



Fatwa no. 20071:

**Q:** I own a retail butcher shop. There are some matters which I do not understand when it comes to the weighing process. Allah alone knows that I only seek His pleasure by adhering to lawful and honest trade and abiding by the rulings of Shari`ah (Islamic Law). My problem is that I own an electronic scale that has an accuracy weight of five grams. We sell the meat wrapped in paper especially made for it at a cost 35 Dinar (in Algerian currency) per Kilo. We then cut it into pieces and the weight of a single paper ranges from 85 gram to 20 gram.

The price of 1kg of this paper is 35 Algerian Dinars.

1 kilo of paper consists of 35 papers (each paper measures 20 gram). When we sell the meat, the price of one kilo becomes 4.20 Algerian dinar, and of course we pack the amount of meat with the necessary paper. The problem arises when it comes to weighing the meat while wrapped in paper, as the price of the paper equals that of the meat, i.e., one kilo of paper equals 4.20 Algerian dinar. In a simple mathematics, one kilo of paper (50 papers) equals 35 Algerian dinar, the price of the single paper is 5.75 dinar, and the price of one kilo of paper after weighing is 4.20 Algerian dinar whereas the price of a single paper is 840 Algerian dinar. What is striking

( Part No : 13, Page No: 230)

here is the huge difference between the purchase price of the single paper which is 0.70 Algerian dinar, and its selling price which is 840 Algerian dinar, taking into consideration that we use small plastic bags that cost 0.50 Algerian dinars each, whereas the price of each big one is 1 Algerian dinar per sale.

Kingly guide us, may Allah be merciful to you. If we sell the meat without this kind of paper, we would lose the price of the paper. If we sell it with the price of the paper included, then we would go against the rulings of Shari`ah knowing that I began this kind of work two years ago. We ask that you to tell us if we have indulged in any kind of Riba (usury/interest), because we will not accept Haram (prohibited) earnings. Also, how should we purify this money gained from any unlawful profits? There is another problem, namely, some dishonest merchants sell goat's meat as sheep's meat. It is not detectable after the animal is skinned, so they sell the meat cheaper than we do. What is the ruling regarding those who do this?

**A:** What you said in your question concerning including the wrapping paper weight in the meat gross weight, and the big difference that occurs, as well as selling the goat's meat as sheep's meat and the like, are all forms of cheating and deception. This is forbidden in the revered Shari`ah, for Allah (may He be Exalted) stated: ﴿ And eat up not one another's property unjustly (in any illegal way e.g. stealing, robbing, deceiving, etc.) 》The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿ "He who cheats us is not of us (is not my follower)." 》

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family,  
and Companions!

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