99359 - False medical excuses used by students and employees

the question

What is the ruling on using false medical excuses used by some clerks and students? While the real reason for their absence is traveling or sleeping for example. Is it permissible for a student, for example, to use such false medical excuse in case he could not wake up or did not hear the alarm and got delayed for the exam; as he is, in fact, excused anyway?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What the Muslim must do is be trustworthy, and remember that Allaah, may He be exalted, is always watching him in all his affairs, so he should be honest in word and deed, and he should not be deceitful or do anything that would make others suspicious of him.

Allaah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, Allaah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allaah) gives you! Truly, Allaah is Ever All-Hearer, All-Seer”

[al-Nisa’ 4:58]

al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Tafseer al-Qur’aan il-‘Azeem (2/338):

Allaah tells us that He has enjoined rendering back trusts to those to whom they are due. In a hadeeth narrated by al-Hasan from Samurah it is reported that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Render trusts back to those who entrusted them to you, and do not betray the one who betrays you.” Narrated by Imam Ahmad and the authors of al-Sunan. This includes all kinds of trusts that are binding upon one, such as the rights of Allaah over

His slaves, prayer, zakaah, fasting, expiation, fulfilment of vows and other things with which one is entrusted and that other people cannot see; and the rights that people have over one another, such as things that are entrusted to one's care and so on, with no proof. Allaah has enjoined us to fulfil these trusts and if a person does not do that in this world, it will be taken from him on the Day of Resurrection. End quote.

Falling short in doing one's work by being absent or by not doing it properly or by neglecting it is regarded as a betrayal, which is haraam. So how about if that is combined with lying and fabricating excuses one way or another?

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Righteousness is a good attitude, and sin is that which wavers in your heart and you do not want the people to find out about it." Narrated by Muslim (2553).

If an employee falls short in his work, then he offers a fabricated medical excuse, he feels in his heart that he is sinning and he does not want people to find out what he has done, even those who are close to him. He wants to appear trustworthy, honest, productive and committed to his work.

The scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas were asked: What is the ruling on an employee who works in a government department asking for sick leave when he is not telling the truth?

They replied: If the situation of the employee is as described, then that is not permissible, because it involves lying and deceiving the state, and taking the wages that he is paid during that false sick leave unlawfully. End quote.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (15/152-153).

They were also asked (15/153-154):

I work as a teacher, and my wife is also a teacher – praise be to Allaah. On some occasions one or both of us were absent, but not for any legitimate excuse, rather it was because we overslept or felt lazy, but the following day we gave a false excuse, and sometimes our boss turns a blind eye

to that. What is the ruling on that? What should we do with the salary that we were given for those days when we did not attend? Please note that we regret our absence on those days, and we resolved not to do that again, then we do it again.

They replied:

What a person who is entrusted with work in return for payment must do is do the work in the manner required. If he fails to do so with no legitimate excuse, the salary that he receives is not permissible for him to keep, because he is not taking it in return for work. Based on that, you have to repent and not go back to what you have mentioned, and you have to be trustworthy in doing the work with which you are entrusted, and give in charity the part of your salary that you took with no legitimate excuse. End quote.

They were also asked (15/156):

How can one be sincere in doing one's work; does this come under the heading of amaanah (trust) that is mentioned in the Qur'aan?

They replied:

Sincerity in doing one's job or work that one has been hired to do means doing the job in the manner required, as agreed upon in the contract or in accordance with the work system. This is a kind of trust that must be fulfilled, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Verily, Allaah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due"[al-Nisa' 4:58]. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Majmoo' al-Fataawa (5/40):

What the employee must do is to fulfil the trust sincerely and carefully, and not waste time, so that he will have discharged his duty and so that his earnings will be halaal, he will please his Lord and he will be acting sincerely towards his state or towards the company for whom he works or anyone for whom he is doing work. This is what is required of the employee, to fear Allaah and to fulfil the trust with the aim of doing a good job and being sincere, in the hope of attaining Allaah's

reward and for fear of His punishment, in accordance with the words of Allaah, (interpretation of the meaning): “Verily, Allaah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due”[al-Nisa’ 4:58].

One of the attributes of the hypocrites is betrayal of trusts, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks he lies, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is entrusted with something he betrays that trust.” Agreed upon.

It is not permissible for a Muslim to resemble the hypocrites, rather he must avoid their characteristics and remain trustworthy, and do his work with the utmost care, making good use of his time even if his boss is lenient and even if his boss does not tell him to do that. He should not neglect his work or be careless about it, rather he should try to be better than his boss in doing his job, and be sincere in fulfilling the trust, so that he will be a good example to others. End quote.

The doctors who help these employees who are falling short in their duties, and write notes for them when they know that they are not true, so that they become a cause for corruption among employees and encourage them to neglect their work, fall short and consume people’s wealth unlawfully, should also fear Allaah.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked in al-Liqa’ al-Shahri (7/question no. 4):

Is it permissible for a doctor to give anyone a sick note – especially for employees – when the person may not really need that note, and the doctor has not examined this person? Is the doctor sinning if he gives the patient a sick note that allows him more time off than he deserves?

He replied:

In al-Saheehayn it is narrated from Abu Bakr (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Shall I not tell you of the greatest of major sins?” They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allaah. He said: “Association of others with Allaah,

disobedience towards one's parents" – and he was reclining, but he sat up and said: "And false speech and false witness."

Undoubtedly if the doctor gives a person a sick note when he is not sick, then this is undoubtedly false speech and false witness, and he is sinning and has committed one of the worst of major sins. Similarly, the one who takes leave on the basis of this sick note is sinning and lying to his employers, and he is consuming wealth unlawfully, because he is taking the salary that he gets during this sick leave unlawfully. The same applies if he gives him more than he needs, such as if he needs three days sick leave and he gives him four days. This is haraam and is a major sin.

In fact, the more a person thinks about these matters, the more he will wonder how a Muslim can do such a thing. Are we not all Muslims? Doesn't the religion of Islam forbid that? Doesn't pure reason, aside from faith and Islam, disapprove of that? The answer is yes, but unfortunately Muslims do this, and it is a disgrace for every Muslim. Now some foolish people are saying that the kuffaar are more sincere than the Muslims and more honest than the Muslims and more loyal than the Muslims. This may be true in some cases, but we say to this person: The religion of Islam is more perfect than any other religion, and the path of Islam is better than any other path, and the law of Islam is superior to any other law. The problem is with the followers of Islam, not with Islam itself. So long as a man regards himself as a Muslim and feels proud of it and hopes to earn the reward of Allaah thereby, then why would he go against the laws of Islam? Why would he speak false words? Why would he give false testimony? Why would he consume wealth unlawfully? Why would he betray his employers? All of this is most regrettable, all of this is what has caused the Muslims to become backward and has allowed their enemies to prevail over them. Our Muslim brothers in some Muslim lands are being slaughtered like sheep, their sanctity is being violated, their children are being taken captive, and their wealth is being plundered – why? All of that is because of our sins. We ask Allaah to forgive us and to help us against our enemies. End quote.

The same applies to a student as to an employee: it is not permissible for him to tell lies and bear false witness.

We ask Allaah to guide us all.

And Allaah knows best.