




Fatwa No. 413

Q: When I read the Hadiths cited in the book entitled Al-Tawhid, in the Chapter on the torment of photo-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 from Allah on Doomsday will be those who imitate (Allah) in the act of His creation.) Does this Hadith apply to today's photographers who have studios? What is the ruling on a person who keeps photographs of himself, his friends or relatives for memory not for bringing blessings, and a person who keeps some useful magazines like Al-`Arabi magazine to benefit from its useful information, not to keep its photographs?

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

(Part No : 1, Page No: 680)

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 the photographs by drawing with his hand or by the use of a camera or any other tool. But 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 later 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. It is not permissible to keep a photo to glorify the object in it, and the ruling on doing this is either Shirk-Akbar (major form of associating others in worship with Allah) or a sin depending on the intention of the person who keeps the photo at home as a memory of someone. This is not permissible because the ruling is to prevent them. So it is not permissible to take these photographs or keep them at home except for a legal purpose and keeping a photo for memory 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 benefits. Otherwise, its prohibition will be highly stressed.

(Part No : 1, Page No: 681)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (What is lawful is evident and what is unlawful is evident, and in between them are doubtful matters which many people do not know. So he who guards against doubtful matters keeps his religion and honor blameless, and he who indulges in doubtful matters indulges, in fact, in unlawful matters, just as a shepherd who pastures his animals round a preserve will soon pasture them in it. Beware, every king has a preserve, and the things Allah has declared unlawful are His preserves.) 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 wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves to and from in the breast even though people again and again have given you 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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