

Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Awqaf
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Honest Merchants

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, Who says in His Ever Glorious Book, **“You who believe, be mindful of Allah: stand with those who are truthful.”** I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon him, his Household, Companions and upon those who follow their path to the Day of Judgment.

The religion of Islam encourages people to earn their living and work. It warns against unemployment, idleness and laziness. Work is the way to develop the universe, create progress of nations, and build civilizations. The Almighty Allah said, “It was He who brought you into being from the earth and made you inhabit it.” The forms of lawful earning are varied, and among the most common forms is trade, which the Almighty Allah called its profits in the Qur’an “the grace of Allah.” Moreover, Allah called those who travel for the sake of concluding trade as “*Mujahids*” for the sake of Allah. In the Qur’an, Allah (Glory be to Him) says, **“Some of you travel through the land seeking Allah’s grace, some of you fighting in Allah’s way.”** The Prophet (PBUH) was asked, “What

type of earning is best?" He replied, "A man's work with his hand and every transaction which is free from cheating or deception."

It is sufficient honor for merchants that our Prophet (PBUH) worked in trade with his uncle Abu Talib and with the Mother of the Believers Khadijah. He (PBUH) was the best example of honest merchants. Once, al-Sa'ib Ibn Abu al-Sa'ib described him saying, "You were my partner during the Ignorance period (*Jahiliyyah*) and you were the best of partners, you did not conceal something or dispute." This means he (PBUH) would not conceal a defect in the commodity, and he did use to argue for the sake of falsehood.

There are several good qualities that an honest merchant should have, and these qualities include: being truthful in buying and selling, as truthfulness begets blessings in trade, as our Prophet (PBUH) said, "Both parties in a business transaction have a right to annul it so long as they have not separated; and if they tell the truth and make everything clear to each other, they will be blessed in their transaction, but if they conceal anything and lie, the blessing on their transaction will be eliminated." However, a dishonest merchant who prefers the worldly profits to the reward in the Hereafter, will be among the losers in this life and in the Hereafter. His profits will be deprived of blessing, and his good deeds will not be accepted from him. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "A false oath (by the seller) may persuade the buyer to purchase the goods but that will be

deprived of Allah's blessing." He (PBUH) also said, "He who earns unlawful money, then uses it to free a slave and deals well with his relatives, it will be counted as sins for him."

Among the qualities of an honest merchant is: complete honesty and clarifying any defects in the commodity, as an honest merchant does not cheat or deceive, as our Prophet (PBUH) said, "The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, and it is not permissible for a Muslim to sell his brother goods in which there is a defect, without pointing that out to him." Once the Prophet (PBUH) passed by a heap of corn. He thrust his hand in that (heap) and his fingers felt wetness. He said to the owner of that heap of corn, "What is this?" He replied: "O Messenger of Allah! These have been drenched by rainfall." He (PBUH) remarked, "Why did you not place this (the drenched part of the heap) over the corn so that people might see it? He who deceives is not one of us."

Another quality that merchants have to abide by is tolerance in buying and selling and having good manners, as our Prophet (PBUH) said, "May Allah show mercy to a man who adopts a kind attitude when he sells, buys and demands for the repayment of loans." The Prophet (PBUH) also said, "Shall I not tell you whom the (Hell) Fire is forbidden to touch? It is forbidden to touch a man who is always accessible, having polite and tender nature."

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his companions and followers:

Among the qualities of an honest merchant is: sincere patriotism. This patriotism is not just words or slogans to be raised, but rather it is an act of giving and sacrifice. A wise and patriot merchant proceeds in his dealings from a religious commitment and a human feeling, and he does not allow himself to increase his wealth at times of crises at the expense of the poor and the needy. He completely avoids all forms of greed, fraud, monopoly and exploitation. If these defects are rejected and bad at all times, they become much more rejected and heinous sins at the time of crises, as the Almighty Allah said, **“Woe to those who give short measure; who demand of other people full measure for themselves, but give less than they should when it is they who weigh or measure for other.”** The Prophet (PBUH) said, “He who who keeps goods till the price rises is accursed.” In another Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said, “He who trades in a commodity to rise its prices for Muslims, Allah would put him in the Hellfire on the Day of Judgement.”

Moreover, we affirm that when an honest and truthful merchant reduces his profit margin to the lowest possible degree in a time of crisis,

the amount he reduces is considered a charity if he intends so. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The truthful and honest merchant will be with the Prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs." The one who cares for the Hereafter, avoids cheating and deception, and cares for people's conditions deserves to be among the Prophets, truthful ones and righteous people, who are the best companions. We also affirm that the honest merchant benefits more from his honesty and truthfulness than he benefits from his prayers and charities.

May Allah save our country, Egypt and all other countries of the world!