

Ask Rabi'a: Performing Choreography

Dear Rabi'a,

I've learned a dance choreography – can I perform it in public?

Love to Dance

Dear Love to Dance,

Yes and no - it depends on the circumstances in which you learned the choreography.

Class/Workshop/Instructional DVD

– Yes, you can perform the choreography. The instructor made the choice to teach a choreography, not steps or combinations. You paid your hard-earned money and gave up your precious time to learn it. You are entitled to perform what you've learned. You should never, never, never take credit for someone else's work so good manners and dance etiquette dictate that you give credit to the choreographer – i.e. *Rabi'a will perform a veil dance choreographed by Little Egypt*. Same thing if you are an instructor and want to teach this to your class; give credit where credit is due. If you change some of the choreography, acknowledge that you are performing/teaching someone's modified

choreography. It does not count as your choreography if you change 8 counts of a four minute routine.

Performance DVD – No, you cannot perform the choreography. Modern

technology with its slow motion, pause and rewind has made it possible to learn a routine from a performance DVD. The dancer did not intend that her performance be an instructional opportunity for anyone who buys the DVD and it is just tacky to steal her show. If you like a move or a combination of steps go ahead, break them down, learn them and add them to your repertoire.

Troupe / Group – No, you cannot perform the choreography. The choreography was intended for the specific troupe/group to be performed only by that troupe/group. You should not perform this on your own. You should not teach this to your class. You should not teach this to your friends. You should not perform this with anyone other than the members of the troupe/group that it was intended for. If you move to another state, I suggest that you ask the troupe/group director for permission to use the choreography in your new area. Dancers performing troupe/group choreographies outside of the troupe/group have caused more trouble and hard feelings than there is sand in Egypt. Resist the urge and don't do it.

