71249 - He used to steal money from his father and now he wants to return it without telling him

the question

My father has a briefcase which he leaves at home. A while ago I opened his briefcase and took some money to pay off some debts that I had because I was not working. I did this several times until my father noticed that the money was getting less, but he did not know who was doing that. After a while, praise be to Allaah, our Lord guided me and I became committed and realized that I had committed a sin when I took the money without my father’s knowledge. Now I have decided in sha Allaah to work and save up the money, and return the money that I took and put it back in his briefcase without his knowledge.

My question is: Should I put the money in my father’s briefcase without his knowledge, because I am afraid of my father’s being angry with me, because I am also going to work with my father and I am afraid that he will lose trust in me. I hope that you can tell me what to do.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Your taking money from your father’s briefcase without his knowledge was a reprehensible action and an evil deed. Praise be to Allaah Who has guided you and enabled you to repent. Part of your repentance is to put back the money that you took.

If telling him about it will make him angry or make him not trust you, then put the money back by any means without telling him, such as putting it in his briefcase and so on.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked: Since I was young, if I saw my father putting something away, whether it was money or things that were useful, I would take it, and my father did not know about that. After I grew up, I began to fear Allaah and I stopped doing all that. Now is it permissible for me to tell my father about that or not?

They replied:

You have to return the money and other things that you took from your father, unless it was something simple like pocket money, in which case it does not matter. End quote.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 15/352

They were also asked: (24/355): If a person steals some money then he wants to repent, and return the money to its owner without him knowing it, what is the ruling on his repentance?

They replied:

If the situation is as you describe and he is sincere in his repentance and regrets what he did, and he has resolved not to do it again, then his repentance is valid and his repentance is not affected if the one from whom it was stolen does not know who returned his money. End quote.

And Allaah knows best.