

Ahadeeth Concerning Tasweer (Pictures)

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Source: The Islamic Ruling Concerning Tasweer



Image Makers will be punished on the Day of Judgement

Narrated Abdullaah ibn 'Umar (d.73H) radiallaahu 'anhu: Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, *"Those who make these images (suwar) will be punished on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be said to them, make alive what you have created."* (Al-Bukhaaree 7/541, no.835; Muslim, 3/160, no.,5268)

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar (d.852H) says, "It is a command to do that which one is unable to do. From it we get a description of how the punishment of the image-maker will be. He will be ordered to breathe the soul into the image which he has made and he will not be able to do so. As a result his punishment will continue (UNCEASINGLY)." (Fath ul-Baaree, 10/398).

It should also be mentioned that there must be consideration in this matter if the making of a picture is necessitate by urgency or emergency, such as x-rays for identification or diagnosis of a disease or sickness. In this case the condition is that the picture itself be not the immediate goal or objective. This is based on the rule is Usool al-fiqh: necessity should be measured by the existing circumstances. Whatever goes beyond that, to the point of being done out of pride, and enjoyment of these images, is forbidden. (Nuzhatul Muttaqeen, 2/1150, no.1680)

The Command to Remove Curtains Containing Images

'Aaisha (d.58H) radiallaahu 'anhaa reported that Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam came back from a journey and I had screened my door with a curtain having (images) of winged horses on it. He sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam commanded me (to remove it). So I pulled it down. [This is the wording narrated by Muslim] (Muslim, 3/1158, no.5256)

Al- Bukhaaree's narration is, "I had hung a thick curtain having images (tamaatheel). He sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam commanded me to remove it, so I pulled it down." [Bukhaaree, 7/542]

Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajr says, "It has the word tamaatheel which is the plural of timthaal and refers to something whose image is made; and it is more general than to be limited to shaakhis (that which has body like a statue) or naqsh (engraved), dahn (painting), or nasaj (weaved) in a cloth. In the narration of Bukair ibn al-Ashajj from Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Al-Qaasim, reported by Muslim (3/1159, no.5265), it contains the words "... she hung up a curtain which had in it tasaaweer (images).". (Fath ul-Baaree, 10/401. no.5955)

See also Ahmad 6/208, 6/281, where 'Aaisha's narration contains, "... she said then he sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam tore it up."

Pulling Down and Tearing up Curtains Containing Images

'Aaisha radiallaahu 'anhaa reported that she had a curtain which had images (tasaweer) in it. Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam entered (the room) and pulled it down. 'Aaisha said, "I then tore it and prepared two cushions from it." A man who was present at the time when this Hadith was being narrated and whose name was Rabeeah ibn 'Ataa ibn al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad was one of the students of al-Qaasim ibn Muhamma, asked, "Didn't you hear Abu Muhammad (al-Qaasim, the narrator from 'Aaisha), making mention of 'Aaisha radiallaahu 'anhaa having stated that Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam used to recline on them (the two cushions)?" Abdur-Rahmaan ibn al-Qaasim said, "No, but I heard al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad saying so." (Muslim, 3/1159, no.5265, footnote 2518).

'Abdul-Hameed Siddiqui in his commentary of the English Translation of Saheeh Muslim, (3/1159, footnote 2518, English trans) says: "One may ask the question if the cloth having pictures on it is forbidden to be used as a curtain, why is it not forbidden to be used as a cushion? The answer is that when the cloth having pictures upon it is torn into pieces and sewn in another shape, the pictures lose their form altogether and they no longer remain pictures. Moreover hanging-pictures are more conspicuous, while those on cushions, etc, become insignificant."

This is similar to what al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar said concerning the reconciliation (jam) between the following Hadith containing the words, "... he tore (the curtain containing images) apart ... so we turned the curtains into one or two cushions", and the next Hadith containing the words "She bought a cushion having images on it. When Allaah's messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam saw it he stopped at the door and did not enter ... he sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam added: *Angels do not enter a house in which there are images.*"

al-Haafidh says another possible explanation for reconciliation between the two Hadith is that when the curtain was cut up, the cutting could have been, for example, in the middle of the image, thereby changing it from its original form. For this reason he sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam began to use it to lean on.

