

3633 - Is Watching TV Prohibited in Islam?

the question

Is watching TV permitted in Islam? If so, under what conditions?

Summary of answer

The issue of watching films is not free from numerous reservations from a Shar`i point of view, such as uncovering `Awrah, listening to music, spreading corrupt beliefs and calling for imitation of the disbelievers.

Detailed answer

The [issue of watching films](#) is not free from numerous reservations from a Shar`i point of view, such as uncovering `Awrah, listening to music, spreading corrupt beliefs and calling for imitation of the disbelievers. Allah has commanded us to lower our gaze, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts).” [An-Nur 24:30-31]

Since [lowering the gaze](#) is the basis of protecting the private parts, it is mentioned first. Allah has made the eyes the reflection of the heart: if a person lowers his gaze, the desire in his heart will be reduced, but if a person looks and stares, the desire in his heart will be provoked.

Muslim narrated (1218) that Al-Fadl ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the Day of Sacrifice (Yawm An-Nahr) from Muzdalifah to Mina, when some women riding on camel-borne sedan chairs passed by. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

turned his [Al-Fadl's] head away. This was prevention and denunciation through action, for if looking were permissible he would have approved of what he did.

Al-Bukhari narrated (6343) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Every son of Adam has his share of Zina decreed for him, and he will undoubtedly get his share. The eye commits Zina and its Zina is looking. The tongue commits Zina and its Zina is speaking; the feet commit Zina and their Zina is walking; the hands commit Zina and their Zina is touching. The heart longs and desires for something and the private parts confirm that or deny it."

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) began by mentioning the eye because this is how the Zina of the hand, foot, heart and private parts begins. By mentioning the Zina of the tongue, he pointed out that the mouth can commit Zina by speaking. And he stated that the private parts can confirm that, if they make the deed (Zina) happen, or deny it if that does not happen.

This Hadith gives the clearest indication that the eye can sin by looking and that this is its Zina. This is a refutation to those who say that looking is allowed in all circumstances.

It was also reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "O `Ali, do not follow a look with a second, for the first [unintended] look is allowable but not the second."

A look has the same effect on the heart as an arrow has on its victim. If it does not kill him, it will wound him. It is like a spark of fire in dried grass; if it does not burn all of it, it will still burn some of it. May Allah have mercy on the one who said:

"Everything starts with a look, and big fires start from little sparks.

How often has a heart been dealt a fatal blow like that of an arrow, with no need for a bow.

As long as a man's eyes are looking around, looking into the eyes of others, he is in a state of danger.

His eye delights in that which could destroy his heart. The joy that may lead to harm is not welcome."

Hence Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Fatawa 3/227:

“With regard to [television](#) , it is a dangerous device and its harmful effects are very great, like those of the cinema, or even worse. We know from the research that has been written about it and from the words of experts in Arab countries and elsewhere enough to indicate that it is dangerous and very harmful to Islamic beliefs (‘Aqidah), morals and the state of society. This is because it includes the presentation of bad morals, tempting scenes, immoral pictures, semi-nakedness, destructive speech, and [disbelief](#) . It encourages imitation of their conduct and ways of dressing, respect for their leaders, neglect of Islamic conduct and ways of dressing, and looking down on the scholars and heroes of Islam.

It damages their image by portraying them in an off-putting manner that makes people despise them and ignore them. It shows people how to cheat, steal, hatch plots and commit acts of violence against others.

Undoubtedly, anything that produces so many bad results should be stopped and shunned, and we have to close all the doors that could lead to it. If some of our brothers denounce it and speak out against it, we cannot blame them, because this is a part of sincerity towards Allah and towards other people.

Whoever thinks that [this device \(TV\) can be free of these evils](#) and can be used only for good purposes if it is censored properly is exaggerating and is making a big mistake, because the censor may miss things and most people nowadays want to imitate the foreigners. It is very rare to find censors who are doing their job properly, especially nowadays when most people are only interested in time-wasting entertainment and things that turn people away from true guidance. Reality bears witness to that.”

We ask Allah to keep us safe from all evil for He is the Most Generous.

And Allah knows best.