

143709 - Ruling on wearing clothing that has small or hidden images on it

the question

As you know, most clothes nowadays have images of animate beings, whether the image is on the outside of the garment or is on a piece that is hidden inside. Is it permissible to wear these clothes?

What if it is children's clothing? What if these images are very small and can hardly be noticed?

For example, I have a suit on which there is the image of two men shaking hands on the inside of the coat collar and no one can see it. Is it permissible to wear it?

In most cases these images are part of the company's logo and are not visible except if a person looks hard, because they are in a light colour. I hope that you will explain the ruling.

Detailed answer

It is not permissible to draw or make images of animate beings, whether they are humans, animals or birds, and whether that is engraved or on paper, fabric or anything else. That is because of the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (2105) and Muslim (2107) from 'Aa'ishah the Mother of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with her), who said that she bought a cushion on which there were images. When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw it, he stood at the door and did not enter. She said: I recognized displeasure in his face. I said: O Messenger of Allah, I repent to Allah and His Messenger, what have I done wrong? The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "What is this pillow?" She said: I bought it for you to sit on and recline on. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The makers of these images will be punished and it will be said to them, 'Bring to life that which you have created.'" Then he said: "The house in which there are images is not entered by the angels."

And it is not permissible to keep these images or to set them up, except in cases where the images will not be treated with respect, as is the case with images on carpets, cushions, diapers and the like, because of the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (5954) and Muslim (2107) from 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered upon me and I had covered a niche of mine with a thin curtain on which there were images. When he saw it, he tore it down and his face changed colour and he said: "O 'Aa'ishah, the people who will be most severely punished by Allah on the Day of Resurrection will be those who imitate the creation of Allah."

'Aa'ishah said: We cut it up and made one or two pillows from it.

at-Tirmidhi (2806) and Abu Dawood (4158) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Jibreel came to me and said: I was going to come to you yesterday and nothing prevented me from entering upon you in the house where you were except that at the door of the house there were some statues of men, and in the house there was a curtain on which there were images, and there was a dog in the house. So tell someone to cut off the heads of the statues that are by the door of the house, so that they will become like trees, and tell someone to take down the curtain and make it into two cushions which can be thrown on the floor and on which people may step, and tell someone to take the dog out." So the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did that. The dog was a puppy belonging to al-Hasan or al-Husayn, and it was under a bed of his, and he ordered that it be taken out.

This hadeeth was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 68

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Sharh Muslim: Our companions and other scholars said: Making images of animals is emphatically forbidden and is a major sin, because of the stern warning concerning it that is mentioned in the hadeeths, whether it is done in things that are handled in a disrespectful manner or otherwise. Making them is haraam in all cases because it is competing with the creation of Allah, may He be exalted.

(The prohibition applies) whether the images are on garments, carpets, coins, vessels, walls or elsewhere. As for making images of trees, camel saddles and other things that do not include the images of animate beings, that is not haraam. This is the ruling on image making itself.

As for acquiring something on which there is the image of an animal, if it is hung on the wall or appears on a garment or head cover that is worn, and the like, which is not regarded as handling it disrespectfully, this is haraam. If it is on a carpet that is stepped on or on a pillow or cushion and the like that is handled in a disrespectful manner, then it is not haraam. But does it prevent the angels of mercy from entering that house? There is a discussion concerning that which we will mention below, in sha Allah. In this regard there is no differentiation between that which casts a shadow and that which does not (three-dimensional and two-dimensional). This is a summary of our opinion concerning this matter, and something similar was said by the majority of scholars among the Sahaabah, Taabi'een and those who came after them. It is the view of ath-Thawri, Maalik, Abu Haneefah and others. Some of the early generation said that only that which casts a shadow is forbidden, and there is nothing wrong with images that do not cast a shadow. But this is an invalid opinion because the curtain that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) objected to because of the images on it is undoubtedly something blameworthy, and its images did not cast shadows. Moreover the rest of the hadeeths apply to all images. End quote.

The point is that there is nothing wrong with images that are treated in a disrespectful manner, like the images on furniture and carpets.

As for images on clothing, there is a difference of opinion concerning them. Some of them do not seem to be treated in a disrespectful manner, such as images of performers and sports players, which are only put on clothing out of love and respect. And some of them are treated in a disrespectful manner, such as images on diapers. And some of them come in between, but to be on the safe side they should be avoided.

What appears to be the case, and Allah knows best, is that small and hidden images, like those on the inside of the collar, come under the ruling on images that are treated with disrespect, unlike images that appear on the outside, even if they are small.

The same applies to incomplete images that appear in such a way that it is certain that the animal could not live in such a state; there is nothing wrong with them according to many scholars. If the problem with images becomes so widespread in children's clothing, and an image appears in a partial, incomplete form, then perhaps it may be forgiven.

The hidden image in the collar of a coat may be erased or covered up with stitches or a colour, and thus the problem will be dealt with.

For more information on the difference of opinion regarding garments on which there are images, please see al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 12/122

And Allah knows best.