



WOMEN ATTENDING THE CONGREGATIONAL OR EID SALAAH

Q: Why do the Ulamaa prevent women from attending the congregational salaah in the masjid or from attending the eid salaah, whereas it is recorded in the Ahaadith that in the era of Rasulullah ﷺ the Sahaabiyyaat ﷺ would attend the congregational salaah in the masjid?

A: Firstly we must understand that Deen is not that which conforms to our personal understanding. Rather, Deen is to carry out every command of shari'ah in accordance with the mubaarak sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ.

To acquire anything in the world, Allah ﷻ has created procedures. Similarly, to acquire the correct understanding of Deen, Allah ﷻ has created a procedure. If one does not adopt the correct procedure, then one is bound to fall into confusion. Referring to the Qur'aan and Hadith directly or viewing the translations of certain Ahaadith and trying to reach one's own conclusion is not the correct procedure to understand Deen. In doing so, one often tries to practise on one Hadith, but opposes many other Ahaadith on account of lacking sufficient knowledge and sound understanding regarding the correct context of the Hadith, or the related sciences that are required to understand the Hadith. At times, the laws mentioned in certain Ahaadith are subject to specific conditions being found in order for the laws to be practised. Not understanding these conditions leads one to incorrectly practising on the Hadith. Below we will explain the correct procedure which has to be adopted in order to gain the correct understanding of Deen.

THE CORRECT PROCEDURE TO UNDERSTAND DEEN

In order to correctly understand the Qur'aan and Sunnah, we are commanded to follow the Khulafaa-e-Raashideen and the Sahaabah ﷺ. The Sahaabah ﷺ are regarded as the criteria of guidance and success due to them being blessed with the mubaarak companionship of Rasulullah ﷺ. Hence, we are commanded to follow the Sahaabah ﷺ. However, in this belated era, it is practically impossible for one to succeed in gathering the knowledge of the Qur'aan, the Ahaadith of Rasulullah ﷺ and the statements and practices of all the Sahaabah ﷺ and reach a conclusion. Hence, Allah ﷻ, out of His infinite grace and mercy, has blessed the ummah with great personalities, such as the eminent Imaams of Fiqh and the great Fuqahaa, who sufficed us of

undertaking this mammoth task of gathering all the information from the Qur'aan, the Ahaadith of Rasulullah ﷺ and the statements and practices of the Sahaabah ﷺ, and thereafter in the light of this deep knowledge, explaining the Sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ. Therefore, in the issue under discussion, as well as all other Deeni issues, we will have to refer to the Fuqahaa and follow their rulings in order to correctly understand and follow Deen.

Below, we will briefly explain the condition that was prevalent during the mubaarak era of Rasulullah ﷺ, and the change in condition that occurred during the era of the Sahaabah ﷺ, after the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ, which warranted women being discouraged from coming to the masjid.

THE BEST OF ERAS

The era of Rasulullah ﷺ was a mubaarak era. It was an era in which wahi (revelation of the Qur'aan Majeed) was being received from Allah ﷻ. New shar'ee laws and injunctions regarding various issues were constantly being revealed by Allah ﷻ and there was a need for the men and women of the Sahaabah ﷺ to learn the laws of Deen relating to salaah, fasting and other injunctions directly from Rasulullah ﷺ. Generally, Rasulullah ﷺ would educate the Sahaabah ﷺ in the masjid; during the khutbah or after the congregational salaah.

However, it should be borne in mind that the era of Rasulullah ﷺ was the 'khair-ul-quroon' (the best of eras). Being the best of eras, people were protected and safeguarded from fitnahs. The levels of Imaan, taqwa and piety were so high that all the Sahaabah ﷺ, whether men or women, were prepared to make any type of sacrifice for the cause of Deen. The ardent love within the hearts of the Sahaabah ﷺ for Rasulullah ﷺ was unimaginable and unconceivable. Similarly, there can be no match or comparison for the unflinching commitment and submission they displayed before every command of Rasulullah ﷺ.

