

Lesson 5: Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place

Introduction

Men's and women's being at the same place, represents, in general, a fertile land for falling in a lot of behavioral and psychological deviations, a land which may tempt the human being to find him/herself, from these two aspects, at a point at which he/she has lost all the psychological defenses against the insinuations of the devils and the calling for evil soul, at which he/she has turned to be a victim under the control of cursed Satan and away from the divine mercy.

Such areas where both men and women are present are, in fact, from the easy targets towards which Satan and his soldiers direct all their weapons and seductions and embellishments and illusions, so that they will defeat the human being and so that the aim of cursed Satan will be accomplished:

"[Satan] said, 'O my Lord! Because You misled me, I shall indeed adorn the path of error for them on the earth, and I shall mislead them all. Except Your chosen slaves among them.'" (The Qur'an, Al-Hijr, 15:39-40)

From here, men's and women's being at the same place implies a special danger which makes it necessary to get acquainted with the religious limits which prevent the human being from falling into the trap of Satan and his soldiers and which supply the human being with the requisite protection and invulnerability in order to remain honorable in this life and in order to gain salvation in the hereafter.

What Is the Meaning of Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place?

Men's and women's being at the same place means the meeting of the men and the women at one place, whether a house, a market, a road, etc. Then, any meeting for one of the sexes with the other sex

is considered to be involved in this definition.

Being illustrated with this general meaning, men's and women's being at the same place can be avoided with respect to one person or two persons. But it is absolutely difficult to avoid it with respect to the society in general because the human being usually lives in a society where both men and women are present.

Also, the members of the society have exchanged needs, which makes it difficult to impose the complete isolation between the men and the women. Even more, we notice that men and women are present at the same place even in some major religious issues, such as: the pilgrimage and the fight for God's sake.

It is related in the biography of The Greatest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that the women used to get out with him for war in order to cure the wounded, to supply the fighters with water, etc.

Reduction of Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place

The fact that the men's and women's being at the same place is necessary in some issues does not present a sufficient excuse to give up to it and to agree on it whatever. This is so because necessities are limited to their requisite rate. Therefore, men's and women's being at the same place must be reduced to the most possible extent as The Noble Qur'an guides us to in the stories of the Talker with God, Prophet Musa (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household) and the two daughters of His prophet Shou'aib (God's peace bestowed upon him and upon our Prophet and his Household). The Most High God says,

“And we he arrived at the water of Madyan [Midian], he found there a group of men watering [their flocks], and beside them he found two women who were keeping back [their flocks]. He said, “What is the matter with you?” They said, “We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take [their flocks]. And our father is a very old man.” (The Qur'an, Al-Qasas, 28:23)

The Forbidden Privacy

The sacred doctrine forbids that sort of men's and women's being at the same place which reaches the extent of the privacy between the marriageable man and woman under certain conditions which Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred) referred to in saying, “If the man and the woman meet in a place of privacy where nobody is present and where nobody else is able to enter and if they fear to commit something forbidden, they must get out of the place.”¹

It is enough even if the forbidden part in the privacy place is restricted to the forbidden look only. Such privacy is forbidden in itself. It is related in the narrative ascribed to The Prince of the Believers Imam Ali

(God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "Let no man be in privacy with a woman because whenever a man is in privacy with a woman, the devil is the third one there."²

It is related to Imam As-Sadiq (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) imposed on women a commitment not to wail, scratch themselves, and sit with men alone."

The Standards of the Permissible Men's and Women's Being at the Same Place

If no privacy takes place, men's and women's being at the same place is not forbidden in itself. But this does not mean that there are no religious limits. When the man and the woman are present at the same place with each other, there are several limits which must be taken in consideration and which must be avoided. Here we mention some of these limits.

1- Grooming and Adorning: Grooming and adornment are from the things which the woman is forbidden to show to the marriageable men. It is related in the forbiddances discourse ascribed to The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He [wanting God] forbade that she adorns for anybody rather than her husband. If she does, God will burn her in fire."

