



Fatwa no. 2642

All praise be to Allah Alone, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family and Companions.

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The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' has reviewed the query sent to His Honorable President by the Dean of Student Affairs at the University of Riyadh via Dr. Mohiyuldin Khalil, Head of the Department of Islamic Culture. The query which was referred to the Committee numbered 2554/2 on 7/8/99 A.H. is as follows:

Female university students who are not from the city of Riyadh stay in the Umm Al-Mu'minin residential unit. On holidays or weekends, they travel to their home towns. Most of them set out for Jeddah or Al-Zhahran by air. The Deans Office stipulates that no student should travel except with a Mahram (spouse or unmarriageable relative). However, this condition cannot be met by all the students and in all cases. Sometimes, they are required to travel due to certain urgent circumstances. Some of them object to this policy and feel that in such case Shari'ah (Islamic law) allows traveling without a Mahram, since the journey takes only a few hours. They cite the following Hadith as evidence: **(It is not lawful for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to travel on a journey that takes three days or more, except with her father, her brother, her husband, her son, or a Mahram.)** Also, the Hadith on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: **(No woman should travel for the distance of one day and one night except with her mahram.)** Also, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who stated: **(It is not permissible for a Muslim woman to travel**

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for the distance of one day and one night except with her mahram.) We hope that you will inform us whether it is permissible to allow female students to travel to Jeddah or Al-Zhahran by air without Mahram.

The Committee replied as follows: Bringing about benefits and averting evils is a basic principle of Islamic Shari'ah whose essential purpose is preserving honor and purity of lineage. There are in the Qur'an and Sunnah clear proofs which assert the necessity of blocking the means leading to violation of honor and mixing of lineage. Among the forbidden means that must be blocked are Khulwah (being alone with a member of the opposite sex); a woman displaying her beauty to anyone other than her husband, Mahram, or males coming under the heading of Mahram who are mentioned in Surah Al-Nur; the furtive glance and not lowering the gaze. Therefore, women traveling without their husbands or a Mahram who are considered, in the view of the Shari'ah, the means that ensure security to her is prohibited. Moreover, it is regarded as a means leading to adultery, rape, and mixing of lineages. It was authentically reported from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **(No woman should travel a three-day journey except with a**

Mahram.) (Related by

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Ahmad, Al-Bukhari and Muslim) It was authentically reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: [\(No woman should travel for a Barida \(a distance equal to four parasang or a distance of half a day\) without a Mahram.\)](#) (Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Hakim) It was authentically reported that Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) while delivering a Khutbah (sermon), stating: [\(No man should be alone with a woman unless there is a Mahram with her, and no woman should travel except with a Mahram. A man stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! My wife has set out for Hajj, whereas I am enrolled in such-and-such expedition.' He said, 'Go and perform Hajj with your wife'.\)](#) (Related by Ahmad, Al-Bukhari and Muslim) In some reports it is limited to "the distance of one day" and in others it is limited to "the distance of one night". There are also other reports in which it is limited to "three days" and in others it is limited to "two days". The apparent meaning of this definition of the number of days is not what is meant. The definition of the limits was in reference to specific incidents. No attention should be paid to the definition of limits, for its connotation will disagree with the explicit statement in the Hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them).

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Rather, the meaning of the Hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) refers to everything that is regarded as travel is forbidden to a woman unless she has a Mahram with her. This applies regardless of the woman's age, the distance of travel, or the means of transportation. Anyone who opposes this claiming that the prohibition is limited to young women, to fixed distances or days mentioned in some reports, to insecurity of the road, or who claims that a secure trustworthy group of pious women companions is sufficient, their argument is rejected based on the general meaning of the Hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them). What is explicitly stated in the Hadith should be given precedence over the understanding of "day numbers" in other Hadiths. Accordingly, it is prohibited for a woman, be she a student or not, to travel by air without a husband or Mahram. Since the case mentioned in the question entails travel, the general meaning of the prohibition indicated by the Hadith applies. May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'

Member	Member	Deputy Chairman	Chairman
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Source: Fatwas of the Permanent Committee