

MUSIC AND DANCING

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the brief reasons why music is haram
- Understand the things that make music ḥarām
- Know the rules of dancing for men and women in brief

Music and Dancing

In this lesson, we will be discussing music and songs, and learning which types of music and songs are ḥarām and which are okay to listen to.

Listening to ḥarām music is counted as one of the 'great sins'. This is because of the several bad effects it

has on the person who listens to it. In this lesson we will look briefly at some of the reasons why music is haram in Islam.



SOME REASONS WHY MUSIC IS HARAM

1. Music can distract us from the reality of our life and cause to spend a lot of time day-dreaming or fantasising. This makes us lazy and it also deadens the heart, making it difficult for us to pay attention in our prayers and to enjoy the spirituality of supplications.
2. Listening to ḥarām music is punishable with the Hell-fire. Imam al- Bāqir (as) said:



“Music is among the things for which Allah has promised the Fire (of Hell). Then he recited the following āyah: "Indeed successful are the believers those who in their prayer are humble and those who keep themselves aloof from Vain (words and deeds)." [23:1-3].

WHAT MAKES MUSIC HARAM?

The criteria of whether music is ḥarām or not is the following:

- If the music is usually played or listened to in gatherings of sin (e.g. nightclubs) then it is ḥarām
- If the music is not primarily used in gatherings of sin, then it is okay to listen to

As for the words of a song, they make the song ḥarām if:

- They talk about sinful things
- They include vain words, this includes 'love songs' or 'romantic songs'
- It is also important to remember that it is ḥarām for a man to listen to a woman singing.

Once a man asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) about what kind of singing was ḥarām. The Imam (as) said: 'when you are listening to something, ask yourself that on the Judgment Day, will these words be words of truth or words of falsehood?' The man understood the meaning of the Imam (as).

The Imams (as) have said: 'A house, in which there is singing, is not safe from calamity, and supplications in that house are not answered, and no angels enter such a house'.



The Imams (as) have also said: 'if a person listens to someone, he is worshipping him. If that person speaks for God, then the person is worshipping God, but if that person speaks for Satan, then that person is worshipping Satan'.

DANCING

Dancing encourages immoral deeds and arouses lust and it can also lead to a person losing their dignity. It is usually associated with gatherings of sin.



Particularly for men, dancing is forbidden in all situations.

As for women, some scholars rule that it is okay for women to dance in front of other women if there is no other ḥarām act being committed (e.g. ḥarām music or songs). However, other scholars rule that it is forbidden for women to dance even in front of other women.

Review Questions

Q1. Music is ḥarām if it:

- a) usually played in gatherings of sin
- b) Makes a person want to dance
- c) All music is ḥarām

Q2. If a song is sung by a woman:

- a) Then a man can listen if the words are not ḥarām
- b) A man cannot listen at all
- c) A man can listen