466192 - What is the ruling on turning a masjid into a gathering place or rest area?

the question

I have a masjid in which the qiblah is not correct, and I want to build another masjid. Is it permissible to turn the old masjid into a gathering place or rest area?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The basic principle regarding waqfs (endowments) is, if the waqf is still in use, that it may not be disposed of; rather, it must retain its original character – as a masjid – but it is permissible to add to it, expand it, and adjust the direction of its qiblah.

If the masjid needs to be expanded because of an increase of people in that locality, but that is not possible, because the new land is not contiguous with the existing masjid, and interests are better served by building on the new land, then the old masjid and its structure should be evaluated by experts, and the value of the old masjid should be spent on constructing the new masjid or on renovating another masjid, after which the old masjid may be turned into a gathering place or rest area, as it has reverted to a state of unrestricted status.

It is essential to consult the authority responsible for endowments (awqaf) or the Sharia court to handle the evaluation and oversee the construction of the new masjid.

If the masjid does not need to be expanded, and it is sufficient for the number of worshippers, then its qiblah should be adjusted and it is not permissible to sell it or change its endowed status.

The Permanent Committee for Issuing Fatwas was asked: We have a small masjid that the Muslims built ten years ago, and now it become too small for the number of worshippers, and now we want

to expand the masjid, but that may not be possible, so we want to buy a large piece of land where we can build the masjid and a school for Muslim children, and supporting facilities.

The question is, is it permissible to sell the current masjid so that we can use the money to build the new masjid?

They replied: If the matter is indeed as described in the question, that the current masjid is too small and it is not possible to expand it, and necessity dictates that they should build a spacious masjid to accommodate all the worshippers and a school for the education of Muslim children, with supporting facilities, then we see no reason why the land and structure of the current masjid should not be sold, and the proceeds be used to buy a larger piece of land in a suitable location, and to build the masjid and the school with the necessary facilities there, because that serves the public interest. But that is on condition that this project should be undertaken by those who are trustworthy, honest and competent. And success comes from Allah.

Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz ibn `Abdillah ibn Baz, Shaykh `Abd ar-Razzaq al-`Afifi, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Ghadyan, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Munayyi`.

End quote from *Fatawa al-Lajnah ad-Da'imah*, 16/38.

The Committee was also asked about building a large masjid next to an old masjid, and turning the old masjid into a school for the education of Muslim children.

They replied: There is no objection to constructing the new masjid, having the old masjid – both land and structure – evaluated by experts, using the proceeds to build another masjid in a locality where one is needed, and converting the site of the old masjid into a school for teaching Islamic religious sciences.

Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz ibn `Abdillah ibn Baz, Shaykh `Abd ar-Razzaq al-`Afifi, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Ghadyan

End quote from *Fatawa al-Lajnah ad-Da'imah*, 16/60.

And Allah knows best.