

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:181

ANCIENT PROPHETS

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

Prophet Shu'ayb (as)

“And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said, "O my people, worship Allah ; you have no deity other than Him.”(11:84)

The story of Prophet Shu'ayb is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an mainly in Surat al-A'rāf (7) and Surat Hūd (11).

Just like most early Messengers, Prophet Shu'ayb was sent to his community in order to bring them to belief in the Unity of God. His community had strayed from the right path and were worshipping idols. His main message was to teach his people about the true concept of the Oneness of God.

Yet Prophet Shu'ayb had another important message for his people.

“O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.”(11:85)

Prophet Shu'ayb was sent to two communities mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The first was called al-Aykah, while the second were the people of Madyan. Both these groups had a common problem of cheating in business.

They cheated by doing the following:

- They would rig their scales so that when they were measuring the products of other people, the scales would show them for less than what they really were. This way, they would have to pay less for what they bought
- They under-valued the products of others by criticizing them excessively, so that they could buy them for less

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the mission of Prophet Shu'ayb (as)
- Review the details of Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) economic message/principles
- Discuss the world's current economic system and the alternative systems
- Discuss the impact that capitalism and the culture of consumerism has on our lives
- Know the story of Prophet Lūṭ (as)
- Understand that homosexuality is considered an abominable sin in Islam and other religions
- Understand that homosexuality is unnatural and people are not born as homosexuals
- Understand the negative effects of homosexuality
- Understand how we should deal with homosexuals in our society

- They lied to their customers and hid the defects of the products they wanted to sell to their customers
- They over-valued their own products, so that they could sell them for more
- They lived in a fertile, so the desert people around them had no choice but to trade with the people of al-Aykah, and these people used this as a way of taking advantage of the less fortunate people.



Prophet Shu'ayb preached to his people, urging them to be mindful of Allah's favours upon them, and to use these favours to be fair to others- not to cheat and take advantage of them. He urged them to be fair in business, to not cheat with the scales, and to only engage in ḥalāl business.

They rejected his teachings. They tried to trick him, they accused him of being insane, and then they threatened to exile him from their land.

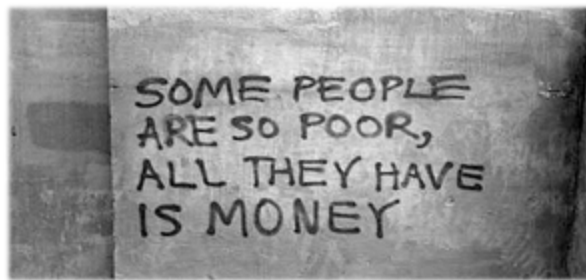
Finally, Allah (SWT) punished them, sending upon them His Wrath, leaving them as corpses in their own homes.

“And when Our command came, We saved Shu'ayb and those who believed with him, by mercy from Us. And the shriek seized those who had wronged, and they became within their homes [corpses] fallen prone.”(11:94)

This was the fatal end of the disbelieving people of Prophet Shu'ayb, as was the end of every people before and after them who rejected the Divine Message and belied Allah's Messengers and Prophets.

PROPHET SHU'AYB'S ECONOMIC MESSAGE

Prophet Shu'ayb's community, lacking faith in Allah and in the reckoning of the Hereafter, had fallen into sin, especially as might be expected, into cheating and injustice in their business dealings. So widespread was the corruption amongst Prophet Shu'ayb's people that it was considered the norm in their society. No one questioned their way of life as it brought them great material wealth and 'success' in their day-to-day business transactions.



We must be careful not to fall into the same sin, especially as we live in a world ruled by the system of capitalism. Whenever we engage in business, we must remember the following rules:

Do not put down the price when buying.

- Do not exaggerate about the good qualities of what you are selling
- Do not use oaths when selling or buying (e.g. 'I swear to God this car does not have a single problem.')
- Do not lie
- Only engage in ḥalāl business. We will learn about which types of business are allowed in Islam.

The Holy Prophet (saw) said: "Indeed, the trader who is both honest and trustworthy in both word and deed will, on the Day Of Judgment, arise with the Prophets of Allah and the righteous and the martyrs."

