

120332 - Ruling on unscrambling codes for sports channels in order to watch them

the question

Recently there has appeared special equipment for receiving satellite channels which works with the help of the Internet -- unlike satellites -- and the purpose of it is to unscramble encrypted channels which require payment of money in order to subscribe to them.

My question is: what is the ruling on buying this equipment and using it to watch permissible sports channels? Please note that the way it works is by obtaining the special codes for these channels via the Internet and sending it directly to the receiver in order to open them.

Please advise us, as many of our Muslim brothers are confused about this issue; they have started to buy it without asking about the ruling on it, on the basis that the companies which offer these sports channels require a huge fee up front that is too expensive, and may be as much as 5000 riyals for one year, whereas this equipment costs only 800 riyals.

Detailed answer

In the case of encrypted satellite channels for which a subscription is needed in order to view them, it is not permissible to try to unscramble these codes or to help others to do so, because that is transgressing against people's rights and consuming their wealth unlawfully.

These channels are of two types: those which are permissible in and of themselves, which it is permissible to watch and look at; and those which are haraam and it is not permissible to watch them or look at them because of what they contain of things that go against sharee'ah.

Sports channels fall into the second category, which is haraam and not permissible, so looking at them is haraam for two reasons: because of the fact that they are encoded and because of the fact that they contain things that it is not permissible to look at, especially uncovering of 'awrahs. Sport is not just one kind of game; there is swimming, which involves uncovering the

‘awrahs of women, as is well known; and there is freestyle wrestling which is haraam because of what it involves of extreme harm; and there are other things which are undoubtedly haraam.

The fatwa of the scholars on watching sports channels -- even if it is for free -- has been quoted in the answer to questions number [82718](#) and 95280.

And Allah knows best.