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Ramadan Lectures- Flashes on faith1425H- Lesson(06-64): Usury and Insurance

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All- Kowner, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Why does Allah threaten those who take usury with a war from Him?



Dear brothers, Allah the Almighty says:

"Those who eat Riba (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaitan (Satan) leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like Riba (usury)," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba (usury). "

[Al-Baqarah, 275]

Dear brothers, the negative effects of some of the sins are visible. For example, whoever drinks wine, loses his mind, so he may commit a big mistake, or he may do harm to those who are close to him. Also, whoever commits adultery, causes a young woman to turn from pure and chaste into unchaste and corrupted. The negative effects of usurious banks, on the other hand, are invisible. whoever goes to a bank, sees that it is a prestigious building where there are state-of-the-art electronic devices, air conditioners, a reception hall and the bank staff, so you do not see any ill effect of usury. However, Allah the Almighty says:

"And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger "

[Al-Baqarah, 279]

There is no sin in the Shar'e which Allah the Almighty threatens those who commit it with a war from Him except usury, because money is the backbone of economy, and when it produces itself, it will be owned by few people and the rest (who are the majority) are deprived of having it.

In fact, 10% of world inhabitants own 90% of its wealth. There is an unreasonable income differential between the people in the north and people in the south, and between people in the west and people in the east. Such income differential is the very reason behind wars, international fraud, oppression, sex trafficking, slave trade and all other problems which people suffer at present. Therefore, Allah the Almighty threatens those who take usury with a war from Him.

The difference between Halal and Haram incomes:



Dear brothers, if you ask me about the common feature of all Haram earnings (ill-gotten earnings) and the common feature of all Halal earnings, I tell you that all Haram earnings are based on gaining benefit at the expense of doing harm to others, while all Halal ones are based on mutual benefit between two parties. Al-Mudarabah (a kind of partnership where one partner gives money to another for investing in a commercial enterprise. The investment comes from the first partner who is called "Rab-ul-Maal" while the management and work is an exclusive responsibility of the other, who is called "Mudarib" and the profits generated are shared in a predetermined ratio) is an example of the legal gains. Let us assume that the party who provides the capital is unable to invest it, because he is an old man, someone who is retired, a teenager inheritor or a widow, while Al-Mudarib is a young man who does not have enough money, but he is well-experienced, so they help one another and gain money together.

Dear brothers, the basic rule of Halal and Haram gains is that the Halal gains are based on mutual benefit, while the Haram gains are based on gaining benefits at the expense of doing harm to others. Accordingly, dealing in usury demolishes the whole nation, because when the purchasing power of money is not enough for making a good living, bribery, theft, fraud, deception and other means of ill-gotten gains will spread.

The following two points should be taken into consideration:

I wish that the two points below are crystal clear to you:

Abu Hatem Al-Muzani narrated that the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, said:

"If there comes to you one with whose character and religious commitment you are pleased, then marry (your daughter or female relative under your care) to him, for if you do not do that there will be Fitnah in the land and widespread corruption.' They said: "O Messenger of Allah! What if there was something about him?" He, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, said: If there comes to you one with whose character and religious commitment you are pleased, then marry (your daughter or female relative under your care) to him," three times.

[At-Tirmidhi]

Can anyone stop the sexual desire in whoever wants to marry if he puts considerable obstacles in his way? Of course not, but such desire will be satisfied unlawfully. When difficulties in the way of a young man who wants to marry increases, prostitution becomes widely spread. Allah the Almighty says:

"(And) if you (Muslims of the whole world collectively) do not do so (i.e. become allies, as one united block with one Khalifah - chief Muslim ruler for the whole Muslim world to make victorious Allah's Religion of Islamic Monotheism), there will be Fitnah (wars, battles, polytheism, etc.) and

oppression on earth, and a great mischief and corruption (appearance of polytheism). "

[Al-Anfal, 73]

If someone is prevented from getting what he needs lawfully, he will think about satisfying his needs unlawfully. This is exactly what happens when Halal earning is not available, when the income is not enough for man to fulfill his needs or when there is no gain by which man can live dignified. There will be innumerable ways of making ill-gotten gains, and when man earns money unlawfully, he will be detached from Allah, the One and the Judge.

