



Fatwa No. 3374

Q : We have disputed over the issue of photography that you did not mention in your letter; whether it falls under the same ruling of portraying or not? As some (scholars) have argued that it is permissible, for it is not drawing but no more than imaging the figure of people without exerting any effort except for pressing the button (of the camera) to bring out a photograph identical to the figure 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 proof of the permissibility of photography?

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Or was it taken without your knowledge?

Moreover, if photography is impermissible, then what is the legal decision on buying the newspapers and the magazines replete with pictures, important news, and other useful/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 advise us in all these regards, May Allah reward you with good.

A: First of all: Photography falls under the forbidden types of picturing, for its ruling matches those on portraying; in structure, color paints, and embodied pictures. The difference only exists in the means of picturing and the machine used but this does not make a difference in the ruling. Likewise, the disparity in terms of difficult and easiness makes no difference. Rather, what is to be considered is the picture itself, for it is prohibited regardless of the means or effort in acquiring it. As for displaying my picture with my Fatwa regarding the rulings of Siyam (Fast) in Ramadan,

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it lends no support for permitting picturing or for my agreement to it, as I didn't know of it.

Secondly: It is permissible to buy newspapers and magazines with pictures of animate beings, only if they include important news or useful scientific issues. In addition, they should be bought with the intention of acquiring knowledge. Besides, pictures are secondary to the predominant i.e. the information, the news, etc. contained; the ruling is to be applied to the predominant 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 impermissible to put a television in Al-Musala for the distraction that would result, as it is impermissible to look at any dissolute or uncovered pictures to avoid sedition and bad consequences (resulting from this).

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

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