The Most Severely Punished People on the Day of Resurrection Will Be Those Who Try to Imitate Allaah's Creation

Narrated 'Aaisha radiallaahu 'anhaa that Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam returned from a journey when I had placed a curtain of mine having images (tamaatheel) over (the door of) a chamber of mine. When Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam saw it, he tore it apart and said: "*The People who will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be those who try to make the like of Allaah's creation.*" So we turned the curtains into one or two cushions / pillows." (al-Bukhaaree, 7/542, no.838)

In another narration he sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said "... *those who make these*

images." (Bukhaaree, 8/83, no.130)

In the narration of Muslim it contains the words, "... *he tore it apart and the colour of his face underwent a change.*" (Muslim 3/1159, no.5261) In the narration of az-Zuhree from al Qaasim as reported by Muslim "... *those who try to imitate (make similar to) the creation of Allaah (alladheena yushabbihoona bi khalq Allaah).*" [Muslim 3/1158, no.5258)

Ibn Hajr discusses the words "... *a curtain of mine having images*". In the narration of Abu Usamah in the Saheeh of Muslim it contains the additional words, "... *curtains having images of winged horses on it*". This Hadith has been used as an evidence for the permissibility of possession of images (suwar) if they are those which have no shadow (two-dimensional) with the condition that they be of those which are walked over, trampled upon, and used in a degrading manner, like cushions, and pillows.

An-Nawawee said, "This is the saying of the majority of the scholars from among the sahaba (companions) and the taa'bieen (students of the companions). It is also the opinion of ath-Thawri, Maalik, Abu Hanifah, and ash-Shaafi'ee. There is no difference (in this prohibition) between that which has a shadow and that which has no shadow. For if it was hanging on a wall, worn as clothing, or a turban, or what is similar to that - of those things which are not considered to be in a state of degradation or dishonour - it is haraam (prohibited)."

Ibn Hajar says there are some exceptions or objections to what an-Nawawee has mentioned. The following are some of those objections:

1. Ibn al-'Arabee, the Maaliki Faqih, has transmitted the opinion that surah (images) which have a shadow (like statues) are haraam by ijma' (consensus) equally so whether it is in a state of dishonour or not. This consensus does not cover dolls which are played with by girls.

Al-Qurtubee has related in his explanation of Saheeh Muslim entitled al-Mufhim, two sayings in reference to the images which are not meant to be permanent, like that made from clay. The most correct of the two sayings is that it is prohibited.

Ibn al-'Arabee considers correct the opinion that the image (surah) which has no shadow, if it remains intact - not being torn or effaced - is forbidden. This, being so equally, if it is of that which is degraded or not. However if its head is cut off or its parts are separated then it is allowed.

Dislike of Entering a House Where There Are Images Even if Those Images Were in That Which is Sat Upon (Dishonoured) Like a Cushion

Narrated 'Aisha radiallaahu 'anhaa, the wife of the Prophet sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, who said: *I bought a cushion (numruqah) having images (tasaweer) on it. When Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam saw it, he stopped at the door and did not enter. She noticed the signs of strong disapproval on his face. She said "O Allaah's Messenger! I turn to Allaah and His Messenger in repentance. What sin have I committed?" He said, "What is this cushion for?" I said, "I have bought it for you to sit and recline on." Allaah's*

Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said "The makers of these images (suwar) will be punished (severely) on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said to them, make alive what you have created." He sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam added, "Angels do not enter a house in which there are images (suwar)." (al-Bukhaaree, 7/545, no.844), Muslim 3/1159, no.5266)

The first benefit that we get here is from the chapter heading which Imaam Bukhaaree wrote for this Hadith: "Chapter: Whoever dislikes sitting on images (suwar)." Ibn Hajar explains the meaning of the chapter heading as follows "Chapter: Whoever dislikes sitting on images (suwar) even if they were of those which are walked over and trampled upon." (Fath ul-Baaree 10/403)

Angels Do Not Enter A House Where There are Images

Abu Hurairah radiiallaahu 'anhu reported Allaah's Messenger sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam as saying, *"Angels do not enter a house (or any other place) where there are statues (tamatheel) or pictures (Tasaweer)." (Muslim 3/1162, no.5276)*

Whoever is pleased to have images in his house himself prohibits the entry of the angels. The angels do not enter because of their rejection and disapproval of the act of the image makers in violation of the laws of Allaah, the Most high. The result of this is that the absence of the angels is an open invitation to the devils. According to some scholars the angels which are prohibited from entry are only the angels of MERCY, and not all angels, since the angels who write the deeds of human beings (al-Hafazah) do not separate from the human simply because of the presence of images. (Nuzhatul Muttaqeen, 2/1153, no.1686 and 1688)

Ibn Hajar says its apparent meaning is that it is general (applicable to all angels).

Al-Qurtubee says, "That which points to the recording angels being a special exception i.e. that they are not prevented from entering, has no supporting textual evidence."