89737 - Ruling on selling newspapers

the question

I live in a European country. Is it permissible for me to work delivering newspapers to houses, knowing that in these newspapers there may be pictures of women or other kinds of news that goes against our sharee'ah? Please note that I do not read them or look at what is inside them.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Newspapers, magazines and other kinds of publications fall into three categories:

1 – Newspapers and magazines that spread good and virtue, and follow Islamic guidelines in what they publish, and do not contain anything that is obviously wrong. It is permissible to buy, sell and distribute such publications, according to scholarly consensus.

2 – Newspapers and magazines that spread evil and corruption, and do not respect any morals, sharee'ah or good taste. Their pages are filled with pictures of adorned women and their articles promote sin or poisonous thinking, and they are generally corrupt and immoral, such as indecent newspapers and magazines that speak about actors and actresses, or those that have titles such as "Woman's World" or "Fashion World", or newspapers supervised by those whose thinking is toxic and who seek to attack Islam or mock the sharee'ah. It is not permissible to sell, buy or distribute such publications, rather we should denounce everyone who works for them and helps to publish them.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The newspapers of this type, i.e., those that publish indecent pictures or revile those who seek to spread Islam, or seek to prevent da'wah, or which publish heretical articles and the like – such newspapers should be boycotted and should not be bought. The state – if it is an Islamic state –

should ban them, because they harm the society and harm the Muslims. The Muslim should not buy them or distribute them, and he should call upon others to boycott them too and encourage people not to keep them or buy them. The authorities who are able to ban them should do so, or tell them to do good things and give up evil.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa (8/176).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

There are magazines – we ask Allaah to keep us safe and sound – that promote promiscuity and corruption, either with their indecent words or their indecent images. It is not permissible for anyone whom Allaah has put in charge of his family to keep these newspapers in his house at all. He must oppose them fiercely and fight them as he would fight a fire with water. He should tear them up in front of his children, so that they will know that they are haraam and represent falsehood. But if he brings them to his family, or sees them buying it and approves of that, by Allaah he is not taking care of them properly.

It is very strange that people spend their money on these magazines that contain material that affects morals and beliefs. Is there any greater waste of money than this?

If a person were to walk though the marketplace and scatter money on the ground, that would be better than buying these magazines and giving them to his children, because by buying these magazines he is doing something haraam and supporting falsehood and promoting the spread of evil among his family. If he were to scatter money on the ground, perhaps a poor person would pick it up and benefit from it.

So we must advise one another to shun these indecent magazines.

Al-Liqa' al-Shahriyyah (no. 39, question no. 6).

In Fataawa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Kareem al-Khudayr (60) it says:

Working for these newspapers and magazines which are mostly filled with haraam material is not

permissible, and the income earned from that work is also haraam, because when Allaah forbids a thing He also forbids its price. It is also haraam to distribute them, read them, buy them or sell them, or do anything else that has to do with them, rather they must be boycotted. End quote.

3 – Newspapers and magazines which contain mostly permissible material, such as local and international news, and some intellectual and political articles, and some scientific articles and other permissible things. They may not be not free of some pictures of adorned women or some liberal articles or unacceptable ideas, but most of what they contain is permissible. There is nothing wrong with selling these, buying them and distributing them, because the permissible aspect outweighs the unaccaptable, but the one who reads them should get rid of the haraam pictures in them, either by tearing them up or not looking at them, and we should all try to advise those who are in charge of them to rid their newspapers of all haraam content.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling on local newspapers that are published here – i.e., in Saudi.

He replied:

I do not think that there is anything wrong with them, unless they contain bad ideas or indecent pictures.

The same questioner asked: They contain news about sports, acting and music and promote these things.

The Shaykh said: You should ignore this one and not buy it.

The questioner said: The magazine is bound to have sections that cover these topics.

The Shaykh said: By Allaah, I do not know. I think that if a person does not know what is going on in the world he is falling short. It is better to say that if you like to find out about world news, buy this newspaper, because most of it is not like what you think, and that can be torn up.

The same questioner asked the Shaykh about a shopkeeper selling it – can he sell newspapers

such as al-Jareedah, al-Riyaadh, ‘Ukaaz [names of Saudi newspapers] etc?

The Shaykh said: If it is permissible to buy them it is permissible to sell them, because sale is a contract between two people.

Liqa’aat al-Baab il-Maftooh (no. 99, question no. 9)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to Islamic magazines that contain pictures, it is a sign of perfect faith not to make the magazine all pictures. There are well known magazines such as those that are filled with pictures or fashion magazines – it is not permissible to buy or sell these magazines, or to keep them. And there are magazines which publish news and articles, but they may contain a picture of the speaker or writer, or a picture of some scene. These are not haraam, but is it permissible to keep them or must every single picture be erased? It seems that it is not essential to erase every single picture, because the pictures are not the purpose of the magazines. The person who buys a newspaper is not buying it for the pictures only, so we can differentiate between magazines and newspapers that are focused on presenting images and those that do not focus on presenting images, but which contain images. It is haraam to sell, buy or keep the former, but it is not haraam in the case of the latter.

Liqaa’aat al-Baab il-Maftooh (no. 132. question no. 16)

Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Jibreen (may Allaah preserve him) said:

With regard to magazines, if they are indecent and promote evil and immorality, it is haraam to sell them, make money from them or deal in them.

If the pictures in them are of an ordinary type, and they are free of immoral content, then there is nothing wrong with selling them, because of the knowledge, lessons and permissible material that they contain, and because the pictures are not the main purpose in them.

Fataawa Islamiyyah (2/372)

It seems to us – after asking some of those who live in European countries – that the newspapers in those countries are of the second type, because they contain attacks on Islam and present a distorted image of the Muslims, and they contain advertisements for brothels, nightclubs, alcohol and gambling.

Our advice to you is to give up this job and look for permissible work, even if the pay is less.

We ask Allaah to suffice us with that which He has permitted so that we will have no need of that which He has forbidden.

And Allaah knows best.