

## PICTURES AND PHOTOGRAPHY

### Introduction

From amongst the major sins, we find no sin more widespread than that of the production of images. Nearly every person today carries a cell-phone, by which he is easily able to take pictures.

Many years ago, Mufti Muhammad Shafee Saheb رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ wrote a book on photography. In the introduction, he wrote,

“On noticing this state of retrogression, where everyone seems to be involved in this sin, one personally feels despondent and that one should rather adopt silence, instead of saying anything.

On the other hand, intellect demands that one should make the public aware of that *haraam* and impermissible action which has been narrated from Rasullullah ﷺ in such abundance, that it has reached the level of *tawaatur* (narration in which there is no doubt with regards to its authenticity.)

One should try ones level best to inform people of this sin, whether they accept or not. Even if they mock or pass unwanted remarks, one should not bother about it, but still apply oneself and go all out to make them aware of this sin. This is the demands of *Shariat* and intellect.

Take the example of a plague. If all efforts have been made to prevent the disease/plague from spreading, but people are still falling ill and contracting that disease, then no intelligent person will say that now the doctors should tell the people not to regard this disease as a disease, and neither should any steps be taken to treat it. In such times, the doctors continue treating the sick and administering medication, and many a times they are successful as well.”

# Pictures and Photography

*With the advent of mobile-phones and other similar devices, pictures, photography and video making, taking and viewing (of animate objects) has unfortunately become wide-spread. This scourge has reached unbelievable proportions. As Muslims, we should understand the harms, implications and dangers of pictures and photography etc. This booklet is an attempt to educate Muslims at large regarding the evils of this scourge. It is hoped that, insha Allah, after reading this booklet, the reader will understand the associated harms and will abstain accordingly, as well as endeavour to convey this message far and wide thereby saving himself as well as others from Allah's ﷻ Divine Wrath. May Allah ﷻ grant us the ability. Aameen*

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photograph should be prohibited to a higher degree when compared to the hand produced image.

It makes no difference whether an image is produced mechanically or by hand. The main thing is the final result. If some-one says that wine produced by hands are forbidden, but wine squeezed out from a machine is permissible, then such a statement will hold no weight, since the underlying factor in wine being forbidden is the factor of intoxication. The manner of producing it makes no difference. Similarly, one underlying factor of the prohibition of pictures is resemblance to the creation of Allaah ﷻ, which is found to a greater extent in images produced mechanically.

3.) Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates, I heard Rasullullah ﷺ saying, “Whoever makes an image in this world will be compelled to give life to it on the day of Resurrection, and he will not be able to give life to it.” (Bukhaari no. 5963, Muslim no. 2110) A man went to Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and said, “I make these images (as an occupation). Give me a fatwa regarding it. He رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ replied, “Come closer.” The man came closer. Again he said, “Come closer,” and the man drew even closer. Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ then placed his hand on the man’s and said, “I will inform you of what I heard from Rasullullah ﷺ. I heard Rasullullah ﷺ saying, “Every image maker shall be in the Hell-fire. A separate life will be given to him for every image that he produced. That life will then punish him in Hell.” Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, “If you have no alternative, you may draw trees and objects that have no life.” (Muslim no. 2110 similar narration in Bukhaari no. 2225)

Note: The more pictures one has made, the more severely he will be punished in the hereafter. Rasullullah ﷺ said, “On the Day of Judgment, some necks will emerge from the Fire of Hell. These necks will have two eyes that can see, two ears that can hear and a tongue that can speak. It will say, “I have been appointed to deal with three classes of people, all the rebellious tyrants, all those who associated a deity with Allaah ﷻ and all the makers of images.” (Tirmidhi no. 2574, Ahmad no. 8430)

Keeping this in mind, the following booklet has been prepared to highlight the severe warnings mentioned regarding photography, important masaa'il, and some incidents of our pious elders in which they clearly demonstrated their aversion to these pictures. May Allaah ﷻ grant us the ability to follow in their footsteps, save us from sin and those things which will lead to sin, and make our object of life the Hereafter!

## Quranic Verses and Ahaadith Explaining the Evil of Pictures

Allaah ﷻ states, “Verily those who (desire to) cause harm to Allaah and His Messenger, Allaah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a disgraceful punishment.” Ikramah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ says that the verse was revealed with regards to those who make images/pictures.” (Ibn Katheer)

1.) Ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasullullah ﷺ said, “Those who make these images shall be punished on the day of Resurrection. They will be ordered, ‘Give life to what you created.’” (Bukhaari no. 5951, Muslim no. 2108)

Explanation: The word ‘images’ refers to images of animate objects whether humans, animals, fish, etc. As for inanimate objects, permission has been granted to draw or form them e.g. trees, buildings, rivers, etc. Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that he heard Rasullullah ﷺ saying, “Every painter shall be in the Hell-fire. A life will be given to every picture that he drew. That life will then punish him in Hell.” Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, “If you have no alternative, you may draw trees and objects that have no life.” (Bukhaari no. 2225, Muslim no. 2110)

‘Those who make these images shall be punished’ – Ulama state that if a person forms these images with the intention of adopting similarity with Allaah ﷻ, then such a person will become a disbeliever. If however, one does not have this intention, he will be a flagrant sinner.

‘They will be ordered, ‘Give life to what you created.’ – They had imitated the action of Allaah ﷻ’s creative quality but had not placed life into it

as Allaah ﷻ had done. They will be ordered to place life into it which they will not be able to do, and will thus be punished. Aishah رضي الله عنها narrates, “Rasulullah ﷺ returned from a journey. In his absence, I covered the porch of my house with a curtain which had pictures on it. When Rasulullah ﷺ saw it, the colour of his face changed [out of anger]. He said, ‘O ‘Aishah! Those who shall receive the severest punishment by Allaah ﷻ on the day of Resurrection shall be those who copy the creation of Allaah.’ She said, “We therefore cut that curtain and made one or two pillows from it.” (Bukhaari no. 5954. Muslim no. 2107) (Note: Pictures should be completely destroyed in such a manner that no form of the living being remains.)

Ibn Hajar رحمه الله writes, “This is a special warning to those who use images because since the severe warning addresses the maker, it will apply to the user as well because an object is made for usage and the maker is simply the means, whereas the user is the actual objective, so therefore the user is more deserving of this warning. (Fathul-Baari vol. 10 page 390)

Note: Keeping pictures is forbidden. The prohibition intensifies when it is such that there is reverence as well e.g. when it is hung up or placed in a frame. Another evil form is when pictures of the deceased are hung on the grave. This is an innovation which must be prohibited.

Forming, taking pictures and drawing of inanimate objects are permissible. However, if done unnecessarily, it is disliked (*makruh tanzih*) as it is an act of futility.

2.) Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrates, “I heard Rasulullah ﷺ saying, “Allaah ﷻ said, “Who can be more oppressive than the one who tries to create something that I created? Let them [show their talent] by creating an ant, a grain seed or a barley seed [if it's possible for them to do that]!” (Bukhaari no. 5953. Muslim no. 2111)

‘Oppressive’ – Oppression entails the misplacing of an attribute. Here the attribute of Allaah ﷻ is being assigned to the creation. The image-maker is thus deserving of the most serious form of punishment.

‘who tries to create something that I created?’ – Ibn Hajar رحمه الله writes, “This similarity is only with regards to the image alone and not in all aspects.” This means that the person does not have to create in the complete form and manner in which Allaah ﷻ does. By simply creating the image of the creation of Allaah ﷻ, he is nevertheless attempting or deemed to have attempted to imitate the act of creation which is the exclusive action of Allaah ﷻ.

