




Fatwa no. 413

Q: When I read the Hadith cited in the book entitled "Al-Tawhid", in the Chapter on the torment of image-makers, I found that their torment is very severe as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **(The people who will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be those who emulate Allah's creation.)** Does this Hadith apply to today's photographers who have studios? What is the ruling on people who keep photographs of themselves, their friends or relatives as mementos not for bringing blessings, and people who keep some useful magazines like "Al-`Araby" to benefit from their sciences and knowledge, not for the photographs?

A: The committee believes that taking photographs of living beings is not permissible according to the authentic evidence reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) like the Hadith mentioned

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by the questioner.  This ruling applies to the people who make photography their profession to earn their living or who take it as a hobby. It also applies to a person who makes images by drawing with their hand or by the camera or any other tool. Yet, it is permissible to take photos if there is a need for it, for example to obtain a citizenship or a passport, or, as in the case of taking photos of criminals, to identify them and arrest them if they commit a crime or try to flee and such necessary cases. Also there is no legal reason that prohibits keeping photographs of living beings at homes if they are given a menial value, and being trodden on by feet and so. Likewise, if the photo is in a passport or a citizenship, it is permissible to have it at home and carry it because this is necessary. On the other hand, it is not permissible to keep a photo to glorify the object in it, and the ruling on doing so varies from major Shirk (major form of associating others in worship with Allah) to a sin depending on the intention of the person who keeps the photo at home as a memento of someone. This is not permissible because the basic rule prohibits such practice. So it is not permissible to take these photographs or keep them at home except for a legal purpose and keeping a photo as a memento is not a legal purpose. As for the magazines that include indecent photos, it is not permissible to buy them or keep them at home because the evils of keeping them exceed the benefits you mentioned in case they have any. Otherwise, its prohibition will be highly stressed.

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **(What is Halal (lawful) is clear and what is Haram (prohibited) is clear, but in between them there are doubtful matters that most people do not know about. So anyone who guards himself against these doubtful matters saves his religion and his honor. And anyone who falls into these doubtful matters is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near a Hima (private pasture) and is on the verge of entering it. Every king has a Hima and the Hima of Allah on the Earth is His forbidden matters.)** Also he (peace be upon him) said: **(Leave what causes you doubt and turn to what does not cause you doubt.)** Moreover, he (peace be upon him) said to the man who came to ask him about righteousness: **(Righteousness is that about which the**

soul feels tranquil and the heart feels tranquil, and sin is that which is abrasive to the soul and the breast even though people again and again give their legal opinion [in its favor].)

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

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