

*Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, June 20, 2003*

*Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah*

*Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim*

My previous Qhutbah, by the Grace of God was on the concept of wealth. There are some further thoughts I'd like to add. Every one of us tries frantically to seek prosperity. Nations do the same and seek help and support from international agencies. Under developed countries try to get out of their poverty trap and developed countries try to acquire more wealth to maintain their supremacy and hegemonistic attitude.

The general prevailing concept of success is economic prosperity – your home, cars, influence etc. But how the Quran guides us is of vital importance – the difference being heaven and hell. Wealth is but a bounty of God and a means of discharging obligations placed on us.

[62:9] O you who believe, when the Congregational Prayer (Salat Al-Jumu`ah) is announced on Friday, you shall hasten to the commemoration of GOD, and drop all business. This is better for you, if you only knew. [62:10] Once the prayer is completed, you may spread through the land to seek GOD's bounties, and continue to remember GOD frequently, that you may succeed. [62:11] When some of them come across a business deal, or some entertainment, they rush to it and leave you standing! Say, "What GOD possesses is far better than the entertainment or the business. GOD is the best Provider." [17:66] Your Lord is the One who causes the ships to float on the ocean, that you may seek His bounties. He is Most Merciful towards you.

We should strive in the way of God but we can also endeavor to provide for our parents and our family so that we are not reduced to begging. [57:27] Subsequent to them, we sent our messengers. We sent Jesus the son of Mary, and we gave him the Injeel (Gospel), and we placed in the hearts of his followers kindness and mercy. But they invented hermitism which we never decreed for them. All we asked them to do was to uphold the commandments approved by GOD. But they did not uphold the message as they should have. Consequently, we gave those who believed among them their recompense, while many of them were wicked.

God does not want your wealth to be an end in itself to be ruthlessly pursued at the expense of others or unrighteous objectives. [3:180] Let not those who withhold and hoard GOD's provisions think that this is good for them; it is bad for them. For they will carry their hoardings around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. GOD is the ultimate inheritor of the heavens and the earth. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.

[9:34] O you who believe, many religious leaders and preachers take the people's money illicitly, and repel from the path of GOD. Those who hoard the gold and silver, and do not spend them in the cause of GOD, promise them a painful retribution. [9:35] The day will come when their gold and silver will be heated in the fire of Hell, then used to burn their foreheads, their sides, and their backs: "This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you have hoarded." Thus, accumulation of wealth is frowned upon.

Wealth provides us the ability to do good but it also exposes the owner to many temptations for sin and transgression whereas a poor person with few or no resources may be prevented to do so. This is why - *The Rich Believer is Better than the Poor Believer* [16:75] GOD cites the example of a slave who is owned, and is totally powerless, compared to one whom we blessed with good provisions, from which he gives to charity secretly and publicly. Are they equal? Praise be to GOD, most of them do not know.

Thus, the Quran mentions wealth as a serious test. [64:15] Your money and children are a test, and GOD possesses a great recompense. [3:186] You will certainly be tested, through your money and your lives, and you will hear from those who received the scripture, and from the idol worshipers, a lot of insult. If you steadfastly persevere and lead a righteous life, this will prove the strength of your faith. [9:55] Do not be impressed by their money, or their children. GOD causes these to be sources of retribution for them in this life, and (when they die) their souls depart while they are disbelievers. [23:55] Do they think that, since we provided them with money and children, [23:56] we must be showering them with blessings? Indeed, they have no idea. The point to be noted here is that *money and children & money and life* come on an equal par as a trial for us.

We cannot have a large society of wealthy people and leave the minority starving and helpless. This is why God has made Zakat obligatory and advocates charity so strongly. This way there would be no deprivation and no one would go to sleep on an empty stomach. The affluent could provide for the basic needs of society to provide the resources on a compulsory as well as voluntary basis. We don't want God to withhold His Blessings – why then do we withhold our excess?

*What God wants to see is not a quantity of wealth but a quality of life.*