‘Let them [show their talent] by creating an ant, a grain seed or a barley seed [if it's possible for them to do that]!’ – This is a form of rebuke of such persons and an indication of their inability. In the world, he was effectively claiming his ability to create an animate being, whereas in the hereafter he will be unable to produce even an inanimate form of creation.

This hadith indicates to one of the reasons why picture making is forbidden. Creating and forming of shapes is amongst the special qualities of Allaah ﷻ, in which no other person can partner Him. By forming or drawing a picture, a person is practically claiming to partner Allaah ﷻ in these qualities. Man is completely weak. He is thus told in this hadith to create in reality something small and insignificant like one atom, a grain seed or a barley seed. When he cannot do so, then he should completely refrain from forming animate objects.

Additional point: The greater the degree of resemblance between the image and the actual animate object, the greater the degree of prohibition would be because the extent of challenging and attempting to resemble Allaah ﷻ is greater when the image is closer to the original. It is quite clear to every intelligent person that a photograph resembles the original item to a very high degree when compared to a hand drawn image, which does not resemble the image in every aspect. It therefore follows that a

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “O Shabah, efface (wipe out) every image in the Bait (Ka’bah).” (At-Tareekhul-Kabeer of Bukhari no. 2196)

Aishah رضي الله عنها states that Rasulullaah ﷺ would not leave anything in the house in which there were images except that he destroyed it. (Bukhari no. 5952)

7.) Ali رضي الله عنه says that on one occasion he had prepared food and invited Rasulullaah ﷺ. When he arrived at the home, he noticed some pictures and therefore returned. (Nasai no. 5351, Shorter Ibn Majah no. 3359) A similar thing happened to Abu Masud رضي الله عنه. He once saw an image in a home, and he returned (i.e. he did not enter that home.) (Bukhari before hadith 5181) Abu Masud رضي الله عنه says that once somebody prepared a meal for him and invited him. He asked if there were any images in the house. The reply was in the affirmative. He therefore refused to enter the house until some time that the images were broken. Only thereafter did he enter. (Sunan Kubra of Baihaqi no. 14565) When Umar رضي الله عنه came to Sham, a Christian man prepared food for him and said, “I love that you accept my invitation, so that you and my companions can honour me.” He was a respectable person of Sham. Umar رضي الله عنه said to him, “We do not enter your churches because of the pictures therein.” (Sunanul-Kubra of Baihaqi no. 14564)

The underlying reasons why photography is haraam:

1. The one drawing an animate object is resembling Allaah ﷻ in the power of creation. (This factor is glaringly found in digital photography.)
  2. It is the cause of shirk and idol worship in the world. This was found in the images and pictures of the pious and righteous.
  3. It is a barrier for the entrance of angels into one’s home. (These three reasons are established by the ahaadeeth.)
- Hadrat Thanwi رحمه الله writes one other reason: Talazzuz (deriving pleasure) – this can be in one of two ways: a.) Roohani (Mentally and spiritually) e.g. looking at the pictures of the pious and attaining a feeling of happiness in

In another hadith, Rasulullaah ﷺ is reported to have said, “The worst punished on the Day of Judgement will be a man who a nabi killed or he killed a nabi; the leader of misguidance; and the one who imitates or copies Allaah ﷻ.” (Musnad Ahmad no. 3868)

4.) Ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه narrates, “I heard Rasulullaah ﷺ saying, “Those who used to make images shall receive the severest punishment on the day of Resurrection.” (Bukhaari no. 5950. Muslim, 2109)

Some scholars are of the opinion that musawwirun refers to those who make images of idols which could be worshipped. By doing so, one will become a disbeliever, and since his evil action lead others to the worst sin of shirk, he will get the severest punishment. Other scholars state that the word musawwirun is general. Images, effigies as well as pictures are included in this warning.

Aishah رضي الله عنها narrates that once Umm Habibah رضي الله عنها and Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها made mention of a church they had seen in Abyssinia in which there were images. They then mentioned it to Rasulullaah ﷺ who replied, “These people were such that when any pious person amongst them passed away, they built a place of worship over his grave and they formed images of this person at the place of worship. These are the worst of the creation of Allaah in the sight of Allaah on the Day of Judgement.” (Bukhari no. 427, Muslim no. 528) Whilst photographs are prohibited, photographs of pious people are to an even greater extent prohibited, since they can lead to idol-worship. Such photographs should never be taken, and if found should be destroyed.

Imam Nawawi رحمه الله has written, “Our companions and other scholars are of the view that making up an image of a living being is severely prohibited and is amongst the major sins regarding which severe warning has been sounded which have been mentioned in the ahaadith. This applies equally to making a form of something which is looked down upon or not. Making such an item is prohibited in all conditions as in doing so, one is imitating

the creative quality of Allaah ﷻ. This applies equally whether the image is created on a cloth or a sheet that is spread out or a gold or silver coin used as change or a vase, on a wall or otherwise. As for forming an image of a tree or the saddle of a camel, etc. in which there is no animate object, then this is not prohibited. This is the ruling regarding making of images. As for keeping of photographs in which there is an animate object, the following laws apply: a.) If it is hung on a wall, or it is imprinted on clothes that are worn, or imprinted on a turban or something similar, which is treated with honour, then this will be prohibited. 2.) If however it is found on a carpet which is trampled, or a pillow which is treated in a humiliating manner, then this is not prohibited. However, will this prevent the angels of mercy from entering the house or not? In this, there is discussion which we shall explain soon, if Allaah ﷻ wills. There is no difference in all of these rulings, whether the image has a shadow or not. This is the crux of our madhab on this issue. The overwhelming majority of scholars hold the same view from among the Companions, the Taabi'een and those after them. This is also the madhab of Thauri, Maalik, Abu Hanifah and others (May Allaah ﷻ have mercy on them!) (*Sharhun Nawawi of Muslim*)

5.) Abu Talhah رضى الله عنه said, "The angels do not enter a house in which is a dog or a picture [of an animate object]." (*Bukhaari no. 4002, Muslim no. 2106*) Ibn Umar رضى الله عنه narrates, "Jibreel عليه السلام promised Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه that he will come to him. However, he delayed in coming and this made Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه quite anxious. He eventually came out [of his house] and Jibreel عليه السلام met him. Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه complained about his delay. He replied: 'We do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture.'" (*Bukhaari no. 5960, Muslim no. 2105*) A'ishah رضى الله عنه narrates, "Jibreel عليه السلام promised Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه that he will come to him at a certain time. When the appointed time came, Jibreel عليه السلام was not there. Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه had a stick in his hand which he threw aside and said, 'Allaah and His Messenger do not go back on their word.' He then turned around and saw a pup [little

dog] under his bed. He asked, 'When did this dog come inside?' I replied, 'By Allaah, I did not even know it was here.' He ordered that it be sent out. Jibreel عليه السلام then came to him. Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه said to him, 'You made a promise to come at a certain time. I remained waiting for you but you did not come.' Jibreel عليه السلام replied, 'The dog that was in your house prevented me from coming. We [angels] do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture [of animate objects].'" (*Muslim no. 2104*)

The angels referred to here are the angels of mercy. Other angels like the protecting angels, the angels who are engaged in writing the actions of a person and the angel of death are not meant here. By keeping these pictures or a dog, a person is deprived of the company of these angels, thus depriving himself of their blessings, their seeking forgiveness on his behalf, and their inspiring him to obey Allaah ﷻ. The obvious result is the entry of Shaytaans (devils) in the house. The house is thus deprived of Allaah ﷻ' s mercy.

The dogs referred to here are those which one is prohibited from keeping. As for those which are permissible e.g. security dogs, hunting dogs, farming dogs, herding dogs, etc. they are not a barrier in letting the angels enter. However some scholars state that even though keeping these dogs is permissible, they too are a barrier for the angels. Precaution demands that if one is in need of these dogs, then he should not allow them to stay in the house, but they should be kept outside.