In essence, when the period was one that was free of fitnah and all the Sahaabah ﷺ fulfilled every command of Rasulullah ﷺ in the exact manner that he commanded, concession was granted for women to come to the masjid for the congregational salaah, with adopting all the measures of purdah and adhering to the prescribed code of dressing and conduct.

CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN ATTENDING THE SALAAH

Even in the time of Rasulullah ﷺ, the permission granted to women for attending the congregational salaah in the masjid was subject to several conditions being adhered to. Some of these were:

1. Complete Hijaab (Purdah) – Hazrat Aa'ishah ؓ reports that women used to come to the masjid completely covered in their long shawls (i.e. above their clothing, abaayas, etc). (*Saheeh Bukhaari #372*)

2. Not Applying Perfume – Hazrat Zainub ؓ, the wife of Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ, reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "If any woman comes to the masjid, she should not use any perfume". (*Saheeh Muslim #443*)

3. Dressing Shabbily – Hazrat Abu Hurairah ؓ reports that Rasulullah ﷺ commanded that if women attend the masjid, it should be in a manner that they are "tafilaat" (dressed in clothing that is shabby and completely unattractive). (*Abu Dawood #565*)

4. Not Dressing Attractively - It is reported that Rasulullah ﷺ addressed the Sahaabah ؓ saying, "O People! Prevent your women from wearing attractive garments and walking proudly in the masjid, since the people of Bani Israa'eel were cursed because of this very action of their women." (*Sunan Ibn Maajah #4001*)

5. No Intermingling of Males and Females - Rasulullah ﷺ prohibited the women from walking with the men. Instead, they were instructed to walk behind the men and to remain on the sides of the road when going to and returning from the masjid. (*Sunan Abu Dawood #5272*)

WOMEN APPLYING PERFUME WHEN LEAVING THE HOME FOR SALAAH

Once, a woman proceeding to the masjid passed by Hazrat Abu Hurairah ؓ. Hazrat Abu Hurairah ؓ perceived the fragrance of perfume emitting from her clothing and thus asked her, "O servant of Allah ﷻ, the Almighty! Where are you going?" The woman replied, "I am proceeding to the masjid to perform salaah." Hazrat Abu Hurairah ؓ then asked her, "Have you applied perfume?" The woman replied in the affirmative. Hazrat Abu Hurairah ؓ then said, "Indeed I heard Rasulullah ﷺ saying, 'Whichever woman applies perfume and thereafter leaves her home to come to the masjid, her salaah will not be accepted until she has a bath in the manner she washes herself when purifying herself from janaabat.'" (*Sunan Ibn Maajah #4002*)

WOMEN NO LONGER ADHERING TO THE CONDITIONS

When Rasulullah ﷺ commanded the Sahaabiyyaat ؓ to adopt complete purdah, segregate themselves from men, dress in a shabby and unattractive manner, refrain from applying any perfume when leaving their homes for salaah and not to walk on the streets with the men, they immediately surrendered and wholeheartedly obeyed.

Subsequently, during the era of the khilaafat of Hazrat Umar ؓ when Islam spread very much and many new people

entered the fold of Islam, the Sahaabah ؓ had witnessed a decline in the levels of hayaa as the women were no longer upholding the conditions as they would during the blessed era of Rasulullah ﷺ. Hence, the Sahaabah ؓ understood that allowing women to be present for the congregational and eid salaah would lead to fitnah.

Furthermore, they understood that Rasulullah ﷺ permitting women to come to the masjid was not a command and an obligation upon them in the manner that men had been commanded to do so. Instead it was a concession granted subject to certain conditions being upheld. However, when the women were no longer upholding these conditions, and the desire of Rasulullah ﷺ was for the levels of hayaa to always be preserved (and therefore, in many Ahaadith, he encouraged women to remain at home), the concession no longer remained.

