176910 - Ruling on abiding by the law of the land in western countries

the question

Is it essential for a Muslim who lives in a non-Muslim country to abide by the laws of that land, such as abiding by traffic laws and the age set for being allowed to drive, or is that haraam or makrooh?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

With regard to laws promulgated in non-Muslim countries, one of the following three scenarios must apply:

1.

The laws are contrary to what Allah has prescribed, such as giving the wife the power of divorce, or not giving the father guardianship over his daughter after she reaches puberty, or giving a daughter the same share of the estate as a son, allowing the drinking of alcohol and zina (sex outside of marriage), and so on. It is not permissible to act upon these laws or approve of them.

2.

The laws are in accordance with what is mentioned in Islamic teachings. In this case, one should abide by them, in obedience to Allah and His Messenger.

3.

The Islamic texts have not said anything about the laws, but they are in the best interests of people, such as laws having to do with driving and the age at which driving is allowed. These laws must be adhered to, in accordance with the religious texts which enjoin being faithful to contracts and covenants, such as the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the

meaning): “O you who believe! Fulfill (your) obligations” [al-Maa’idah 5:1] and the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): “Muslims are bound by their conditions, except a condition that forbids something permissible or permits something forbidden.” Abu ‘Eesa [at-Tirmidhi] said: This is a hasan saheeh hadith. It was classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) in Saheeh Ibn Maajah (2353).

And Allah knows best.