Dear brothers, usury is a very serious issue. As I said previously Mudarabah is a legal way to earn money. The one who provides the capital takes part in this partnership with Al-Mudareb who exerts effort, no matter whether they make profit or lose. Thus, the owner of the money is not considered a burden to Al-Mudareb, while the one who deals in usury is a burden to those who are in debt, because the former's money and profits are ensured. If we go beyond usury a little bit, we will find that everything is ensured these days.

The effects of worldly laws:



Someone told me on a phone call that in some countries you can have insurance against your customers (debtor insurance or business credit insurance, protects your business against non-payment.) For example, if you are a merchant and you sell goods which cost a hundred million to a hundred customers, but one of them does not pay you, you can get the full amount of money from the insurance company.

When man earns fixed profits, and fears no financial crisis as everything is ensured, he will dispense with Allah the Almighty. He will be like those about whom Allah the Almighty says:

"Nay! Verily, man does transgress all bounds (in disbelief and evil deed, etc.).* Because he considers himself self-sufficient."

[Al-Alaq, 6-7]

You can notice how the merchant supplicates Allah to protect his trade, and the farmer supplicates Allah to send rain. As long as man has a legal career, such as a merchant, a farmer or a manufacturer, this career keeps him in need of the Mercy of Allah the Almighty. The jobs to which the worldly laws are applied cut off your relation with Allah the Almighty, as all risks are ensured. For instance, a well-known singer fears losing his throat, so he ensures it for a million dollars.

A true story:

I was told what happened to the manager of one of the biggest insurance companies in an Arab country. He used to earn about half a million liras monthly, and he has a high university degree. Once while he was in his car with his wife, he had an accident and the car was burned. Its doors were locked automatically, so both of them were trapped in the car and burnt alive. When people got them out of the car, all they found is two pieces of coal. He did not benefit from the car insurance. One month later, the owner of that company had a horrible car accident too; his car collided with a truck, and his head was cut off. Thus, he did not make use of the car insurance. The worldly laws make you forget about Allah's Protection, Help and Guidance, as you whatever you own is insured.

Nowadays there are incredible kinds of insurance by which one can have everything ensured. The latest kind of insurance is the one against the customers. If you are a merchant, and you have huge sales in the market, the insurance company will pay you if one of your customers does not pay you. However, you have to pay a large amount of money to the insurance company.

Does the problem lie in Islam or in Muslims?



Dear brothers, the problem does not lie in Islam, but in Muslims. Some of our brothers in faith, whom are about one hundred doctors, live in a western country. They cannot feel at ease unless they get insurance against lawsuits that may be brought against them, but why should they do that?

In the Middle East, when a doctor commits a medical error, it is wrongly ascribed to the Divine Predestination, while this is a complete misunderstanding of the Divine Decree. Such an error can occur when the doctor in the ambulatory clinic does not care about his job and continue his conversation with the nurse there. As a result, a seriously ill patient is neglected, and he dies later on. In this case we cannot say that the patient died, because it was his destiny! This is nonsense.

It was narrated by Amr ibn Shu'ayb, from his father and his grandfather, that the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him, said:

"Whoever practices medicine when he is not known for that, he is liable."

In the western countries, on the other hand, the patient can bring a lawsuit against his doctor, and sometimes he makes the doctor pay 80 million dollars. Therefore, every doctor should obtain insurance to protect themselves against the lawsuits which may be brought against him. The doctor has to pay about 2 million liras per year in order not to worry about the lawsuits. Those one hundred doctors did that for many years and paid huge amounts of money, then they decided to make it an Islamic insurance. They brought a moneybox and each one of them put one million liras. In the first year, they put one hundred million liras in the box, and nothing happened to anyone of them. The second year passed, the third and the fourth and nothing happened, so they decided to establish an Islamic center and an Islamic school, and if a lawsuit was brought against one of them, he could take the full amount from that moneybox. Notice how the Islamic insurance is a cooperative one as you can take your money whenever you need it.

Dear brothers, whatever needs you have in society can be fulfilled according to the Shar'e, but Muslims do not exert enough effort to understand the rulings of their religion.

The reason behind the economic power of the following country

I visited a country in East Asia, and I was surprised when I knew many facts about that country whose population is no more than twenty-three million. Twenty five years ago, that country was backwards and its people used to live in forests. However, nowadays its international export exceeds that of the whole Arab world including the oil. Its budget surplus is about sixty billion dollars. They have Islamic insurance companies, Islamic banks and Islamic credit cards. They never deal in usurious interests, and all their investment projects are in industry, agriculture and trade. Once a well-known official in the West visited that country to interfere in its affairs, but its people expelled him forcibly. They have enormous economic power because they implement the Shar'e of Allah the Almighty.