RASULULLAH ﷺ ENCOURAGING WOMEN TO PERFORM SALAAH WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE HOME

Though Rasulullah ﷺ permitted women to attend the congregational salaah and the eid salaah in his mubaarak era, it was the burning desire of Rasulullah ﷺ that women perform their salaah within the confines of their homes, thereby remaining completely concealed from the eyes of strange men. Hence, we find that Rasulullah ﷺ expressed this desire in many Ahaadith. Some of these Ahaadith are:

1. Hazrat Ummu Humaid ؓ, the wife of Hazrat Abu Humaid As-Saa'idi ؓ, once came to Rasulullah ﷺ and said, "O Rasulullah ﷺ, I long to perform salaah behind you." Rasulullah ﷺ replied, "I am aware that you long and desire to perform salaah behind me. However, your salaah in your bedroom is more rewarding than your salaah in any other part of your home. Your salaah in any other part of your home is more rewarding than your salaah in your courtyard. Your salaah in your courtyard is more rewarding than your salaah in the masjid of your locality. Your salaah in the masjid of your locality is more rewarding than your salaah in my masjid (i.e. Masjid-un-Nabawi)." Hazrat Ummu Humaid ؓ (in compliance and obedience with the mubaarak desire of Rasulullah ﷺ) instructed that a small area be reserved for her salaah in the innermost and darkest portion of her bedroom, and she would devotedly perform all her salaah in that area until the end of her life. (*Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan #2217*)

2. Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ reports a similar narration in which Rasulullah ﷺ said, "The salaah of a woman in her bedroom is more rewarding than her salaah in the communal room of her house, and her salaah in the innermost portion of the bedroom (a small room within the bedroom - walk-in closet - or a corner of her bedroom) is greater and more rewarding than her salaah in her bedroom." (*Abu Dawood #570*)

3. Hazrat Asmaa bint Yazeed Al-Ansaariyyah ؓ, a Sahaabiyyah from the Banu Abdil Ash-hal clan, once approached Rasulullah ﷺ while he was seated among the Sahaabah ؓ and addressed him in the following words:

"May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! I have

come to you as a representative of the women. May my life be sacrificed for you! Every single woman, in the east and west, whether she has heard that I have come to you or not, will have exactly the same question as myself. Verily Allah ﷻ has sent you with the truth to men and women. We brought Imaan in you and in Allah ﷻ who deputed you.

We, the women, live within the confines of our homes and are restricted from exposing ourselves and doing many things that the men are able to fulfill. We remain confined to our homes. We allow you to fulfill your needs and desires with us, and we bear your children. You, the men, have been favoured by Allah ﷻ by being able to attend the jumu'ah salaah and other salaahs in congregation (whereas we women perform our salaah within our homes). You are able to visit the sick and be present at funerals. You perform hajj after hajj and even more virtuous than that is your participating in jihad in the path of Allah ﷻ. When any of you men leave your home to perform hajj or umrah or to guard the borders of the Islamic territories, it is none other than us women who protect your wealth for you. We sew your clothes for you. We raise and care for your children. Do we not have a share in your reward, O Rasul of Allah ﷺ?"

On hearing the question of this woman, Nabi ﷺ turned his face towards the Sahaabah ﷺ and asked, "Have you ever heard a woman ask a question regarding her Deen more excellent than the question of this woman?" The Sahaabah ﷺ replied, "O Rasul of Allah ﷺ! We never imagined that a woman could be inspired to ask a question of this nature!"

Nabi ﷺ turned to her and said, "Return, O woman, and inform all the women you represent that for you to display excellent conduct with your husband, seek to keep him happy and try your utmost to comply and cooperate with him will enable you to be equal with him in all the good deeds which you have mentioned that men carry out."

