9589 - Her husband stole from a store, claiming that their prices were too high

the question

I have known my husband for 3 years, and he is a very honest Muslim man. However 2 months ago he went to buy something from a shop and the price of this item was higher than in other shops so he stole it. His excuse for his doing was that he can not stand being "ripped off". Now, two weeks ago he rented a suit for our friend's wedding, and after went to another shop to buy a shirt and a tie. He found a shirt and a tie in a package and when he decided to buy it he was accused by sales assistant of putting these two together in order to get a cheaper price and this was not true. Therefore he got very angry and in order to "punish" the company, stole a $900 suit, and left to the same company other suit that he rented for $50. I explained for him that this is haraam, and that there is no excuse for stealing. He is not a thief. He is a very strict Muslim. Please tell me how to explain to him that in Islam stealing is stealing no matter of the situations. Please answer me, I would really appreciate it.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

1.We are surprised at your husband’s actions which you have told us about, and we are amazed that you describe him as not being a thief and as being a committed Muslim, when he has done something which the rank-and-file of Muslims – let alone their scholars – know full well to be haraam.

We have nothing that we can advise you to tell him, apart from the ruling on stealing, and that it is haraam, and that Allaah says in His mighty Book (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (as for) the male thief and the female thief, cut off (from the wrist joint) their (right) hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allaah…”

[al-Maa’idah 5:38]

The punishment for stealing in sharee’ah is cutting off the right hand, and the thief is still not free from blame after the punishment has been carried out, until he restores the stolen property to its rightful owner.

Allaah also says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And eat up not one another’s property unjustly (in any illegal way, e.g. stealing, robbing, deceiving)”

[al-Baqarah 2:188]

It was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) addressed the people on the Day of Sacrifice and said:

“O people, what day is this?” They said: “A sacred day.” He said, “What land is this?” They said, “A sacred land.” He said, “What month is this?” They said, “A sacred month.” He said: “Your blood, your wealth and your honour are sacred to you, just as this day of yours in this land of yours in this month of yours is sacred” – and he repeated it several times. Then he raised his head and said, “O Allaah, have I conveyed it? O Allaah, have I conveyed it?” Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said:

“By the one in Whose hand is my soul, it was advice given to his ummah, so let the one who was present convey it to the one who was absent.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1652).

A similar report was narrated in al-Saheehayn from Abu Bakrah.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: A man came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said, “O Messenger of Allaah, what do you think if a man comes to take my wealth?” He said, “Do not give him your wealth.” He said, “What if he fights me?” He said, “Fight him back.” He said, “What if he kills me?” He said, “Then you will be a

shaheed (martyr).” He said, “What if I kill him?” He said, “He will be in the Fire (Hell).” (Narrated by Muslim, 140)

It was also narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah cursed the thief who steals an egg and has his hand cut off, and steals a rope and has his hand cut off.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6401; Muslim, 1687).

If he thinks that this is permissible for him, then he has been cheated. This is the deception of the Shaytaan. A haraam action should not be met with another haraam action.

This is if we accept what he said. But in principle the vendor has the right to sell (his goods) for whatever price he wants. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The buyer and seller have the choice (of either going ahead with or cancelling the transaction) so long as they have not parted.” (Narrated in al-Bukhaari, 1973; Muslim, 1532) If he [your husband] does not like the price of an item, all he has to do is negotiate; he should not steal. If he likes the price, fair enough; otherwise he should go to a different store.

As for his “punishing” the store by stealing 900 dollars, this is also haraam. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if you punish (your enemy, O you believers in the Oneness of Allâh), then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted” [al-Nahl 16:126]

A person does not have the right to take whatever wants even if he has been mistreated. If he takes more than what has been taken from him unlawfully, then he becomes a wrongdoer too.

This is if the store has done wrong by your husband, but what seems to be the case is the opposite. It is no more than the matter of misplaced suspicion. Would your husband like it if someone were to do that to him, and steal even half of this amount just because he suspects him?

The answer, obviously, would be no. So it is not permissible for him to do that to this storekeeper.

We advise you to tell him that this world is fleeting, and that man will meet Allaah on the Day of

Resurrection with his deeds, and that theft is a scandal and a humiliation in this world and the next.

In this world, it removes the blessing from the thief's property, and indeed from his life, then it brings him humiliation among people.

In the Hereafter it will be even worse. Let him think about this hadeeth:

It was narrated that Abu Humayd al-Saa'idi said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

"By Allaah, none of you takes something from another unlawfully, but he will meet Allaah carrying it on the Day of Resurrection. I shall see some of you meeting Allaah carrying a camel grunting, or a cow mooing, or a sheep bleating." Then he raised his arm so high that the whiteness of his armpit became visible, and said, "O Allaah, have I conveyed it?" (narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6578; Muslim, 1832)

And Allaah knows best.