6.) Abu al-Hayjaaj Hayyaan ibn Husayn narrates, "'Ali ibn Abi Taalib رضى الله عنه said to me, 'Should I not send you to fulfil a task for which Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه had sent me? The task is that if you see any picture, you must erase it. And if you see any elevated grave, you must level it [in line with the ground].'" (*Muslim no. 969, Abu Dawood no. 3218, Tirmidhi no. 1049*)

When Rasulullaah رضى الله عنه saw images in the Ka'bah, he refused to enter it, but rather gave instructions for it to be destroyed, which was duly carried out. (*Bukhaari no. 3352*) Shaibah ibn Uthmaan رضى الله عنه reports that



wall, etc.) which allows one to view it whenever one wishes. Similar is the case of a digital photo. The image is first captured, stored, and thereafter displayed on the screen. Hence, one is able to view the digital picture whenever one wishes. The only difference is that through modern day technology, the formation and capturing process takes place in rapid succession. The pixels and rays of light are used to form picture after picture within seconds. However, the focal point is that the second picture only appears after the first picture disappears. Each person understands that these pictures had to be created in order to appear on the screen. Therefore, digital photography will be regarded as a picture immaterial of the process of formation or the duration of time that it remains on the screen.

4. Resembling the creation of Allaah ﷻ - The fourth way for one to understand that digital photography is the same as a normal picture is that Nabi ﷺ has explained that the underlying factor for the prohibition of normal pictures is that the one drawing an animate object is resembling Allaah ﷻ in the power of creation. Hence, wherever this factor is found the prohibition will apply. As it applies in the case of a normal picture, then why should it not apply to digital pictures? In fact, this factor is found in a digital picture to a greater extent. One is able to view the picture in motion which seems so real to the onlooker.

Finally, each person should heed the advice of Rasulullaah ﷺ on this issue, if he is still in doubt. "Halaal is clear and haraam is clear. Between them are unclear and doubtful things. Many people are unaware about these things. The one who refrains from unclear and doubtful things saves his deen and secures his respect in society. The one who gets involved in doubtful things eventually falls into haraam just as a shepherd who pastures his animals round a preserve will soon pasture them in it." (Muslim no. 1599) "Abandon that which puts you into doubt for what which does not create any doubt. Verily truth is a source of solace and falsehood is a source of doubt (hence if something creates doubt, it is most likely that some element of falsehood exists therein.) (Tirmidhi no. 2518)

the heart b.) Shaitaani (physically) by looking at images of women and other immoral pictures.

Hadrat Hakeem Saheb رحمہ اللہ has mentioned two other wisdoms why Allaah ﷻ has declared pictures as impermissible:

1.) By declaring pictures as impermissible Allaah ﷻ has protected the honour of His servants. For example, if a stranger has to see an elderly grandmother then he will greet her with respect but if he has to see her picture when she was 16 years of age (in spite of her reaching old age) then he too will entertain filthy thoughts of her and desire that he had her. It is truly the favour and kindness of Allaah ﷻ upon us that He has declared photography as haraam so that people do not entertain filthy thoughts of His servants.

2.) Another secret in regards to the impermissibility of photography which Allaah ﷻ placed in my heart is that photos become a document of one's life history. If a person was involved in some sort of sin but then removed the photos that display the sins that he committed, then this person could resort to tawbah in the future by the taufeeq of Allaah ﷻ and become the Sheikh or Wali of the time. Now, if a jealous person has to present one of his past photographs (indulging in sin) then how wouldn't this person be humiliated and disgraced. It is for this reason that photography has been declared forbidden so that it doesn't become a document of one's sins and in this way the honour of His servants are protected. (Inaamaat e Rabbani page 109/110)



Rasulullaah ﷺ said: "The angels of mercy do not enter a home wherein there is a dog or a picture (of an animate object)." (Saheeh Bukhari)

### ***Important Point Regarding Digital Photography***

Digital pictures are produced in three stages: 1.) The cameras multiple light sensitive sensors capture the brightness of each pixel. 2.) These sensors thereafter convert the captured brightness of each pixel into a digital value e.g. red=46, blue=70, green=100. 3.) The software in the camera or on a computer then reads the value recorded for each pixel (in step two) and displays the image on the screen. Thus, there are several stages through which the digital photo passes, before it is displayed as an image. Each picture is first created and then displayed. This is very swiftly followed by the creation and display of the next picture. It is thus clear that all digital cameras whether standalone cameras, cameras built into cellular phones, CCTV, web-cams, etc. produce images within milliseconds and then display them (even before one captures it or saves it to memory). In principal, digital photography resembles the conventional method of picture making. One first gathers the material e.g. paint, painting brush, paper, etc. Thereafter one skillfully combines the materials to produce the picture. Similar is the case of digital photography, the camera joins the necessary material and puts it together in order to produce the picture. Therefore, in drawing one picture, there is one sin. In digital photography a person is guilty of forming thousands of images every minute.

Those who claim permissibility state that this is similar to the reflection of a mirror, because just as a mirror does not possess stability and does not remain existent all the time, similar is the case with digital photography. However, there are noticeable differences between them:

1.) Reflection of a mirror occurs naturally without any action of man, for which he is not accountable. Digital photography is a creation of man and operates through his actions. He will thus be accountable for it. 2.) The reflection on a mirror is subject to the original object being before the mirror. Once the original object moves away, the object no longer remains. This is not the case with digital photography. 3.) The reflection of a mirror is not preserved for a moment on the mirror after the original object

moves, whereas a person's image on digital photography can be seen after his demise as well.

2.) The terms *tasweer* and *surah* in the terminology of the jurists are the same as their literal meanings. (*Al-Mausu'atu'l-Fiqhiyah*.) Thus there is no difference between the literal and technical meaning of picture in the Shariah. The inventors of these modern objects as well as experts in their respective fields have clearly declared that these instruments are forming images and are not mere reflections.

### ***Various Ways of Proving that Digital Photography is the Same as Picture Making***

There are essentially four ways through which one can understand that digital photography is the same as a normal picture.

1. Strong resemblance - The end result of a person capturing something by means of digital photography strongly resembles the end result of drawing a picture by hand.

2. Progressive form of drawing - The second way for one to understand that digital photography is the same as a normal picture is that digital photography is just a progressive form of drawing a picture with one's hand. Technology has replaced the conventional method of drawing by hand. However, in terms of the end product being a picture, both are the same. In fact, every person believes beyond a shadow of doubt that digital photography has far exceeded and surpassed a normal picture in the art of picture making. Hence, one would understand that the prohibition that applies to picture making necessarily applies to digital photography.

3. Capturing, storing and displaying - The third way for one to understand that digital photography is the same as a normal picture is that digital photography resembles a picture in the aspect of capturing, storing and displaying, though the method of both differs. In the case of a normal picture, it is captured (in the form of drawing) on a material surface, (page,



10.) If a picture is closed in a box or covered by a cloth, plate, etc. then this will not be a barrier for the entry of the angels. Yes, the sin of making it, buying it, selling it, and keeping it for no reason will still remain.

11.) A picture is found in the house or shop of some person. Another Muslim has the ability to destroy it. It will be waajib (compulsory) for him to do so. According to the Shariah, responsibility for any damages is not compulsory on him. However, if there is a fear of fitnah (evil or trouble) occurring, then such an action should not be done.

12.) Some people present themselves at such places where photos are taken. They cover their faces to save themselves from being photographed. It is not sufficient to do this to save oneself from the sin. It is actually waajib (compulsory) to move away from this gathering, even if it is a religious gathering. If the person is a leader or respectable person, then his sitting in this gathering is worse and a double sin – one sin for sitting there and the other for making the general masses bold to commit sin.

