Painting and Sculpture

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Q1215. What is the view on making dolls and sculpture, or drawing living beings (plants, animals, and human beings)? And what is the view on selling, buying, acquiring, and exhibiting these items?

A: There is no harm at all in the sculpture, photography and drawings of living beings whether or not they have a soul. Also, it is permissible to sell, buy, or keep pictures and statues. There is no objection to showing them in an exhibition as well.

Q1216. In the new curriculum, there is a subject called self-reliance. Part of the subject deals with sculpture. The teachers ask the students to make dolls of rabbits, dogs, and the like from cloth or other items. What is the ruling in this matter? What is the ruling on the teachers' instructions in this regard? And to what extent does the completion in full-size of these dolls affect the ruling?

A: There is no problem in making a statue or ordering another person to do so.

Q1217. What is the ruling in the matter of children drawing pictures of Qur'anic stories such as that of the People of the Elephant and the cleavage of the sea for Moses (a.s.)?

A: There is no objection to it in itself. However, it must be based on the truth, making sure to avoid dabbling in falsehoods and not to impinge on the sanctity of the subject matter.

Q1218. Is it permissible to manufacture dolls and statues of beings having spirits like human beings by using machinery?

A: There is no harm in it.

Q1219. What is the ruling in the matter of making jewelry in the form of statuettes? And does the material which goes into the making of the jewelry have any bearing on the ruling, in that it may be ḥarām?

A: It is permissible to make statuettes regardless of the material used in making them.

Q1220. Is returning the parts of a dismantled doll, such as hand, leg, and head to it included in the impermissibility of making a statue? And could it fall in the category of making statues?

A: Making limbs or returning them to their places per se is not considered as sculpture. At any rate, making a statue is no problem.

Q1221. What is the view on body tattooing which is usually done by some people and it is a method of obtaining marks or designs on the skin that are not removable? And does it constitute any barrier to water, used for ghusl or wuḍū', reaching the skin?

A: Tattooing is not ḥarām and the mark it leaves under the skin does not form a barrier to water reaching the skin. Thus, ghusl and wuḍū', with a tattoo on any part of the body, are valid.

Q1222. A married couple of famous painters make a living of restoring paintings. Most of these paintings depict Christian society; some of them portray the crucifix, Mary and Jesus Christ (a.s.) Some companies and institutions or even some people on behalf of Churches refer to them for this purpose. Is it permissible for them to carry out the required restoration work on such paintings and get paid for it, knowing that it is their only way of making living and they are devout Muslims?

A: There is no harm in the mere restoring of such paintings, even if they depict Christian society or portray Jesus Christ and Mary (a.s.). Nor is there any harm in taking fees for such work or taking up such a profession and earning a living from it unless it contributes to promoting falsehoods or misleading ideas or leads to other vile deeds.