82704 - Ruling on working for newspapers

the question

I work for one of the daily newspapers in my country, which is supposedly an Islamic country but in fact it is not. You know the extent of government hypocrisy and misguidance in these newspapers. I work in the department that deals with design and production of these newspapers. Is my salary halaal? Because job opportunities in my country are very few and I have no choice but to work in this job, even though I did not want to work here at first.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We ask Allaah to set the affairs of the Muslims straight, and to guide the media bosses to that which is best for all people, and to help them to spread truth and chastity.

But unfortunately very few newspapers and magazines are free of things that are forbidden in Islam, which means that we must refrain from selling them and buying them. That makes it more likely that we should refrain from working in them. Among these forbidden things are the following:

1 – Horoscopes and fortune-telling. These are major sins which may lead a person to kufr.

2 – Program listings for satellite channels. Most of these channels spread evil and immorality.

3 – Indecent pictures of attractive and immoral women.

4 – Adverts for banks and companies that sell and manufacture haraam things.

5 – Cartoons which are haraam because they are usually drawings done by hand of animate beings.

6 – Hypocritical praise of the rulers who do not deserve it.

7 – False fatwas that are fabrications against sharee'ah, and deviant articles that attack Islam.

And there are many other things that go against Islam, which may be more or less serious according to each nation and its system, and according to each newspaper and its aims.

Hence the scholars have issued a fatwa forbidding the buying and selling of newspapers and magazines that contain a few of these haraam things, so how about those that contain many of them? What if the ruling has to do with design and production of these newspapers?

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

It is not permissible for you – or anyone else – to sell newspapers and magazines that contain pictures of women or articles that go against Islam, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allaah. Verily, Allaah is Severe in punishment"

[al-Maa'idah 5:2]

Fataawa Islamiyyah (2/371).

2 – Shaykh 'Abd-Allaah ibn Jibreen (may Allaah preserve him) was asked:

I am a young man, 21 years old. My father has died and I have five brothers and my mother. He left us some shops, including a shop that sells newspapers and magazines, and religious books and Mus-hafs (copies of the Qur'aan). In that shop there is a worker who is not Muslim. I told my older brother that it is not permissible for that worker to touch the Qur'aans and religious books, and it is not permissible to sell the magazines which contain pictures, but he did not accept what I said. What should I do? Is it permissible for me to sit with my brothers and eat with them?

He replied:

We appreciate your piety and your desire to avoid haraam and doubtful things. We advise you to

try to fire this kaafir and you will find a trustworthy Muslim who is much better than him in sha Allaah.

With regard to magazines, if they are indecent and promote immorality, then it is haraam to sell them, make a profit from them or deal in them. If the pictures in them are regular pictures and are free of indecency, then there is nothing wrong with selling them because of what they contain of useful knowledge and permissible speech, and the pictures are not the main purpose for you. We advise you to stay with your brothers and eat with them, and there is no sin on you in sha Allaah.

Fataawa Islamiyyah (2/371, 372).

3 – Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was also asked:

What is the ruling on drawings (caricatures) which appear in some newspapers and magazines and include drawings of people?

He replied:

The kind of drawings mentioned are haraam, and they are among the widespread evils which must be avoided because of the general meaning of the saheeh ahaadeeth which indicate that making images of any animate beings is haraam, whether they are done with machines or by hand or otherwise.

For example, al-Bukhaari narrated in al-Saheeh from Abu Juhayfah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) cursed the one who consumes riba and the one who pays it, and he cursed the image-maker. It is also narrated in al-Saheehayn that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The most severely punished of people on the Day of Resurrection will be the image-makers.” And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The makers of these images will be punished on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said to them: Give life to that which you have created.” And there are many other ahaadeeth on this subject, and there are no exceptions to that except cases of necessity where image-making cannot be avoided, because Allaah says (interpretation of the

meaning):

“He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you, except under compulsion of necessity”

[al-An’aam 6:119]

I ask Allaah to help the Muslims to adhere to the sharee’ah of their Lord and the Sunnah of their Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and to avoid that which goes against that, for He is the best One to ask.

Fataawa Islamiyyah (4/362, 363)

4 – Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

I say to those who are in charge of these newspapers that they will have to answer before Allaah when they stand before Him on the Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, Except him who brings to Allaah a clean heart [cf. al-Shu’ara 26:89]. Those who publish these evils will be responsible for whatever effects came about as the result of their publishing them. If the society turned into a bestial society, where nothing good was enjoined and nothing bad was denounced and the people did not follow the commands of Allaah let alone the commands of the slaves of Allaah, this will lead to unlimited chaos.

And he said: Among the evils spread by these newspapers is the love that develops in the heart for images that have no reality, so it is like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water, until he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing; but he finds Allaah with him, Who will pay him his due (Hell). And Allaah is Swift in taking account [cf. al-Noor 24:39].

Another of the evils spread by these newspapers and magazines is that they have an effect on people’s morals and customs, because of the images and fashions found in them, so the society turns into one that is very similar to those corrupt societies.