13.) Some people keep the photos of pious people in their homes with great care. The rulings regarding these photos are the same as has been mentioned regarding general photos – making them, buying and selling them are forbidden. In regarding them as blessed, there is the fear of kufr. The doors of misguidance and polytheism opened from these types of pictures.

14.) Regarding pictures that are found on many food items which are stored in our homes, it is best that the packaging be removed and the contents stored in jars/ containers etc. (such as tea, coffee, cereals). If not, then one should at least destroy the picture of the animate object by removing the entire head or scratching it off. Regarding diapers/napkins, there are many napkins found on the market which are free of pictures. One should make an effort to purchase such napkins. Tossing napkins are also still found on the market which are totally free of pictures.

This principle is explained in the books of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). A person has a glass of water which he intends drinking. However, five people claim that one teaspoon of urine had been added to the water whilst another ten people claim that no urine had been added to the water. What will one do in such a situation? Will one drink the water? One will certainly exercise caution and refrain from such water due to the doubt which was created. Similar is the case of digital photography. To the layman it is no different to any other photography. Even the experts call it a picture. As for picture making, numerous Ahaadith prohibit it. The four Imaams of Fiqh have declared it impermissible in the light of the Ahaadith. The six famous Imaams of Hadith (Imaam Bukhaari, Imaam Muslim, Imaam Abu Dawood, Imaam Tirmizi, Imaam Nasaai and Imaam Ibnu Maajah رَحِمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ) all have included the Ahaadith prohibiting picture making in their compilations. Imaam Bukhaari رَحِمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ has dedicated ten chapters in his masterpiece “Saheeh Al-Bukhaari” towards explaining the severity and admonitions of picture making. Thus, even if some Ulama declare it permissible, the dictates of caution is that one should refrain from it.

**Rasulullaah ﷺ has explicitly warned:**

**“Among the people who will receive the worst punishment on the day of Judgement will be those involved in picture-making”**

**(Saheeh Bukhaari)**

### ***Masaail (Ruulings) Regarding Photographs***

- 1.) It is forbidden to: a.) draw pictures of animate objects. b.) take pictures of animate objects. This is irrespective of whether the picture is small or big; formed on clothing, paper or a wall; whether done manually by means of a pen or by camera or in a printing press or even by carving out a picture.
- 2.) Just as it is not permissible to make pictures, it is not permissible to put them up for display and hang them up on the wall, etc. Watching immoral scenes on the television and cinema screens is a compounded sin. It is forbidden for men to look at pictures of strange women and vice versa, whether in magazines, newspapers, books, etc.
- 3.) It is permissible to read the permissible subject matter in newspapers, magazines and school and college textbooks, but it is not permissible to take enjoyment from pictures of animate objects therein.
- 4.) It is forbidden to buy and sell pictures. Any money earned therefrom is haram and cannot be utilized. This is when the picture is the actual reason for the sale. If the object is something else e.g. a person buys a book or some clothing, and the picture is affixed to it, then the sale will be correct. It is necessary for the purchaser to obliterate the picture as soon as he buys it.
- 5.) It is not permissible to make, buy, and sell toys with animate forms. One should not make, buy and sell foodstuff made in the form of an animate object, like chocolates, cakes, etc. made in the form of humans and animals. It is not even permissible to eat this even if not bought, as one is endorsing sin.

The current day dolls available on the market with facial features resembling a living being is not permitted in Shariah. It is therefore best that one refrains totally from purchasing any such dolls for their children.

However, if a parent had purchased such dolls in the past due to not knowing the above mentioned ruling and the kids have now become accustomed to playing with them, then it is necessary that the head of the doll is completely removed. This will be the only way possible for one to keep the doll, but then too the ideal thing to do is to get rid of the doll since it is moulded in the shape of the human being.

6.) It is forbidden to keep pictures of animate objects. Similarly keeping photo albums, frames etc. are also not permitted in Shariah. Even worse is to hang pictures of animate objects in one's home and shop. Another evil found in some homes are trophies of people, etc. It is forbidden to display or even keep such trophies.

7.) It is not permissible to perform salaah wearing such clothing which has the picture of an animate object. It is also not permissible to perform salaah in a place where there are photos. In this case, the salaah will be makrooh-tahreemi. However, if the head of the picture is cut off or erased, or the picture is so small and on the floor that if a person is standing, he cannot see it clearly, then there will not be any karaahat (reprehensibility) in the salaah. Similarly, if a big picture is concealed (for example, on the vest under the kurtah), then the salaah will be valid. However, to garb oneself with such clothing without necessity is a sin.

8.) Passports, identity cards, money and tickets with photos are items of necessity. There is no harm in keeping them. Some people collect tickets or stamps as a hobby. Keeping such tickets or stamps which have photos is not permissible

9.) It is not permissible to enter a house in which there is the picture of an animate object displayed. Places of necessity are excluded, for example, going to a place to retrieve a loan, places related to one's livelihood, etc.

Moulana Manzoor Nu'mani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ to criticise and write against this calendar in their respective magazines; "Ta'meer-e-Hayaat" and "Al-Furqaan".  
(Sawaanih Hazrat Shaikhul Hadeeth by Ml. Abul Hasan pg.210/211)

Once an Egyptian Aalim visited Darul Uloom Deoband. Hazrat Madani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was showing him around the Darul Uloom. When they reached a certain open place, the Egyptian Aalim asked Hazrat Madani to remain standing where he is to which Hazrat obliged, not knowing the reason behind this strange request. The Egyptian Aalim then walked a short distance, turned around and took a photo of Hazrat. Hazrat Madani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ became extremely angry when he realized what had transpired.

5.) Mufti Mahmood Hasan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ narrated the following incident: In Saraa-e-Meer Madrasah I met a certain close friend of Mowlana Abdul Ghani Phulphuri رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, who told me that he has something special to show me. He then, with great respect and reverence, took out a photo of Moulana Abdul Ghani Saheb and placed it in front of me, saying: "This is Hazrat's photo." (This was most probably the photo he took when he went for Haj.) Mufti Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: I took the photo and tore it up, since it's not permissible to keep a photo in this manner, with such reverence. This friend then told me that he has another photo also. I told him that you have just seen what I did with the first one, so he promised that he will tear up the other one also. (Malfoozaate Faqeehul Ummat vol.3 page 114)

Once, somebody showed a photo of Hakeemul Ummat Mowlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ to Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. Mufti Saheb took the photo and tore it up right there and then. (Narrated by Qari Barkatullah Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, Lenasia)

6.) Once an elderly white bearded man, who seemed to be a very pious person, came to invite Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Ludhyanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, author of Ahsanul Fataawa, to perform the nikaah of his son. Mufti Saheb explained to him that since photography on the occasion of nikah has become very common, he does not attend nikahs. The elderly man assured Mufti Saheb that there will be no photography. Mufti Saheb warned him to think well

- 15.) All these rulings are with regards to animate objects. It is therefore permissible to make, buy and sell:
  - a.) pictures of inanimate objects.
  - b.) animate objects in which the head is severed (and not only the eyes).
  - c.) pictures of other limbs individually, excluding the head.

