

Cheating in Exams

Islam, the true religion of Allah, never allows cheating in any aspect of life. Muslims are people of morals, values, and ethics. Therefore, cheating in exams cannot be justified under any pretext. Muslim students should be distinguished by their honesty, truthfulness, and fairness.

Sheikh `Atiyya Saqr, former head of Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, states that: It goes without saying that all kinds and forms of cheating are *haram*. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) has made this clear in the hadith: **“He who cheats us does not belong to us.”** Anyone who cheats really commits a sin and he who helps him in cheating also shares in the blame. It’s to be stressed that toughness of exams does not justify cheating, for examination is originally meant to distinguish the studious from the lazy; it’s to show how far one has exerted efforts in preparing for the test. It’s not logic, of course, to shower both the diligent and the indolent with accolade of merits. This is injustice. A sound mind never accepts such an unjust equation.

Cheating in examination is one of the things that threaten the society, for it urges the spread of falsehood and forms an attack against truth. It causes total chaos in the society and indicates that some people will have unjustified access to posts and honours.

A person who gets a job that requires a certain degree or certificate which he has gained through cheating should know that the money he gains is *haram*. He may be of those whom are referred to in the verse that reads: **(Think not that those who exult in what they have given, and love to be praised for what they have not done Think not, they are in safety from the doom. A painful doom is theirs.)** (Al `Imran 3:188)

If this person has performed some kind of work and exerted efforts that are not closely related to the qualifications, then he is entitled to the wage given to him in return of the efforts. What is beyond this is considered to be *haram*.”

Dr. Ahmad ` Abdul-Karim Najeeb, professor at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Sarajevo and former professor at the Islamic Academy in Zinsta, adds: Actually, this is a case in which many of our Muslim youth in the West have got themselves involved. The answer to this can be summarized in the following points:

1- Gaining a degree or a certificate without being really qualified for that degree is a form of cheat, which is totally rejected and prohibited. This is based on the hadith that reads: **“He who deceitfully shows that he has something which he really does not have is like a person who puts on garments that do not belong to him and claim that they are his.”**

2- In case a Muslim student is subject to some kind of exploitation which puts his rights at stake unless he pays a sum of money, there is no harm on him paying money to get himself out of the matter and to ward off the injustice to which he may be subjected.

3- If a person gets the certificate by means of cheat and then exerts efforts to be qualified for the job, his sin is still there, for he is supposed to be qualified for the job before not after having it. If he is a physician for example, what about the patients who fall a prey to his wrong prescription. As for the money the person gets after exerting efforts to be qualified and being really qualified, such money is not *haram*. ”

It's the duty of the Muslim students to steer clear of all forms of cheat, deceit, and dishonesty. By doing so, Allah, Most High, will grant them high degrees, both in this world and the world to come.