

A MUSLIM IN THE WORKPLACE

STRIKE O MUSLIM EMPLOYEE..... WITH THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES

BE LOYAL & REFRAIN FROM *TATFEEF* (CHEATING)

One form of *tatfeef* (cheating) is when an employee is employed to work for an agreed number of hours but accepts his full salary for working less hours. An employee is obliged to do the work he is being paid for. It is not permissible for one to accept one's full salary when the desired work is incomplete or incorrect. An employee will be guilty of *tatfeef* if he uses his working hours to engage in activities that are not related to his work such as browsing the internet, busy with his cellphone, smoking or idle chatter. It is unfortunately the practice of many employees to work diligently while the employer is watching but to engage in something else when his back is turned. The person doing this is guilty of *tatfeef* (mentioned in the Quraan).

Also guilty of *tatfeef* is the employee who does something contrary to what he is paid for or who accepts a bribe to do something because of his position of employment. While the bribe is in itself impermissible, part of his salary will also become impermissible for him because he is not doing what he is being paid for.

IT IS AN IBADAH (ACT OF WORSHIP) IF DISCHARGED CORRECTLY

Allah has referred to the quest of sustenance as seeking the bounty of Allah. This means that our sustenance flow from the unlimited treasures of Allah. Thus working is also an act of ibadah that has to be discharged with justice, commitment and honesty. One needs to understand that every individual will be held accountable and questioned about how he earned his wealth and how he spent it. This 'right' to seek the bounty of Allah brings with it corresponding obligations.

Islam does take into account mutual rights, but places a greater emphasis on duties/obligations. The underlying idea is to ensure that if duties are fulfilled devoutly, conflicts would be automatically obviated.

IHSAAN

Islam further encourages individuals to seek their rights and discharge their obligations on the basis of *ihsaan* - To do more than the minimum requirement. A Qur'anic verse enjoins thus: "Verily Allah demands that you establish justice and *ihsaan*". The Qur'anic term *ihsaan* which is normally taken to mean proficiency or efficiency can also be interpreted to mean, "performing a task by going beyond the call of duty". It means giving your best to achieve optimal results in whatever you do. This implies that a good Muslim will always will go the 'extra mile' when discharging his obligations.

If the relationship between the employer and employee is based on *ihsaan* it will ensure that the employer does not only respect the humanity of the employee only so far as he is obliged to do so in the interest of his own business. Likewise, it will ensure that the employee is not only interested in his work so long as his livelihood depends on it. *Ihsaan* will invariably nurture a healthy rapport between the employer and employee and motivate them to act in the best interest of each other. "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

DA'WAH BY ACTION & WORD

As Muslims we must realize that the greatest form of da'wah is our own character. The way we deal and treat our employers and employees speaks of our faith and values. Compassion and justice must serve as the twin pillars of all our monetary dealings. "Without a rich heart, wealth is an ugly beggar".

The conduct we portray in our capacities as employers or employees is either going to draw people closer to Islam or turn them away from it. Rasûlullâh ρ had a burning desire to invite humanity towards Islam. Despite 13 years of untiring effort in Makkatul Mukarramah and seven years in Madinatul Munawwarah, there was no large scale movement of non-Muslims into Islam. Between 7 AH and 10 AH which is the period after the conquest of Makkah until the demise of Rasûlullâh ρ, there was such an influx of people entering the ranks of Islam that was not witnessed in the preceding 20 years.

This was due to non-Muslims having had an opportunity for the first time, to observe and intermingle with Muslims, witness their honesty, fair dealings, compassion and sole reliance on Almighty Allah Y. This left such a deep and profound impression on non-Muslims that thousands entered into the fold of Islam within a relatively short period of time.

BE PUNCTUAL WITH YOUR SALAH

There are millions of Muslims who are punctual with their Salah at work so never feel that you are alone in carrying out this noble command of Allah. There are no excuses to not to perform on time at the workplace. A person should select a suitable time and place and offer the salah in its time by, for example, taking permission for a short time to buy something or go to the bathroom. If he is unable to do even this, then he has no option but to leave the job for the sake of Allah Y, and through the blessings (barakah) of his guarding his Salah, Allah Y will facilitate for him what is more beneficial. Whoever prefers Allah Y, Allah Y prefers him.

SAFEGUARD YOUR GAZE

And one should not forget the generality of Allah's instruction, to believing men and to believing women, to lower their gazes. Thus, in the workplace as well we should be cautious in this matter and not unnecessarily mingle with the opposite gender. One must ward off all ill-thoughts and potential inclinations to allow one's gaze to stray.

RIGHTS OF THE EMPLOYER UPON THE EMPLOYEE

An employee should recognize the value of work and regard his work as an *amaanah* (trust). This trust demands that the employee discharges his duties with commitment and proficiency. Rasûlullâh ρ said: "When a man does any work, Allah wishes him to give it perfection and grace."

Time and punctuality are also a basic requirement of this *amaanah*. Rasûlullâh ρ said: "Fulfill the trust of one who has entrusted you..." Killing time, neglecting duties and poor performance are tantamount to breach of this trust.

Work is an act of worship, which requires sincerity of purpose and loyalty. The employer is entitled to: Sincerity, Responsibility, Honesty and Proficiency. Rasûlullâh ρ said: "There is no Imaan (faith) in one who is not trustworthy nor is there religion in one who does not keep his promise."

THE MUSLIM EMPLOYEE

The Quran attaches great respect for honest work and as such, imposes ethical obligations on employees. An employee has an obligation to discharge his work honestly and faithfully to the best of his ability. An employee is prohibited from wasting the resources, property and time of the employer and is required to display perfection at work. Islam impresses upon the working class to work faithfully, honestly, diligently and with a sense of dignity. An employee is obliged to do what a reasonable employee would do in any situation.