



STEPS ISLAM

HAS TAKEN TO REGULATE
SEXUAL DESIRE





In the Name of Allah,
the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful



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Islam prohibits everything, which arouses one sexually – except what occurs between spouses – for fear that a person would do what is unlawful. The following steps are carried out in Islam to prevent one from becoming sexually aroused.

Separating children in their sleeping places.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Command your children to perform prayers when they are seven, and beat them [if they do not perform prayer] when they are ten, and separate them in their sleeping places.” (Abu Dawood)

This is to prevent anything that would arouse them sexually while they are asleep.

Islam orders Muslim women to cover themselves, act with modesty (Hijab) and not to socialize with non-Mahram⁽¹⁾ men, so that they can preserve their chastity and avoid arousing their sexual desires. Allah says:

“O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.” (33:59)

Islam has made it lawful for elderly women, who neither desire marriage, nor are desired by others, to take off their outer garment (abaya). Allah says:

“And women of post-menstrual age who have no desire for marriage – there is no blame upon them for putting aside their outer garments [but] not displaying adornment. But to modestly refrain [from that] is better for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.” (24:60)



The Muslim is ordered to lower his gaze and not look at prohibited things. The concern is that a person would stare passionately after the initial look, then imagine, and finally do the unlawful. Allah says:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of

women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.” (24:30-1)

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said⁽³⁾:

“Since [fornication] stems from what one sees, the command to lower the gaze is given precedence over safeguarding one’s private parts (to be chaste). All incidents stem from what one sees. Similarly, a fire starts with small sparks. An unlawful look, evolves into a thought [in the heart] which leads one to action and finally to the sin itself. That is why it is said:

“Four things: the eyesight, thoughts, utterances, and actions. Whoever safeguards these, he preserves his Deen.””

One may happen to glance at something unlawful, but it is prohibited for him to look at it intently or a second time.

The Prophet ﷺ said to Ali:

“O Ali, do not look over and over. You would not be chastised on account of the first glance, but would be chastised on account of the second.”

In order to encourage Muslims to lower their gaze, the Prophet ﷺ stated the reward a Muslim receives when he lowers his gaze out of fear of Allah and in hope of His reward. He ﷺ said:

“A glance is similar to a poisoned arrow of [Satan]. Whoever leaves it due to the fear of Allah and to seek His pleasure receives reward and his faith increases, the pleasure of which he feels in his heart.” (Weak Hadith – Targheeb, Al-Albaani)



03

Seeking permission before entering upon someone, so that he would not see something that is unlawful.

Allah says:

“O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not [yet] reached puberty among you ask permission of you [before entering] at three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put aside your clothing [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These

are] three times of privacy for you. There is no blame upon you nor upon them beyond these [periods], for they continually circulate among you - some of you, among others. Thus does Allah make clear to you the verses; and Allah is Knowing and Wise.” (24:58)

Allah continues by saying:

“And when the children among you reach puberty, let them ask permission [at all times] as those before them have done. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses; and Allah is Knowing and Wise.” (24:59)

04

Islam prohibits men to imitate women and women to imitate men.

Ibn Abbas said:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ cursed men who imitate women and women who imitate men.” (Bukhari)

05

Islam prohibits looking at things that arouse one sexually, such as evil pictures.

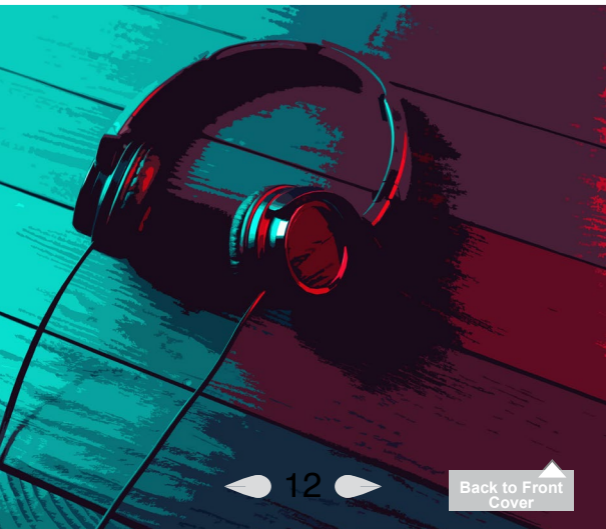
Abdurrahmaan b. Abi Sa'eed al-Khudri said that his father said that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“A man should not look at another man's private parts, nor should a woman look at another's private parts. Two men should not lay naked under one garment, and two women should not lay naked under one garment.” (Muslim)

06

Listening to things that arouse one sexually, such as certain types of music.

Certain types of rhythms have the effect of provoking one to do evil and can arouse the individual sexually. The scholars were truthful in their statement about music, when they said, “Music leads to fornication.”



The Prophet forbade sitting with pre-pubescent youth and looking at them intensely, especially if they are attractive.

Abu Hurairah said that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The son of Adam will commit his due share of fornication. The eyes fornicate and their fornication is looking at prohibited things. The ears fornicate and their fornication is listening to prohibited things. The tongue fornicates and its fornication is speaking to female strangers. The hand fornicates and its fornication is to touch unlawful things. The feet fornicate and their fornication is walking to the prohibited. The heart wishes and desires. Thereafter, one may actually fornicate or come close to doing it.” (Muslim)



08

The Prophet ﷺ forbade secluding oneself with a woman not from his immediate family.

