fath al-Qadeer (4/285):

There was a difference of opinion concerning the munkar (evil actions) that they did. It was said that they used to pelt people with stones and show no respect to strangers. And it was said that they used to break wind in their gatherings with no control. And it was said that there was no

reason not to believe that they used to do all of these evil actions. Az-Zajjaaj said: In this there is an indication that it is not appropriate for people to get together for the purpose of doing evil deeds or mocking others. End quote.

It was narrated that Yazeed ibn Bakr al-Laythi said: al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad was asked about the words of Allah, “And practise Al-Munkar (disbelief and polytheism and every kind of evil wicked deed) in your meetings” – what was that munkar (evil)? He said: They used to break wind in their gatherings with no control; one of them would break wind in the direction of another.

Tafseer Ibn Abi Haatim, 11/425

A similar report was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah, Ibn ‘Abbaas, al-Qaasim ibn Abi Barzah and others.

See: Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 6/276; Tafseer at-Tabari, 20/29. al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’aan, 13/342

One of the reports which indicate that passing wind is something that one should feel embarrassed about is that which was narrated by Abu Dawood (1114) from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) who said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If one of you breaks wind during his prayer, let him hold his nose and leave.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

It says in ‘Awn al-Ma’bood, 3/326:

“Let him hold his nose”– al-Khattaabi said: He instructed him to hold his nose so that people would think that he has a nosebleed. This comes under the heading of good manners in concealing a shameful matter, hiding that which is offensive and giving the impression that what has happened is something different. It does not come under the heading of showing off or lying; rather it is a kind of euphemism, observing decency and seeking to protect oneself from people’s criticism.

This is how people customarily behaved.

Al-Madaa'ini said:

One day Ash'ab sat beside Marwaan ibn Abaan ibn 'Uthmaan, and there came out of Marwan wind that made a sound. So Ash'ab got up and left, so that the people would think that he was the one who had passed wind. When Marwan went home, Ash'ab came to him and said to him: Pay me back. Marwaan said: What for? He said: Pay me back for the wind that I took responsibility for instead of you, otherwise I will embarrass you (by telling people what really happened). And he did not leave him alone until he had settled the matter by taking something from him in return. End quote.

Nihaayat al-Arab fi Funoon al-Adab, p. 393

Rather the lack of shame concerning such things is known among nations other than the Muslim ummah.

Ar-Raaghib said in Muhaadiraat al-Udaba', 1/445:

The Indians claimed that holding back wind could cause serious illness and that releasing it spares one from illness, and that it is the greatest remedy. On the day of their gatherings and festivals they do not refrain from passing wind and they do not conceal the passing of gas silently. And they do not see anything wrong with that or regard it as funny. End quote.

Al-Bukhaari (4942) and Muslim (2855) narrated from 'Abdullah ibn Zam'ah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) admonished them for laughing at the passing of wind and said: "Why does one of you laugh at what he does?"

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This indicates that it is not allowed to laugh when one hears someone else break wind. Rather he should ignore it and carry on with whatever he was doing, without paying any attention to it or anything else, and pretend that he did not hear anything. This is good manners and proper conduct with others. End quote.

The scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas were asked:

Nowadays, unfortunately, it happens that people get together and they do not refrain from passing wind, and they laugh at it as if they find it funny. If they are told to stop doing this blameworthy action, they say, it is better than burping, and so on, and that there is no evidence to suggest that it is not allowed. How should we respond to them? May Allah reward you.

They replied:

It is not permissible to break wind deliberately or to laugh at that, because it is contrary to decency and dignified manners. That is not like burping, because burping usually happens involuntarily and people do not laugh at it. But if a person passes wind naturally, without doing it deliberately, there is nothing wrong with that and it is not permissible to laugh at it, because it is proven that ‘Abdullah ibn Zam‘ah said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade laughing at what comes out of one naturally. Narrated by al-Bukhaari. End quote.

Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa’imah, 26/222

With regard to passing wind – even if it makes noise – because of an excuse, such as if one has no control over his flatulence, or a disease in the colon, or one cannot hold it in, then there is nothing wrong with that and it is not permissible for people to laugh at what he does, because of the hadeeth quoted above.

Rather the issue has to do with the one who does that deliberately, to make his friends laugh, and does not care about what people think or feel embarrassed in front of them, this is what is blameworthy.

And Allah knows best.