

What is The Ruling of Playing Music at Weddings and Renting out the Sound System for it?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: Zaid has a sound system shop and he also operates the sound system himself. He only takes the sound system to islāmic gatherings. But because it is currently wedding season, people ask him to provide his sound system on rent for playing music at wedding functions. They also request him to accompany the equipment and operate it so that the system does not get damaged. They also agree to pay him the wage for one night. So, the question is, can Zaid himself become an ajīr to provide the service of playing the music and can he rent out the sound system for this purpose?

Answer

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

Playing and listening to music at weddings or at any other occasion is impermissible, ḥarām, and a sin as music generally contains musical instruments whereas musical instruments have been prohibited in the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. It is even stated in the ḥadīth that music produces hypocrisy in the heart. In the described situation, because being hired as a sound operator for playing music at weddings contains issues, such as being hired for a sin and assisting someone in sinning, it is therefore impermissible, ḥarām, and a sin for Zaid to become an ajīr for playing music at weddings. Furthermore, the earning Zaid receives from this is not ḥalāl for him because the earning received from unlawful work is not ḥalāl.

As for renting out a sound system, sound systems are used for impermissible (e.g., music) and permissible (e.g., islāmic gatherings) purposes. The principle of sharī’ah is that when something can be used for impermissible and permissible purposes, it is impermissible to sell or rent it out to such a person about whom it is known that they will use it for impermissible purpose as this is assisting in sin and assisting in sin is impermissible and a sin. Therefore, because Zaid knows that in this situation the sound system will be used for an impermissible purpose, it is impermissible for Zaid to rent out the sound system for playing music in weddings.

Note – Nikāḥ is not only a Sunnah but it is a great blessing granted by Allāh for the fulfillment of a person’s natural needs. We should appreciate this blessing by ensuring that all wedding-related arrangements are carried out in accordance with Islamic teachings and avoid anything that Islām has prohibited.

Regarding the condemnation of music and instruments, Allāh Almighty states in the Noble Qur’ān:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ﴾

Translation (Kanz al-‘Irfān): And among people there are those who purchase words of amusement so that they may divert from the way of Allāh without knowledge; and take it in mockery. There is humiliating punishment for them. (The Noble Qur’ān, Part 21, Sūrah Luqmān, Verse 06)

It is stated in the commentary of the above-mentioned verse in *Tafsīr Ibn Kasīr*:

قال ابن عباس وجابر وعكرمة وسعيد بن جبيرة ومجاهد ومكحول وعمر بن شعيب وعلي بن نديمة وقال الحسن البصري: نزلت هذه الآية (وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ) في الغناء والمزامير

Translation: It is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, Jābir, ‘Ikramah, Sa‘īd Bin Jubair, Mujāhid, Makḥūl, ‘Amr Bin Shu‘aib, ‘Alī Bin Nudaimah رضي الله تعالى عنهم and Imām Ḥasan رحمه الله تعالى عليه states that this verse was revealed regarding singing and instruments. (Tafsīr Ibn Kasīr, Vol. 06, p. 331, Publ. Dār Taybah Lil-Nashr Wal-Tawzī‘)

Under this verse it is stated in *Tafsīr Sirat-UI-Jinān*:

اس آیت میں "لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ" سے متعلق ممتاز مفسرین کا ایک قول یہ ہے کہ اس سے مراد گانا بجاتا ہے۔

Translation: One opinion of the grand exegetes is that لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ in this verse refers to playing music. (Tafsīr Sirāt-UI-Jinān, Vol. 07, p. 475, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madīnah, Karachi)
Music produces hypocrisy in the heart. Thus, a ḥadīth in Sunan Abī Dawūd states that it is narrated from ‘Abdullah Bin Mas‘ūd رضي الله تعالى عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ stated:

ان الغناء ينبت النفاق في القلب

Translation: Singing produces hypocrisy in the heart. (Sunan Abī Dawūd, Chapter of prohibition of singing and instruments, Vol. 07, p. 287, Publ. Dār al-Risalah al-‘Ālamīyah)

Regarding not assisting others in sin, Allāh Almighty states:

﴿وَلَا تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾

Translation: and do not help each other in sin and transgression and be mindful of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is severe in retribution. (The Noble Qur’ān, Part 06, Sūrah al-Mā‘idah, Verse 02)

Commentating on the above-mentioned verse, Imām Abū Bakr Aḥmad Bin ‘Alī al-Jassās Rāzī Ḥanafī رحمه الله تعالى عليه (d. 370 AH/ 980 CE) writes:

نهي عن معاونة غيرنا على معاصي الله تعالى

Translation: In this verse, there is a prohibited of assisting others in transgression against Allāh. (Aḥkām al-Qur’ān Lil-Jassās, Vol. 02, p. 381 Publ. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, Beirut)

It is stated in *Al-Muḥīt al-Burhānī, al-Baḥr al-Rā‘iq Sharḥ Kanz al-Daqa‘iq, Fath al-Qadīr*, and *al-Fatāwā ‘al-‘Alamgīrī* (the following is cited from the first):

الاعانة على المعاصي والفجور والحث عليها من جملة الكبائر

(Al-Muḥīt al-Burhānī, Vol. 08, p. 312, Publ. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, Beirut)

Regarding Ijārah (hiring) for a sinful act being impermissible, Shams al-‘A‘immah, Imām Sarakhsī رحمه الله تعالى عليه (d. 483 AH/ 1090 CE) writes:

ولا تجوز الاجارة على شيء من الغناء والنوح والمزامير والطبل وشيء من اللهو لأنه معصية والاستئجار على المعاصي باطل، فان بعقد

الاجارة يستحق تسليم المعقود عليه شرعاً ولا يجوز ان يستحق على المرء فعل به يكون عاصياً شرعاً

(Al-Mabsūt Lil-Sarakhsī, Vol. 16, p. 38, Publ. Dār al-Ma‘rifah, Beirut)

The wage earned by doing an impermissible act is ḥarām. Regarding this, ‘Allāmah Shaykhī Zādah رحمه الله تعالى (d. 1078 AH/ 1667 CE) writes:

لا يجوز اخذ الاجرة على المعاصي كالغناء والنوح والملاهي --- وان اعطاه الاجر وقبضه لا يحل له

(Majma‘ al-Anhur Sharḥ Multaqa al-Abḥur, Vol. 02, p. 384, Publ. Dār al-Iḥyā al-Turās al-‘Arabī, Beirut)

The Imām of Ahl as-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمه الله تعالى (d. 1340 AH/ 1921 CE) writes:

حرام فعل کی اجرت میں جو کچھ لیا جائے، وہ بھی حرام کہ اجارہ نہ معاصی پر جائز ہے، نہ اطاعت پر۔

Translation: Whatever wage is received for ḥarām work is also ḥarām as neither is it permissible to get hired for sinful acts, nor for acts of worship. (Fatāwa Razawiyah, Vol. 21, p. 187, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

It is impermissible to sell such an object which can be used for sinning to such a person about whom it is known that they will use it for sinning. ‘Allāmah ‘Alā-Uddīn Ḥaskafī رحمه الله تعالى (1088 AH/ 1677 CE) writes:

ويكره تحريم مبيع السلاح من أهل الفتنة إن علم لأنه إعانة على المعصية

(Al-Durr al-Mukhtār Ma‘a Radd al-Muḥtār, Book of Jihād, Chapter of Rebels, Vol. 04, p. 268, Publ. Dār al-Fikr, Beirut)

It is stated in *Jadd al-Mumtār ‘Alā Radd al-Muḥtār*:

ان الشئى اذا صلح فى حد ذاته لان يستعمل فى معصية وفى غيرها ولم يتعين للمعصية فلم يكن بيعه اعانة عليها لا حتمال ان يستعمل فى غير المعصية وانما يتعين بقصد القاصدين والشك لا يؤثر

(Jadd al-Mumtār ‘Alā Radd al-Muḥtār, Vol. 07, p. 75-76, Publ. Maktabah-Tul-Madīnah, Karachi)

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ knows best.)

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