66800 - She wants to do ‘Umrah but she is afraid of crowding with men

the question

I want to go for ‘Umrah during the month of Ramadaan, but there is this intense mixing with men, and sometimes pressing against one another. Is that permissible?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Mixing between men and women is haraam. We have explained that in detail in the answer to question no. 1200.

Secondly:

The rulings of Islam recognizes the nature of women and how the Shaytaan exploits women’s charms, so the saheeh texts of Islam enjoin women to stay in their houses and not to make a wanton display of themselves, and not to crowd with men. Indeed, the Islamic texts do not enjoin upon women what they enjoin upon men, such as attending Jumu’ah prayers and prayers in congregation.

Women crowding with men is one of the greatest causes of fitnah, hence Islam closes the door to that temptation and protects acts of worship from everything that could cancel them out. In the case of Eid prayer, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded the women to go out to the prayer, but said that they should be in their own prayer place, far away from the men. With regard to Hajj and ‘Umrah, Islam also forbids mixing between men and women, so that women will be protected from crowding with men. This is clear from the following:

1 – The Lawgiver has not enjoined Hajj or ‘Umrah upon a woman unless she has a mahram with her.

It was narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “No woman should travel except with a mahram, and no man should enter upon her unless she has a mahram with her.” A man said: “O Messenger of Allaah, I want to go out with the army of such and such and my wife wants to go for Hajj.” He said: “Go for Hajj with her.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1763; Muslim, 1341.

2 – The Lawgiver has granted a concession to a man who has womenfolk with him, allowing him to leave Muzdalifah at night.

It was narrated from ‘Abd-Allaah, the freed slave of Asma’, that she stopped at night in Muzdalifah and stood there and prayed for a while, then she said: “O my son, has the moon set?” I said: “No.” She prayed for a while, then she said: “O my son, has the moon set?” I said: “Yes.” She said: “Then move on.” We went on and she stoned the jamarah, then she came back and prayed Fajr in Muzdalifah in her tent. I said to her: “O you! I think we have come to Mina very early in the night.” She said: “O my son, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave permission to the women to do that.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1595.

Imam al-Bukhaari included this hadeeth in a chapter entitled “One who sends the weak members of his family ahead at night, so that they may stand in Muzdalifah and make du’aa’, and move on when the moon sets.”

3 – It is mustahabb for women to keep far away from the Ka’bah when doing tawaaf, lest they mix with men, even if that keeping away means that they cannot touch the Black Stone.

It was narrated that ‘Ata’ said: The wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) circumambulated the Ka’bah with the men. It was said to him: “How come they are mixed with the men?’ He said: “They did not mix with the men. ‘Aa’ishah used to do tawaaf far away from the men, not mixing with them.” A woman said: “O Mother of the Believers, let us go and touch the Black Stone!” She said: “Go yourself,” and she refused to go.

Ibn Jamaa’ah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

One of the worst evil actions that the ignorant common folk do in tawaaf is when men crowd with

their wives whose faces are uncovered, and that may happen at night when they are carrying lit candles in their hands … We ask Allaah to inspire the authorities to put an end to this evil.

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami said, after quoting these words:

Think about it, and you will realize that it is obligatory to prevent women even from tawaaf if they do things that lead to fitnah.

Al-Fataawa al-Fiqhiyyah, 1/201, 202

Thirdly:

If a woman wants to go for ‘Umrah, she has to travel with a mahram who can look after her and protect her. She should choose times when the Haram is not crowded. As for times when there is crowding, such as Ramadaan, it is better for her to avoid doing ‘Umrah at such times, because of the crowding with men that takes place, when she will not be able to avoid them.

In the answer to question no. 36514 we have quoted the words of Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him), where he says that it is better for a woman nowadays, in view of the intense crowding, not to do Hajj repeatedly, because that is better for her religious commitment.

And Allaah knows best.