



ON THE SELLING OF MURTIS BY A MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVE

7th December 2021

MajlisTT has been approached to address the captioned issue that has been unfolding in the national arena and on social media in recent days.

MajlisTT notes the preponderance of correspondence and commentary on the matter, primarily through social media, and consistent in form across numerous posts and articles. MajlisTT, not being a recipient of, or witness to, the original documents in question, cannot verify the authenticity of any of the documents that form part of the posts, and remind the public that such verification should be established in the routine course of sharing or forwarding content. That having been said, we were asked to comment on the content that was shared, and reference same in this deliberation.

On the Permissibility of a Muslim to Sell Murtis.

Islam as a complete code of life places permissions and restrictions on Muslim behaviour and trade practices, amongst other things. On the matter of the selling of Murtis, Islamic guidance from the ahadith (traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)) is referenced following:

Narrated Jabir bin `Abdullah: I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), in the year of the Conquest of Mecca, saying, "Allah and His Messenger have forbidden the trade of alcohol, dead animals, pigs and idols..." [Sahih al-Bukhari 2236; Sahih Muslim 1581]

The guidance from these ahadith is clear and self-evident.

That being said, in the context of Trinidad and Tobago today, the onus is on each individual Muslim to comply with Islamic instructions. A Muslim, although prohibited from trade in the mentioned products in Islam, is free to trade in or all of the same products if they decide to do so. It is the Islamic belief that such persons would be held accountable for their decisions and their actions by Almighty Allah, on the Day of Judgement.

In addition, we note the responses by some members of the Muslim community which assert that there can be no discrimination against anyone on the basis of religious faith, and [what is implied to be Muslim-owned] community businesses have a duty to serve the entire community. MajlisTT agrees with this, but at the same time recognizes that serving the public without discrimination is a different matter from decisions on what products a business sells – a decision taken on the basis of feasibility, ethical and other influencing criteria. As such, and as mentioned previously, a Muslim can choose what to sell and what not to sell at their discretion, on the basis of religious and other considerations, and they would be held individually accountable to Almighty Allah on a fixed day.

We take the opportunity to remind Muslims of the ubiquity of Islamic values and regulations on Muslim life, including trade, and encourage all to adhere to the tenets of faith.

On The Issue of The Muslim Decision-Maker of a Firm Selling Products Prohibited in Islam, While at The Same Time Being a Decision-Maker or Representative of a Muslim Entity.

MajlisTT notes that ownership structures vary across various organisational models, and in some cases decisions are concentrated in the role of one individual, while in other cases are based on simple majority or consensus, or in alternative structures. Whatever the situation is that informs the decision-making of a business, MajlisTT is of the general position that Muslim decision-makers of a business that trades in items prohibited in Islam should not hold representative positions within the Muslim community, where there is a conflict of interest or the potential for decisions to compromise effective representation of Islam and the Muslim community.

Although this seems to be the core issue in the present situation, in this case the institutions and individuals involved are all independent entities, guided by their respective instruments of operations or ethical parameters. This issue is largely an internal organizational matter, and therefore understood to be outside the remit of the MajlisTT or other uninvolved external parties.

MajlisTT notes that many seemingly external parties hastened to issue their perspectives on the theological and social aspects of this matter. While we cannot speak for them, we urge persons to exercise caution on theological pronouncements that may be under-developed or outright inaccurate, and a misrepresentation of Islam. We are told in the Qur'an:

“So ask the people of the message [or of knowledge] if you do not know” (Quran 16:43)

On the Trading of Murtis within the National Community

Islamic beliefs are centered on the Oneness of God, and much of its regulations are extensions of this principle of simple monotheism. Its injunctions apply to Muslims, although others are free to live by Islamic regulations if they choose. Muslims are commanded in the Qur'an to not belittle or decry other religions. The Qur'an instructs Muslims:

“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah...” (Quran 6:108)

In Islam, Muslims are encouraged to adhere to their religion, and respect the rights of others to believe in their own faiths, and to be free to do so. The Qur'an tells us:

“For you is your religion and for me is my religion” (Qur'an 109:6)

In light of this, we respect the rights and freedoms of members of the Hindu and wider national community to believe and to consume as they see fit, consistent with their values, and in no way seek to discount or deny same simply because it is inconsistent with Islamic beliefs. Rather, we recognize our own freedom to adhere to our beliefs and restrictions in the same way others are free to do with theirs. Any utterances by anyone from the Muslim community contrary to this fact is not only unfortunate, but against the principles established in Islam.

In conclusion, we pray that this incident serves as an opportunity to not just learn more about each other and our respective beliefs, but to foster deeper connections, understanding and mutual respect within this rich tapestry of Trinbagonian society that we as Muslims are fortunate to share with others groups in our country. We ask Almighty Allah to forgive our sins and transgressions, and live together as a family serving God faithfully and devoutly.

May Almighty Allah guide us to that which is better.

Majlis ul Ulamaa Shariah Council

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