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Capitalism is the main driving force in today's society and the school which governs most of the world's economic transactions and behaviours.

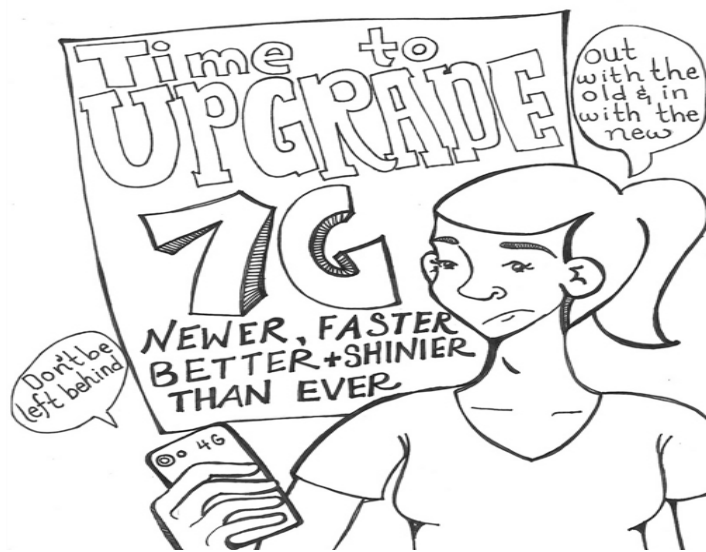
In capitalism, the final aim is to sell products for a profit. Whether people need these products, and whether they are satisfied with them, is not taken much into consideration.

Capitalism is based on the fact that people should try to do as well as they can for themselves and not worry so much about society.

Since the main goal of capitalism is to sell products, it leads to a culture of *consumerism*. This is a culture in which people are encouraged to continually buy new things, even if they are not necessary. In such a culture, the following things are encouraged:

- Separation of families- because a separated family needs two households, which means more things need to be bought, and thus more profit
- Lack of charity- if the aim is to make profit, then charity and the needy are forgotten. The only charity that is given is just to show off and make more profit

- Capitalism means that farmers will rather burn their left-over stock than give it as charity to make sure prices stay up.

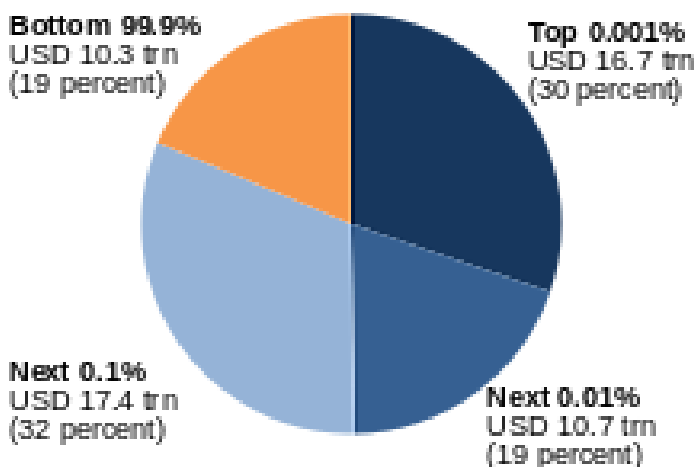


THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The below facts are a direct result of greed and excessive consumption that the current economic system, capitalism, is responsible for:

- At least 80% of the world lives on less than \$10 a day.
- 1% of the world’s population has 81% of the world’s wealth. The other 99% are left with only 19% of all that wealth between them.
- Almost 50% of all children worldwide live in poverty
- The world’s 100 richest people could eliminate world poverty 4 times over!

Global Distribution of Wealth



THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Islam on the other hand orders us to take the middle path and balance individual needs and the needs of

society. The Islamic economic system is based on the following principles:

- Justice and fairness. Thus a person is not allowed to cheat or be unfair to others just to make a profit. Exploitation is very much forbidden in Islam
- Real ownership belongs to Allah: so if a person is need and we have the resources to help them, then we must do so, because the wealth we have is a trust from Allah (SWT), and does not really belong to us. This system encourages charity based on need and sincerity
- Living moderately: while Islam does not ask us to forego comforts and luxuries, we are encouraged and expected to live moderately, so that others in the world are not deprived. Rather than always buying and buying, we are encouraged to be content and part of our excess wealth to help those who need it more



If all humans were to implement these basic principles in our daily lives then we would see all the financial problems of the world vanish and equality of wealth would spread- poverty itself would cease to exist.