In such a case, a person may fall prey to satanic desires and fornicate with her. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Let not one of you seclude himself with a woman [stranger], for Satan would be their third.” (Ibn Hibban)

Free intermingling between both sexes is prohibited in Islam, for prohibited relationships may result. Hence, all that leads to the prohibited is prohibited as well.

Muhammad Qutub said in his book, *Man Between Materialism and Islam*:

“Innocent coeducation was a great myth that originated from the West. When the West headed to secularism [and lost its ideals] and aimed to treat sexual tension, the sociologists and psychologists presented the benefits of coeducation. Thereafter the West realized the fallacies of these values and benefits. Psychiatrists and psychologists withdrew their opinions regarding coeducation, and stated that slow dances, innocent parties, mixed tea parties and picnics, even under the supervision of parents, arouse one’s desire. If these desires are suppressed due to social circumstances or shyness, this creates mental and nervous anxiety after the calmness one feels during these occasions. In this case, the youth resorts to one of two things; either to go to a place where he can do these things without the barriers present, or reside in this state of anxiety which leads to certain disorders. Therefore, what kind of innocence and nurturing is this?”



09

Islam prohibits a woman to describe another woman to her husband for fear that he may dislike his wife on account of that.

Some qualities that his wife tells to him about her may be preferable to him and are not present in his wife. Satan may even provoke him to seek this woman. Abdullah b. Masood said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“A woman should not sit with another woman in order to describe her to her husband as though he is looking at her.” (Abu Dawood)



10

Women are forbidden to leave their homes while they are perfumed and beautified, for this would cause people to look at them, and hence lead to the unlawful. Allah says:

“And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the way of the former times of ignorance.” (33:33)

She is also prohibited to speak softly in a submissive tone. This safeguards her from weak men who desire fornication. A woman should talk to men (strangers) when

needed only, and when she does, she should not talk in a flirtatious manner.

Allah says:

“If you fear Allah, then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet. Instead, speak with appropriate speech.” (33:32)

Allah says:

“... And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts” (33:53)

Islam forbids nudity and the displaying of woman’s adornments. Allah says:

“O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness – that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember.” (7:26)

Abu Hurairah said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“There are two types of people who will be punished in Hell whom I have not seen: men having whips like the tails of cows and they will be beating people with them, and women who will be dressed but appear to be naked, inviting to evil, and they themselves will be inclined to it. Their heads will appear like the humps of the Bactrian camel inclined to one side. They will not enter Paradise and they will not even smell its fragrance which is perceptible from such a far distance.” (Muslim)

Islam clearly lists with whom the woman is allowed to uncover her apparent adornment. Allah says:

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adorn-

ment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment..." (24:31)





11

It is prohibited for the woman to travel alone, without a Mahram (male guardian) such as the husband, father, brother, or relative who is prohibited for her to marry. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“A man should not sit in seclusion with a woman [stranger], nor should she travel without Mahram.’ A man then asked the Prophet ﷺ, ‘O Messenger of Allah I have enlisted to go in such and such battle, and my wife has left to make pilgrimage!’ The Prophet said, ‘Go make the pilgrimage with your wife.’” (Bukhari)

The wisdom behind this is to preserve and safeguard the woman's chastity, for usually traveling is not easy, and presents many unique challenges. Furthermore, the woman has special circumstances in that she menstruates, may be pregnant, and may need to breastfeed her child. Therefore, during travel, she benefits from a person who safeguards and protects her from those who wish to harm her in any way or take her money. She is also in need of someone who provides her with her needs, and ensures her comfort. The Mahram is obliged to do all this, so she would not require the assistance of a stranger.



12

The Prophet ﷺ commanded Muslims to approach their wives if they see a woman who stimulates their sexual desire, in order to relieve themselves from this desire in a lawful manner.

By doing this, he safeguards himself from falling into evil, and rids himself of the whispering of Satan. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“The woman comes in a shape similar to Satan, and goes in a shape similar to Satan.” (Muslim)



13

Islam commands both spouses to satisfy each other's sexual desire when either spouse desires.

It is prohibited for a woman to refuse her husband's request when he wants to satisfy his sexual desire, since this would lead him to evil. He may search for other methods to satisfy his desire, or develop mental pressure, and both are detrimental to health. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“If the husband calls his wife to sleep with him, and she refuses, and he sleeps that night angry with her, the Angels curse her until the morning.” (Abu Dawood)

The husband must also satisfy his wife’s desires in order to protect and safeguard her from evils. Imam Ibn Hazm, may Allah have mercy on him, said:

“It is a duty of the husband to have intercourse with his wife, when she becomes purified if he is capable of doing so. Otherwise, he is a sinner. The proof of this is in the words of Allah:

“And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you.” (2:222)

Due to the severity of this matter, if the husband does not fulfill the wife’s desire, she can raise her matter to the legal courts – if needed – so that she can take her due rights. This maintains the safeness of society from all evils.

Allah has indeed threatened those who love to see evil become widespread in the community with a most severe punishment. He says:

“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you do not know.” (24:19)

If this is the punishment of those who like illicit relations to become apparent (in society), what is the punishment of those who engage in it and help spread it in society?

This is an excerpt
of a larger book titled
«**Islamic Perspective on Sex**»
by Abd Ar- Rahman
bin Abd Al-Kareem Ash-Sheha.

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