

**Answer to a Question**

**The Shariah Ruling on Drawing (Tasweer)**

To: Ahmad Al-Hashlamon

**Question:**

Assalaam Alaikum, my name is Ahmad Wisam Al-Hashlamon one of the Shabab of Hizb ut Tahrir, I have some questions and would like your answers regarding them:

1- What is the ruling of Islam on drawing? 2- What is the ruling on drawing parts of the human body? 3- Does the ruling on sculpting apply to drawing? Thank you.

**Answer:**

Wa Alaikum As-Salaam Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuhu

**We have previously given a comprehensive answer on drawing (Tasweer), it seems that you have not come across it covering the questions you raised as well as other questions on the same subject...Here is the text of the answer:**

Before answering these questions, we emphasize two points:

First: The following answers are the Hukm Shar'i concerning sketch drawing, i.e. drawing by hand, which is what is indicated in the ahadeeth and not the photographs captured using cameras. Camera photography is permitted and the ahadeeth do not apply to it.

Second: The following answers all pertain to flat drawings with no embossing (one dimension drawings) which is explained in detail in response to the question.

Third: As for such embossed drawings i.e. statues or sculptures, that you have explained in your question as sculpt; they are clearly prohibited by the Shari'ah evidences as highlighted at the end of the question and answer...

**Firstly: The answers pertaining to flat drawings with no embossing i.e. one dimension drawings in its various topics:**

**With Respect to Questions One and Two:**

- Editing/modifying photographs i.e. removing wrinkles, changing the colour of eyes or altering certain other facial features etc.
- Drawing sketches of peoples and animals which look realistic...

These questions are related to drawing of pictures of living beings or the process of altering features by hand like removing wrinkles and other facial features to photographs... These are covered under the prohibition mentioned in the evidences irrespective of whether such alterations were made by hand using a pen or by using the mouse on a computer. As long as the resulting photograph/sketch of a living being is a result of 'human effort', it is covered under the prohibition. Bukhari extracted a hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas (ra) that the Prophet (saw) said: «مَنْ صَوَّرَ صُورَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُعَذِّبُهُ حَتَّى يَنْفُخَ فِيهَا الرُّوحَ وَلَيْسَ يَنْفُخُ فِيهَا أَبَدًا» "Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah till he puts life in it, and he will never be able to put life in it."

Also in another narration on the authority of Ibn 'Omar (ra) that the Prophet (saw) said: «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَصْنَعُونَ هَذِهِ الصُّوَرَ يُعَذَّبُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُقَالُ لَهُمْ أَهْيُوا مَا خَلَقْتُمْ» "The painters of these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. It will be said to them, 'Put life in what you have created.'"

**With Respect to Questions Three and Four:**

- Using ready and available photographs and sketches for printing.
- Using ready and available photographs, sketches or logos for designing new ones instead preparing this by oneself.

i.e. copying the same from others without the questioner himself drawing the same. This ruling applies to the acquiring of pictures and this has three aspects:

A: If your copying of pictures is for the purpose of using these in places of worship, like prayer carpets, mosque curtains, brochures for mosques etc., then such action is prohibited and not permissible. Evidences for this are as follows:

Ibn 'Abbas (r.a) narrated that the Prophet (saw) refrained from entering the Ka'bah until the pictures present there were removed. Thus the Prophet's (saw) refusal to enter the Ka'bah until after the pictures were removed is an absolute indication (Qareenah) to refrain from putting pictures in places of worship and it an evidence on the prohibition of pictures being present in the mosques:

Imam Ahmad has reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas (r.a) that: «أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا رَأَى «**When the Prophet (saw) saw pictures in the house, i.e. the Ka'bah, he (saw) did not enter, rather he ordered removal of the pictures which were removed.**»

B: If the pictures were copied by the questioner from others for the purpose of using them in places other than places of worship, then the following evidences indicate the permissibility:

With dislike (makrouh): If the pictures were copied for use to enhance the decoration of a place, like curtains for houses, or for highlighting cultural places or on the shirts or dresses...or in schools and libraries, in advertising brochures that are not connected with worship, or as a centre-piece of a room, or beautify a dress etc. all this is disliked (makrouh).

With permissibility (mubah): If the copying of pictures was for the purpose other than places of worship and in places that are not accorded veneration and respect like floor carpet which are walked upon, or other mattresses or cushions on which one sleeps or reclines against, or on the floor which is trampled upon etc., then these are permitted (mubah).

Evidences for these include:

The hadith reported by Abu Talha by Muslim who says that he heard the Prophet (saw) say: «لا «**Angels (Malaaikeh) do not enter a house wherein lives a dog and there are pictures.**»

Or as in another narration reported in Muslim: «إلا رقماً في ثوب» “**Except the prints on the cloth**”.

This indicates that pictures drawn on a dress are exempted, and this means that angels do visit homes where there are dresses with pictures drawn on them.

