624401 - What is the ruling on decorating melons and fruits and painting them different colours?

the question

What is the ruling on painting fruit, then selling it?

We are wholesalers, and we decorate yellow melons by making small squares, drawing four or five squares, with red paint on the rind, to make it look pretty. That is at the request of the customers, who then resell it piece by piece. This is something that is commonly done when selling this type of melon in our country. Are there any reservations on doing that from an Islamic point of view?

Summary of answer

It is permissible to decorate melons with paint, if that is free of any harm or extravagance and not connected to corrupt beliefs.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There is nothing wrong with decorating yellow melons by drawing small squares on the rind and painting them red, subject to some conditions:

1.There should be nothing in this paint that could cause harm to the one who eats the fruit, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm.” Narrated by Ahmad and Ibn Majah (2341); classed as authentic (sahih) by al-Albani in *Sahih Ibn Majah*.

2.This decoration should not be connected to any beliefs or imitations of non-Muslims, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of

them.” Narrated by Abu Dawud (4031); classed as authentic (sahih) by al-Albani in *Sahih Sunan Abi Daud*.

3.This decoration should not involve any deceit of the purchaser or cheating him, in the sense that he thinks that these colours are something that naturally occur in the fruit, so that he will desire it more.

4.That should not involve any extravagance or waste of money, such as using a lot of paint or using expensive paint, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says: { and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He [Allah] does not like those who waste by extravagance} [Al-An`am 6:141].

What is meant by extravagance is spending too much on permissible things.

It says in *Fayd al-Qadir* (1/50): Extravagance means spending money on the right thing, but more than is appropriate. And what is meant by squandering is spending on that which is not appropriate. This was stated by a number of scholars. Al-Mawardi said: Extravagance means spending too much in terms of amount, which results from ignorance of what the appropriate amount is. Squandering means spending on that on which it is not appropriate to spend, and it results from ignorance of what is appropriate to spend on. Both are blameworthy, and the latter is regarded as blameworthy because the mistake of the one who is extravagant is spending more than is required, whereas the one who squanders is mistaken on two counts. End quote.

In principle, this kind of decorating is permissible, and it comes under the heading of customs and traditions. Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Say [O Prophet], ‘Who has forbidden the adornment and the nourishment Allah has provided for His servants?’} [Al-A`raf 7:32].

Dr. Muhammad Sidqi Al Burno (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Mawsu`at al-Qawa`id al-Fiqhiyyah* (1/2/24):

No. 373: In principle, what is beneficial is permissible and what is harmful is prohibited…

Some example of the issues to which this principle may be applied are:

Animals, foods, drinks, smells, tools and actions concerning which no ruling is mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. If something is proven to be beneficial, it is permissible, and if it is proven to be harmful, it is prohibited. End quote.

So every action that is not harmful is permissible in principle.

See also the answers to questions no. 2376 and 305881.

And Allah knows best.