So the believers should boycott these newspapers and magazines and not help their publishers in their sin. Buying them is helping them and strengthening them and encouraging them to continue

publishing them and things that are even worse. Those who subscribe to them and buy them are helping them in sin and transgression. The believers should remember what Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allaah, but do that which they are commanded”

[al-Tahreem 66:6]

O Allaah, have I conveyed the message? O Allaah, have I conveyed the message? O Allaah, have I conveyed the message? O Allaah, bear witness to what I say, and bear witness to what these people hear, what is obligatory for them and what I say and repeat: you must boycott these newspapers and magazines and burn any of them that you have in your possession, so that you will be free of their sin.

Fataawa Islamiyyah (4/381-383).

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

It is not permissible to publish magazines which include pictures of women or promote zina, immorality, homosexuality, consumption of intoxicants and other things that call to falsehood and help therein. It is not permissible to work for such magazines by writing or distributing, because that is cooperating in sin and transgression, and spreading mischief on earth, and promoting the corruption of society and the spread of evil. Allaah says in His Book (interpretation of the meaning):

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allaah. Verily, Allaah is Severe in punishment”

[al-Maa'idah 5:2]

Fataawa Islamiyyah (4/384)

6 – Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah al-Jibreen (may Allaah preserve him) was asked:

We hope that you can explain the Islamic ruling on what appears in some immoral magazines which is called the zodiac, such as Taurus, Scorpio and so on. They say that whoever is born under the sign of Taurus, for example, such and such will happen to him, and he will travel to some land etc, and similar claims to have knowledge of the unseen. Each sign has its own events that will happen to those born under it.

He replied:

The zodiac refers to stations or “houses” of the sun, of which there are twelve. Allaah has sworn in the Qur’aan (interpretation of the meaning): “By the Sky (displaying) the Zodiacal Signs” [al-Burooj 85:1]. They are: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. They are months, and nobody knows what is going to happen in them except that which Allaah has told us. Whoever claims that such and such will happen in Taurus and such and such will happen in Scorpio is one of those who claim to have knowledge of the unseen, which no one knows except Allaah. It is not permissible to seek in the stars or the constellations of the zodiac anything but that which benefits a person’s faith and Islam. And Allaah knows best.

Fataawa Islamiyyah (4/386).

7 – The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked:

What is the ruling on one who allows magazines that contain pictures and articles that are forbidden in Islam to enter his home?

They replied:

It is not permissible for a Muslim to allow into his home magazines or novels which contain heretical ideas or material that promotes bid’ah and misguidance, or which promotes immorality, for they corrupt people’s beliefs and morals. The head of the family is responsible for his family, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The man is the shepherd

of his household and is responsible for his flock.”

Fataawa Islamiyyah (4/387).

8 – Shaykh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Jibreen (may Allaah preserve him) was asked:

The [name deleted] newspaper plays a bad role in distorting news about Muslims, concealing facts about their issues and presenting a bad image of Islam. It mispreresents Islamic issues and deals with them in a manner that does not serve the best interests of Islam in any way. It also presents news about kaafir actors and actresses etc and publishes pictures of them. What is your opinion of this newspaper? What is the ruling on selling it, buying it, distributing it and keeping it?

He replied:

If the matter is as described above, then dealing in it is a way of encouraging it, distributing it, promoting it and supporting it, in spite of all the problems in it and the damage it does to people’s ‘aqeedah. Hence I think that it is not permissible to keep it, buy it or distribute it. I advise every sincere person to avoid subscribing to it or publishing (articles) in it, because that will a way of suppressing it, until it changes it ways and does something better than this.

Fataawa Islamiyyah (4/388)

Conclusion:

You have read the fatwas of the scholars, and what they have said about the reasons why it is haraam to work for newspapers and magazines that go against sharee’ah, or to sell and buy them. You have seen what we said at the beginning of our answer. Based on that, you can think about these fatwas and see to what extent they apply to the newspaper that you work for. If there is anything that goes against sharee’ah then you should not work for it. Fear Allaah and remember that Allaah has promised you something better if you fear Him. In the Sunnah there is glad tidings for you if you give up this work for the sake of Allaah.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whosoever fears Allaah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).

3. And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allaah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allaah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allaah has set a measure for all things”
[al-Talaaq 65:2-3]

“and whosoever fears Allaah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him”

[al-Talaaq 65:4]

and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever gives up a thing for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will compensate him with something better than it.” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Hijaab al-Mar’ah al-Muslimah (p. 49).

If you think that by staying there you can change some of these evils and reduce them, and enjoin what is good and pave the way for righteous people to write for the newspaper and defend Islam, and other kinds of beneficial actions, then we hope that your staying there will be a good thing and that you will be rewarded for it and for your efforts to reduce evil, in sha Allaah.

But if you are not able to do that and the newspaper is filled with evils, then you have no choice but to leave, and Allaah will compensate you with something better than it.

And Allaah knows best.