Review Questions

Q1. What was Prophet Shu’ayb’s main message?

- To believe in one God
- To feed the needy
- To trade with others in a fair and just manner
- Both a & c

Q2. Capitalism is:

- An economic principle based on justice and distribution of wealth
- An economic principle based on selling goods for maximum profits
- An economic principle based on Islam

Q3. Circle the main principles that a Muslim should adhere to while involved in trade:

- » Do not put down the price when buying
- » Bargain when buying to get the lowest price possible

- » Do not exaggerate about the good qualities of what you are selling
- » Do not tell the whole truth to customers so they buy your products
- » Do not use oaths when selling or buying
- » You can use oaths so people can believe you and trust you
- » Do not lie
- » Only engage in ḥalāl business

Prophet Lūṭ (as)

PROPHET LŪṬ (AS)

Prophet Lūṭ (as) is one of the prophets sent to mankind by Allah (SWT). He lived at the time of Prophet Abraham. In fact, it was Prophet Abraham who sent him to a certain village in order to guide its people. This prophet is mentioned 27 times in the Holy Qur'an, and his story is mentioned in 82 āyāt.

The emphasis in Prophet Lūṭ's (as) story is the vicious practice of his people- the practice of homosexuality. He preached to them for a long time, urging them to stop this vicious practice and go back to their nature, but they did not heed his message and threatened him. When there was no chance of them being guided, Allah (SWT) sent his punishment upon them.

“And (remember) Lūṭ when he said to his people: "You commit *Al-Fāḥishah* (an abominable sin) which none has preceded you in (committing) among people. Verily, you do sodomy with men, and rob the wayfarer, And practise *Al-Munkar* in your meetings." But his people gave no answer except, that they said: "Bring Allah's Torment upon us if you are one of the truthful. He said: "My Lord! Give me victory over the people who are corrupt”(29:28-30)

Allah (SWT) sent a group of angels to the village of Prophet Lūṭ (as). They came to Prophet Lūṭ (as) in the form of humans, and stayed with him as guests. Prophet Lūṭ (as) was scared that his people would assault them. He sneaked them into his house, but his wife told the men of the village about the visitors and the people of his town came to take the visitors.

Prophet Lūṭ (as) went so far as to offer the villages his daughters in marriage in order to bring them back to the right path. His people did not listen and tried to charge into his house. At that time, the visitors told Prophet Lūṭ (as) that they were angels, sent to destroy his people.

“And when Our Messengers came to Lūṭ he was grieved because of them, and felt straitened on their account. They said: "Have no fear, and do not grieve! Truly, we shall save you and your family, except your wife, she will be of those who remain behind. Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky, because they have been rebellious. And indeed We have left thereof an evident *āyah* for a folk who understand.” (29:33-35)

They advised Prophet Lūṭ (as) and his family to flee the village before the morning. Prophet Lūṭ (as) and his family fled, except for his wife who remained behind and suffered punishment along with the people of that village. The prophet and those who believed with him were saved, and the Promise of God to give help and victory to His prophets and supporters came true. In contrast, the stubborn people of the village, intent on their evil practices, met a horrible death.

“And (as for) ūṭṭ, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which wrought abominations; surely they were an evil people, transgressors” (21:73)

In the rest of this lesson, we will discuss the very important issue of homosexuality.

ISLAM CONDEMNS HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is becoming more and more common and people are seeing it as something normal. These people now have rights and are protected by law. However, the Bible and Torah, as well as the Qur'an of course, condemn homosexuality. The Torah says: 'if a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both have done what is detestable and should be put to death'. Homosexuality used to be considered a medical and psychological problem, but because of gay people influencing experts this view was changed.

