Theatre and Cinema

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Q1211. Is it permissible to use the uniform of the Islamic clerk and judges in making moving pictures? Is it permissible to make films that deal with religious and mystical issues, especially those talking about the lives and achievements of the late or contemporary clerics while observing their dignity and the inviolability of Islam? All of these are aimed at portraying noble Islamic values and explaining the idea of mysticism (‘irfān) and the rich Islamic culture; it is also an attempt to stand up to and stem the onslaught of the adverse culture of the enemy. I should add that the introduction of such subjects through effective cinematic techniques has a great impact that would attract a wide audience, especially the youth?

A: In view of the fact that cinema is a medium through which enlightenment and information could be spread, there is no harm in showing anything of useful effect for the intellectual development of the youth and others or in promoting Islamic culture. Included in this is the introduction of religious scholars and their special life histories as well as that of officials and other scholars. However, it is obligatory to observe their particular status, respect, and sanctity of their right to privacy. This should not be used as a means to disseminating any anti-Islamic propaganda, as well.

Q1212. We intend to make a film portraying the story of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (a.s.), especially the principles for which he sacrificed his life. It is noteworthy that the actor who will play the role of the Imam is not going to appear in the flesh, i.e., just a luminous person. Is it permissible to make such a film?

A: Should the story of the film be based on reliable sources with utmost consideration of the sanctity of the subject and the integrity and status of Imam (a.s.), his companions, and household, there is no harm in that. However, since it is very difficult to tackle the subject carefully and accord due reverence to the integrity of the martyred Imam and his companions; one has to observe caution in this matter.

Q1213. What is the view on men wearing women’s clothes and vice versa for the purpose of acting on theatre or in films? And what is the view on the opposite sexes mimicking the voice of each other?

A: It is not remote to be permissible for the opposite sexes to wear each other’s clothes or mimic the voice of each other in acting and expressing the characters of a real person provided that it does not cause corruption.

Q1214. What is the ruling in the matter of women wearing make-up for acting purposes in performances which are attended by men as well?

A: If applying make-up is undertaken by the person herself, or by another woman, or by one’s maḥram, and it does not entail any corruption, there is no objection to that. Otherwise, it is not permissible. Of course, their face with make-up should be covered in front of non-maḥrams.