

175999 - A young man is finding it extremely difficult to find halaal work

the question

I am a young Muslim man who was born in a western country. By the grace of Allah, may He be exalted, I have learned more about my religion in recent years. I know that it is obligatory for the Muslim to live in a Muslim country, but at present I am not able to live in a Muslim country because of difficult circumstances beyond my control. But I intend to migrate when I get the chance. The problem may be that I am trying to find a job, and the problem is that the vast majority of jobs in the West are dubious, if not haraam. I will give you some examples:

1.

There is a company that sells fresh produce and needs someone who is skilled in using computers and can help others in the company with their problems in using computers. The problem here is that if someone wants me to install a program or fix his web browser, it may be the case (in fact it is most likely) that he is going to browse websites or pages in which there are things that are contrary to Islamic teaching, such as music, or pictures of adorned women, and other things. Similarly, he may ask me to fix the printer, which may be used to produce printed material containing things that are contrary to Islamic teaching, such as images of animate beings and women, or things that contain kufr (disbelief), and I will carry the burden of sin for that, and I will not be able to refuse to help them. Moreover, this company may sell the produce to restaurants that cook these vegetables with pork or alcohol or other haraam things. Will there be any sin on me if I work in this company? What should I do?

2.

Teaching is another example. For example, if a person wants to teach a secular subject in a non-Islamic school, he will be confronted with many things that are contrary to Islamic

teaching. For example, he has to allow the students to go to gatherings that the school holds on the occasion of their shirki festivals such as Christmas and Easter, and the teacher has no choice, because the instructions come from the principal of the school and he has to comply with them. In addition to that, he may sometimes have to attend these gatherings, because they are held during school time. Sometimes he may be faced with words of kufr uttered by some of the students, and I will not be able to leave them every time; in fact I will not be able to denounce them. In addition to that, sometimes I may be required to be a supervisor on school trips. What should I do? I want to point out that the Islamic schools in our country do not have much support, therefore it is very difficult to get jobs in them.

3.

Even if a person applies for a job in a company that sells honey, which is basically permissible, it is most likely that this honey will be used for haraam things, such as being put into beer or on ham (honey glazed ham), and other things that it is not permissible for us to eat and drink and so on.

Every time I look for a job, these dubious matters come up and I think that I may have to help with or participate in these haraam things. These doubts are not something imaginary, because these people do not care about issues of halaal and haraam. What should I do?

Finally, as I mentioned above, many jobs here in the West that may be halaal in principle become haraam or dubious because the people do not have any idea of halaal and haraam and they misuse almost everything. I do not want to consume income that is haraam or concerning which there is some doubt.

My question is: what are the guidelines that I can follow in looking for halaal work in the light of what I have mentioned above of doubts and problems? It is also very important for you to understand that I cannot leave work every time I find something that is contrary to Islamic teaching, because this will have an impact on my work record, and that will make it

very difficult for me to find a job after that, and I cannot leave work every time I find something that is contrary to Islamic teaching.

Detailed answer

We congratulate you for your keenness to look for permissible work and your caution against falling into haraam. We ask Allah to increase you in guidance and piety.

You should understand that the matter is much easier than you think, and that Allah does not make things too difficult for His slaves with regard to this issue. If every person thought in the way that you think, there would never be any permissible work for anybody, either in the east or in the west, because the things that people do are interconnected, each one complementing the other, and undoubtedly some haraam elements may creep in. If we refused to do all actions because of the possibility that they may lead to other actions that are prohibited, we would never find any purely permissible action except in a few, rare cases.

Should we say to someone who sells mobile phones and other communications technology: it is not permissible for you to sell them, because some people are going to use them for haraam purposes?

Should we say to shopkeepers: do not sell women's clothing, because some women will wear it in ways that are prohibited? Indeed, should we say to someone who sells food that some people will buy it with haraam wealth, or will eat it in order to have the energy to commit sin?!

Similar things may be said about working in the manufacture of printers, cars and computers, and making other things that are not free of being used in haraam ways.

Islam does not demand this of people, so long as the work is permissible in principle; whoever uses the product of that work for haraam purposes is the one who bears responsibility for his deed.

What we advise you to do is to look for work that is appropriate for you in permissible fields of work, of which there are many, praise be to Allah. All you have to do is avoid two types of work:

1.

Work that is haraam in and of itself, such as working in pubs, dance clubs, riba-based banks, selling alcohol and pork, and other things that are prohibited in Islamic teaching

2.

Work that helps in doing haraam things, on condition that this is helping in a direct sense, such as serving alcohol to those who drink it, or writing down riba-based contracts, taking part in building a church, and so on, which are actions that are direct precursors to doing haraam things.

But if the work may help in doing haraam things in an indirect manner, or it is the matter of mere speculation and possibility, then that does not make the job haraam, especially if a person is not intending to do something haraam in his work – otherwise every job that a person could do could possibly lead, indirectly, to helping in something haraam.

May Allah make things easy for you, grant you abundant provision from wholesome sources, and guide you to His straight path.

And Allah knows best.