66200 - Ruling on worshippers stretching out their legs in the direction of the mus-hafs

the question

After praying, some worshippers stretch out their legs in front of them to relax them, but there are usually Mus-hafs (copies of the Quran) in front of them. I heard a fatwa by Ibn Taymiyah concerning this but I cannot remember it. Could you tell us the ruling on doing this?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars are unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to protect and respect the Mus-haf. Al-Majmoo' by al-Nawawi, 2/84.

Stretching out one's legs towards the Mus-haf is a kind of bad manners.

Hence a number of scholars were of the view that this action is makrooh, and some said that it is haraam.

It says in al-Bahr al-Raa'iq (2/36) – which is one of the books of the Hanafi madhhab – :

It is makrooh for a person to stretch out his legs when sleeping or at any other time towards the Mus-haf or books of fiqh, unless the books are on a higher level than him. End quote.

It says in al-Iqnaa' (1/62) – which is one of the books of the Hanbali madhhab – :

It is makrooh to stretch out the legs in that direction (the direction of the Mus-haf); similarly it is makrooh to turn one's back to it or step over it.End quote.

Ibn Muflih said in al-Adaab al-Shar'iyyah (2/285):

It is makrooh to lay one’s head on the Mus-haf… Ibn Hamdaan was of the view that it is haraam and that is stated definitively in al-Mughni. That applies also to all books of knowledge in which Quran is quoted, otherwise it is merely makrooh. Similarly it is makrooh to stretch out the legs towards any of those books. The Hanafis said that it is makrooh, because they contain the names of Allah, and it is bad manners. End quote.

Some of the Shaafa’is were also of the view that it is haraam, as stated in Tuhfat al-Muhtaaj, 1/155

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: In the mosques the Mus-hafs are placed on stands, and some people sit down and stretch out their legs, and they may be pointed towards these stands, with the feet close to them or underneath them. If the one who is sitting like this does not intend any disrespect towards the Mus-haf, does he have to move his legs away from the Mus-hafs, or move the Mus-hafs to another place? Should we denounce the one who does that?

He replied:

Undoubtedly respecting the Book of Allah is part of perfect faith and veneration of one’s Lord, may He be exalted. Stretching out one's legs towards the Mus-haf or towards the stands where there are Mus-hafs, or sitting on a chair or on a table under which there is a Mus-haf goes against having proper respect for the Word of Allah. Hence the scholars said that it is makrooh for a person to stretch out his legs towards the Mus-haf, even if his intention is sound and good. But if he intends to show disrespect towards the Word of Allah, then it is kufr, because the Quran is the Word of Allah.

If you see anyone stretching out his legs towards the Mus-haf, whether it is on a stand or on the ground, or you see someone sitting on something and there is a Mus-haf underneath it, you should remove the Mus-haf from in front of his feet or from beneath the chair on which he is sitting, or you should tell him, “Don’t stretch out your legs towards the Mus-haf; respect the Word of Allah.”

The evidence for that is what I have mentioned about it going against proper respect for the Word

of Allah. If a man whom you respect is in front of you, you would not stretch out your legs towards him, out of respect for him, and the Book of Allah is more deserving of respect."(Majmoo' Fatawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen, vol. 3).

With regard to the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyah concerning that, we looked for it but we could not find it.

And Allah knows best.