



Fatwa no. 3374

Q: We have disputed over the issue of photography which you did not mention in your letter. Does it fall under the same ruling of portraying or not? Some (scholars) have argued that it is permissible, for it is not drawing but nothing more than imaging the figure of a person without exerting any effort other than pressing the button (of the camera) to bring out a photograph identical to the figure being photographed. Some of my friends showed me a photograph of Your Eminence in the Kuwaiti magazine of "Al-Mujtama`" and the Egyptian magazine of "Al-I`tisam." It was published with your Fatwa regarding the rulings of Sawm (Fast) during the blessed month of Ramadan. Is displaying your photograph in the magazine a proof of the permissibility of photography

(Part No. 1; Page No. 669)

or was it taken without your knowledge?

Moreover, if photography is not permissible, then what is the Islamic ruling on buying the newspapers and magazines replete with pictures, although they contain important news and other useful and useless information? Please advise us in this regard.

Is it permissible to put these magazines in Al-Musalla (place for prayer) even if they are covered by a cloth or suchlike? Or should they be destroyed after reading them? What is the ruling on watching moving images on television? Is it permissible to turn on the television in Al-Musalla?

Please enlighten us in these regards, may Allah enlighten you.

A: Firstly: Photography falls under the forbidden types of image making, for its ruling is the same as portraying, making images on cloths with color paints and statue making. The difference in the means and tools of making images does not entail having a different ruling. Likewise, the disparity in terms of difficulty and easiness makes no difference. Rather, what is to be considered is the image itself, for it is prohibited regardless of the means leading to making it or the effort exerted. Having my pictures appearing with my Fatwa regarding the rulings of Sawm in Ramadan in Al-Mujtama' and Al-I'tisam magazines

(Part No. 1; Page No. 670)

is not a proof that I permit image making, or agree to it, as I was not aware of them.

Secondly: It is permissible to buy newspapers and magazines with pictures of animate beings, only if they include important news or useful scientific issues and if the aim behind buying them is benefiting. Besides, images are secondary to the superordinate i.e. Information, news, etc.; the ruling is to be applied to the superordinate not the subordinate. Also, it is permissible to put them in Al-Musalla on condition that the pictures are being hidden or effaced somehow so as to benefit from the articles included.

Thirdly: It is not permissible to put a television set in Al-Musalla due to the distraction that may result, as it is impermissible to watch any dissolute or uncovered images to avoid Fitnah (sedition) and any resulting bad consequences.

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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