2- Fragrance and Perfume: The fragrance and the perfume are also judged as grooming is; but the difference lies in that the grooming is sensed by the sight whereas the perfume is sensed by the smell. If the evil is probable, she is forbidden to get out of her house and to be with the marriageable men at the same place while she is being perfumed. It is ascribed to Jaber ibn Yazeed that he said, "I heard Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Baqir (God's peace bestowed upon him) saying, 'She is not permitted to perfume when she gets out of her house.'"

Getting out is just an example for what gives chance for men's and women's being at the same place. Forbiddance is not exclusive to getting out; it is applicable to men's and women's being at the same place in general even if it takes place inside the house.

3- Touching the Marriageable Person and Shaking Hands: Touching and shaking hands are from the evils related to the sense of touch, so it is forbidden to touch the skin of the marriageable person. It is ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He who shakes hands with a woman while it is forbidden to do so is going to come on the Day of Judgment shackled and then is going to be ordered to the Fire."

It is ascribed to Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (God's peace bestowed upon him) that he said, "The woman is not permitted to shake hands with a marriageable man but when the hand is covered with a veil."

Forbiddance, therefore, applies to both men and women: The man is forbidden to shake hands with the

marriageable woman, and the woman is forbidden to shake hands with the marriageable man.

4– Speaking in a Seductive Way: It is to speak in a coquettish way, and The Most High God forbids this in His saying,

“O wives of The Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty [to Allah], then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease [of hypocrisy or evil desire to adultery, etc] should be moved with desire, but speak in an honorable manner.” (The Qur’an, Al-Ahzab, 33:32)

This noble verse indicates the seriousness of the role of The Prophet’s (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) wives and indicates that they are asked, before the other women are asked, to abide to these Islamic duties which are general for all the Muslims. From these duties is not to speak in a soft i.e. coquettish way. The Muslim woman, therefore, must speak in an honorable way and must turn away from the ways which seduce the listening men, especially those in whose hearts are diseases.

5– Going Too Far in Looking: The Most High God says,

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze [from looking at forbidden things] and protect their private parts [from illegal sexual acts, etc]. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze [from looking at forbidden things] and protect their private parts [from illegal sexual acts, etc] and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent [like palms of the hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head cover, etc] and to draw their veils all over their Juyub [i.e. their bodies, faces, necks, bosoms, etc].” (The Qur’an, An-Nur, 24:30–31)

The believing men and women must lower their gazes and not fix their looks at each other. It is ascribed to The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, “God’s wrath increases on a married woman who quenches her sight by looking at somebody rather than her husband or at a marriageable man. Once she does so, The Most Glorified and Reverent God aborts everything she does.”³

It is ascribed to Imam Abu Abdullah As-Sadiq (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “Looking is one of Satan’s poisoned arrows. How many a times has a look resulted in a long sorrow!”⁴ It is also ascribed to him (God’s peace bestowed upon him) that he said, “A look after a look plants the desire in the heart, and it is sufficient to seduce the looker.”⁵ If it is a look with a desire, then even the first look is forbidden.

6– Joking and Much Laughing: The woman must preserve her honorability when she is present at the same place with marriageable men, and she must not give herself vent to look as if she has a frivolous character which is easily turned with the fancies. Much joking and laughing are from the issues which

show the woman as being frivolous and non-grave in this society where both men and women are present. Because of this, it is related in the narrative ascribed to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) that he said, "He who jokes with a woman who is not his own wife will have God imprisoning him in this life a thousand years for every word."⁶

Joking deletes the psychological limits and paves the way in front of any probable slipping.

Abu Baseer said, "I was teaching Qur'an to one woman, and I joked with her about something. When I went to Abu Ja'far [Imam Al-Baqir] (God's peace bestowed upon him), he asked me, 'What did you say to the woman?' So, I covered my face. He (God's peace bestowed upon him) said to me, 'Do not do that again. '"

These are the major standards which must be taken into consideration when men and women are present at the same place.

Summary

Men's and women's being at the same place represents, in general, a fertile land for falling in a lot of behavioral and psychological deviations.

