31781 - Can You Work for a Company that Cheats?

the question

He works for a company which mixes haram things with halal things, and sells some stolen goods and cheats. Is his income halal? If he leaves this job, any other job will also involve some things that are forbidden according to Shari`ah, so what should he do? Should he continue in his job or give it up and let his children go hungry when he cannot find any means of taking care of them?

Summary of answer

If your work involves helping the company in any way with any kind of cheating or stealing, then it is not permissible. But if your work has nothing to do with the haram things, and the company also has some other departments that do not deal with haram things, then it is permissible for you to work in the departments that deal with permissible things.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Can you work for a company that cheats?

If your work involves helping the company in any way with any kind of cheating or stealing, then it is not permissible. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression.” [Al-Maidah 5:2]

But if your work has nothing to do with the haram things, and the company also has some other departments that do not deal with haram things , then it is permissible for you to work in the departments that deal with permissible things, subject to the condition mentioned above, which is

that there should be no helping anyone to do anything haram.

Is it permissible to work in riba-based institutions?

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“It is not permissible to work in riba-based institutions even as a driver or guard, because taking up employment with a riba-based institution implies that one approves of it. A person who hates something could never agree to work in its interests, so if he works in its interests, that means he approves of it, and the one who approves of something haram has a share of its sin.

But if he is directly involved in recording, sending and depositing, etc., then he is undoubtedly involved directly with the haram thing. It was proven from the hadith of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cursed the one who consumes riba , the one who pays it, the two who witness it and the one who writes it down, and he said: “They are all the same.” (Fatawa Islamiyyah, 2/401)

What you have to do is to denounce those who are in charge of the haram departments , and advise them to give up these dealings. You also have to advise the purchasers, if you can, and tell them of the faults present in the products that they are buying.

Quitting a job for the sake of Allah

With regard to the issue of there being no other work, this is a whisper (waswasah) from the Shaytan. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine” [Al-Talaq 65:2-3]

There are many kinds of permissible work. So you have to put your trust in Allah and avoid that which is haram.

Will your children die of starvation if you quit a haram job?

With regard to the idea of your children dying of starvation, we ask you: is it better for them to die of starvation – assuming that they do die – or for you to enter Hell for their sake?

Moreover, Allah is the One Who has created them, and He is the One Who has guaranteed to provide for them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And in the heaven is your provision, and that which you are promised.” [Al-Dhariyat 51:22]

“And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin.” [Al-Isra 17:31]

Allah has decreed the provision of each person before he emerges from his mother’s womb, so do not fear that Allah may reduce your provision, rather fear your own self that is inclined to evil and tempts you to commit sin. Remember the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “There is no flesh that is nourished from haram sources, but the Fire is more suited to it.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, no. 614; classed as hasan by al-Albani in Sahih al-Tirmidhi)

Stories from the life of `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz

There follow some stories from the life of the Rightly-Guided Caliph `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz (may Allah have mercy on him):

Some apples were brought to `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz for the bayt al-mal (treasury) of the Muslims, and a small son of his took an apple. He snatched it back from him by force and the child ran to his mother, crying. She sent someone to the marketplace to buy him an apple. When ‘Umar went back home, he noticed the smell of apples and said, “O Fatimah, have you taken anything from this wealth?” She said, “No,” and told him that she had bought an apple for her son with her own money. ‘Umar said: “By Allah, when I snatched it from him it was as if I was snatching it from my own heart, but I would not like to condemn myself before Allah for the sake of an apple from the wealth of the Muslims.” (Manaqib `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 190)

`Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz entered upon his daughters after ‘Isha prayer to greet them, and when they realized he was there, they put their hands over their mouths and moved away from him. He said to their guardian, “What is the matter with them?” She said: “They did not have anything to eat for dinner apart from lentils and onions, and they don’t want you to smell that from their mouths.” So ‘Umar wept then he said to his daughters, “O my daughters, what will it benefit you if you live a life of luxury but your father ends up in Hell?” Then they wept loudly. (`Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz by Dr. al-Burunu, 142)

`Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz was rebuked, when he was dying, of leaving his children poor. He sent for them and there were over a dozen males. He looked at them and his eyes filled with tears, then he said: “O my sons, your father has been given the choice between two things, either you will be rich and your father will enter the Fire, or you will be poor and your father will enter Paradise. If you are poor and your father enters Paradise, that is dearer to him than your being rich and your father entering Hell. Get up, may Allah protect you.”

And Allah is the Source of strength.