21401 - Well-off people taking things that are only for the poor from a kaafir state

the question

In USA, some Muslims request food stamps -which are assigned to poor people- while they have enough money. They hide their bank accounts information to be eligible for these stamps. When I advised them, they told me that it is not haram because they dont take money from an Islamic country! Is that correct?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is not permissible for you to stay in a kaafir country unless you have a valid shar'i reason and fulfil the conditions set out by sharee'ah. These have already been explained several times. Please see Question #12866 and 6154.

Secondly:

It is not permissible for those who are not entitled to take these food stamps, whether that is from a Muslim country or from a kaafir country, because the one who takes them in this case comes under the ruling on one who tells lies, and Allaah and His Messenger have forbidden telling lies.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allaah (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." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 33; Muslim 59).

It was narrated from 'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man

will keep on telling the truth until he becomes a siddeeq (one who speaks the truth). Lying leads to evildoing and evildoing leads to Hell. A man will keep on telling lies until he is recorded with Allaah as a liar." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5743; Muslim, 2607).

This also involves consuming people's property unlawfully.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And eat up not one another's property unjustly"

[al-Baqarah 2:188]

It is not permissible for a Muslim to ask people for money when he has no need of it. Muslim narrated in his Saheeh (no. 1041) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever asks the people for money in order to amass more wealth is asking for a burning coal, so let him ask for less or more." What this means is asking so that he may accumulate a large amount when he does not need to. This was stated by al-Haafiz.

Thirdly:

Muslims should be above doing such reprehensible deeds which are not only damage their own image and reputation but that of their religion as well, for this action may be a cause of the kaafirs attacking their religion or criticizing it.

Allaah praises those who are poor but do not ask people for anything. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"(Charity is) for Fuqaraa' (the poor), who in Allaah's Cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely, Allaah knows it well"

[al-Baqarah 2:273]

So what about one who is not poor and is not in need, but he asks or begs from people? Could this be something praiseworthy and commendable?

And Allaah knows best.