

Divine Causes of Financial Crises

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic on 17 October 2008. 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

God says “Those who consume usury cannot stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Shaytan into insanity. That is because they say, ‘Trade is [just] like interest.’ But God has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with God. But whoever returns [to dealing in interest or usury] – those are the companions of the Fire, they will abide there eternally. God destroys interest and gives increase for charities. And God does not like every sinning disbeliever. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish the prayer and give zakah will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, or will they grieve. O you who have believed, fear God and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers. And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from God and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may have your principal – you do no wrong, nor are you wronged.” [AL-BAQARA 2:275-279]

It is a miracle that the Quran is addressing every time, place and individuals. It also corrects all misbehaviour regardless of the time or the place. Some verses might have more significance in a certain time and have more effect in special events.

The previous verses are from the chapter of AL-BAQARA/ the cow and they were among the last verses revealed to the prophet (pbuh). The chapter of AL-BAQARA can be described as the chapter of Quranic law and clear rulings.

These verses, oh Muslims, are talking about a terrible and ugly reality, a reality which is described so accurately by those verses. Mankind nowadays deals by usury without caring about the law of God. Its lord became this material life and its religion became how to reap profits and investment, therefore it got hit by this overwhelming juggernaut in morals and religion, health and economy as a result of this usury system.

Don't you hear the verse “If you do it not - meaning abstaining from dealing by usury, oppressing other and taking advantage of their need- Take notice of war from God and His Messenger”. No one knows in what form will that war be or when will it take place, only God knows when, how and where will it be.

Oh Muslims,

Islam wants mankind to enjoy the bounties of God and wealth is among the greatest of those bounties. That is why God says “Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; Heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land” [AAL-E-IMRAN 3:14] and “It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse ye through its tracts and enjoy of the sustenance which He furnishes” [AL-MULK 67:15]. God almighty has placed mankind with authority on earth and settled them therein giving them the authority on sustenance, forces, energies and resources subject to

one covenant and condition: to apply the law of God on this earth; contracts and transactions, ethics and worship must be in accordance with the law of God. What happens that is contrary to the terms and covenant is invalid.

That covenant also states that people should not invest their wealth using means which harm others, disrupt the people's interests, effect people's sustenance or take advantage of other's neediness. God says "O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: But let there be amongst you Traffic and trade by mutual good-will" [AN-NISA 4:29] and "... nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief" [HUD 11:85] and the prophet (pbuh) said: ""There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others"

Now look to the situation without this covenant and you find that man sees himself as the master of the Earth and that he is not restricted by any belief, God or religion. He makes no relation between the will of God and his daily life. This person, in his situation, feels totally free to use any means to acquire the wealth and to invest it. He also feels free to enjoy his wealth without being restricted by anything so it is fine to harm millions of people as long as he is adding millions to his accounts. There may be interference from man-made laws but swindling and fraud are still not to being prevented effectively by any man-made laws today.

The Islamic financial system is different to the financial system of greedy people. There are two opposite systems: the Islamic system and the usury system and the objective, purpose and standards of each one is totally different than the other.

Oh Muslims,

Financial problems have direct and indirect reasons, material and moral causes as God says "Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because on the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness" [ASH-SHURA 42:30]. The first cause of the financial crisis nowadays is usury which is not limited to the transactions between individuals only but it is used in all financial institutions including banks, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Usury is among the great destructive sins. The prophet (pbuh) considered it as one of two sins which cause the anger of God on a whole society, those two sins are usury and adultery "If adultery and usury spread in a village, the people of that village are asking for the punishment of God". That is because usury is resulted in acquiring the wealth of the others without any effort and favoring the rich at the expense of the poor. All divine legislations before Islam prohibited usury "The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah - that which We have sent by inspiration to you - and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein [ASH-SHURA 42:13]

The second cause is oppression which can be noticed very easily these days. Among the greatest oppression is the exploitation of the neediness of peoples and nations and the oppression of the human towards his brother in humanity. One of the greatest oppressions is the global weapons trade and the billions of dollars spent for this purpose. Those arms dealers are getting richer and persist in their injustice and

their insolence, taking advantages of the events, fabricating crises and misleading public opinion.

God has prohibited oppression on himself and his servants, in the Qudsi hadith God says "O my servants, indeed I have prohibited oppression upon myself, and I have prohibited it amongst you so do not be oppressive." God almighty loves those who judge in equity and curses those who are unjust "Now surely the curse of God is on the unjust" [HUD 11:18]. That is why every transaction that includes oppression is prohibited by Islam.

Oh Muslims,

Crises like these are reminders for mankind in order that they may reflect. God says "... But the disbelievers, never will disaster cease to seize them for their (ill) deeds, or to settle close to their homes, until the promise of God come to pass, for, indeed, God will not fail in His promise [AR-RAD 13:31] and "God will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity: For He loves not creatures ungrateful and wicked" [AL-BAQARA 2:276] and "Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deeds) that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds, so that they may return" [AR-ROOM 30:41]

We should as Muslims present the virtues of Islamic law, justice and the integrity of Islam. We should show the world that the Islamic financial system can provide the solution to any financial problems using wisdom, knowledge and accurate argument. We ask God to protect us all from the consequences of such crises... Amen.