129673 - Ruling on blotting out images in books and magazines; what are the images that prevent the angels from entering a house?

the question

Is it necessary to blot out images on the covers of books so that they will not prevent angels from entering the house? Do images in recycling bins prevent the angels from entering the house, even if we allocate a specific place in the house for that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The use of images in books, magazines, packaging and so on is something that has become a widespread problem and the Muslim is not required to seek them out and erase them, because of the great hardship involved in that.

Shaykh ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan as-Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to necessary items (containing images) that have becomes part of people’s daily lives and have become widespread, such as images on currency, matches and the like, what appears to me to be the case is that this comes under the heading of matters concerning which one has no choice, and with regard to matters concerning which one has no choice and which are very widespread, there is the hope that Allah will pardon them and the ruling is leniency concerning them."(Al-Ajwibah an-Naafi‘ah ‘an al-Masaa’il al-Waaqi‘ah p. 83)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said:

The individual is not required to blot out everything that he finds in magazines and newspapers,

because of the hardship entailed. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship” [al-Hajj 22:78]. He does not buy these magazines and newspapers because of the images and pictures; rather he buys them because of what they contain of news and information."(Jalasaat Ramadaaniyyah, p. 103. See also: ash-Sharh al-Mumti‘ 2/92).

Secondly:

The images that prevent the angels from entering the house are images of animate beings that are not handled in a disrespectful manner.

As for permissible images, such as images of natural scenery and other inanimate things, and images that are handled in a disrespectful manner, they do not prevent the angels from entering the place where they are.

The fact that images that are handled in a disrespectful manner do not prevent the angels from entering is indicated by the report narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Jibreel came to me and said: ‘I came 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 a statue in the images of a man, and in the house there was a curtain on which there were images, and in the house there was a dog. So issue instructions that the head of the statue at the door be cut off, so that it will resemble a tree, and issue instructions that the curtain be cut up and made into two cushions that may be left on the floor to be stepped on, and issue instructions that the dog be put outside.’”

So the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did that.

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2806); classed as saheeh by al-Albani in as-Silsilah as-Saheehah (256).

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said: This hadith supports the view of those who say that the kind of image that prevents the angels from entering the place where it is is that which remains in its original form, and is put in a high place and is not handled in a disrespectful manner. But if it is subject to being

handled in a disrespectful manner, or it is not subject to handled in a disrespectful manner but its appearance is altered, either by cutting it in half or cutting off its head, then there is no problem."(Fath al-Bari 10/392)

Al-Khattaabi said: Rather the angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or an image, of the type of dogs or images that it is prohibited to keep. But if it is not haraam, such as a dog for hunting, farming or herding livestock, or it is the kind of image that is subject to disrespectful treatment, such as images on carpets, cushions and the like, then the angels are not prevented from entering because of it.

Quoted from him in Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi (8/72)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said: If an image is subject to being handled in a disrespectful manner, such as if it is on a rug or cushion, then the majority of scholars are of the view that it is permissible. Based on that, it does not prevent the angels from entering that place, because if it did prevent them from doing so, then it would be forbidden."(Liqa’ al-Bab al-Maftooh 85/6)

Imam Ahmad (6290) narrated that Layth said: I entered upon Saalim ibn ‘Abdullah when he was reclining on a cushion on which there were images of birds and wild animals.

I said: Isn’t this disapproved of in sharee‘ah?

He said: No, it is only images that are set up in a high places that are disapproved of in sharee‘ah.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz was asked about the ruling on images on blankets, milk cartons and other household necessities.

He replied:

Such things are overlooked because they are subject to being handled in a disrespectful manner. Bedding is are subject to being handled in a disrespectful manner, cushions are subject to being handled in a disrespectful manner, and ketchup bottles are thrown in the trash, so the images on them do not matter, in sha Allah, because they are all subject to being handled in a disrespectful

manner."(Fataawa Noor ‘ala ad-Darb 1/310)

so images that are found in recycling bins are subject to being handled in a disrespectful manner, and do not prevent the angels from entering the house.

And Allah knows best.