102214 - Ruling on working in a shop that rents out wedding dresses

the question

My cousin works in a shop that rents wedding and party dresses. She wants to know if this work is halal or haram. She says that there is no other job available now. Is she permitted then to stay in this job until she finds another?
Most of these dresses expose the shoulders, chest and neck, but they all have an attachment that is similar to a jacket to cover those positions of body.
This shop rents those dresses for three types of brides.
- A bride who normally wears hejab. She rents the dress with the jacket, and their parties are usually mixed.
- A bride who normally wears niqab. She rents the dress without the jacket, and their parties are usually in two halls; one for men and the other for women.
- A bride who does not normally wear hejab. She rents the dress without the jacket, and their parties are usually mixed.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

With regard to clothing that reveals ‘awrahs and shows a woman’s charms, selling and renting them is something that is subject to further discussion, as follows:

1-

It is permissible to sell and rent them to people who we know or think most likely that they will use them in permissible ways.

2-

It is haraam to sell and rent them to people who we know or think most likely that they will use

them in haraam ways, such as one who will wear them in mixed parties, because that is helping in sin. It is known that it is not permissible for a woman to uncover her neck and shoulders in front of non-mahram men, rather she is obliged to conceal all of her body in front of them, even her face and hands according to the more correct opinion. See the answer to question no. 11774 and 21536.

3-

If it is not known whether the purchaser or renter will use them in halaal ways or haraam, and there is no circumstantial evidence to suggest that either of the two possibilities is stronger, then the basic principle is that it is permissible to sell or rent it to them, then if they use it in haraam ways, then they are the sinners.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Sharh al-'Umdah (4/386): All clothing that it is thought most likely that it will be used for sinful purposes, it is not permissible to sell it or sew it for one who will use it for sinful and wrongful purposes. End quote.

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (13/109): Everything that will be used in haraam ways, or it is thought most likely that it will be used in such ways, it is haraam to manufacture it, import it, sell it or distribute it among the Muslims. That includes what many women do nowadays – may Allaah guide them – of wearing thin, tight and short clothes, which may all be summed up as showing their charms and adornments, and showing the shape and size of a woman's limbs in front of non-mahram men. End quote.

Based on that we say: If your cousin is able to follow what we have said then there is nothing wrong with this work of hers, but if she is not able to do that, then she should leave this job, seeking the pleasure of Allaah and so as to avoid sin. She should realize that there are many ways of seeking halaal provision, and that if a person fears Allaah, He will provide for him, and the one who gives up something for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will compensate him with something better than it.

It is not permissible for her to stay in this haraam job until she can find another, because there is

no necessity which makes it permissible to do something haraam.

And Allaah knows best.