171636 - Ruling on computer games that include increasing the physical strength of the player

the question

There are some videogames that develop the virtual character, such as increasing physical strength, psychological well-being and skills of that character, by doing training within the game. Is this regarded as imitating the creation of Allah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Many computer games involve things that are contrary to sharee'ah, such as music, uncovering 'awrahs, venerating the cross, learning violence and committing crimes, and neglecting obligatory duties. We have explained in the answers to questions no. 2898, 39744 and 98769 the negative consequences of computer games. In the second of these answers (39744) we have explained the ruling on buying and selling them; and in the first answer (2898) we mentioned – when explaining what is haraam concerning them – games which are based on glorifying the cross and in which passing over it gives health or strength, or brings one back to life, or gives the player extra "lives" and so on.

Based on that, if these computer games are based on such things then playing them is haraam, and it is also haraam to buy and sell them, whether the thing that gives strength or lives is the cross or a charm, as is the case in Japanese and Chinese games. But if gaining strength for the player is done by means of training that he does, and not any of the things we have mentioned, then it seems to us that it is permissible to play these games.

Secondly:

With regard to imitating the creation of Allah that is mentioned in the question, the response is in two parts, from the linguistic point of view and from the shar ‘i ruling point of view.

With regard to the linguistic meaning, the discussion centres on what is meant by imitating or trying to match. Al-Khaleel ibn Ahmad al-Faraaheedi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Imitating means trying to match one thing to another. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “They imitate the saying of the disbelievers of old” [at-Tawbah 9:30]. What is meant is: They say something like they (the disbelievers of old) said. And in the hadeeth it says: “The people who will be most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection will be those who imitate the creation of Allaah.”

Al-‘Ayn, 4/70; an-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadeeth by Ibn al-Atheer, 3/232

With regard to the shar‘i ruling, it is mentioned in these words and synonyms in saheeh hadeeths, including the following:

1.

It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The people who will be most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection will be those who imitate the creation of Allaah.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5610; Muslim, 2107.

According to a version narrated by Muslim: “Verily, among the people who will be most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection will be those who imitate the creation of Allaah.”

2.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, said: ‘Who does more wrong than the one who tries to imitate My creation? Let them create an ant, or let them create a grain of wheat, or let them create a grain of barley.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5609; Muslim, 2111.

This competing or imitating mentioned in the hadeeth is that which constitutes kufr. That applies in two cases:

(i) Where the image maker makes an idol – or a representation of something else that Allah created – to be worshipped

(ii) Where the image maker makes the image and claims that it is better than the creation of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

This does not apply to games that contain characters that are animated beings, because they are not intended to match or compete with the creation of Allah.

And Allah knows best.