This means that plain pictures 'drawn on dresses' are permitted because the angels do visit the house in which there are dresses with plain pictures drawn on them. But there are ahadith that explain this permissibility:

Bukhari has reported on the authority of Aishah (r.a), she says: «دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَفِي «**The Prophet (saw) entered upon me while there was a curtain having pictures (of animals) in the house. His face got red with anger, and then he got hold of the curtain and tore it into pieces.**»

Qiram is a type of cloth which was hung on the door of the house as a curtain. The Prophet's (saw) face became red and he (saw) pulled out the curtain, which amounts to asking for removing of such curtains on the doors which have pictures drawn on them. When this is seen in the context of the possibility of angels entering such houses where there are pictures 'drawn on dresses', then it implies that 'asking for removal' of such curtains is not absolute i.e. such curtains etc. are disliked (Makrooh). Further, since such curtains were placed on the door of the house, which is a place of honour, therefore placing of pictures on a place of honour is disliked (makrouh).

The hadith of Abu Hurairah (r.a) extracted by Ahmad, which are the words of Jibreel (a.s) to the Prophet (saw): «وَمُرُّ بِالسِّتْرِ يَفْطَعُ فَيَجْعَلُ مِنْهُ وَسَادَتَيْنِ تُوْطَأَنَّ «**Order them to cut the curtain and make two cushions to sit on from it.**” Thus Jibreel (a.s) ordered the Prophet (saw) to remove the curtain from a place of respect (door) and make from it two cushions to sit upon. This indicates that using pictures drawn by others in places which are not places of respect, is permitted (mubah).

#### With Respect to Questions Five and Six:

- Drawing signage of people or animals, for instance road signs like 'Pedestrians Crossing' or 'Reach door in case of fire' or 'Dog-walking prohibited'.

- Drawing sketches of human or animal body parts, for example depicting hand-shake, pointing a finger, or horse head as signs.

### **Answers to these two questions are as follows:**

If the drawn pictures indicate that such pictures are of living things, then it is forbidden. This is because the Hadiths described pictures of living things as forbidden, and this prohibition applies to a complete picture or a half one or that of a head connected to obvious parts like hands or the like.

But if the signs do not indicate that the picture is a living being, like the picture of a hand alone or that of a finger pointing towards something or that of two hands in a handshake etc., then this prohibition will not be applicable to these.

As for the picture of a head alone without it being joined to other clear body parts, then there is a difference of opinion on its jurisprudence, and the preponderant opinion is that of non prohibition of head alone without being joined with any part of a body. This is because the ahadith permit cutting up of the head of statues to render them like a tree, for instance the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (r.a) wherein Jibreel (a.s) said to the Prophet (saw) that a statue does not remain haraam when its head is severed: «فَمُرْ بِرَأْسِ التَّمَثَالِ الَّذِي فِي بَابِ الْبَيْتِ فَلْيَقْطَعْ لِيصِيرَ كَهَيْئَةِ الشَّجَرَةِ» **“Order the cutting up of the head of which is on the door of the house so that it becomes like a tree.”**

Or the hadith «...فَمُرْ بِرَأْسِ التَّمَثَالِ يُقْطَعُ فَيَصِيرُ كَهَيْئَةِ الشَّجَرَةِ...» **“...Order the head to be cut so that it resembles a tree...”** (Extracted by Ahmad)

This hadith means the head alone and the rest of the figure is separate and both of these is not haram. It cannot be argued that the non-prohibition will only apply to the rest of the body whose head has been cut while the head itself will remain haraam. This is because Jibreel (a.s) asked the Prophet (saw) to cut off the head of the statue, meaning the cutting is permitted, hence the result of such cutting will also be permissible.

It must be known that *Hanbali* and *Malikis* permit pictures of head alone, but the *Shafa'iis* have difference of opinion on this issue... most of their Fuqaha prohibit pictures of the head, but some of them do permit it.

### **With Respect to Questions Seven and Eight:**

- Drawing sketches of people and animals that do not look realistic, like caricatures.
- Drawing of fairy tale sketches which do not exist in reality.

Answers to these questions is that if such pictures depict living beings, even if they are not realistic, then they are prohibited because the hadith of prohibition is applicable to them. In a hadith extracted by Muslim, the Prophet (saw) commanded 'Aisha (r.a) to pull down the curtain which was hung on the door because it had a picture of horses with wings. Although in reality there are no horses with wings.

Muslim reported on the authority of 'Aisha (r.a), she says: «قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ سَفَرٍ وَقَدْ سَتَرْتُ عَلَى بَابِي ذُرْتُوكًا فِيهِ الْخَيْلُ ذَوَاتُ الْأَجْنِحَةِ فَأَمَرَنِي فَنَزَعْتُهُ» **A'isha (r.a) reported: Allah's Messenger (saw) came back from the journey and I had screened my door with a curtain having portraits of winged horses upon it. He commanded me and I pulled it away.**” Darnouk (درنوك) is type of cloth.

