

279129 - Ruling on Jobs Acquired by Cheating in Exams

the question

I previously asked you, in question no. 278157, about getting a job on the basis of a degree which was obtained with some cheating, and the ruling on the salary that is based on having that degree, and you referred me to question number [26123](#) , which quoted a Fatwa from Shaykh `Abdul-Karim Al-Khudayr. I have read many answers on this website, and I found that some of the scholars say that there is nothing wrong with working on the basis of this degree, if the person has repented from cheating and is good at his job. We would like you to give the evidence and the basis for this view (which is that the degree or certificate does not become invalid because of cheating).

Summary of answer

Cheating and deceiving are prohibited whether in exams or otherwise. However, there is nothing wrong with obtaining a job on the basis of that degree, if you are good at it, because the primary and greatest aim of stipulating that job applicants should have a degree is to ascertain that the person is qualified to do this particular job, even on the basis of probability.

Detailed answer

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Ruling on jobs acquired by cheating in exams

Cheating and deceiving are prohibited, [whether in exams or otherwise](#) , because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever deceives [or cheats]

does not belong to me.” (Narrated by Muslim, 102) The one who has committed any such action must repent to Allah, may He be Exalted.

However, there is nothing wrong with his working on the basis of that degree, [if he is good at his job](#) , because the primary and greatest aim of stipulating that job applicants should have a degree is to ascertain that the person is qualified to do this particular job, even on the basis of probability.

Moreover, every boss or company which requires or stipulates that employees should have a degree is aware that some of those who have that degree may not be qualified for the job, and the way in which they obtained the degree may have involved some kind of transgression and the like, and this is something that is fairly common and well-known. Nonetheless, it is common that they initially require a degree as an indication that the person is qualified to do this job, then they watch to see how he actually performs.

If the person does his job in the manner that is required of him and others like him, then the purpose of stipulating that he should have a degree is fulfilled.

It is a waste of time and effort to seek to find out exactly how he obtained this certificate, and whether there was any transgression, cheating and the like involved. It is quite clear that this requires too much effort and it will be too difficult to establish exactly how he obtained this certificate.

Ruling on salary if one acquired the certificate by cheating

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: A man got a job on the basis of a degree certificate, but he cheated in the exams for this degree. Now he is performing well, according to the testimony of his bosses. [What is the ruling on his salary](#) – is it permissible or prohibited?

He replied:

“There is nothing wrong with it, in Sha’ Allah, but he must repent to Allah for what he did of [cheating](#) . That is provided that he is doing his work as it should be done. In that case, [there](#)

is no problem with regard to his salary , but he erred by cheating in the past, and he must repent to Allah from that." (Majmu` Fatawa Ibn Baz 19/31)

The way to work out the ruling in such cases is to note what is mostly the case, and overlook what rarely happens. Hence we must differentiate between one who cheated in the exams and one who obtained a fake certificate.

If the workplace requires a particular degree, and the person obtained it by cheating in the exams, then the condition has been met and the sin that he committed may be overlooked, unlike the one who did not sit the exams and obtained a fake certificate, because that certificate carries no weight.

If, in addition to the fact that he is doing his work in the manner required, or he is doing it like his peers, he has also repented from transgressing and cheating, the concession of letting him off becomes stronger, because it is known that one of the objectives of Shari`ah is helping the penitent in his repentance and forgiving what has happened in the past. Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, "Trade is [just] like interest." But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to [dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein} [Al-Baqarah 2:275]

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"This is general in meaning and applies to everyone who has received an admonition from his Lord: Allah has ordained that he may have what is past.

The fact that this is proven in the case of a Muslim is supported by what it says in a subsequent verse: {O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest} [Al-Baqarah 2:278]. Allah enjoined them to give up what remains, but He

did not enjoin them to return what they had already received. This, along with the phrase {may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah} [Al-Baqarah 2:275] indicates that they may keep what they had received in the past. And Allah accepts repentance from His slaves.

If someone were to say: this verse refers exclusively to the disbelievers, the response is:

There is nothing in the verse to indicate that; rather Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): {So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past}. Rather it is more appropriate that this should include the Muslim as well as the disbeliever.

In fact, it may be said that this applies to anyone who is aware that something is haram, then an admonition comes to him from his Lord, so he gives it up. Allah will forgive the one who repents on the basis of his repentance, so whatever he did in the past becomes as if it did not happen, and the verse refers to him too: {[he] may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah}.

This is also indicated by the subsequent verses (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers.

... But if you repent, you may have your principal.} [Al-Baqarah 2:278-279]

Repentance refers to both the Muslim who has sinned as well as the disbeliever [i.e., both of them may repent]. (Jami` Al-Masa'il 1/271)

For more details, please see the following category: [Rulings on Jobs](#).

And Allah knows best.