175480 - Confused about a fatwa on the ruling on showing pictures of women’s fashions

the question

In your fatwa on the website entitled Putting women’s pictures in women-only chat rooms to learn how to do makeup and other adornments, it says that it is permissible to show pictures of fashion outfits in chat rooms with the head cut off or with the facial features blotted out completely. I was confused by this. How can this be permissible when a man who goes to this page could see it? Does blotting out the facial features cancel out the fitnah altogether? How many men have been tempted by a woman’s body even though her face is ugly! If it is permissible, then what is the benefit of the command to wear the abayah if the body is not a source of temptation and it is permissible for men to look at it? Aren’t all parts of the woman’s body ‘awrah and don’t men have to lower their gaze and not look at her? What is the evidence for this being permissible?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We appreciate your concern and your keenness to seek good. We ask Allah to make us and you steadfast in obedience to Him.

Secondly:

The fatwa you mention has to do with women’s chat rooms. It stated that it is haraam to publish pictures of women on the Internet, but it granted a concession allowing posting pictures of “outfits minus the head, or with the facial features blotted out completely”. That is because of what was mentioned in the question, which is that it is for the purpose of learning and benefitting. Undoubtedly the aim of the fatwa was to avoid fitnah and block the causes that lead to it. If the pictures of outfits lead to fitnah, such as if they were physical bodies or they were provocative

pictures, then the answer is that it is also forbidden to post them.

There is no doubt that men are enjoined to lower their gaze and avoid looking at women, their faces and their bodies, with no differentiation. And there is no doubt that the woman’s entire body is ‘awrah as you say. But the point that should be noted here is that the chat room is for women and this means will divert many women from looking at harmful fashion magazines, and so they can find what they need on these websites. But we affirm that if the pictures of fashion outfits are done in a way that promotes fitnah, then they should not be allowed and ways must be sought of presenting them without showing them on bodies.

To sum up: we have to differentiate here between two things having to do with this issue:

1.The issue of the image itself, regardless of whether it results in fitnah or not. This is the one for which it is stipulated that the head be cut off

2.The issue of fitnah, which must be warded off and prevented, if it is thought most likely that it will occur.

And Allah knows best.