

## Chapter 290: prohibition of gazing at strange women and beardless handsome boys except in exigency

### Commentary

The great scholar of hadeeth, An-Nawawi, may Allah shower blessings on him, said: The chapter on prohibition of 'gazing at strange women and beardless handsome boys except in necessity.

A strange woman refers to a woman who is eligible for you to marry; she may be a relative or not. A beardless boy refers to a good looking youth whose beard has not grown and has no dense mustache; that is,

<sup>1</sup> Dhuhair bn Abee Salamah's Deewan in his Muallaqah (1/6).

the point of his moustache is still bare.

Beautiful is the opposite of ugly.

Looking at a strange woman is prohibited as stated by the author - may Allah shower blessings on him. This is because Allah - the Mighty and Sublime - has ordered us to lower our gaze:

﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا

يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

*“Say to the believing men to lower their vision and to guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what they do.” (24; 30).*

He - the Mighty and Sublime - instructed that eyes should be lowered and private parts be guarded. This shows that lack of lowering the gaze would lead to lack of guarding the private part. When a person continues to stare at a woman, his heart becomes attached to her until he approaches her for discussion. Thereafter, several arrangements will follow and adultery will occur, refuge is with Allah. That is why it is said: ‘Gaze is the emissary of illegal sexual intercourse.’ That is, it invites to fornication and adultery. Allah - the Mighty and Sublime - ordered us to lower our gaze; He the Exalted, says:

﴿إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣١﴾﴾

*“Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those one will be questioned (by Allah).” (17: 36)*

A person will be questioned about his sense of hearing; what did he listen to with his ears? Did he listen to forbidden words or take pleasure in the voice of a strange woman? Likewise, one will be questioned about his sight and heart. Therefore, it becomes an obligation for a person to guard himself.

However, there is nothing wrong in looking at a woman who is forbidden for you to marry. There is no harm in looking at her face,

head, palms, arms, legs or feet except one fears temptation. In such situation, he should not look at her even though she is forbidden for him to marry. If one has a pretty foster sister, she is forbidden for him in marriage because she is comparable to his blood sister. However, he must lower his gaze if he fears temptation and she is expected to cover herself in his presence because Hijab was initially legislated to prevent temptation. Therefore, if there is possibility of temptation, a woman must veil her face even from the one who is eligible to marry her.

But if there is no temptation, and one has a pure and virtuous heart, it is forbidden for him to look at a woman who is allowed for him to marry. For example, he should not gaze at his paternal cousin, maternal cousin or sister-in-law. The important point is that it is permissible to look at women that are forbidden to marry as long as one does not see any possibility of temptation. As for other women, it is prohibited to gaze at them in absolute terms.

He – the Mighty and Sublime – said:

﴿يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ﴾ (١٩)

*“Allah knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the breasts conceal.” (40: 19).*

*‘The fraud of the eyes’* refers to stolen gaze; that is, to stare in a way that people will not realize it but Allah – the Mighty and Sublime – is aware of it for He knows what the heart conceals of good and bad intentions. He knows what the heart whispers and the impending actions of man.

Allah alone grants success.

## Hadeeth 1622

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: كُتِبَ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ نَصِيْبُهُ مِنَ الرَّئِي مُدْرِكُ ذَلِكَ لَا مَحَالَةَ: الْعَيْنَانِ زِنَاهُمَا النَّظْرُ، وَالْأُذُنَانِ

زِنَاهُمَا الْاِسْتِمَاعُ، وَاللِّسَانُ زِنَاهُ الْكَلَامُ، وَالْيَدُ زِنَاهَا الْبَطْشُ، وَالرَّجُلُ  
زِنَاهَا الْخُطَا، وَالْقَلْبُ يَهْوَى وَيَتَمَنَّى، وَيَصَدِّقُ ذَلِكَ الْفَرْجُ أَوْ يُكَذِّبُهُ  
مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ. وَهَذَا لَفْظُ مُسْلِمٍ، وَرَوَايَةُ الْبُخَارِيِّ مُخْتَصَرَةٌ.