There is no doubt that Islam condemns and forbids homosexuality. In fact, if it is proven that a person committed this act, the Islamic punishment for them is the death penalty. Furthermore, if a person commits such acts and does not repent before they die, their

punishment in the Hereafter is to suffer in Hell. As the Holy Qur'an confirms, the people of Prophet Lūṭ (as) were destroyed by a great torment from God because of their evil acts.

“Verily, we are about to bring down on the people of this town a great torment from the sky, because they have been rebellious. And indeed We have left thereof an evident *āyah* for a folk who understand.” (29:33-35)

ARE PEOPLE BORN HOMOSEXUAL?

Unfortunately, the commonness of homosexuality has led to a commonly held belief that people are born homosexual and have no choice in this matter. Some people have claimed that a person's genetic makeup can cause them to be homosexual, while others have claimed that exposure to certain hormones while in the mother's womb can cause this.

All the above claims are far from the truth. The studies used to support the above claims all had major flaws in their designs and conclusions. For every one of these studies, there were other studies that showed absolutely no hormonal, anatomical or genetic contributors to homosexuality.

No gene or group of genes has ever scientifically been shown to cause or contribute to homosexuality. Yet even if there was a genetic factor involved, the most it could be is a genetic predisposition. This means that a person may have a predisposition to doing something, without being forced or compelled to it. Just like some people are genetically predisposed to have anger problems or addiction problems, or a disease such as schizophrenia. This does not mean that we should condone all their actions and claim what they do is right. Instead, we should try to facilitate help for them so that they can return to their natural state.

According to the teachings of Islam, which are supported by science and logic, people are not born homosexual. Rather, certain events in their life, or actions they undertake, can affect them negatively and so they choose such a lifestyle.

Many homosexuals underwent severe trauma in their childhood and some were sexually abused. This led to severe psychological problems and difficulties in interacting with the opposite gender. Rather than facing and solving these issues, some of these people resort to

homosexuality. Again, rather than condoning this lifestyle, we should offer help and treatment for such people. Many people who were previously homosexuals came back to a normal lifestyle.

Other homosexuals simply began to live very sinful and lewd lives, and engaged in unnatural sexual acts. This caused a disease within their hearts which eventually led them to engage in homosexuality.

THE DANGERS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The first and foremost danger of this problem is that it is an absolutely unnatural act. The way humans are- physically, emotionally and mentally- obviously shows that they are suited to engage in intimate relations with the opposite gender only. When a person goes against this natural order, it will certainly have very negative results. It creates a physical and mental conflict within that person and leads to great suffering.

This is why homosexuals suffer from much higher rates of mental health problems than other people. They are more likely to be depressed, anxious and to commit suicide. Usually their relationships are short lasting and there is a high level of domestic violence in these relationships.

They also suffer from a much higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. In western countries most people who suffer from HIV and AIDS and other major sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis and gonorrhoea are homosexual. Doctors are educated to specifically screen homosexuals for these diseases more than others and there are special health services dedicated to treating such people, all of which shows that this lifestyle is a major contributor to contracting these terrible diseases.

We also have to consider the long term impact on societies. Children are meant to be raised by a male and a female, so that their personalities remain balanced and healthy. If homosexuality continued to be condoned, children may end up being raised by two males or two females, and this can lead to many negative effects on those children. Additionally because two males or two females cannot naturally conceive children, society will be forced into more unnatural and unethical ways of conceiving children. This will also lead to major individual and societal problems.

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH HOMOSEXUALS?

If we feel a person is suffering from mental health problems and this is the reason for their considering themselves a homosexual, then we should try to do what we can to help them.

If however they are beyond the stage of helping and are stubborn or proud of their homosexuality, then we should avoid them as much as we can. We should also show our disapproval in whatever we can without getting ourselves into trouble. We should definitely not befriend them or help them where possible.

It is also very important not to sympathise with them or feel pressure by society to accept them. It is our duty as Muslims to take a stand on this issue and forbid evil by showing our disapproval in whatever way we can.

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Lūṭ lived at the same time as which other Prophet?

- a. Prophet Jesus
- b. Prophet Moses
- c. Prophet Abraham

Q2. How many times is Prophet Lūṭ mentioned in the Qur'an?

- a. 10
- b. 15
- c. 27