Since men's and women's being at the same place is dangerous, it is necessary to get acquainted with the religious limits which prevent the human being from falling into the trap of Satan and which supply the human being with the requisite protection and invulnerability.

Men's and women's being at the same place means the meeting of the marriageable men and the women at the same place, whether a house, a market, a road, etc. Then, any meeting for one of the sexes with the other sex is considered to be involved in this definition.

The sacred doctrine forbids that sort of men's and women's being at the same place which reaches the extent of the privacy between the marriageable man and woman. There are two basic points which result in the forbiddance of the privacy:

- 1- To be alone in a place where nobody else can enter
- 2- Not to be safe from evil, even if the evil is restricted to the limit of the forbidden look

When men and women are present at the same place, there are several limits which must be taken into consideration and which must be avoided. Here we mention some of these limits:

- 1- Grooming and adorning
- 2- Fragrance and perfume

3- Touching the marriageable person and shaking hands

4- Speaking in a seductive way i.e. coquettishly

5- Going too far in looking

6- Joking and much laughing

Comprehension Questions

1- What are the social consequences of men's and women's being at the same place?

2- What is meant by men's and women's being at the same place?

3- What is the difference between men's and women's being at the same place and the forbidden privacy?

4- What are the two conditions which fulfill the forbidden privacy?

5- What must the woman take into consideration and avoid in the councils where both men and women are present?

For Reading: Khadija bint Khouwayled

For Reading: Khadija bint Khouwayled (God's peace bestowed upon her): The Sacrifice to Preserve the Message

When The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) was being hurt and was facing the difficulties, there was at the same time someone who was appeasing him, easing his pains, and driving away his worries and sorrows. That person is the great woman: Khadija bint Khouwayled (God's peace bestowed upon her).

The presence of Khadija (God's peace bestowed upon her) was an important factor in the life of The Noblest Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) and in the life of Islam at its very beginning. Had not her presence been of this great importance, it would not have been so hard for The Prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) to lose her and her death would not have been so painful for him: He (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) called the year in which she passed away "The Year of Sorrows", and he continued to remember her and her grace the whole of his lifetime.

When Sayyida Khadija (God's peace bestowed upon her) got married to God's prophet (God's prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household), she did not spare any effort to dedicate all her financial and spiritual capabilities for the sake of helping him.

She is the one who said to her cousin Waraka ibn Nawfal, “I declare that I have offered all my money and servants to Muhammad, so that he will dispose of them however he wishes.” So, her cousin Waraka ibn Nawal stood between Zamzam [well of blessed water in Makka] and Makam [the Sanctuary] and called most loudly, “O Arabs, Khadija call you to be her witnesses on that she offered herself, her money, her servants, and whatever she owns to Muhammad as a sign of reverence of him and glorification of his status...”

After that, the greatest peril on the message which The Noblest Prophet (God’s prayers and peace bestowed upon him and his Household) faced was the siege Quraish dropped around him, his family, relatives, and Sons of Hashem in general. At that point, Khadija’s (God’s peace bestowed upon her) money was the key for enduring the siege and was the outlet for the ones sieged: She used to buy the food for double its price, so that the sieged people would eat. The three years of siege passed, thus ending with the safety of the people and the frustration of what Quraish plotted against them.

The narratives relate that what Sayyida Khadija (God’s peace bestowed upon her) spent summed up to forty thousand and forty thousand dinars.

- [1.](#) Tawdeeh Al-Masael [The Illustration of the Questions], Imam Al-Khomeini (May his secret be sacred), Question 2445
- [2.](#) Moustadrak Al-Wasa’il [Making Up for the Means], Part Fourteen, p.265
- [3.](#) Mizan Al-Hikmah [The Standard of Sagacity], Part Two, p. 116
- [4.](#) Al-Kafi [The Sufficient], Part Five, p.559
- [5.](#) Wasa’il Al-Shi’a [The Means of the Shiite], Part Twenty, p. 192
- [6.](#) Wasa’il Al-Shi’a, Part Twenty, p. 198

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