

Islam Question & Answer

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24 - Returning stolen property that has depreciated or become obsolete

the question

A man works in an air transport company. He steals a tape-recorder. After many years he repents. Now, should he return the same transistor radio, or a similar model or its equivalent price, especially considering that the original model is not sold in the markets now?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

He must return the same piece along with an additional amount equal to the reduction in its value that has resulted due to its usage or the course of time. Of course it is to be accomplished in a suitable manner without causing himself harm. However if that is impractical or infeasible then he can give in charity an equivalent amount in the name of the original owner.