Hazrat Asmaa ﷺ was so delighted with the answer of Rasulullah ﷺ, that as she walked away, she continued to exclaim "Allahu Akbar!" and "La ilaaha illallah!" out of joy and excitement. (*Shu'abul Imaan* #8369)

Rasulullah ﷺ was pleased with the Deen of Hazrat Asmaa bint Yazeed ﷺ, as this conformed to what he wanted for the women of his ummah, and among the things which she highlighted was that women perform salaah within the confines of their homes and do not attend the congregational salaah in the masjid.

THE PRACTICE OF THE SAHAABAH ﷺ DURING THE KHILAAFAT OF HAZRAT UMAR ﷺ

During the khilaafat of Hazrat Umar ﷺ, when the Sahaabah ﷺ noticed the decline in the levels of hayaa and saw that the conditions for women coming to the masjid were no longer being adhered to, many of them prevented women from attending the congregational salaah in the masjid, as they understood that the concession granted to women was subject to their upholding the conditions. Since the women were no longer upholding the conditions and the era was no

longer like the era of Rasulullah ﷺ where hayaa and modesty was at its peak, they prevented women from attending the congregational salaah in the masjid. Furthermore, they understood that women performing salaah in their homes was what Rasulullah ﷺ desired most for the women of the ummah. Therefore, they did not oppose Rasulullah ﷺ in any way, but rather fulfilled his mubaarak desire.

Among the many Sahaabah ﷺ who prevented women from coming to the masjid were the following very prominent Sahaabah ﷺ:

1. Hazrat Umar ﷺ 2. Hazrat Aa'ishah ﷺ 3. Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar ﷺ 4. Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood ﷺ 5. Hazrat Zubair ﷺ

Generally, the Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar ﷺ is quoted wherein he said, "Do not prevent women from coming to the masjid." (*Saheeh Bukhaari* #900) However, it is also reported regarding Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar ﷺ that he would not allow his womenfolk to attend the two eid salaahs, and he would throw small pebbles at the women on the day of jumu'ah in order to remove them from the masjid (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaibah* #5845 ; *Umdatul Qari* 6/157). It is thus clear that when Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar ﷺ later on realized that women coming to the masjid was a cause of fitnah, he also prevented them from coming to the masjid.

It is similarly recorded regarding Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood ﷺ that he would throw small pebbles at the women, preventing them from attending the jumu'ah salaah in the masjid. (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaibah* #7699)




THE PRACTICE OF THE TAABI'EEN AND GREAT LUMINARIES OF THE UMMAH




Apart from the Sahaabah ﷺ who prevented women from attending the congregational, jumu'ah and eid salaahs, there were many illustrious Taabi'een ﷺ and other great luminaries of the ummah who also did not allow women to go to the masjid or attend the eid salaahs in their eras. These luminaries understood the Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ better than anyone present today.




1. It is reported that Hazrat Urwah bin Zubair ﷺ would not allow his womenfolk to attend the eid salaahs. (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaibah* #5846)
2. Hazrat Ebrahim Nakha'ee ﷺ said that it is makrooh for women to attend the salaahs of Eid-ul-Adh-haa and Eid-ul-Fitr. Furthermore, he did not allow his womenfolk to attend the jumu'ah or daily congregational salaah. (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaibah* #7703)
3. Imam Tirmizi ﷺ quotes the statement of the great Muhaddith, Hazrat Abdullah bin Mubaarak ﷺ, who said, "I believe that in these times, it is Makrooh for women to go for the eid salaah to the eid gah..." (*Sunan Tirmizi* #540)
4. It is also reported from Hazrat Sufyaan Thowri ﷺ that he regarded it as makrooh for women to go to the eid salaah in his era. (*Sunan Tirmizi* #540)

5. All the four Imaams of Fiqh are unanimous that at the time of fitnah, women should not be allowed to come to the masjid to perform salaah. (*Shaami 1/566 ; Al-Majmoo' 4/68; Haashiyatud Dusoofi 1/534 ; Al-Insaaf 2/151*)