### ***Incidents and Statements of our Elders Regarding Photos***

- 1.) In the year 1970, Allamah Yusuf Binnori رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ went to Cairo to attend the fifth 'Majma'ul Abhaathil Islaamiyyah' conference as a representative of Pakistan. At the end of the conference, the former president Jamal Abdun-Nasser invited the participants to the Government House. Each individual was to go forward as his turn came along, greet the president and would be allowed to say a few words if they wished to do so. The president had, to honour each guest, called for a photographer to take a photograph of each of those scholars while posing with the president. When this desire of the president was made known, most of the guests were overjoyed at the prospect of having their pictures taken with the president. One by one, they stood on the president's left and had their photos taken. Allamah Yusuf Binnori رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states, "I do not have piety and Taqwa by which I would be able to avoid such sins. Nonetheless, when my turn came closer, I went into the other room and sat down. It so happened that the president was directly in front of me and kept looking at me. When my turn came, he said to two Shaykhs of Azhar, "Go and call that Pakistani Shaikh (Aalim) to take a photo with me." All praise is due to Allah that my deeni ghayrah (sense of honour) came to the fore. My heart said to me, "Remain firm on the viewpoint of your pious elders and shun this 'honour'." Today it is necessary to practice on this Hadith 'It is not permissible to obey the creation when it entails disobedience to Allaah. Obedience is only allowed in permissible actions.'" When those two seniors said to me, "The leader is calling you to have your photo taken with him", I replied, "I do not consider it to be correct, nor is there any value in this as far as my Deen goes." They went back to him and related my excuse to the president. I was not able to hear their words and determine how they interpreted my

viewpoint. When departing, nobody was bold to shake hands a second time. Before departing, I approached the president with this thought in my mind, "Today I have the opportunity. Allaah alone knows whether I will have another chance or not. Therefore, I should give him some good advice." While shaking his hands, I said, "Respected president, Allaah has granted you a strong heart in your bosom. My hope and desire is that this strong heart should build up a strong contact with the Strong and Mighty Creator in whose control lies all kingdom." The president smiled, pondered deeply over my words, then shook my hands with force and lowered his hands slightly, as is done on an occasion of joy. This was my final meeting with the president which ended on this advice." (*Condensed from 'Basa'ir wa Ibar'*)

2.) After a visit to Egypt by the Jami'atul Ulama Hind (India) in connection with the plight of the oppressed Palestinians, when preparing to leave, a number of Egyptian *ulama* and dignitaries came to see the delegation of Jami'at al-'Ulama al-Hind off. The dignitaries requested for a photo to be taken but Mufti Kifayatullah emphatically refused and declared it *haram*. In view of certain Egyptian scholars having issued a *fatwa* of permissibility of photography, a discussion ensued. A brief recording of the discussion appears in *Biography of Mufti Kifayatullah* (Abdur-Rashid Ahmad Arshad) as follows:

Ulama of Egypt: The impermissibility only applies to those pictures which are made by the work of the human hand. In photography, no such thing is needed. It is simply a reflection of the picture.

Mufti Kifayatullah: So how does this "reflection" become transferred from the lens to the paper?

Ulama of Egypt: It requires much [technical] work.

Mufti Kifayatullah: What is the difference between "human handiwork" and "much work"?

Ulama of Egypt: Yes, they are the same thing.

Mufti Kifayatullah: Hence, their ruling is the same [photography is just as *haram* as drawing pictures with the hand].  
The response of Mufti Kifayatullah left the Egyptian *ulama* present speechless and very impressed. (*Biography of Mufti Kifayatullah*, p. 25-6)

3.) Hadrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Akhtar Sahab رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to say, "To take a photo is prohibited. If a person has to take a photo, due to a valid Shar'i reason e.g. for a passport, identity document, etc. then my Shaikh Moulana Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to say, "Do not take the photo with a smile. With a sorrowful face, seeking forgiveness in the heart, a person should say, "O Allaah! Taking of photos is prohibited. I have a Shar'i reason. Please forgive me."

4.) Moulana Zaynul Aabideen A'zami رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, ustadh of Takhassus-fil-Hadeeth in Mazaahire Uloom, Saharanpur said, "Due to Hazrat Madani's political stance, he used to appear quite often on stages at different gatherings. If he saw anyone trying to photograph him, he would in stern words prohibit them from doing so." Hazrat Madani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ himself states, "I never ever had my photo taken knowingly and voluntarily. That takes place when I am unaware, and I do not consider it permissible. Those who do that [i.e. take other peoples' pictures] are responsible for their actions." (*Ma'arif wa Haqa'iq* page 380)

In 1949, a certain Deeni organization in Delhi, India published a calendar known as the 'Shaykhul Hind Calendar', which included a photograph of Shaykhul Islaam Moulana Husayn Ahmad Madani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. The said organization not only advertised this calendar in their organ, "Al-Jam'iyat", but went as far as to say that the value of this calendar has increased due to it containing a photo of Moulana Madani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, and that alone is worth all the money spent in purchasing it.

When Shaykhul Hadeeth Moulana Zakariyyah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, [author of Faza'il-e-A'maal] read this advert, he could not tolerate it and immediately wrote to Moulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, stressing on him and his colleague

Thereafter Hazrat narrated the following incident of Moulana Yusuf رحمۃ اللہ علیہ which was narrated by the respected mother of Hazrat Moulana Salmaan Saheb and the niece of Hazrat Shaykhul Hadeeth رحمۃ اللہ علیہ: She says, “When we were young, somebody amongst the girls in Nizamuddeen got hold of a picture of one of the *Buzurgs* from somewhere. As it is with little children, one began passing it to the other. All of a sudden Hazrat Moulana Yusuf Saheb entered the house and he noticed something in one of our hands. When he saw it was a photo, he immediately tore it to pieces. One of the girls innocently said, “But this was Hazrat’s photo!” Moulana replied, “No matter whose photo it is, I will still tear it up and destroy it!”

Moulana Zaynul Aabideen A’zami said, “Hazratjee Moulana Yusuf رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to be very stern and firm when it came to photos. If he saw anyone taking photos (in bayaans, ijtimas etc.) he used to reprimand and prohibit them.”

13.) A friend of Hazrat Hajee Ahmad Nakhooda Saheb (daamat barakaatuhu) (a Khalifah of Hazrat Shaykhul Hadeeth Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ who resides in Madeenah Munawwarah) has the gift of Kashf-e-Quboor (the ability to communicate- by the permission of Allah تبارک و تعالیٰ - with the deceased). Once, he went to the grave of a friends’ father in Lichtenburg, South Africa. (Hajee Saheb even mentioned the name). The marhoom told him that there’s something heavy on his chest. When asked what it was, he replied that there is a photo of his somewhere in his house. When the person gifted with kashf-e-quboor related it to the marhoom’s son, he acknowledged and said, “We had an album containing family photos. My wife and I decided to destroy it, so she burnt it in the stove. I, however, secretly removed one picture of my father before she burnt it, and kept it in my cupboard.” Thereafter, the marhoom’s son destroyed that picture also. After visiting the qabr again, the marhoom told the one gifted with kashf-e-quboor that he’s now feeling better and that burden has now been removed.

over it, because if while he’s performing the nikah anyone decides to take a photo, he will immediately stand up and walk out, without even completing the nikah. He added: “Do not say afterwards that you were disgraced in public, etc.”

The elderly man assured Mufti Saheb that he takes the responsibility to ensure that photos are not taken. On the day of the nikah, when Mufti Saheb arrived near the place of nikah, he saw a massive tent pitched on a wide field, with photographers standing on all sides. Mufti Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said, “Until these weapons of Shaytaan (cameras) are not taken away from them and handed over to me, I would not even enter this field.” When they expressed their helplessness and the fact that they were incapable of doing it, Mufti Saheb turned around and began walking away.

