

Abu Hurayrah narrated that

- 1 As he was passing by, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) saw a heap of food [on sale]. He put his hand into it and felt that it was wet underneath.
- 2 He said: 'O food seller, what is this?' The man said: 'Messenger of God, it has been affected by rain'.
- 3 The Prophet said: 'Would it not be better for you to put it on top so that people can see it?
- 4 Whoever cheats does not belong to me.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by Muslim, 102.

#### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, eat of the wholesome things We have provided for you, and give thanks to God, if it is truly Him that you worship.﴾ (2: 172)
- ﴿Do not devour one another's property wrongfully, nor bribe with it the judges in order that you may sinfully, and knowingly, deprive others of any part of what is rightfully theirs.﴾ (2: 188)

#### The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Şakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

#### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) checked the goods of a shopkeeper and found that the product was wet underneath. He told him that this was not permissible, and that cheating was forbidden in all cases.





# Implementation

- 1 Advocates of Islam and young scholars should visit the marketplaces and look for unlawful practices, giving advice to people and reminding them of the need to always be God-fearing.
- 2 In the early generations of Islam, it was the tradition of the Prophet, his companions and the *tābi'īn* that a market controller was appointed. He would go on a round of inspection so as to ensure that everything was done properly. It is useful that governments should revive this tradition in order to organize trade and protect people's rights.
- 3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) first asked the shopkeeper about the wetness of his goods, without accusing him of any wrongdoing. He considered that the shopkeeper might not have been aware of it. It is important to ascertain what is going on, rather than judge things by appearances.
- 4 Vendors must inspect their goods periodically so as to make sure that they remain of good quality.
- 5 A Muslim must be truthful in buying, selling and all other transactions. He must ensure that his earnings are legitimate. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whatever flesh grows through wrongful earnings is only suited for the Fire'.<sup>(1)</sup>
- 6 Every Muslim must beware of cheating in business, because it leads to loss. Whatever earning are made through it will be devoid of blessing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The two parties to a sale deal have the option to cancel until they have parted. If they are truthful and explain things, their deal is blessed, but if they lie and suppress information, the blessing of their deal is obliterated'.
- 7 Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh used to sell goods. He would tell the buyer of any defect in the article he was buying and give him the choice to buy or not. Some people said to him that if he continued to do so, he would sell nothing. He said: We have pledged to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that we will give sincere advice to every Muslim.<sup>(2)</sup>
- 8 Every Muslim should make sure that whatever he eats or drinks is lawful. Good deeds are unacceptable if they are coupled with devouring what is unlawful. Wahb ibn al-Ward said: 'Were you to stand in the mosque as long as this pillar, nothing will benefit you unless you check whether what goes into your belly is lawful or unlawful'.<sup>(3)</sup>

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 612.

2 Related by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 2510. Quoted by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Mutammim al-Ṣaḥābah*, p. 803.

3 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 263.

9

Whoever cheats and devours what is forbidden should realize that the fate of every person shall not be determined on the Day of Judgement until he has been asked about four things. One of these is how he earned his money.

10

How will a cheating person who takes people's money unlawfully hope that his supplication be answered? The Prophet (peace be upon him) 'mentioned the case of a man who goes on a long travel, uncouth with dust on his body. He raises his hands to the sky and says, 'My Lord! My Lord!' Yet, his food is unlawfully earned; his drink is unlawfully earned; his clothes are unlawfully earned; and he was fed, when young, with what was unlawfully earned. How can such supplication be answered?'<sup>(1)</sup>

11

It may be better to state the hadiths that mention 'does not belong to me', or 'does not belong to us' without adding any explanation. They are more effective as a deterrent for people.

12

Ibn 'Abbās said: 'A person will continue to have the right view as long as he is sincere in his advice to others. Once he starts to cheat in his advice, God will deprive him of sound judgement'.<sup>(2)</sup>



1 Related by Muslim, 1015.

2 Al-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī'ah*, p. 211.

