

Last week during the initial days of Ramadan I was blessed with the fortune to go for 'umrah. Coincidentally in Makkah, I was fortunate to meet Peer Zulfiqar Naqshbandi (damat barakatuhu) in Masjid Haram. We were sitting and conversing in the saff when someone without our knowledge took our picture.

After some days upon reaching Madinah I found out that this photo had spread like wildfire through WhatsApp. After returning home from 'umrah, I discovered that some urdu newspapers had also printed that picture and played their part in spreading it. After hearing this I became upset and this incident had a deep effect on me. I cried and made dua to Allah.

Through this article of mine, in clear words I am announcing that I am free from this photo incident. Those people that have taken my picture without my knowledge and those that have circulated it bear the shar'i responsibility of this matter.

They can choose to hide now and refuse to come forward, but on the Plain of Resurrection [Maydan Hashr] they will not be able to hide. On the Plain of Resurrection they will be brought before Allah and it will be said these are the people that bore the burden of your commandment:

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(And those who harm believing men and believing women undeservedly, bear on themselves the crime of slander and plain sin).

This humble servant is not attempting to show his virtue or piety, but sees it as his moral responsibility to clarify his position regarding the issue of photography. This humble servant from the mas'ala point of view, regardless of what instrument is used, views photography as

haram and impermissible. This is also the view of my cautious elders. If it becomes known that any Islamic gathering, social event, seminar or wedding etc. will entail photography, then this humble servant avoids attending such gatherings.

1. In 1995 the All India Personal Law board held their 12th meeting [ijlaas] in Ahmedabad. I was appointed by my elders as the president [sadr] of the first meeting due to a dearth of (capable) people. At that time this humble servant remained firm upon the path of our elders [akabir] and endeavored to ban photography. My witness for this attitude is Hadhrat Moulana Gulam Muhammad Wastanwi (damat barakatuhu). You may refer to him for further details regarding my stand.

2. A few years ago I participated in a three day seminar (venue: Azamgarh, UP). In the seminar I witnessed photography taking place. I was extremely hurt by this. For two days I was wearing a scarf over my head in order to save myself. However, on the third day my religious honor (deeni ghayrah) flared-up and I openly condemned photography. Thousands of people were witness to this.

3. Two years prior in Khanqah Mahmudiyya (Jami'ah Islamiah Dhabel) on the night of completion of the Qur'an, one person took a photo of the gathering. When this humble servant was told of it, I immediately condemned it and said: Take hold of him, confiscate his camera and break it. The entire gathering was stunned.

I wish to clarify through this that my stance on the issue of photography is and has always been strict. In this article I clearly announce that if anyone has taken my photo without my knowledge, then I distance myself from it. Whomsoever has any photos on their phone or on WhatsApp that were taken recently or in the past, then I ask for the sake of Allah: Please delete them. You will be rewarded by Allah.

I request this clarification of mine to be circulated as much as possible, especially for those who took part in spreading the picture as according to Sharī'ah it is compulsory on them to do so.

PROHIBITION OF PICTURES

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