That elderly man began begging Mufti Saheb to perform the nikah, saying that besides the humiliation we will have to suffer, no arrangements were made for anyone else to perform the nikah, and that it would be difficult to find someone at this moment. Mufti Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ replied, “Whatever happens may happen. Let alone performing the nikah, I would not even set foot on that field.” He then walked away! (Anwaarur Rasheed pg.173)

7.) Once an Aalim who studied for only one year under Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Ludhyanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ attended the Jalsah of a certain Deeni institute. As he came near, he saw a photographer standing there. He immediately turned around and returned home. He wrote a note regarding preventing such a major sin and sent it to the rector of that institute, who, at that time did not take any steps to prevent the photographer from his haraam act. Later on, this aalim went to meet the rector in private and explained to him the seriousness of the wrong perpetrated at the jalsah. The rector realized it and immediately expressed his tawbah. This Aalim then explained to him that the tawbah for a sin done in public must be made in public. The rector accepted his advice and announced his tawbah in front of a massive crowd at the time of Jum’ah. (Anwaarur Rasheed pg.213)

8.) Many Ulema of other countries who were imprisoned in Malta benefited from the vast knowledge of Shaykhul Hind رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. Some of them were under the misconception that there is a difference between taking of photos (by means of a camera) and drawing of pictures (by hand), therefore the former is permissible although the latter is not. However, after listening to the explanation of Shaykhul Hind رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ and the bayaan of Hazrat Madani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, most of them began regarding the taking of photos as impermissible as well. Those who had repeatedly requested Shaykhul Hind رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ permission to photograph him, after listening to his explanation, did not repeat their request. *(Hoyate Shaykhul Hind pg.121)*

Some Muslims of Turkey and Shaam requested Shaykhul Hind to grant them permission to photograph him, but Hazrat Shaykhul Hind did not accede to their request and explained to them that taking of a photo by means of a camera is no different than drawing a picture, and is therefore Haraam. *(Hoyate Shoykhul Hind pg.123)*

9.) Hajee Abdul Wahhaab Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once said, "Moulana Ilyas رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was once on a journey. They stopped over at a certain house where Moulana was feeling unusually tense and constricted. He wasn't speaking openly and freely. Those close to Moulana realized this and asked him the reason. He mentioned that it seems that there are no angels of mercy in this house. The people began looking for those things mentioned in the Hadeeth Shareef which cause the angels of mercy to vacate the house. After a while they found a piece of paper lying in a corner which bore a picture of an animate object. When it was removed, Moulana's condition returned to normal."

10.) Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had such aversion for pictures of animate objects (humans and animals), that he used to count money (which bore a picture of Ghandi) with the picture overturned, facing downwards.

Some of the air-mail envelopes in India used to bear a picture of Ghandi. Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ used to **always** turn the envelope around, so the picture is not visible.

When visitors used to depart, it was the habit of Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ to give them something to eat on the journey, which was most of the time a packet of biscuits. Some of the packets used to have a picture of a boy on it. Hazrat رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ used to cut out the picture before giving the pack of biscuits to the guest. *(As narrated by close mureeds of Moulana Maseehullah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ)*

11.) Once while teaching Bukhari Shareef in Darul Uloom Deoband, someone came to say that some people of the press have arrived and they want to take photos. Molana Fakhruddeen رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ (Shaikhul-hadeeth of Deoband) severely reprimanded them and sternly mentioned that in no ways will photography be allowed in the Madrasah.

12.) In Rajab 1431, when Hazrat Moulana Salman Saheb (grandnephew of Hazrat Shaykul-Hadeeth رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, and ustadh of hadith in Mazaahirul-Uloom) was asked regarding any incidents of our akaabireen (seniors) pertaining to photography, he looked down, paused for a while, sighed deeply (a sigh full of pain and concern), and then mentioned, "This is the era of 'ibaahiyat' (impermissible and haraam actions are being declared permissible and halaal). Our buzurgs and elders were very particular and had a lot of 'ihtiyaat' (were very cautious). May Allaah ﷻ protect us and grant us tawfeeq to follow in the footsteps of our Akaabireen (seniors). Because of progress with regards to the 'means' of picture-making, people have found a loophole and a chance to make 'ta'weel' (bring about interpretations in order to alter the established laws of shariah). This sad state of affairs has deteriorated to such an extent, that we find 'men of knowledge' openly and freely allowing themselves to be photographed. May Allaah ﷻ protect us!"



together with the etiquettes of propagation, only one person is brought onto Deen, then our propagation efforts have been successful. On the other hand, if, by adopting those methods and means which are declared impermissible by Shari'ah, scores and droves of people are affected and won over, then this 'success' or 'achievement' holds no value in the sight of Allaah ﷻ. How can success ever be achieved when our propagation entails trampling upon the laws of Deen. That can never be the propagation of Deen, but rather it is propagation of something else.

Videos and films are in itself against the laws of Islam, therefore we have not been made duty-bound to use it for the propagation of Deen. We will extend our heart and soul for those who are prepared to listen to our Da'wah through the correct and permissible means, but as for those who are only prepared to listen to our Da'wah if it is done via those means and methods which are not permissible, like videos and films, then we are excused from conveying the message to such persons in such a manner.

If we do not adopt this stance which has been explained, then today, for the sake of the people, we will be using films to propagate Deen, tomorrow unveiled women without hijab will be used for spreading Deen, and we will try to bring people onto Deen through gatherings of music and dancing...and in this way, in the name of propagating Deen, we will be trampling upon and destroying the laws of the Shari'ah, one by one."  
(Adapted from *Ulama Deoband ke aakhiree lamahaat pg.170/171 by Ml. Thanaullah Sa'd Shuja'abaadi*)

2.) Hadrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Akhtar Saheb ﷻ's bayaan (lecture) was in Dubai, in Masjidul-Ghurair. After the termination of the bayaan, some people of Sharjah said, "You have concealed your Shaikh. We have connection with the Sharjah television company. If your Shaikh appears on TV, then many people will accept Islam, and many Muslims will become the friends of Allaah." Someone mentioned this to Hadrat, who replied, "Ask them! If you go to your aunt's house, and she gives you a spoon of sweetmeats which she had used to clean the stool of her child and then

14.) Hadrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Akhtar Saheb ﷻ was present at Masjid Quba in Madeenah Munawwarah. Some men and women were taking photos on the staircase. Hadrat's blessed face became red with anger, on seeing this disobedience of Allaah ﷻ. He reprimanded them saying, "O unworthy people! People come to this blessed lands to seek forgiveness for their sins, whilst you perpetrate major sins here." All these people quickly absconded from there without even turning back.

A student of the Imam of the Haram phoned Hadrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Akhtar Saheb ﷻ, saying, "I have spoken to people here regarding the great services Hadrat is rendering: the huge madrasah, and the free distribution of so many small and big books. They are prepared to give Hadrat a huge prize. However, Hadrat will have to come to this function. They will take Hadrat's photo." Hadrat said, "We do not need the gifts of this world or the certificate of any person. The pleasure of Allaah ﷻ is the greatest."

15.) Sayyid Ataur-Rahmaan Bukhaari (ustadh of Jamiah Farooqia Karachi)

## Picture-Making and our Extremism

The ahaadeeth regarding the prohibition of photography have reached the level of tawaatur (narration in which there is no doubt with regards to its authenticity) with regards to the subject matter. Severe warnings have been declared regarding the taking of photos. However our actions and attitude have reached a sad state. For fourteen centuries, the consensus of the ummah was that they regarded every form of animate objects to be impermissible. Thereafter, there was inverse progress, and the digital era commenced. Amongst the ulama, there was an academic difference of opinion regarding digital photography. The majority of ulama (according to Mufti Abdur-Raooof Sakhravi Saheb (daamat barakaatuhu)) had declared it to be impermissible. Some ulama regarded it to be a reflection and permitted it with certain conditions.