### **Secondly: Answers to questions that have embossing i.e. sculptures (statues):**

Statues of living things with the exception of children's toys, the evidence is as follows:

Ahmad narrated from Abu Huraira that he said: the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “Jibreel (as) came to me and said:

«أتاني جبريل عليه السلام فقال: إني كنت أتيتك الليلة فلم يمنعني أن أدخل عليك البيت الذي أنت فيه إلا أنه كان في البيت تمثال رجل... فمر برأس التمثال يقطع فيصير كهينة الشجرة... ففعل رسول الله ﷺ.»

**“Jibril came to me and said: “I came to you yesterday and nothing prevented me from entering except that there was a statue of a man by your door... Cut off the head of the statue by your door, so it will look like a tree... The Messenger (saw) did that.”**

On the authority of Ibn Abbas: A man came to Ibn Abbas and said: I make drawings of these pictures (suwar), so tell me about (the ruling on) this. Ibn Abbas said: Come closer to me, the man did then Ibn Abbas put his hand on the man's head and said: I will tell you what I heard the Messenger (saw) say. I heard him (saw) say: «كل مصور في النار، يُجعل له بكل صورة صورها نفس تعذبه في جهنم، فإن كنت لا بد فاعلاً»

...«فاجعل الشجر وما لا نفس له»...  
**“Every Musawwir (one who draws living beings) will enter the Fire and a soul will be given to every drawing they made so that it would torment them in the Fire. He added: If you have to do this (go on in this profession), then make drawings of trees and everything that does not have a soul.”**

Tasweer is the drawing of something, this includes making statues, and sculptures. A drawing or a statue is the *surah*, its plural (in Arabic) is *suwar*, and it is also referred to in the language as *tasaweer*, which includes statues.

It is narrated that the Prophet (saw) sent Ali (ra) in an expedition and said to him: «لا تذر تمثالاً إلا هدمته» **“Obliterate every statue”** (Narrated by Muslim).

Thus every *surah* (drawing, statue, sculpture) of a living being (with soul) whether it was a *surah* that has a shadow (embossing), a statue, or a *surah* without a shadow, it is forbidden.

**Exceptions for prohibited pictures are those for children such as children's caricatures or cartoons or those imaginary pictures for children or for their recreation and leisure/diversion or for their teaching...All these are permitted and the evidences for this permission include:**

«قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ أَوْ خَيْبَرَ وَفِي سَهْوَتِهَا سِتْرٌ فَهَبَّتْ رِيحٌ فَكَشَفَتْ نَاحِيَةَ السِّتْرِ عَنْ بَنَاتٍ لِعَائِشَةَ لَعِبَ فَقَالَ مَا هَذَا يَا عَائِشَةُ قَالَتْ بَنَاتِي...»  
**“When the Apostle of Allah (saw) arrived after the expedition to Tabuk or Khaybar, the draught raised an end of a curtain which was hung in front of her store-room, revealing some dolls which belonged to her. He asked: ‘What is this, O Aisha?’ She replied: My dolls (my girls).”**

And in the hadith narrated by ‘Aisha (r.a) extracted by Bukhari, she said: «كُنْتُ أَلْعَبُ بِالْبَنَاتِ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ...» **“I was playing with dolls while the Prophet (saw) was present.” i.e. she was playing with toys that were in the shape of girls.**

Also the hadith narrated by Rabee'a bint Mu'wadh al Ansariyyah (r.a) extracted by Bukhari: «...وَنَجْعَلُ - وَفِي رِوَايَةِ مُسْلِمٍ وَنَصْنَعُ - لَهُمُ اللَّعْبَةَ مِنَ الْعِهْنِ فَإِذَا بَكَى أَحَدُهُمْ عَلَى الطَّعَامِ أَعْطَيْنَاهُ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى يَكُونَ عِنْدَ الْإِفْطَارِ...» **“We used to make – and in the narration of Muslim ‘craft- toys of wool for the boys and if anyone of them cried for food, he was given those toys till it was the time of the breaking of the fast.” i.e. to divert them with the toy until the time of breaking fast (iftaar).**

All these Hadiths permit (having) children’s toys even if they take the shape (statue) of a living thing (with a soul). Thus according to the rule: “of higher priority” that the one dimension picture (drawing, statue, sculpture) are permissible, whatever they are.) End of quote.

**I hope that you will find the answer to your question in this answer in addition to other related areas.**

Your brother,

**Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah**

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**The link to the answer from the Ameer’s Facebook page:**

<https://web.facebook.com/AmeerhtAtabinKhalil/photos/a.122855544578192.1073741828.122848424578904/606217656241976/?type=3&theater>

**The link to the answer from the Ameer’s page on Google Plus:**

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/100431756357007517653/100431756357007517653/posts/JFG3A6ey89>

**The link to the answer from the Ameer’s page on Twitter:**

<https://twitter.com/ataabualrashtah/status/846678594147508225>