374172 - Ruling on posting videos on YouTube with ads that appear and one has no control over their content

the question

My question is about new conditions that are stipulated by the YouTube website, which we received two weeks ago. As a content creator, we have no choice but to accept them. One of the clauses gives YouTube the right to put ads on my videos and make money from that, even without my consent, and without me subscribing to the advertising program (the profits go to the owners of YouTube only, and not to me, but the issue of helping in sin and transgression is still there, because the followers of my channel will see the YouTube ads that are filled with things that are contrary to Islamic teachings). What is the ruling on posting my content on YouTube in the future, and what is the ruling on leaving my old videos there, because all the content will be affected by the ads? Please advise us, thank you.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

In principle, it is not allowed to take part in or contribute to posting any ads that contain or promote anything objectionable, because posting that is helping to spread sin and exposing the viewers to seeing sin, and Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty} [al-Ma’idah 5:2].

Based on that, if it is possible for the content creator to prevent ads altogether, or to prevent the ads which he thinks are most likely to contain objectionable material, even if that is by paying a monthly subscription that he can afford without suffering harm, then he must do that, and it is not

permissible for him to allow ads to appear on his content, and what that could lead to of spreading mischief.

Similar to that, if shar'i interests can be achieved by posting his content on another website, that does not require him to have these ads and other evils, then he should move to that website and should not take part in supporting websites in which there is a great deal of evil. If it is not possible to prevent ads, or to have any control over them, even by paying money that the content creator can afford, and the content he posts is beneficial and posting it on YouTube serves a greater interest, then what appears to be the case is that there is no blame on him for that, and the sin of the objectionable material is only on those who make and post it. The greater interest served by your content, such as teaching people, benefitting them, calling them to Islam and guiding them, should not be abandoned because of something objectionable in the ads. That is for the following reasons:

- The ads that appear in video clips are a widespread problem and it is difficult to avoid it except with great hardship.
- The channel owner or producer of videos has nothing to do with the ads and has no control over them and no ability to limit them.
- Refraining from posting will leave more room for others to post evil and trivial content.
- Seeking to crowd out falsehood and outnumber such material by posting useful and beneficial videos, or even those that are merely permissible, is a valid objective according to Islamic teachings

Al-Shatibi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: With regard to basic activities that are, in principle, allowed in Islam, if they involve some infractions – such as buying and selling, mixing with people and living among them – when mischief has become widespread in the land and evil activities have increased and become normalized, such that when the accountable person is going about his business to meet his needs and do other ordinary, daily activities, he will in most cases be unable to avoid coming across some infractions and evils… If we realise that refraining from going about one's business could cause undue hardship to a person and impose on him restrictions that he

cannot bear, that is something for which this ummah is excused. In that case, the individual has no choice but to carry on, but he must refrain from whatever he can refrain from, and anything else may be overlooked, because his excuse is due to his situation, not because these things are acceptable in principle."(*Al-Muwafaqat* 3/526-527).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If a man in a position of leadership does what is required of him, of enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, striving in jihad, doing what is required of a man in a position of authority, and so on, then he will inevitably commit some infractions. What is required of him is to see which of the two matters is dominant. If what is enjoined in Islamic teachings will bring greater reward than refraining from the infractions, then he should not give up his position because of what he fears of falling into infractions which are outweighed by the benefits. But if refraining from infractions will bring him greater reward, he should not miss out on that reward in the hope of getting reward for doing obligatory actions that bring less reward. This issue should be judged by comparing and weighing up the good deeds and bad deeds in both scenarios. This is how the matter should be examined, but explaining that in detail would take too long."(*Majmu' al-Fatawa* 28/168).

For more information, please see the answer to question no. 119222 .

Secondly:

Everyone who watches video clips on YouTube or elsewhere should take whatever he can of measures to help prevent these ads appearing. This is possible by using some programs or other ways that are known to experts, and you can easily obtain them.

Thirdly:

The money that the channel owner or publisher of videos earns because of the ads is mixed wealth, some of which is halal and some is haram. He must work out the proportion of it that is haram, based on what he thinks is most likely to be the case, and get rid of it by giving it in charity

to the poor and needy. If he cannot work it out precisely, he should work out what is most likely to absolve him of responsibility.

Fourthly:

As for those who publish content that is of no benefit and has nothing to do with what people need in their religious or worldly affairs, and have no aim except to make money from ads, it is not permissible for them to pursue this method of earning money, because it is profit that is tainted by committing haram, and there is no interest that could equal or outweigh the mischief involved, such that a concession could be granted to do that.

And Allah knows best.