

Taking other's rights & consuming the unlawful – 15 February 2008

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God.

Without a doubt there is a relationship between the soundness and ruin of the heart with the food a person eats and how he or she acquires it. If the way it was obtained was unlawful (Haram) then this causes destruction in the heart.

This can be seen through the following: Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (pbuh) said: "What is lawful is clear and what is unlawful is (also) clear. But between the two are doubtful matters..."

And he (pbuh) followed that by saying: "Know that in the body there is a lump of flesh; when it is sound the whole body is sound, and when it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt. Know, it is the heart." (Bukhari and Muslim)

God the Most Great has warned us against eating that which is unlawful and this pertains to consuming unlawful wealth, taking the rights of people as well as eating that which is forbidden.

God says:

"And do not devour your property among yourselves by false means and do not offer it as bribe to the authorities (the judges) that you may devour a part of the wealth of other people wrongfully while you know" (Al-Baqarah: 188)

Abdullah son of Abbas (May God be pleased with them both) said this is regarding a man who is in debt but the creditor has no evidence so that man denies it in front of the judge while knowing that he is consuming unlawful wealth!"

How can a believer consume that which is unlawful when God Almighty has enriched him with so much that is good and lawful?

God says:

"O you who believe, eat from the good things we provided for you, and be thankful to GOD, if you do worship Him alone". (Al-Baqarah 172)

"O you who believe, do not consume each others' properties illegally" (An-Nisa 29)

"Say: The bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance of the bad may please you" (Al-Ma'idah 100)

That which is forbidden is bad even if many others do not see it as an enormity so it becomes an accepted practice or even if it appears to you to be good, it is still evil.

O Muslims- Taking that which is unlawful has bad consequences for the one who is responsible for it. The supplication of such a person is not answered. Can a servant of God be independent of his Lord for even a blink of an eye?! Never.

Ibn Abbas narrated that he recited the following verse in front of the Messenger of God pbuh: "O believers, eat from that which is good and lawful in the world (earth?)". Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas stood up and said: O Messenger of God, make supplication that God answers my supplications". The Prophet replied: O Sa'd, eat pure/lawful food and your supplications will be answered".

In another tradition reported in Sahih Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned a man who after a long journey is dishevelled and dust-coloured. [The man] stretches his hands out toward the sky and says, 'O Lord, O Lord', while his food is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, his clothing is unlawful and his nourishment is unlawful. How is he to be answered [in such a state]?"

Look at the state of the one who does not have his supplications answered. Perhaps this is affecting many of us today, we don't really know for sure. Check your self whether you from people are doing wrong actions, missing their prayers, becoming lazy in their obedience and devotion to God or even facing a variety of crises such as ill health, because of consuming that which is unlawful.

O Muslims- consuming that which is unlawful has dangerous consequences (as we have just heard). Taking interest in the form of loans or putting money in a bank in order to take the interest incurred on it, is part what we have described as 'consuming that which is unlawful'

God says: "God condemns usury..." (2:276)

And He says:

"The usury that is practiced to increase some people's wealth, does not gain anything with God." (Surah Rum: 39)

The end result is as described in the following verse:

"..Then expect hostility from God and His messenger". (2:279)

Other things which come under the bracket of consuming that which is unlawful are: Deception and fraud, not abiding by contracts and agreements, tricking people, lying, bribery and theft of all types.

The Prophet Pbu said "Any body that was raised from ill-gotten wealth, then hellfire is more deserving of him."

Second Khutbah:

O Muslims- the Messenger pbuh said:

"God, the Almighty is pure and accepts only that which is pure. God has commanded the faithful to do that which he commanded the messengers, and the Almighty has said, 'O ye Messengers! Eat of the pure things, and do righteous actions'." (Surah Mu'minun: 51)

Consuming that which is unlawful is evil and results in (1) a tribulation in this world and it also results in (2) a severe punishment in the next life. It is mentioned in a Hadith tradition that a person will be asked on the day of judgement about their wealth; how they acquired it and what they spent it on. Consuming unlawfully is an increasing tribulation in our times and for the sake of love of wealth, many people do not care how

they amass wealth nor do they worry about the severe consequences and responsibilities that go along with it.

Islam calls us to do actions and to strive.

God says:

"HE is the One who has made the earth even and smooth for you; so walk in the spacious paths thereof, and eat of HIS provision. And unto Him will be the resurrection."
(Surah Mulk)

"And when the Prayer is finished, then disperse in the land and seek of God's bounty"
(Surah Jumu'ah)

The Prophet PbuH said: "No one has ever eaten any food that is better than eating what his hands have earned. And indeed the Prophet of God, Dawud, would eat from the earnings of his hands."

There are numerous verses and Prophetic traditions regarding this topic and all of them encourage good action and acquiring that which is lawful and pure.

Islam via its main sources (Quran and Sunnah) supports the acquisition of wealth and permits activities that enhance wealth such as trading, agriculture or production etc, as long as these activities are practiced without deception, oppressing the rights of others or taking from their wealth in any way. Islam only recognises as permissible the acquisition of wealth which is good and lawful.

God Almighty says:

"And do not devour your property among yourselves by false means and do not offer it as bribe to the authorities (the judges) that you may devour a part of the wealth of other people wrongfully while you know" (Al-Baqarah: 188)

Imam Al-Qurtubi said: The meaning of this verse is that one should not take/consume the wealth of another without right- it is like gambling, deception or being violated... whosoever takes the wealth of another it is impermissible, if he or she has, then they have devoured wealth illegitimately.

So have consciousness of God the Most High, He sees you and know that consuming or taking that which is unlawful is a great matter with God Almighty and it has grave consequences. Many people are neglect this in matters of eating, in buying, selling and amassing wealth and only those whom God has blessed with His mercy are concerned with the lawful and unlawful. May God guide us to avoid the unlawful and bless us with that which is lawful and give us well-being. Ameen