88180 - If image-making is haraam, how come it is permissible to watch TV and videos?

the question

A brother told me that taking pictures is haram. I started searching in the fatawa of different scholars and I found that scholars have not agreed it is haram. What convinced me the most was the fatwa of Sheikh Ben Baz - may Allah have mercy on him. I believe all types of pictures are haram as well as keeping them, unless for essential purposes. I believe also that the one who accepts to be pictured is as sinful as the one who takes the picture, because he accepted.
On the other hand, in a fatwa of Sheikh Ben Baz he says that watching TV or video is not haram if it contains no munkar (evil).
My question and problem is: Is it permissible then to look at the pictures that contain no munkar? Just for entertainment, according to the scholars who claim looking at pictures is haram? Regardless the way they have been taken? And if it was permissible, then under which level of (Denouncing the evil) should we consider it? As pictures are munkar (Evil), and I should at least denounce it by my heart, then by taking it away of my sight, and moving away from the place where pictures are existing.
Also if anyone shows me a piece of video by mobile phone then I should avoid it? Please sheikh remove my confusion about this matter and tell me if I am right or wrong?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

What you say about it being haraam to take photographs and keep them except in cases of necessity, and it being permissible to watch TV and videos if they are free of evils, is the view of a

number of scholars, including Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) and the scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas, may Allah preserve them.

Secondly:

The confusion that you mentioned was answered by Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him), who explained that pictures contained on a video tape and the like are stored in the form of electro-magnetic waves, hence they were regarded as permissible by those who do not regard photographs as permissible.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Images made by modern methods are of two types:

1 – Those that are stored in a way that does not have any tangible or visible form, as was mentioned in the case of images, such as video tapes. There is no ruling on these at all and they do not come under the prohibition at all. Hence the scholars who forbid photographs printed on paper regarded them as permissible, and said that there is nothing wrong with them. It was said: Is it permissible to film the lectures that are given in mosques? Their opinion was that this should not be done, because it may disturb those who are praying there, and it does not befit the place, and so on.

2 – Photographs that are printed on paper.

But there remains the question: if a person wants to make these permissible images, then he is subject to the five rulings according to his intention. If he intends thereby to do something haraam, then it is haraam. If he intends thereby to do something obligatory then it is obligatory. It may be obligatory to make images sometimes, especially moving images. For example, if we see someone committing a crime that is a crime against a person’s rights, such as a murder attempt and the like, and it cannot be proven except by means of a picture, then in that case taking a picture is obligatory, especially in cases where pictures could tell the full story, because the means are subject to the same rulings as the ends. If we use this image-making to prove the identity of a person lest he be accused of a crime committed by someone else, there is nothing wrong with this either, rather it is essential. But if we take a picture in order to enjoy looking at it, this is

undoubtedly haraam. End quote from al-Sharh al-Mumti’ (2/197-199).

See also questions no. 10326, 13633 and 20325.

And Allah knows best.