

Determining the forbidden shape of the cross

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Article taken and slightly adapted from: ferkous.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

The question: Is the emblem on the front and back of a Mercedes and a Chevrolet considered a cross? Is it an obligation for me to remove it, even if this results in a decrease in the car's value? May Allaah give you the success to explain the legal ruling for this issue. May Allaah reward you abundantly.

The answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Not every emblem that resembles a cross is prohibited and forbidden. The cross is the one known that the Christians sanctify and extol by way of worship. In most cases, this symbol appears on right angles and the bottom is larger than the top. The Christians consider the cross a distinguished symbol of following `Eessa Ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary)¹.

Thereupon, it is not permissible for a Muslim to raise an item that carries this image, because this is a symbol of Shirk (polytheism). The cross symbolizes worship to other than Allaah. Whoever resembles a people in their practices is just like them. This comes from the hadeeth where the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "**Whoever imitates a people is like them...**"².

Whenever a Muslim possesses this kind of cross, he should remove it whether by defacing it, blotting it, sticking on it, or by any other way to remove this symbol, without damaging the principal object that bears it. This is based on the hadeeth reported by `Imraane Ibn Hittaan that `Aisha (رضي الله عنها) told him, "**The Prophet (ﷺ) used to destroy everything that carried a cross or image in his house.**"³

¹ There are many kinds of crosses: Saint George's cross, Saint Andrew's cross, the cross of Lorraine, the Maltese cross, the cross of the Catholic Church, Saint Anthony's cross, Jerusalem cross, the swastika and others. We can also mention "The Red Cross" and the crosses put in some European countries' flags, like the flag of Switzerland, England, Finland and others, and the one commonly known is that mentioned above (in the answer).

² Reported by Aboo Daawood, chapter of "Garments" (hadeeth 4033) and Ahmad (hadeeth 5232), on the authority of Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنهما, and judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in Irwaa' Al-Ghaleel (hadeeth 1269).

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Garments" (hadeeth 5608), by Aboo Daawood, chapter of "Garments" (hadeeth 4151) and Ahmad (hadeeth 23740), on the authority of `Aa'isha (رضي الله عنها).

Determining the forbidden shape of the cross

Ibn Hajar said, "Since destroying images and crosses is intended in this hadeeth, then defacing, scratching off, and spoiling them as well is included. This is the act that should be done to all images, including images engraved in a wall."⁴

If the person does not have the ability to change it with his hands then he must use any other means at his disposal. This is taken from the hadeeth where the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"Whoever witnesses something evil must change it with his hands if he has the ability, otherwise he must speak against it. If he is not able to speak against it, he must hate it in his heart. Hating this evil in the heart is the weakest of faith."**⁵

Now that we have defined the cross that the Christians venerate and take as a symbol, it is clear that the symbols on the two previously mentioned cars are not to be removed.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah (عزَّ وجلَّ). Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers, Rabee` Ath-Thaani 18th, 1428H.

Corresponding to: May 5th, 2007.

⁴ Fath ul-Baaree by Ibn Hajar (10/358-386).

⁵ Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Faith" (hadeeth 177), Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Temptations" (hadeeth 4013) and Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 20759), on the authority of Aboo Sa'eed Al-Khudree (رضي الله عنه).