*Abu Hurairah ؓ said: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah has written the very portion of Zina which a man will indulge in. There will be no escape from it. The Zina of the eye is the (lustful) look, the Zina of the ears is the listening (to voluptuous songs or talk), the Zina of the tongue is (the licentious) speech, the Zina of the hand is the (lustful) grip, the Zina of the feet is the walking (to the place where he intends to commit Zina ), the heart yearns and desires and the private parts approve all that or disapprove it." [ Al-Bukhari and Muslim ]*

## Commentary

After citing the verses, the author - may Allah shower blessings on him- mentioned the hadeeth of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) under the chapter of prohibition of gazing at strange women and beardless handsome boys except in exigency. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah has written the very portion of Zina which a man will indulge in. There will be no escape from it."

That is, a person will inevitably indulge in illegal sexual activity except he whom Allah protects. The Prophet ﷺ then mentioned a case in point. Zina of the eye is the lustful look; that is, it is a form of Zina for someone to look at a woman not legal for him to look at even if it is without lust. The Zina of the ear is listening; when a person listens to the words of a woman and derives pleasure from it, it is Zina of the ears. The Zina of the hand is touching; that is, the act of touching and carrying out similar acts with the hand. The Zina of the leg is the walking; that is, to the place where he intends to commit Zina. For instance, he hears the voice or notices a woman, so he walks to the place in order to see her. This is the Zina of the feet. The heart desires

and inclines to this affair; that is, love for women. This is the *Zina* of the heart and the private part approves of all that or disapproves it. That is, if one engages in illegal sexual intercourse, refuge is with Allah, he has indeed approved the *Zina* of these other organs. On the other hand, if he does not commit *Zina* with his private part but guards and saves himself, it is disapproval of the *Zina* of those organs.

This warns against attaching oneself to women by listening to their voices, looking at them, touching them, walking to their place or inclination of the heart. These are all forms of *Zina*, refuge is with Allah.

Therefore, a sane person with pure heart should be vigilant not to allow these organs become attached to anything relating to women. He must distance himself whenever he senses that because the Devil runs in the veins of human being as does the blood, and gazing is one of the poisonous arrows of the Devil. A person may look at a woman and his heart will not yearn for her at the first gaze, but his heart may long for her after repeated gazes. Thereafter, he becomes madly in love with her, thinking of nothing but her; he remembers her while standing and sitting, while asleep and awake. Hence, it leads to this evil and temptation, and we ask Allah for protection.

Allah alone grants success.

## Hadeeth 1623

وَعَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «يَاكُمْ وَالْجُلُوسَ فِي الطَّرِيقَاتِ» قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَجَالِسِنَا بُدُّ، نَتَحَدَّثُ فِيهَا. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «فَإِذَا أَبَيْتُمْ إِلَّا الْمَجْلِسَ، فَأَعْطُوا الطَّرِيقَ حَقَّهُ» قَالُوا: وَمَا حَقُّ الطَّرِيقِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: «عَضُّ الْبَصْرِ، وَكَفُّ الْأَدَى، وَرَدُّ السَّلَامِ، وَالْأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ». مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ .

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri ؓ said: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Avoid sitting on roadsides." His Companions said: "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, there is no other alternative but to sit there to talk." Thereupon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If you have to sit at all, then fulfill the rights of the road." They asked: "What are their rights?" Thereupon he said, "Lowering the gaze (so that you may not stare at unlawful things); refraining from doing some harm to others, responding to greeting (i.e., saying 'Wa'alaikumus-salam' to one another) and commanding the good and forbidding the evil." [ Al-Bukhari and Muslim ]

## Hadeeth 1624

وَعَنْ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ زَيْدِ بْنِ سَهْلٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كُنَّا قُعُودًا بِالْأَفْيَةِ نَتَحَدَّثُ فِيهَا فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَامَ عَلَيْنَا فَقَالَ: مَا لَكُمْ وَلِمَجَالِسِ الصُّعَدَاتِ؟ اجْتَنِبُوا مَجَالِسَ الصُّعَدَاتِ فَقُلْنَا: إِنَّمَا قَعَدْنَا لِغَيْرِ مَا بَأْسٍ، قَعَدْنَا نَتَذَاكُرُ، وَنَتَحَدَّثُ. قَالَ: «أَمَا لَا، فَأَذُوا حَقَّهَا: غَضُّ الْبَصْرِ، وَرَدُّ السَّلَامِ، وَحُسْنُ الْكَلَامِ». رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ .

