



The Ruling on
**PUBLIC DISPLAYS
OF AFFECTION**

— Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril —

The Ruling on Public Displays of Affection Between Spouses

Transcript of a Q&A video recorded in 1444 AH

Answered By:

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(*حفظه الله*)



HAQQ HURTS HYPOCRITES



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question:

Is it permissible for a husband and wife to physically display affection and be physically intimate with each other in the presence of other people (including family/children)? For example, putting their arms around each other, hugging, holding hands, kissing, etc.

Answer:

Based on the opinions of the earlier ‘Ulamā’, I can probably best answer this question by dividing it into two categories. First of all, there’s physical display of affection that’s considered pre-sexual or foreplay, or similar in nature to that. Affectionate display in a sexual nature, the type of matters that belong in the bedroom, or matters that should be done privately. Those must be kept private, and we go by the Islāmic standards, not western or Kuffār standards. Touches, or moves, or kisses that are sexually suggestive, or anything sexually suggestive at all, it’s not permissible to display what falls under this category – in public, or in front of children, or in front of family, or in front of strangers. Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) ordered that children and servants ask permission before entering their own homes, so they will not see something that’s inappropriate. Imagine acting those matters out in front of them.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنُكُمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكُتُ أَيْمَانَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ هَمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَهِنَّ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ هَمْ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَاتٍ لَكُمْ ه

O you who believe! Let your slaves and slave-girls, and those among you who have not come to the age of puberty ask your permission on three occasions: before the Fajr prayer, and while you put off your clothes during the afternoon, and after the 'Ishā' prayer. (These) three (times) are of privacy for you;¹

¹ [24:58]

Ibn Qudāmah (رحمه الله تعالى) said,

وَلَا يَقْبِلُهَا وَيَبَشِّرُهَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ

"You don't kiss your wife or have relationship with her in front of people"

Ibn Qudāmah said, you don't kiss your wife or have relationship with her in front of people. That includes everything. He specifically mentioned kissing, and of course that includes sexual intercourse or foreplay. Al-Bahūti said it's disliked to kiss a wife or do something sexually suggestive in front of people because it's *danā'ah*. *Danā'ah* means it's despicable. Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Ibrāhīm gave a fatwa that kissing a wife in public is not permissible.

If spouses are deterred from merely speaking about intimate matters to anyone, imagine acting them out in front of anyone. In a narration of a Hadīth deterring from speaking about intimate matters that's in *Musnad Ahmad*, the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) compared speaking about intimate matters between spouses to others, like a female *Shaytān* who meets a male *Shaytān*, that fulfills his desire with her on the roadside while people are watching and looking. So the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) compared speaking about intimate matters to other people, to *Shaytān* publicly performing their sexual acts in public. Imagine one actually performing them before other people.

Where's the *Ghīrah* [protective jealousy] and where's the *Hayā'* [modesty & shyness] for those who do this publicly? The people watching are humans, they're humans with desires. Even if it's matters like the ones mentioned in the question [putting their arms around each other, hugging, holding hands, kissing], or foreplay, or what is similar to that, and even if they are fully clothed – it draws unnecessary attention. And why would a man with *Ghīrah* do matters that are sexually suggestive, that may have an effect on those looking, in desire or arousal? Yeah she's your wife and yeah he's your

husband, and she's in Hijāb and Niqāb, and what you're doing is definitely Halāl – *in the bedroom where it belongs*, not for the public to see.

The second type of display of affection is an innocent show of affection and not in any way sexual. Even this category shouldn't be as a performance for others. Like those who videotape themselves doing even what's in this category, to post on social media. Like the example is, holding the hand of a wife to cross the street or so she won't trip and fall, or holding her hand in a society of vicious monsters and animals who mock her Hijāb and Niqāb, or may harm her. When they see a man holding her hand, they realize she has a man to defend her. Or in the house, examples in the house, like showing affection to one's children by hugging and kissing them, and in the same *innocent* nature, to the wife. Or for example, embracing and greeting them for the 'Eid or after returning from a travel or work – hugging the children and kissing them, and then their mother, in the same innocent, non-sexual manner. This is in the home. And even these matters, even these matters, 'Ulamā' generally classify them under 'Urf. They say, so long as these matters are not of Khawārim al-Murū'ah (unbecoming practices) or violate Hayā', then it's okay. Unbecoming acts are usually judged by 'Urf, which is customary practices recognized in proper, *Islāmic* societies. 'Urf. Standards of the Kuffār, the Modernists, and their likes, and people who lack Ghīrah and Hayā', and who don't know the history of the Salaf – is not the standard we go by. 'Urf here is the 'Urf of the society of those who read the history of the Sahābah and Sahābiyyāt, and knew their Hayā' and Ghīrah.

