

277583 - Does chatting between the sexes on social media sites come under the heading of khulwah that is forbidden?

the question

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Detailed answer

Firstly:

It was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) that he heard the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “No man should be alone with a woman unless there is a mahram present.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5233) and Muslim (1341).

What is meant by khulwah in this hadith is physically being alone together.

The reason for this prohibition is that it is thought that this khulwah will lead to falling into what is prohibited (haraam), because it enables the Shaytaan to instill such temptation. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) referred to that when he said: “Indeed, no man is alone with a woman but the Shaytaan is the third one present.” Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2165); he said: This is a hasan saheeh ghareeb hadith with this isnad. al-Haakim said in al-Mustadrak (1/114): It is saheeh according to the conditions of the two shaykhs [al-Bukhaari and Muslim], and adh-Dhahabi agreed with him. It was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Irwaa’ al-Ghaleel (6/215).

Al-Minnaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“but the Shaytaan is the third one present” by means of his waswasah (whispers), stirring up of desire, dispelling of modesty, and encouragement to commit sin, until he tempts them to commit the act of intercourse or that which is less than it of precursors that will soon lead to it. This hadith proves that it (khulwah) is haraam.

End quote from Fayd al-Qadeer (3/78).

The prohibition on being alone with a non-mahram woman comes under the heading of barring ways that lead to shameful deeds. This is one of the fundamental principles of our religious teaching.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The basic principle is that anything that is a means that leads to fitnah (temptation) is not permissible, because the means that lead to mischief must be barred, if that is not outweighed by a greater interest.

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (15/419).

If a man talks to a non-mahram woman in a private chat on social media websites – even if it does not come under the heading of the khulwah discussed by the fuqaha’ – this is still a means that leads to fitnah (temptation) and mischief, so it is disallowed for that reason.

If looking, shaking hands and the like are forbidden, so as to block the means of being tempted by the woman, even if there is no khulwah, then disallowing private conversation, especially among young people and those who are thought most likely to be vulnerable to temptation, also comes under that heading.

There are many religious texts which forbid seeking enjoyment in talking to a non-mahram woman and finding pleasure in listening to her voice and looking at her; this is regarded as a type of zina.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah, from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), that “Allah has decreed for the son of Adam his share of zina, which he will inevitably get. The zina of the eyes is looking and the zina of the tongue is speaking. The heart wishes and hopes, and the private part confirms that or denies it.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6243), Muslim (2657). Ahmad (27430) added: “And the zina of the ears is listening.”

With some people, the matter may go as far as the Shaytaan tempting them to the extent that they take off their clothes for one another (exchanging nude photos etc).

Undoubtedly the Shaytaan has many traps into which people fall, such as mischief, desires and temptations. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “I have not left behind me among the people any fitnah (trial) that is more harmful to men than women.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5096) and Muslim (2741).

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

“O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts. Indeed, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them. Indeed, We have made the devils allies to those who do not believe”

[al-A‘raaf 7:27].

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

So Allah has forbidden the children of Adam to be tempted by the temptation of the Shaytaan, as their parents were tempted, by disobeying Allah and obeying the Shaytaan in going against the commands and prohibitions of Allah.

He stripped the parents of their clothing, and in like manner he may strip their offspring of the garment of piety (taqwa) and their physical garments, so that they show their private parts.

End quote from al-Istiqaamah (2/170).

To sum up, for a man to chat with a non-mahram woman on social media websites, in a chat room away from other visitors and subscribers, does not come under the heading of the khulwah that is forbidden,

But it is disallowed because of what it involves of temptation and the likelihood of mischief.

So Muslim men and women should avoid such contact, unless it is for a greater religious purpose, such as asking questions of scholars, or it is for a legitimate worldly purpose, in which case the conversation should be only as much as is needed, without unnecessary chitchat and going off topic.

And Allah knows best.