Abu Talhah Zaid bin Sahl ؓ said: We were sitting and talking on a platform in front of our house when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stopped by us and said, "Why do you sit on roads? Avoid sitting in them." We replied: "We sit there intending no harm. We only sit and discuss (religious) knowledge and talk." He said, "If you have to sit, you should fulfill the rights of the road: Lower your gaze, respond to greetings and talk in a good manner." [ Muslim ]

## Commentary

After the author - may Allah shower blessings on him- had mentioned the verses showing the obligation of lowering the gaze, he then cited relevant hadeeths. From these are the hadeeths of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri and Zayd bin Sahl, may Allah be pleased with both

of them.

As for the first hadeeth, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Avoid sitting on roadsides”. This is a warning; that is, beware of sitting on pathways. The companions of the Prophet ﷺ then explained that there is no other alternative but to sit on roadsides to talk. They would sit on the courtyard of their houses just as many people do today to discuss matters of this world and hereafter with their neighbours.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “If you have to sit at all, then fulfill the rights of the road.” They asked, “What are its rights, O Messenger of Allah?” Then he ﷺ mentioned the rights of the roadsides:

“Lowering the gaze”; that is, you should lower your gaze from passers-by. Some people would sit on roadsides and stare at all passers-by until they are out of sight. This contradicts the command of the Prophet ﷺ. They should lower their gaze especially when a woman passes. It is an obligation to lower the eyes for two reasons: because she is a woman and fixing the gaze on a passer-by makes the pedestrian uncomfortable and upset.

The second right: “Refraining from doing some harm to others.” You should not offend any of the passersby with your words or actions, restricting passageway by stretching your legs, for instance, or lying on the road.

The third right: “responding to greeting.” If someone greets you, you should respond to him. It is compulsory if someone says, ‘As-Salam Alaykum,’ to say in return ‘Wa Alaykum Salam’. It is not enough to say in return ‘Welcome,’ ‘Hello,’ or similar statements; rather, you must respond with what is obligatory. (Allah said):

﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا﴾ (٨٦)

*“When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally.” (4:36).*

The fourth: ‘commanding the good.’ If you see someone negligent of his obligations, you should command him to perform them. *Al-Ma’rûf* refers to everything which the Islamic Law commands, and

everything which people know and accept as good without being illegal. For instance, if you sit along the roadside and notice an unveiled woman, you should forbid her from that evil. You saw a negligent person who does not join *Salat* with the congregation at its commencement, you should command him to observe Prayer in congregation. Thus, you would have commanded good and forbidden evil.

These are the five rights on those who sit by the roadsides. The subsequent hadeeth also reiterated the theme of this hadeeth. The point of reference in this hadeeth is his saying: “Lower the gaze.”

Allah alone grants success.

## Hadeeth1625

وَعَنْ جَرِيرِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنْ نَظَرِ الْفَجَاءَةِ فَقَالَ: «أَصْرِفْ بَصْرَكَ». رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ .

*Jarir bin ‘Abdullah ؓ said: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about (the Islamic ruling on) accidental glance (i.e., at a woman one is not Islamically allowed to look at) and he ordered me to turn my eyes away. [ Muslim ]*

## Hadeeth1626

وَعَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: كُنْتُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَعِنْدَهُ مَيْمُونَةُ، فَأَقْبَلَ ابْنُ أُمِّ مَكْتُومٍ، وَذَلِكَ بَعْدَ أَنْ أُمِرْنَا بِالْحِجَابِ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «اِحْتَجِبَا مِنْهُ» فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَيْسَ هُوَ أَعْمَى: لَا يُبْصِرُنَا، وَلَا يَعْرِفُنَا؟ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «أَفَعْمِيَا وَإِنْ أَنْتُمَا أَلْسْتُمَا تُبْصِرَانِهِ!؟». رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ وَقَالَ: حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ.

*Umm Salamah ؓ said: I was with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ*



*along with Maimunah (رضي الله عنها) when Ibn Umm Maktum (رضي الله عنه) (who was blind) came to visit him. (This incident took place after the order of Hijab ). The Prophet ﷺ told us to hide ourselves from him (i.e., observe Hijab ). We said: "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he is blind and is unable to see us, nor does he know us." He replied; "Are you also blind and unable to see him?" [ Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi ]*

## Commentary

The author - may Allah shower blessings on him- reported this hadeeth of Jarir bin Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) under the chapter on prohibition of gazing at women and beardless handsome boys except in exigency. He (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet ﷺ about (the Islamic ruling on) accidental glance. He ﷺ replied: "Turn your eyes away." This is unintended look when you suddenly come across a woman who with exposed face. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Turn your eyes away"; that is, you should turn to the right or left in order not to look at her.

We learn from this hadeeth that it is prohibited for a man to look at a woman. However, this is forgiven if it is a sudden glance since it is not done intentionally. Indeed, Allah has forgiven whatever a person does by accident.

As for the second hadeeth of Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), she narrated that she and Maimunah (may Allah be pleased with her) were with the Prophet ﷺ when Ibn Ummu Makhtum – a blind man (may Allah be pleased with him) entered. The event occurred after they had been commanded (by Allah) to veil themselves, so the Prophet ﷺ ordered them to cover themselves from him. Thereupon, both of them said: "O Messenger of Allah, he is blind and he is unable to see us, nor does he know us." He (the Prophet) said: "Are you also blind and unable to see him?" Cover yourselves from him. He ﷺ commanded them to veil themselves before a man though he was blind.

However, this hadeeth is weak because all the authentic hadeeths

contradict it. The Prophet ﷺ said to Fatimah Bint Qais (may Allah be pleased with her): “Stay and observe your waiting period in the house of Ibn Ummu Makhtum for he is a blind man. You can take off your clothing in his presence.”<sup>(1)</sup>

This hadeeth is recorded in Bukhari and Muslim. Regarding the hadeeth quoted by the author, Imam Ahmad - may Allah shower blessings on him- said: “It will be a mistake to attribute this hadeeth to the Prophet ﷺ.” That is, it has not been correctly narrated from the Prophet ﷺ. Based on this, it is not forbidden for a woman to look at even a strange man provided it is not a lustful gaze or meant to derive pleasure. This refers to usual looking. Hence, we find men walking in the markets without covering their faces and women are looking at them. Likewise, women used to come to the mosque during the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the men were not screened from them. If a man was not allowed to be seen by women, he would have been obliged to cover himself as women cover themselves from men.

The correct opinion is that a woman is allowed to look at a man without lust or to derive pleasure. But (in the case of a man), it is forbidden for him to gaze at a woman. Similarly, a maid-servant in a household is similar to other women in this regard; hence, she is expected to cover her face. Indeed, her case is more dangerous because if she were to uncover her face, and she is young or beautiful, she may become a source of temptation for the owner of the house and his sons, if he has sons.

Allah alone grants success.

## Hadeeth 1627

وَعَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: لَا يَنْظُرُ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى عَوْرَةِ الرَّجُلِ، وَلَا الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَى عَوْرَةِ الْمَرْأَةِ، وَلَا يُفْضِي الرَّجُلُ إِلَى

1 Muslim reported it in the Book of Divorce, the Chapter of A Divorce of the Last Third Time Has No Maintenance, no: (2721).