THE STATEMENT OF HAZRAT AA'ISHAH

The following Hadith of Hazrat Aa'ishah  sufficiently highlights the decline in hayaa and explains the necessity of the Sahaabah  preventing women from attending the congregational and eid salaah. This was in total conformity with the desire of Rasulallah :








It is reported by Amrah that Hazrat Aa'ishah  said, "Had Rasulallah  been alive today and witnessed the fitnah being caused through the women leaving their homes and attending the congregational salaah, Rasulallah  would have surely prohibited them from coming to the masjid, just as the women of the Banu Israa'eel had been prohibited from attending the congregational salaah." (*Sunan Abi Dawood #569*)

The author of the famous commentary of Saheeh Bukhaari, Allaamah Ainee , comments that this was the condition in the time of Hazrat Aa'ishah . He then says regarding his own time, "As for today, Naoozubillah! (We seek Allah's  refuge from the fitnah that is prevalent and hence are forced to prevent women

from attending the congregational salaahs in the masjid)."




When this was the condition in the era of the Sahaabah , that due to the level of hayaa decreasing, women were prohibited from attending the congregational salaah in the masaajid, then one can well imagine the need for not allowing women to participate in the congregational salaah in this day and age, where fitnah is rampant, overwhelming and widespread to such an extent that controlling the fitnah has become practically impossible.





FINAL ADVICE OF RASULULLAH TO HIS WIVES


It is reported from Hazrat Abu Hurairah  that Rasulallah , while addressing his mubaarak wives on the occasion of Hajjatul Wadaa, said, "After this (completing the rites of Hajj,) remain in your homes (i.e. do not leave your homes without a valid need)." Hazrat Abu Hurairah  mentions that it was on account of this statement of Rasulallah  that Hazrat Zainub bint Jahsh and Hazrat Saudah  never left their homes for even nafl Hajj thereafter (though the other Azwaaj-e-Mutahharaat performed nafl Hajj and understood that this statement did not refer to Hajj). Hazrat Zainub and Hazrat Saudah  would say, "After hearing this from Rasulallah , we never mounted a conveyance thereafter." (*Musnad Ahmed #26751*)

STATEMENT OF HAZRAT IMAAM SHAAFI'EE

Hazrat Imaam Shaafi'ee  has written in Ikhtilaaful Hadith:

We do not know of any of the respected wives of Rasulallah  leaving their homes to attend the jumu'ah salaah or any other salaah in the masjid, even though the respected wives of Rasulallah , on account of their special position and relationship with Rasulallah , would have been more rightful and worthy than any woman to fulfil the faraa'idh in the masjid, yet they did not do this.

There were many women who were close to Rasulallah , from the women of his household, his respected wives, his daughters, his slave women and the slave women that belonged to his household, yet I do not have knowledge of even a single woman from them who left the home to attend the jumu'ah salaah behind Rasulallah , despite jumu'ah salaah being compulsory on the men to a greater degree than all the other salaah. Similarly, we do not have knowledge of any of them leaving the home to attend the congregational salaah, neither during the night nor during the day, nor did they even go to the masjid in Qubaa, although Rasulallah  would go to Qubaa, sometimes riding his conveyance and sometimes on foot, nor did they go to any of the other masaajid. I have no doubt that on account of their special relationship with Rasulallah , they were eager to acquire virtue and reward and they knew the avenues of earning reward better than other women, yet they did not go to the masjid for salaah.

I do not have knowledge of any of our pious predecessors instructing any one of their womenfolk to attend the jumu'ah salaah nor the congregational salaah, neither during the night nor during the day. If they knew that there was any virtue in the women leaving their homes and attending the congregational salaah, they would have definitely instructed them and permitted them to do so. Rather, it is related that Rasulallah  said, "The salaah of a woman in her bedroom is better than her salaah in the communal room of her home, and her salaah in the communal room of her home is better than her salaah in the masjid."

(Ikhtilaaful Hadith 8/624)

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