

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Respected Ulamā and guides of the Ummah,

The objective of this dissertation in front of you is neither to express our knowledge nor to admonish anyone, but rather, it is only a means of fulfilling our responsibility of “*Tawāḥ i bil ʿ aqq*” (enjoining of good) which generally, every Muslim, and more specifically, those who are connected to the knowledge of Dīn are bound to. In this regard these few lines are presented to you.

All of us agree that the television, which in this era is a dominant prelude to the Fitnah of Dajjāl and an effective, powerful tool of the devil, the evils of which are innumerable. It plays a pivotal role in inciting evil and shamelessness in people. In short, if wine is the mother of all vice, then without a doubt, the television can be named the mother of all evil. It is also a reality that the anti-Islam forces are utilising it as an effective weapon against Islam and the Muslims. You will therefore see that in countries targeted by these anti-Islam forces in war, first they attack the moral fibre and Imāni (core belief) qualities of the Muslims there via the media, especially via the television. Then only do they attack this weakened people with their military means.

Television contains photographs, the broadcasting/airing of music and/or video containing images of non-Maḥram males for females and non-Maḥram females for males, and these have all been unanimously ruled as impermissible actions. Television without a doubt is a definite means of one becoming involved in those Maḥram actions. This is one of the reasons why in itself, television should be deemed impermissible. Just as in the original prohibition of wine or interest, Nabi (SAW) deemed the means that assist in consuming wine or interest as deserving of being cursed. The Fuqahā have written in detail with regards to ‘means’ which in brief suggests that the means used to bring forth Maḥram will unanimously be prohibited as well, if it is on the level of being a certain or most probable cause of dissension. However those means which are rarely the cause of dissension are not considered, as “*Al Nādir Kal Madūm*” (the rare is like the inexistent).

Now it needs to be clarified as to which category of means does the television fall? I am of the view that all the scholars and people of intellect are unanimous of it being a means of certain dissension. Its benefits are of a temporary and imaginary nature. At this juncture this principle of the Fuqahā needs to be kept in front of us:

‘Averting evil is preferred over drawing benefit. If evil and benefit clash, averting evil will be given preference because Nabi (SAW)’s concern for abstinence from the forbidden was deeper and more severe than his concern with obeying orders. Nabi (SAW) said: “Abstain from what I forbid you from and do what you can of what I order you to do.” (Al-Bukhārī, Al-Muslim)’

- Ulamā appearing on television programmes will cause the notion of permissibility to spread amongst the Muslims and the general public will not be able to adhere to clauses and conditions. This will result in televisions being brought into the homes due to a so-called “need”, which tomorrow, will become the adornment of every home. It is clear that the burden will be on the shoulders of those who permitted it.

- Television will become so common that the gravity of its evil consequences will perish totally from the hearts of the people. At present it is seen that at the very least the television is switched off and stored away upon the arrival of an Aālim to a person's home, or at the approach of the blessed month of Ramaān. This too will not be endured.

- Furthermore, if we examined the countries which have issued a Fatwā of permissibility; we would surely see what destruction the television has caused! People have resorted to incest (adultery with their own sisters and daughters). At present, the plight of three Ulamā has reached me. While browsing the internet for good content, they were led into viewing obscene sites.

- Merely stating that; "if we do not fill the slot, people of falsehood will utilize it to spread more wrong and evil", is not sufficient to warrant permissibility of television. These channels were previously present and this 'benefit' is very limited in comparison to our benefit or harm.

- It is necessary to discard/discontinue a Mustaāb action if it constitutes the incurrence of sin due to a ħarām deed. The discarding a of Mustaāb action is in itself not worthy of reproach. Therefore it follows that it is not permissible to reproach someone for omission of a Mustaāb action.

- The Ulamā's having a difference of opinion amongst themselves with regard to the permissibility or impermissibility of the use of television, causes more disunity and dispersion. This gives an opportunity to some desire-following, fearless-of-the-hereafter type of people to spoil the environment even more.

- Quoting the saying of Imām Abu Ḥanīfah (RA) when he said; "A person involved in frivolous activities should be greeted, so that he may become involved in good for that amount of time", does not warrant permissibility. A Fatwā permitting television will be tantamount to inviting countless people to numerous, even more frivolous activities.

- The argument that we should 'move with the times' is not entirely correct. Rather the new means of propagation (here, television) should be completely pure from all objectionable actions and material in order for us to adopt it as a means to propagate our Dīn.

- The words and actions of Ḥafẓat Gangohī (RA) should also be kept in mind that when it was strongly advocated that a person who was not following Shariah should be made a member of Dārul Ulūm Deoband, he said: "It is a sin to make such a person a member while it is not necessary to run a Dārul Ulūm".

Even if this advancement seems to be somewhat beneficial to those who advocate permissibility, then too it is certain that the harms outweigh the benefits.

- Certainly the general rule that 'necessity allows the forbidden to be permissible' is an

accepted law derived from the Qur'ān and Aḥādīth. The consuming of ḥarām food items, for example, at the time need falls under the ambit of this very principle. However it is necessary to study the circumstances under which the impermissible will become permissible. This Dīn belongs to Allāh and He has taken responsibility of protecting it. We are only subject to using the permissible means to teach and propagate it.

- The group spreading and propagating Dīn the most nowadays is the Tablighī Jamāt; Did they utilize the television?

- Spreading of falsehood via the television is certain. At most people may derive some beneficial knowledge through it; however the light of Imān will not spread via this means.

- We also need to ascertain whether we have utilised all the permissible means of Da'wah at our disposal as they ought to be used.

- However much sternness is used in prohibiting the television, in light of the Shariah and intellect is, in fact, less.

- At the most, those claiming permissibility label the use of television as permissible or Mustaḥab. Is this then worth creating a divide between groups and within the Ulamā

fraternity?

- Some Ulamā viewing video clips on their mobile phones is their own personal action and cannot be used as a Shar'ī proof to substantiate permissibility.

- Conditions dictate that in a few years a television will be part of every household. Is not the call of intelligence and wisdom that we keep ourselves pure from that filth?

- Finally, until that time that the television is not cleansed from all types of forbidden actions in Shariah, issuing a Fatwā on its permissibility or allowing participation on its programs is an extremely dangerous step and a grave responsibility, as we are inviting a great burden upon ourselves.

And Allāh alone knows best and to Him is our return.

Shabbier Ahmed Saloojee (Moulānā)

Dārul Ulūm Zakariyya, South Africa

Endorsed by:

Ra'ī āul āqq (Muftī) who added: I feel that Ulamā should abstain from appearing on television.

Muhammad Alī (Muftī)

Alāuddīn (Moulānā)