الرَّجُلِ فِي ثَوْبٍ وَاحِدٍ، وَلَا تُفْضِي الْمَرْأَةُ إِلَى الْمَرْأَةِ فِي الثَّوْبِ الْوَاحِدِ.  
رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ .

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "A man must not look at a man's private parts nor must a woman look at a woman's private parts; neither should two men lie naked under one cover, nor should two women lie naked under the same cover." [ Muslim ]

## Commentary

The hadeeth of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudrii (may Allah be pleased with him) stated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "A woman must not look at a woman's private part nor must a man look at a man's private part: neither should two men lie naked under one cover, nor should two women lie naked under the same cover."

This statement of his ﷺ prohibits a woman from looking at the private part of another woman. If the private part of a woman, defined as the area between the navel and the knee, becomes exposed for any reason, perhaps she is urinating or the wind blows her garment, it is not permissible for another woman to look at it. Similarly, if the private part of man becomes exposed due to the blowing of wind or other reasons, it is not permissible for another man to look at it.

Some women hang to this hadeeth to think that a woman is not obliged to cover her body except the part between the navel and knees. This is an erroneous understanding. This is because the Prophet ﷺ never permitted women to wear clothes that only cover those parts between the navel and the knee. But he ﷺ forbade a woman from looking at another woman's private part. Hence, the difference between the two issues is clear. A woman must wear cloth that is enough to cover her entire body. The women companions (may

Allah be pleased with them all) of the Prophet ﷺ used to cover all the parts of their bodies; everything between the feet and the palms were covered.

If the private part of a woman opens for any reason such as wind, it is not permissible for another woman to look at those parts between the navel and the knees. The same thing holds for a man; he should not look at the private part of another man which are the parts between the navel and knees.

However, it is permissible for a man to expose his chest and shoulders to another man, based on the fact that a man is allowed to wear a wrapper. This is reported in the hadeeth of a man who requested that the Prophet ﷺ marry a woman, (referred to as) Waahibah, to him. That was the woman who came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I give myself to you.” He ﷺ looked at her but his soul was not enthralled by her, so he remained quiet and the woman sat. Then a man from the congregation said, ‘Marry her to me, O Messenger of Allah.’ The Prophet ﷺ enquired from him, “**What have you for her marriage gift?**” He replied, ‘I have my wrapper.’ Sahl (may Allah be pleased with him), the narrator of the hadeeth, said he had no garment or anything on him except just the wrapper. Then the Prophet ﷺ said: “**You will be without a wrapper if you give it to her but she will not have a bridal gift if you leave it to yourself. Search for anything even if it is a ring made of steel.**” The man left to search for anything but he was unable to get even a ring made of steel because he was poor. Then the Prophet ﷺ said, “**Have you anything which you have memorized) from the Qur’an?**” He replied: ‘Yes, I memorized this and that chapters.’ The Prophet ﷺ then said, “**I marry her to you for what you have of the Qur’an (as her dowry).**” That is, you should teach her the verses you have memorized from the Qur’an, and that is her dowry. The point of reference is that a man is allowed to wear only a wrapper, but a woman is not allowed to do same. This (the wearing of wrapper only) was not the habit of the women companions.

## Chapter 291: prohibition of meeting a non-mahram woman in seclusion

### Hadeeth1628

وَعَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «إِيَّاكُمْ  
وَالدُّخُولَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ»، فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ: أَفَرَأَيْتَ الْحَمُو؟ قَالَ:  
«الْحَمُو الْمَوْتُ». مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ .

*'Uqbah bin 'Amir ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Avoid (entering a place) in which are women (uncovered or simply to mix with them in seclusion)." A man from the Ansar said, "Tell me about the brother of a woman's husband." He replied, "The brother of a woman's husband is death." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]*

### Hadeeth1629

وَعَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «لَا يَخْلُونَ  
أَحَدَكُمْ بِامْرَأَةٍ إِلَّا مَعَ ذِي مَحْرَمٍ». مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ .

*Ibn Abbas ؓ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "No one of you should meet a woman in privacy unless she is accompanied by a Mahram (i.e., a relative within the prohibited degrees)." [ Al-Bukhari and Muslim ]*

## Commentary

The author ؓ said: The chapter on prohibition of meeting a non-mahram woman in seclusion.

A non-mahram woman refers to a female with no restriction of marriage for you. This includes the daughter of your paternal uncle,

the daughter of your paternal aunt, the daughter of your maternal uncle the daughter of your maternal aunt among others, and those who are not your relatives.

The woman meant in this context refers to a woman who you are eligible to marry. It is forbidden to remain in seclusion with her. A man will not be in seclusion with a woman except the Devil will be their third. What do you think about a people whose third is Satan? We think that they will become open to temptation. Then, he (the author) quoted the saying of the Most High:

﴿وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسَأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ﴾

“And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen.” (33: 53)

That is, you should not enter into their abode; rather, ask them from behind a screen in order to avoid seclusion.

Then he (the author) mentioned the hadeeth of Uqbah bin Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Avoid entering a place in which are women (uncovered or simply to mix with them in seclusion).” This is a severe warning. A companion (may Allah be pleased with him) asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about the brother of a woman’s husband, referred to as *Hamwu*?’ He ﷺ replied, “The brother of a woman’s husband is death”.

The word *Hamwu* encompasses the close relatives of the husband such as his brother, his paternal uncle and maternal uncle. They are the ones refer to as the *Hamwu*. The husband’s father and the husband’s son are among those which marriage is prohibited but some of his other relatives such as his brother, his paternal uncle and his maternal uncle are not *Mahram* (to the wife).

The Prophet ﷺ said: “*Al-Hamwu* is death.” This denotes a serious warning. It means that one should prevent the entrance of his relatives into the apartment of his wife and his family in the absence of a *Mahram* as much as one would avoid death. This is a stern notice. The entrance of husband’s relatives into his wife’s place and his

house is more dangerous than the entrance of strange person. This is because the husband's relatives gain access (to the house) without any hindrance considering the fact that they are his relatives. When they stand at the door to seek permission, nobody will tend to deny them. That is why it is forbidden for someone to allow his brother to have privacy with his wife though some people take this issue lightly. He lives with his wife and his brother who has attained the age of puberty and will go to work leaving his wife and his brother alone in the house. This is forbidden and not permissible because Satan flows in the veins of human being as does the blood.<sup>(1)</sup>

But what if they stay in the same house? He must endeavor to put up a barrier with a door between them and keep the key with him. He should show his brother his part of the house and show his wife her part, and insist that the door must not be left open. This is because the brother may enter into her place (while they are alone at home) and Satan incites him to rape her, refuge is with Allah.

We ask Allah for protection.

Another form of seclusion is being alone with a driver. That is, if someone has a driver and has a wife or a daughter, it is not permissible for him to allow his wife or his daughter to ride alone with the driver without a *Mahram*. This is because being alone with a driver in a car is more dangerous than seclusion in the house. This privacy with her may allow him to discuss and reach an agreement with her, then both of them can go anywhere to commit adultery, refuge is with Allah. Thus, it is forbidden for anyone to allow his wife, his sister or his daughter to ride alone with a driver even for a distance of five steps. It is absolutely not allowed.

If someone were to ask, "What if the woman is a student and her *Mahram* is sick or busy and unable to take her (to school) and she definitely has to learn?" We say: No. Who says she must study? The lesson that leads to prohibited thing is also prohibited. She should stay at home rather than ride alone (with a driver), which

<sup>1</sup> Al-Bukhaari reported it in the Book of I'tkaaf, the Chapter of A Mu'takif Defending Himself, no: (1898), and Muslim in the Book of Salam, the Chapter of He Who is In Seclusion with A Woman, no: (4040).

is forbidden. She can revise her lesson at home and fit into the school work. We fear a great deal that the sense of decency has been torn off the heart of anyone who allows such arrangement for his family, refuge is with Allah.

Allah alone grants success.