

Shaykh Mashhūr Hasan

(hafidhahullāh)

ON THE RULING ON THAI BOXING¹

One of the brothers from 'Akka (Acre) in Palestine, which we ask Allāh to return to Islam and the Muslims and that we die while praying in Bayt ul-Maqdis, asks:

I have read some fatawā prohibiting boxing, and there is a sport which is known as Thai Boxing² which differs from the well-known type of boxing that we know of in that it includes kicking at the same time.

Answer from Shaykh Mashhūr:

As for Boxing then the one who is successful in it is the one who is able to injure the face and in the Shar' [Divine Legislation] it is not permissible to hit the face. It is not permissible for a father to hit his child on the face; it is not permissible for a husband, even though it is permitted to beat the wife³, to hit his wife on her face; and it is not permissible for a teacher to hit a student on the face. This is all based on the saying of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*): "Do not hit on the face." So to organise a sport wherein points are scored and winning is based on hitting the face is harām from this angle based on the text. However, performing boxing training in order to strengthen the body without actually doing it (i.e. Boxing someone in the face) is okay and there is no problem in

¹ From Shaykh Mashhūr's Q & A session dated 23 August 2008 CE, it can be accessed at: www.mashhoor.net

Translated by 'AbdulHaq al-Ashanti.

² [TN]: also known as 'Muay Thai' which is referred to as the 'the art of the eight limbs' because the hands, shins, elbows and knees are all used. There are similar boxing sports like this in Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia.

³ [TN]: This "beating" has been explained by the Islamic scholars as being a "beating" which does not cause bruising or pain and is rather a symbolic beating to express the husband's displeasure. As a result, some 'Ulama state that if a husband is to beat his wife it should be with a *miswak* which is about the size of a small thin twig.

this, because a person can play in this way in order to strengthen his body, there is no problem in this. As for practising this and pursuing it as a profession then this is harām from this angle. From another angle, there are harms in boxing when the face is hit and the brain can be harmed which can all affect a person. This is a serious harm and most of those who pursue this sport as a profession do not leave it except that they have been injured in some way which has seriously harmed them.

Then *ihtirāf* (pursing a profession in order to make a living) itself has been mentioned by Ahl ul-'Ilm such as as-Suyūṭī in *al-Ashbāh wa'n-Nadhayeer*,⁴ Ibn ul-Qayyim in *al-Furūsiyyah* [Chivalry]⁵ and a large body of Ahl ul-'Ilm, have highlighted the prohibition of pursuing a profession and earning a living from games, any game. It is not permissible for a person to pursue a profession and earns a living from a game wherein his food, sustenance and profit are as a result of a game. So a person has no work except that he pursues a profession from playing games and gains wealth in this way, then this is not permissible from a third angle. And most of those who practice these games eat from the earnings of playing such games.

⁴ **TN**: *al-Ashbāh wa'n-Nadhayeer fī Furū' ish-Shāfi'iyyah* [Similarities and Opinions in Subsidiary Branches of Law According to the Shāfi'i Scholars]. These are the following prints:

- ✓ Cairo: al-Husayniyyah Press, 1322 AH;
- ✓ Cairo: 1378 AH/1959 CE
- ✓ 2nd ed. 4 vols. Hyderabad: Dairat ul-Ma'arif al-Uthmāniyyah, 1940-42;
- ✓ It was also printed in Beirut by Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya in 1979, 1983, 1987, 1998 and 2001
- ✓ Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Arabi, 2006

⁵ Edited by Nizamuddeen al-Fātih, Madina Munawwara: Maktabah Dar ut-Turāth, 1403 AH/1990 CE