However today, our laxity has reached the level of extremism. For a long time now, taqwa has departed from us in this matter. But now, day by day, we are going further away from the fatwa. Did those ulama who presented the view of permissibility regard as permissible seeing the faces of women or half naked women? Did these elders allow the appearance of women's limbs which were supposed to be concealed? According to those who permit digital photography, do they regard those who make photo albums and share them as doing a good action or something futile? Mufti Saheb is at a certain stall, Mufti Saheb is on a certain vehicle, Mufti Saheb is eating a burger – what is all this? Is it an act of reward to watch musical and vibrating videos (even of men)? Is it permissible to watch comedy videos just for fun when it contains a host of forbidden scenes? Did our ulama unanimously not declare as forbidden printed material of animate objects and pictures on paper? Today, study the magazines of our Islamic organizations, and you will see that the condition is completely opposite. Is it fair to flaunt and exhibit masail in where there is difference of opinion, and scrap those masail which are unanimously accepted? If a person regards digital photography to be impermissible, and his photograph is taken, then we become extremely pleased (that his photo has been taken and is publicized. Therefore, he also supports our view of permissibility). If he has to object, then he is given the title of being too harsh or fanatical. The object is that we do not become like an unbound camel, which wanders wherever it feels (i.e. following our desires). Even those who permit digital photography have conditions. Keep them in mind.

After being wounded, a person says that he will perform salaah with that blood because, according to us, salaah will take place in that manner, is very amazing logic. (Due to some necessity, a person performs salaah with blood. His salaah will be correct. However, a general ruling now cannot be given that a person will now perform every salaah with that blood.) It takes two hands to clap. Firmness at times comes at those times when others force their viewpoint. (This means that some have to be firm when others take matters too lax.)

### ***Incidents and Statements of our Elders Regarding Television***

1.) A few days before his demise (during Zul Qa'dah 1397 A.H.), Moulana Muhammad Yusuf Banuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ attended a meeting of the 'Islamic Advisory Council' in Islamabad. On the second day of the meeting, some people approached Moulana, requesting him to deliver a bayaan (lecture) which would be broadcasted on television. Moulana politely excused himself and did not accede to their request. This then led to the question of whether television, videos, etc. should be used for the sake of spreading and propagating Deen, if it is kept free from immodesty, shamelessness and other such elements which negatively affect people's character. Although not on the agenda of the meeting, this topic was unofficially being discussed.

Moulana Banuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ then expounded on a principle of Deen, the crux of which is given hereunder:

I would like to mention one important usool (principle) regarding the topic under discussion; Allaah ﷻ has not made us mukallaf (duty-bound) to use any and every means possible, whether permissible or impermissible, in order to bring people onto Deen. Yes, we have most definitely been made duty-bound to use the various permissible means and methods of propagating Deen at our disposal. Together with commanding us to propagate and spread Deen, Islam has shown us the method and etiquette of propagating Deen as well. We are duty-bound to propagate Deen, but within the confines of those methods and etiquettes. If we, by adopting the permissible methods and means of propagating Deen, achieve our goals and objectives, then well and good. But, supposing we adopt the permissible means and methods, and by so doing, we do not achieve our goals, then we have not been made responsible to adopt those methods and means which have been declared impermissible by the Shar'ah, just for the sake of propagating the message of Deen and winning people over to our side.

If by adopting those methods and means which the Shar'ah has permitted,

salaah? If you bring a TV into your house while all these principal duties are awaiting us, do you think your children will recite Quraan even if you wanted them to? Or better yet, do you think for one moment they will listen to your advice?" (*Life Story of Hazrat Mahmud Effendi*)

### ***A Few Fatwas by Senior Muftis:***

1.) Allamah Zafar Ahmad 'Uthmani رَحِمَهُ اللهُ - The following fatwa (slightly abridged) appears in the 4<sup>th</sup> volume of Imdaadul-Ahkam:  
 "The hurmat (prohibition) of pictures is established by mutawaatir ahadith and there is ijma' (consensus) of the ummah on this.

...By changing the name of something haraam, it does not become halaal (permitted). It appears in the hadith, "People of my Ummah will change the name of liquor and drink it. They will have parties in which they will play musical instruments and sing. Allah will cause the ground to swallow them up. Some of them will be transformed into apes and swine."

Thus, just as calling interest 'benefit', bribery 'service-charge', liquor 'brandy', 'spirits', etc., gambling 'insurance' and 'lottery' and singing 'gramophone' does not make these things halaal, similarly calling picture-making 'photography' and 'reflection' does not make it [picture-making] halaal.

... If the methodology and means of production of a harâm act changes, it will still remain harâm when its reality and the reason for prohibition are still found. For instance, a new method of murder is devised such as electrocuting to death; or a new method of extracting liquor is found, such as the mechanical process of distilling liquor nowadays which was non-existent in former times; or a new form of gambling is contrived, such as the variety of insurance policies and lotteries devised which were previously unheard of; or new ways of fornication are practised, as in vogue in Europe in these times; then this will not render the harâm act to be halaal.

cleaned it, will you eat from it?" When asked, they replied in the negative. Hadrat exclaimed, "Aah! How can it be permissible then to disseminate the Deen of Allaah ﷻ on the same television which teaches music, naked dancing, fornication and stealing; and makes a mock of the divine laws of Allaah ﷻ and the sunnah? Our elders prohibit us from seeing and hearing tilaawat of the Quraan and seeing the taraaweeth of the Haram on television. We will disseminate the Deen, by the grace of Allaah, by remaining within the parameters of the Shariah. Numbers are not the object. The object is the pleasure of Allaah ﷻ. Till today, tell me of any person who became a wali of Allaah by watching television. How long are the deeni programmes and how long the other immoral programmes are! How will one save himself? If one manages to save himself, how will he manage to save his children?"

3.) On 15 April 2002, Hadrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Akhtar Saheb رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was on his way to South Africa. At Dubai Airport, he stayed at a hotel in transit. There was a television in this room. Hadrat placed a sheet over the television and instructed that it be completely covered. He remarked, "This is used for acts of disobedience. There is music, females, immoral scenes and pictures. Therefore, place this sheet over the screen, since I do not want to even see the gadget of sin. Even though it is off, and there is no sin taking place, I feel pain by merely looking at it."

4.) Hadrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Akhtar Saheb رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "Today, there are televisions in every house. Women look at the thighs of men. There is a cricket match taking place, which I call "kora karkat" (dustbin/ dirt). Men are boxing and wearing shorts. A woman performs salaah, goes for Hajj. How sad, she is involved in a Shaitani work, whether she is aware or not. It is not permissible for a female to look at strange men, just as it is not permissible for males to look at females. This is sufficient reason for television to be forbidden, since men are looking at women and vice versa, even if it is related to the Quraan Shareef. If a woman is reciting the Qur'aan Shareef or singing a nazm, then it is forbidden to look at her and

hear her voice. If a person knows that a woman is reciting Quraan Shareef on radio, then it is not permissible for him to hear her.”

5.) Hajee Nakhooda's neighbour in Madeenah Munawwarah was Ismail Arabi, a Pakistani residing in Madeena Shareef. He once narrated his dream to Hajee Saheb. "I heard a knock on the door. When I opened it, I found Nabi ﷺ and Hazrat Abu Bakr ﷺ there, in front of my door. I invited them to enter the house. Nabi ﷺ was very angry and told me that he cannot enter my house, since there was a TV in it." The next morning Ismail Arabi broke the TV and threw it away.

6.) Great Ulama became bay'at upon the hands of Moulana Hakeem Fakhrudeen رحمہ اللہ. He mentioned that there was a time, that with the rising and setting of the sun, he saw nothing but noor in Surat. The atmosphere was one of noor. The day commenced with Salaah, Tilaawat, Zikrullah... After the cinemas and television and videos flooded Surat (India), there was nothing but 'zulmat' – darkness. With the distraction of such entertainment, Ibaadah becomes a forgotten duty. One Wali of Allaah ﷺ, on visiting a home, mentioned that he perceived the sin of Zina (adultery) from the walls of that home. He was able to recognize this due to the purity of his heart. The residents of that home were not indulging in adultery but they were watching the sin on television.