An-Nawawi (رحمه الله), for example, under this matter said, kissing a wife and a mother in public are of Khawārim min al-Murū'ah (unbecoming practices). But then some Shāfi'iyyah came and said, if it's kissing the wife and mother in front of family members, so long as it's *not* considered a bashful act, then it's okay. They mean in the house, privately, in front of family members, and an *innocent* type of kiss, because they said the mother and the wife. The type of kiss that one would give his mother, an *innocent* type. Other matters like opening the car door, and helping your wife in, and helping her

out, matters like that are actually encouraged because of the Hadīth in Sahīh al-Bukhārī, where Anas (رضي الله عنه) said the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would sit beside the camel and let Safiyyah put her foot on his knees (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to ride the camel. And then she would sit behind him.

فَيَضَعُ رُكْبَتَهُ، فَتَضَعُ صَفِيفَةُ رِجْلَهَا عَلَى رُكْبَتِهِ، حَتَّى تَرْكَبَ

and [he ﷺ] put his knee for Safiyyah to put her foot on, in order to ride²

In the Hadīth that's in Sahīh al-Bukhārī that we took in the Fiqh class, we took it for a different topic, and I didn't mention the beginning of it because it didn't pertain to the class. When Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) slept at his aunt's house. His aunt is Maymūnah (رضي الله عنها), Maymūnah is the wife of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). In the beginning (the part that I didn't mention), Ibn 'Abbās said, I laid on the bed transversely, and the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his wife Maymūnah laid lengthwise. An-Nawawi (رحمه الله), commenting on this said, there's no problem with a husband and wife sleeping in the same room with mature children, so long as nothing is going on between the spouses.

Now, some who permit public kissing and matters bigger and smaller than that, use a supposed athar, an athar that's in Musannaf Hammād Ibn Salamah and other references. Supposedly that Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) had a concubine and he said, I couldn't resist but I kissed her on her neck and people saw. First of all, the athar is weak and that's all really that's needed. But 'Ulamā' gave explanations to that. So assuming, *assuming* it's authentic, there's many responses the 'Ulamā' gave. And among them is that, it was possible that Ibn 'Umar thought nobody saw him, and then after that he noticed that people did see him. Other 'Ulamā' said he did it to infuriate and anger the Kuffār because she was a concubine. Others said it was his personal ijtihād [opinion based on sharī'ī evidence]. Some said the ruling

² Sahih al-Bukhari 2235

pertaining to concubines in this matter is different than free women because it's like the dress code, they have different dress codes in Islām. The free woman is different than a concubine in her dress code. Someone searching for the Haqq doesn't leave what's clear and solid to that which is weak, or what's at best an ijtihād, or what accepts many interpretations.

And you have to keep in mind with all that I mentioned, a Muslim has Hayā', and modesty, and shyness, and Ghīrah. That must be emphasized in this day and age, when speaking about matters like these. Not the opposite, not downplay it.

وَلَا كَانَ الْحُجَّاءُ فِي شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا زَانَهُ

*Modesty in matters adorns and beautifies it*³

And

وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِّنَ الْإِيمَانِ

*Hayā' and shyness and modesty is a branch of Īmān*⁴

Sadly, the standards of some, and even few of those who have the appearance of iltizām [religiously committed], has been affected by the low standards of the Kuffār, and that's due to long term living among them. And even many Muslim societies have been affected by this as well. For our standards, we open the pages and books of the biographies of the Salaf, and we read the astonishing examples they had of Hayā' – both their men and women – and the examples of Ghīrah that they had. The examples are numerous. Look no further than in the Fiqh class, what we took in the Fiqh class, in one of the Hadīth. 'Alī (رضي الله عنه). You think a man who was too shy to ask the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) a Fiqh question pertaining to madhī, that

³ Sunan Ibn Majah 4185

⁴ Sahih Muslim 35b

he must know as part of his Dīn, yet he was too shy to ask the Messenger ﷺ, because his wife was the daughter of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and this was somewhat of a sexually related question. So, he sent al-Miqdād. Would a man with that level of Hayā' ever do something sexually suggestive or anything close to that in public? And the examples are numerous.

“EVERY RELIGION HAS ITS DISTINCT CHARACTERISTIC, AND THE DISTINCT CHARACTERISTIC OF ISLAM IS , ,

HAYA