Problems caused by dealing in usury:



In fact, we are oblivious of the Shar'i rulings, because we see that the Western economic system is inevitable although it is based on usury and insurance.

Dear brothers, usury causes unemployment and the rise in prices. When prices go up, the social class who benefits from every commodity will not be able to fulfill its needs; its members will no longer be able to afford anything.

During one of the most severe critical European financial crises, a university professor told a joke to his students that a coal miner laid off from his job, so he could not buy coal to heat his home. When his son asked him why they did not have coal for heating, he said, "Because there is too much coal, and it is in little demand and unsalable.

Sometimes, you find that all commodities in a country are available, but there is no purchasing power. You see many items displayed at the shop windows, but no one can afford them. Consequently, a financial crisis occurs.

Once, one of the presidents of the Republic of France held a meeting in a resort with some of the greatest scientists. During that meeting, he asked them to give him an explanation for the spread of violence in the world, so one of them said, "The reason is the consumption society."

What happens when wealth is owned by few people:



In the past, when a criminal was hanged in Al-Marjeh Square (in Damascus), all people used to come to the square in order to see him, but at present, at least twenty or fifty people are killed every day, and bombing and killing become daily events. There are violent acts in the world beyond your imagination. As I've mentioned above, when the President of the Republic of France asked the sociologists, psychologists and economists during the meeting he held in the resort why violence became widely spread, the answer was because of the consumption society.

You look at the beautiful products exposed in wonderful and attractive way in shop windows, and at the ad of a luxurious car posted on a building, but you do not have enough money to buy even a bike. The excessive contemplation over such beautiful products while you cannot afford them causes a psychological problem. You may have a feeling of deprivation which leads you to either earn money illegally, and so you will be despised in the Sight of Allah, or have two jobs. Having two jobs means that you will have no time even for yourself. A father who has two jobs goes to work early in the morning when his children are asleep, and comes home late at night when they are also asleep. Fatherhood becomes missing in his life; he loses his role as a real father or a real husband. He has to work for 18 hours in order to buy those products which are exposed in shop windows or in ads. The consumption society obliges man to have two jobs, so he has no leisure time which makes him either lose his sense of humanity, feel excessive deprivation or earn money unlawfully.

It seems that the third possibility is fairly widespread nowadays; there are uncountable ways of obtaining money unlawfully, such as deception, lying, forgery, and whatever illegal way you may think about. Gaining money is a critical issue in our society, and when it is gained and spent according to Allah's Order, it will be distributed among the largest social group. One of the basic rules of the financial system in Islam is mentioned in the following Noble Ayah:

"In order that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you."

[Al-Hashr, 7]

According to Allah's Order, money must be circulated among all social groups. When it is used by all social groups, all of us will be in a good situation, but when it is used by only few people, while the majority are deprived of having it, we will be in a bad situation and many serious problems will spread in society, such as the physiological ones. When money is not enough for a father to fulfill all the needs of his children, the children will keep away from their father. They will prefer to spend their time with their heedless and unchaste rich friends. A father may lose his control over his children, because he cannot fulfill their needs. Also, when children do not have their needs fulfilled at home, they will prefer to spend their time out of their homes. As a result, many serious social problems will arise.

Conclusion:

Dear brothers, do you know how dangerous it is to contribute to raising prices? Whoever does that without realizing the dangerous consequences causes many mental diseases for thousands of people, like schizophrenia which is sometimes caused by class inequality. On the other hand, whoever contributes to lowering the means of living standard will have a great reward from Allah the Almighty. The economic system in Islam is based on justice, and people are guaranteed that money will be circulate among all social groups.. Allah the Almighty says:

"Those who eat Riba (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaitan (Satan) leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like Riba (usury)," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba (usury). So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating Riba (usury) shall not be punished for the past; "

[Al-Baqarah, 275]

Dear brothers, when you ponder deeply over the rulings in the Shar'e, you will find that 90 percent of them are related to money and women. They are the two major tribulations for man; every scandal in the world is either financial or sexual.

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