7.) Hadrat Mahmud Effendi emphasized in all of his lectures that the two most important causes of degeneration in the Islamic way of life are without a doubt television and co-education.

He has always been against co-education or men teaching women and vice versa. As for TV, he always opposed it and used harsh and critical language against this fitnah, and continuously warned Muslims about its dangers.

Here are just a few of them:

"Those who watch TV are destroying their Jannah. The situation of a man whose house has burnt down is better than the one watching TV, because

his stone-made house has burnt down while the other person's akhirah is collapsing. An intelligent man doesn't have a television at home. So far, life without a TV was possible, why is it not possible now. I am giving a fatwa right now that the one who watches TV, does not love his deen. It is better to sit with a snake than to sit with a TV. Television is *fitnawision*.

Another time, he stated as follows, "Do I ever watch TV? No, I don't. One night, a Muslim man who consistently listen to lectures from ulama dreamt of our Nabi, and in his dream the number of ulama accompanying Nabi ﷺ was very few. Nabi ﷺ asked his friends with him, "Why are there so few ulama here?"

His friend pointed to Shaikh Ali Haydar Effendi in the congregation and said to ask him. When Nabi ﷺ asked him the question, he replied, "Most of the ulama bought a TV." This means that an aalim that owns a TV can't accompany the Nabi of Allaah."

Allaah ﷺ says, "I befriend the one that remembers Me." However, you ignore this and watch TV. Is there anyone in the world more stupid than you? Yes there is. Again it's you. Tell me, if Nabi ﷺ came back today, would he have a TV in his house? Would he send his daughter to high school? Television spreads such poison that not everyone is able to see it. If television was a good harmless thing as the some claim, would there be these disgraceful and shameful scenes? Now they are mocking deen on TV. It was reported that on TV an imam was leading the salaah, but was taking too long to make the salaam. Then one among the jamaah in salaah stood up, held the imams ears and made him terminate the salaah by forcefully making him to say salaam. People watching it burst into tears of laughter. The one who laughs at it and the one who made this scene became disbelievers. The one who mocks deen and the one who laughs at their mocking become disbelievers. Their imaan and nikah will become void. Pull yourselves together. We are travelling towards akhirah. Don't poison your families and children. Do you and your children know how to read the Quraan, how to perform salaah as well as the conditions of

c. The difference between the olden method and the modern method is confined to the medium of preservation. The essence and reality of picture-making are common to both. When our seniors declared images made via olden methods to be pictures, then images produced through modern methods will also be declared to be pictures. The reason for this is that the reality is jointly found in both. Thus both will share the same ruling [of prohibition]. (Bayyinah, Ramadan/Shawwal 1429 H)

The venerable Mufti Shu'ayb of Jami'ah al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya (Binnori Town, Karachi) gives a further seven reasons for the prohibition of digital pictures. The fatwa of Mufti Shu'ayb Aalam is endorsed by leading ulama and muftis of Pakistan. A detailed treatise on the subject has also been prepared.

## **Bibliography**

- 1.) Ahaadith kitaabs
- 2.) Photography & Modern Challenges by Mufti Zakariyya Makada
- 3.) Television and digital images by Mujlisul-Ulama of South Africa
- 4.) Ahsanul-Fatawa
- 5.) Articles collected by Mufti Muhammad Ameen Cassim

Thus, since forming pictures [of animate objects] is haraam, then whatever new method of it is invented, it will be haraam. The hurmat will not disappear by altering the name or altering the method of production. And the reason for this is that the cause of the hurmat of pictures, viz. it being a stepping stone to shirk (polytheism), is found here [with the new method of production] as well.

Furthermore, in it [photography] is tashabbuh (imitation) of the kuffar (disbelievers). This is not the way of Muslims.

... It is claimed that photography is in fact a process of reflection; like a reflection is cast on a mirror or water. The response to this [preposterous claim] is that the major difference between the two is that the reflection on a mirror, etc. is not durable, whereas the reflection obtained on a photo is preserved with the aid of technical materials. Thus, it is a reflection as long as it is not preserved with technical materials. But once it is preserved and made durable, in whichever way, then it becomes a picture.

... Then everyone knows that the purpose in taking photos and having one's photo taken is the same as the purpose of drawing pictures. The voluntary act of the photographer and the one photographed is the basis here just as in drawing pictures. Therefore, both are equal in prohibition.

Differentiating between the two is just as bad as differentiating between liquor manually extracted and distilled liquor mechanically extracted.

Thus, both the photographer and the one who allows himself to be photographed are guilty of haraam, guilty of a major sin and in the light of some ahadith they are mal'un (accursed) and faasiq (transgressors).

To keep such photos at home or in one's possession is a clear-cut sin and it is haraam.

Endorsing this fatwa, Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ declares: "This is nothing but the haqq (truth). And in departing from the haqq, there is nothing but dhalal (deviation)." (*Imdood al-Ahkam*, 4:382-4)

2.) Mufti Yusuf Ludhyanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ - Although the photos captured by video or television equipment are not visible (like a normal printed picture), but they are stored, and displayed on a television set.

These pictures cannot be excluded from the ruling of picture-making (tasweer). The most that can be said is that instead of the olden method of picture-making, technological advancement has brought about a new means of picture-making.

When Sharī'ah has declared picture-making as (haraam), then no matter which methods or means are invented, picture-making will remain prohibited (haraam).

The humble opinion of this servant is that in hand-drawn pictures those evil are not found which are found in video and TV... because of the television and videos every home has been transformed into a cinema...

Does this make sense that on the one hand Sharī'ah declares hand-drawn pictures as prohibited (haraam), and the picture maker as accursed and warns him of "the person who will be most severely punished on the Day of Judgement", but on the other hand declares permissible (halaal) this 'storm of immorality and indecency' known as TV?

As for the claim made by some that there is some benefit therein, so I ask, "Are there no benefits in intoxicants, pork, interest and gambling?" But the Qur'aan Shareef has put a cross on all these benefits by announcing "the sin is greater than its benefits".

Some say that through TV and videos we will propagate and spread Islam.

In our country there are Deeni programmes on TV, but, with due respect, may I ask:  
How many non-muslims have accepted Islam by viewing these Deeni programmes?

How many non-performers of salaah began performing salaah because of these programmes?

How many sinners have repented because of these programmes?

This is nothing but deception. This instrument of immorality and sin, which is 'najisul ayn' (impure) from head to toe, which is mal'oon (accursed), the one who makes it is mal'oon (accursed) in Dunya (this world) and Akhiraat (the hereafter), how will it assist in spreading Deen?....

As for those who say that so-and-so says this and so-and-so does that, this is not a proof of (permissibility) for us.

And Allaah knows best.

(Moulana) Muhammad Yusuf (Ludhyanwi)  
20 Zhul Qa'dah 1406

3.) Mufti Shu'ayb Aalam - Our investigation concludes that images formed through digital technology [digital pictures] should be called pictures. The reasons are mentioned hereunder:

a. The objective of the Sharī'ah is to ban the preservation of pictures of animate objects. This is the basis and rationale [of the prohibition]. The long history of mankind tells us that this [making pictures] spawns fitnah. In the digital system the abomination of preserving a picture is found.

b. The essence of picture-making is to copy and display the original. In the history of mankind various ways have been used to achieve this purpose. Of those methods the digital system is the most advanced and superior method. The methodology has progressed. The tools have taken different forms. The pattern has changed. But the basic reality and central aim is the same, viz. 'production of a portrait of the original'.