4259 - What is the ruling on playing karate

the question

What is the ruling on playing karate?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Karate is one of the martial arts, a form of self-defence using one’s hands, without any kind of weapon. It allows hitting with the foot, fist or edge of the hand, focusing on concentrating all one's energy in that blow.

The shar’i viewpoint of this sport:

The sport includes numerous physical, psychological and mental benefits, and it is in accordance with sharee’ah in some ways, and goes against it in others. Among the ways in which it is in accordance with Islam are:

The concealing garments which cover all the ‘awrah completely. The rules of this sport require wearing covering garments composed of a shirt of thick white cotton, and trousers made of the same material, which have to be wide to allow movement of the legs and feet.

Combatants are forbidden to direct blows that will cause harm to their opponents. The rules of the game dictate that attacks must be restrained, and must not cause harm to one's opponent, unlike the rules of boxing, for example.

But on the other hand this sport is not free of things that go against sharee’ah, such as allowing blows to the face.

In addition, it includes some religious rituals that are derived from local Indian religions, such as the exchange of greetings between the combatants, which take the form of bows that are similar

to rukoo’ (the Muslim does not bow to anyone except Allaah), and the exercises such as keeping silent and focusing or meditating, which are derived from the religious rituals of Buddhism, etc. All of these are totally rejected by Islam.

But it is not forbidden to practise this sport once these issues have been eliminated. It is possible to eliminate them on an unofficial level, even if it is not possible to do so on an official and international level. It is not essential to learn these skills at the level of championships and clubs which adhere to these matters and view them as an essential part of the sport which everyone who practises it must adhere to.