

131437 - Her work is putting together da'wah pamphlets and she takes quotes from here and there (instead of writing them herself)

the question

The nature of my work is putting together religious and da'wah pamphlets for an Islamic centre, but I am not very good at writing, so I have no choice but to copy poetry and other literary works by poets and writers. I copy metaphors and other eloquent turns of phrase, beautiful wording and brilliant ways of presenting ideas, then I try to change it a little by adding and subtracting some words to make it suit the topic of the pamphlet that I am writing, so that the article is a composition of things with some alterations, and I do not add any sentence of my own except rarely. The result is an article that is very moving and conveys the basic idea. Is this regarded as stealing work and is it not permissible for me to do this? I have been doing this for more than two years, but now I have realised what I have been doing. I cannot tell my bosses and colleagues the truth. Is the salary that I am taking regarded as haraam wealth?.

Detailed answer

There is nothing wrong with learning and quoting from what others have written of beautiful phrases, eloquent words and brilliant presentations in the manner that you have mentioned, so that the article will be moving and coherent from beginning to end. Writers are always quoting from one another, looking for material, and putting together sentences and paragraphs. Choosing the most appropriate material requires time and effort. Perhaps by doing this you will reach a stage where you no longer need to quote so much.

What is not permissible in this regard is stealing the articles and publications of others, or stealing entire passages from them.

As for taking sentences and words from a number of articles, it does not seem to be the case that this comes under the heading of stealing or theft.

It is also not allowed for a person to pretend to have something that he does not have in order to give his colleagues the impression that these moving words are his creation or production. Rather he should be honest with himself and others, and point out that his efforts are limited to compiling, putting together, selecting the right words and benefiting from the work of others.

It was narrated from Asma' (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: The one who pretends to have been given something that he was not given is like the one who wears two garments of falsehood."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5219) and Muslim (2129)

And Allah knows best.