

Gathering by the Roadside

Q: Prohibitions and Permissions-49: What is the ruling concerning a gathering that is held by the side of a road that people pass by, when this causes inconvenience to the women passing by?

Answer: For a group of people to gather by a place by which women pass entails causing harm to people. When Rasulullaah SAW. mentioned that it is a branch and sign of Imaan to remove any cause of harm from the road, how much worse is it to be the very cause of such harm?

Rasulullaah SAW. said. "There is no good in sitting by the roadside except for the person who guides people, replies to greetings, lowers his gaze and assists in carrying loads.

Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri RAH. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. when Rasulullaah SAW. once told them that they should avoid sitting by the roadside, they told him that they had no alternative since there was no other meeting place where they could discuss their affairs. Rasulullaah SAW. then advised, "If there is no alternative, then ensure that you fulfil the right of the road." When the Sahabah RADI. asked what these rights were Rasulullaah SAW. Replied, Lower your gazes, cause no harm to anyone, reply to people greeting with Salaam. enjoin good and forbid evil.

It is not easy to fulfil all these rights, especially lowering the gaze in today's times. Rasulullaah SAW. said:

1. "There is no test more detrimental to men after I leave than women.
2. "Beware of women because the first test that came to the Bani Israa'eel? concerned women.
3. "Indeed the woman arrives in the form of a Shaytaan and leaves in the? form of a Shaytaan.
4. "A woman is an object to be concealed. so when she emerges, Shaytaan? lies in wait for her (to lure others to her and vice versa).
5. "Allaah curses the one who looks (at a strange woman) and the one who? is looked at.
6. "The eyes also fornicate and their fornication is when they look (at strange women)."

One needs to ponder over all these Ahadeeth and remember that one will be able to protect one's Deen by steering clear of places where accusations could be levelled against one. The person who falls into matters of doubt will soon fall into Haraam. The person who has the fear of Allaah in his heart and the sayings of Rasulullaah SAW. in mind will be most uncomfortable in places like this.

There are also several other evils attached to such gatherings such as laughing at and making fun of passers-by, backbiting, entertaining suspicions about others, etc. the Shari'ah therefore does not permit people to use the roadsides as gathering places. It is forbidden and Makrooh. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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