

43736 - Statement from the Standing Committee for Academic Research and Issuing Fatwas concerning the prohibition of singing and music

the question

I read an article by some writer which said that singing and music are permissible, and refuted those who say that these things are haraam. He encouraged the broadcasting of recordings by dead singers as a means to preserve their memory and the art that they produced during their lives and lest the living be deprived of listening to that art and seeing it. He said: There is no text in the Holy Qur'aan which forbids singing and music, and in the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) we have a good example, and he used to listen to singing and music, and enjoined them at Eid and on occasions such as marriage and other joyous occasions. Then he said: And there are da'eef (weak) ahaadeeth which some quote as evidence that singing and music are forbidden, but it is not right to attribute them to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in order to support an opinion or prevent something that some people do not agree with. Then he quoted the opinions of some of the scholars who say that singing is allowed.

Detailed answer

The Standing Committee for Academic Research and Issuing Fatwas issued a statement refuting this article, the text of which is as follows:

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

In refutation of these specious arguments the Committee has stated the following:

Firstly: it is not permissible for anyone to discuss matters of sharee'ah except scholars of sharee'ah who are specialized and qualified to research and examine issues. The writer of this article is not a seeker of shar'i knowledge (taalib 'ilm) so it is not permissible for him to discuss something in which he is not specialized. Hence he has made many mistakes and said many ignorant things, and spoken about Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be

upon him) without knowledge. This is a sinful matter and is misguiding his readers. By the same token it is not permissible for the media – newspapers, magazines, etc – to give space to those who are not scholars of sharee’ah to discuss shar’i rulings and write about things that are not their specialty, so that the Muslims may be protected from their ideas and beliefs.

Secondly: Nothing can benefit the deceased after his death except that which is indicated by the shar’i evidence, such as the report in which the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When a man dies, his (good) deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge and a righteous son who will pray for him.” Narrated by Muslim, 1631. As for the sins that a person committed during his lifetime, and died without having repented from them – including singing – he will be punished for them unless Allaah forgives him for them by His Grace and kindness. So it is not permissible to resurrect them and revive them after he has died, lest that sin be added to the sins that he committed during his lifetime, because the harm of that extends to others, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever introduces a bad practice into Islam, the burden of that sin will be upon him, as will the sin of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their burden in the slightest.” Narrated by Muslim, 1017.

Thirdly: With regard to his comment that “There is no text in the Holy Qur’aan which forbids singing and music,” this reflects his ignorance of the Qur’aan. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And of mankind is he who purchases idle talks (i.e. music, singing) to mislead (men) from the path of Allaah without knowledge, and takes it (the path of Allaah, or the Verses of the Qur’aan) by way of mockery. For such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hell.fire)”

[Luqmaan 31:6]

The majority of mufasssireen say that what is meant by Lahwa al-hadeeth (“idle talks”) in this verse is singing. Another group says that it is every sound of entertainment, which includes flutes, stringed instruments and so on. All of these mislead men from the path of Allaah and cause misguidance. It is proven that Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him), the great

Sahaabi who was one of the scholars of the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) said, commenting on this verse: “By Allaah, this refers to singing.” And he said: “It causes hypocrisy to grow in the heart as water causes herbs to grow.”

And there are many ahaadeeth which point to the prohibition of singing and musical instruments and indicate that they are a means which leads to great evil and bad consequences. The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah be pleased with him) discussed the rulings on singing and musical instruments in great detail in his book Ighaathat al-Lahfaan.

Fourthly: This writer tells lies about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) by saying that he used to listen to songs and music and enjoined them at Eid and on occasions such as marriage and other joyous occasions. It is proven that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) granted a dispensation to women only, when there are no men present, allowing them to beat the daff and sing nasheeds which are free of any mention of love or the music and instruments, which includes the permissive songs that exist nowadays. Rather he allowed nasheeds that are free of such offensive characteristics and he allowed beating the daff only, not other kinds of drums or musical instruments, to proclaim marriage. It is narrated in saheeh ahaadeeth, as in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade musical instruments of all types and issued stern warnings against them. It is narrated in Saheeh al-Bukhaari and other books of hadeeth that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There will be among my ummah people who will regard as permissible zina (adultery), silk, alcohol and ma’aazif (musical instruments). Some people will camp at the top of a mountain with their shepherd looking after their sheep, and a poor man will come and ask for something, and they will say, ‘Come back to us tomorrow.’ But Allaah will destroy them and level the mountain, and will turn others into monkeys and pigs until the Day of Resurrection.”

The word ma’aazif (translated above as musical instruments) refers to singing and all kinds of instruments. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) condemned those who regard as permissible zina (adultery), the wearing of silk for men and the drinking of alcohol, and who listen to singing and musical instruments. He mentioned that alongside zina,

alcohol and the wearing of silk by men, which indicates that singing and musical instruments are emphatically forbidden.

Fifthly: With regard to this writer's comment that there are da'eef (weak) ahaadeeth which some quote as evidence that singing and music are forbidden, but it is not right to attribute them to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in order to support an opinion or prevent something that some people do not agree with, this reflects his ignorance of the Sunnah, for the evidence that singing is forbidden is to be found partly in the Qur'aan and partly in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, as stated above, and partly in other books of Sunnah, which the earlier scholars used as evidence that singing and music are forbidden.

Sixthly: The opinion of some scholars who allow singing is an opinion that is refuted by the evidence which forbids that. The point here is that we should follow what the evidence says and not that which goes against it. We may take or leave the words of anyone except the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

This writer must repent to Allaah from what he has written, and he should not speak about Allaah and His Messenger without knowledge, for speaking about Allaah without knowledge is mentioned alongside shirk in the Book of Allaah.

May Allaah help us all to learn the truth and follow it.

May Allaah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and companions.