

Is A Web-Developer Sinful If Impermissible Item Is Displayed?

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What do the Islamic scholar say regarding the following:
We are website developers. Although we do not develop websites for Haram things like wine etc. but we do develop websites for trading purposes where a costumer can sell anything as per his wish. We do not know what he is going to upload on the website. We do not upload anything on it even not a single image. It is costumer who himself displays, later at some moment in time, impermissible images on it or sells an impermissible item through it not we. My question is “are we still sinners in this matter?”

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الجواب بعون الملك الوهاب اللهم هداية الحق والصواب

In the asked scenario, because you are developing a website solely for a business purpose and at the time of making, website was not specified for a sinful purpose like selling an impermissible item, so developing this type of trading website for a costumer is permissible for you. Now, if your costumer promotes his product by displaying ads which contain images of uncovered women or he sells an impermissible item, you will not be sinful because of this all. So, it is like selling a knife to a common man where you do not

know whether he will use it for cutting vegetables or for injuring Muslims. However, if you know beforehand that the costumer will use the website for impermissible purposes, then developing a website for him will be a direct assistance in sinful actions and that is impermissible. And it is equal to selling weapons to trouble makers while the seller knows that they will kill and plunder by dint of these weapons.

The holy Quran while forbidding us from assisting somebody in sinful actions mentions:

“وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ”

Translation: And do not help one another in sin and injustice.
(Surah Al-Maidah, Verse 02)

When sinning is attached to an object and the object has been specified for sinning, selling it will be impermissible as it is direct assistance on sinning. The same reason has been mentioned in Takmilah Behrur Raiq while mentioning the impermissibility of selling weapons to criminals and trouble makers.

“لأن المعصية تقوم بعينه فيكون اعانة لهم وتسببا وقد نهينا عن التعاون على العدوان والمعصية”

Translation: As sinning is linked with the weapons, selling these weapons to them (i.e. troublemakers) is equal to assisting them and becoming a means for them in committing this sin and it is against the Islamic teachings because Islam has forbidden us from providing assistance in sinful actions.

(Takmilah Behrur Raiq, Volume 8, Page 371, Beirut)

But when an object is not specified for sinning, although there is a possibility that a sin can be committed with that object

then selling that object will not be prohibited just because there is a possibility that a sin might be committed by using that object. This has been mentioned in Hidayah.

"وإن كان لا يعرف أنه من أهل الفتنة لا بأس بذلك، لأنه يحتمل أن لا يستعمله في الفتنة فلا يكره بالشك"

Translation: There is nothing wrong in selling weapons to an individual about whom one does know that he is from troublemakers, because there is a likelihood that the weapons may not be used in mischief. So, just because of suspicion, the selling of weapons will not be declared Makrooh (Prohibited).

(Al-Hidayah, Vol 04, Page378, Al-Madinah Tul Munawwarah)

Imam e Ahle Sunnat writes in his collection of Fatawas While discussing the matter of selling opium:

”افیون نشہ کی حد تک کھانا حرام ہے اور اسے بیرونی علاج مثلاً ضماد و طلاء میں استعمال کرنا یا خوردنی معجونوں میں اتنا قلیل حصہ داخل کرنا کہ روز کی قدر شربت نشہ کی حد تک نہ پہنچے تو جائز ہے اور جب وہ معصیت کے لئے متعین نہیں تو اس کے بیچنے میں حرج نہیں مگر اس کے ہاتھ جس کی نسبت معلوم ہو کہ نشہ کی غرض سے کھانے یا پینے کو لیتا ہے، لان المعصية تقوم بعينها فكان كبيع السلاح من اهل الفتنة۔ اس لئے کہ اس صورت میں گناہ عین شے کے ساتھ قائم ہے، لہذا یہ فتنہ پروروں کو ہتھیار بیچنے کی مانند ہو گیا۔“

Translation: Consuming opium is haram when the consumed amount reaches to the extent of intoxication but applying it externally on the skin as ointment or coating or adding a very small amount of it in eatable pastes is permissible provided the daily dosage of syrup does not reach to the extent of intoxication. So, when it is not solely for sinful purposes, it is permissible to sell it to anybody except a person

who one knows that buys only for intoxication purposes because in this case sin is committed using the very object and selling in this case will be equal to selling arms to people of Fitnah (i.e. those who create turmoil in society)

(Fatawa Razaviyya, Vol. 23, Page 574, Raza Foundation, Lahore)

It is in Bahar Shariat:

”اسی طرح افیون وغیرہ جس کا کھانا ناجائز ہے، ایسوں کے ہاتھ فروخت کرنا جو کھاتے ہوں ناجائز ہے کہ اس میں گناہ پر اعانت ہے۔“

Translation: Selling Opium and substances like that consuming which is impermissible to an individual who eats them is impermissible because it is assistance in sinning.

(Bahar e Shariat, Vol. 3, Page 481, Maktabah Tul Madinah, Karachi)

والله اعلم عزوجل ورسوله اعلم صلى الله تعالى عليه وآله وسلم

Written by

Abu Muhammad Mufti Ali Asghar Attari Madani

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Translated by Maulana Abdul wajid madani

Islamic Economics Centre
دارالافتاء اہل سنت