



## THE BEGINNING OF IDOL WORSHIP

In the world that we live in today, taking pictures of people and animate objects has become widespread and some Muslims even go to the extent of framing and hanging up pictures of pious people in their homes. Firstly, we need to take heed of the Hadith of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) wherein he has stated that the Angels of Mercy do not enter that home in which there is a dog or pictures of living beings. Secondly, it is important that we understand the history of idol worship and how Shaitaan used these very pictures of pious predecessors to mislead people.

The initiation of idol worship in the world occurred by pictures being made in the love of the Saaliheen (righteous people) and being kept in the homes and Masjids with respect. The people thought it would assist in obtaining fulfilment in their worship and eventually took them to be their gods and started worshipping them.

Allah Ta'ala states in the Holy Qur'an, "And they said, "Do not ever abandon your gods, and never abandon Wadd, and Suwaa' and Yaghooth and Ya'ooq and Nasr (name of their idols)."" [Surah 71, Verse 23] Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) has stated that the names mentioned in this verse refer to the pious and righteous people from the Ummah (Nation) of Hazrat Nooh (Alaihis Salaam). When they passed away from this world Shaitaan placed evil whispers (Waswasa) in the hearts of the people to establish the pious people's pictures wherever they used to sit in the gatherings, and to keep the same names that they had. The people then followed this in ignorance. For some time they showed respect to these pictures but did not worship them. After some time when the people who showed respect passed away, and knowledge had become eradicated and ignorance had become widespread, then the Ibaadat (worship) of those pious people had started.

Hazrat Abu Ja'far (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) has stated that Wadd is the name of a Muslim person who was a loved and respected personality in his community. When he passed away in the region of Baabil, people gathered around his grave and in his separation they were mourning and lamenting. When Shaitaan saw them in this condition, he came to them in the form of a man and said, "I am seeing how you are mourning at the death of this person. What if I make an image of him exactly like he was, for you, then he can still be present in your gatherings, then you can look at his image and remember him."

The people said that this was a very good idea. Shaitaan then made for them an image of Wadd exactly like he was and the people kept it adorned in their gatherings and remembered him. Shaitaan then noticed their condition when they used to remember Wadd in their gatherings, so he came forward with another suggestion saying, "What if I make for each one of you a picture of him so that he will also be present in your home and each one of you can also remember him whether you are in a gathering or alone.

The people agreed to this idea as well and Shaitaan created an exact picture for each person's home. Everyone then started focusing their attention towards the picture, whether they were in a gathering or alone, and they were remembering him all the time. The children of these people witnessed this era and they used to see whatever their elders used to do.

With time their lineage moved forward and spread, and when the era of his remembrance became old, ignorance became widespread to such an extent that the forthcoming generations left

the worship of Allah Ta'ala and started worshipping the picture of Wadd. It is stated that the first time that someone else besides Allah Ta'ala was ever worshipped on the face of the earth, was this same idol, whose name the people had kept as Wadd.

It is narrated in a Hadith from Hazrat Aisha Siddiqah (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anha) that when Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) became ill, some of his blessed wives made mention of a church, which used to be called Maariyah. Hazrat Sayyidah Umme Salamah and Sayyidah Umme Habeebah (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anhuma) had been to the kingdom of Abyssinia and they had seen this church there. Both of them mentioned its beauty and the adorned pictures they had seen in it. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then raised his blessed head and said, "When any pious person from that nation used to pass away, they would erect a Masjid on the grave of that person and they would adorn his pictures and keep it in the Masjid; and they are the worst of Allah Ta'ala's creation." [*Bukhari Shareef*]

It is stated in a Hadith that those naive people used to make pictures of their pious and righteous predecessors and keep them adorned in their places of worship, so that they may remember them and through them incline more towards the worship of Allah Ta'ala. With time, after them more people came into the world. Shaitaan went to the new generations and presented a distorted version of the actions of their predecessors and elders, and told them that their elders used to worship these pictures; and this new generation of people then began to worship the pictures. [*Mirqaat Sharah Mishkaat*]

From this we learn what a great enemy Shaitaan is to us and how devious he is in trying to mislead us from the path towards Allah Ta'ala. We also learn from this that those who used to adorn pictures of pious people have been regarded as the worst of creation by Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Today some people hang pictures of pious people in their homes and argue that the pictures are of pious personalities. In fact it is the adorning of these very pictures of pious personalities that are even more reprehensible because it is exactly this that Shaitaan had used to mislead the previous nations into idol worship.

Who can be greater than the Ambiya-e-Kiraam, and that too a Prophet like Hazrat Ibrahim (Alaihis Salaam), who has the most exalted status amongst the creation after Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)? The Kuffaar had painted images of Hazrat Ibrahim (Alaihis Salaam), Hazrat Ismail (Alaihis Salaam) as well as Hazrat Sayyidah Bibi Maryam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anha) on the walls of the Holy Ka'bah. When Makkah was conquered by the Muslims, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sent Sayyiduna Farooq-e-Azam (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) to erase the images of these great personalities and made sure that there were no signs of these images remaining on the walls of the Holy Ka'bah.

If it was not permissible for the images of the exalted Ambiya-e-Kiraam to be adorned on the walls of the exalted Ka'bah Shareef, how then can we think that it would be permissible to hang pictures of the Awliya Allah in our homes?

May Allah Ta'ala save us and protect us from the mischief of Shaitaan and grant us the Taufeeq to seek knowledge of our Deen and to practice upon the teachings of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Allahumma Ameen.

[*Compiled from Al 'Ataaya Al Qadeer Fi Hukmit Tasweer by Ala Hazrat Imaam Ahle Sunnat Imaam Ahmad Raza Khan Qadri Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh*]