



Fiqh of Taharah: Class Ten

الحمد لله و الصلاة و السلام على رسول الله و بعد:

We spoke last time about the many wisdoms behind the prohibition of gold and silver utensils in Islam. Among the reasons that the Ulema mention are: to prevent the hoarding of commodities necessary for trade in the houses of people, in consideration for the feelings of the poor and needy, and to avoid inclining towards the worldly people.

Also, gold and silk has been forbidden for men in order to preserve his manly nature, and it has been allowed for women in consideration of her soft nature. We also see that Islam encourages distinction between men and women in accordance to what is befitting for each of their natures.

We now come to the hadith that explains the consequences of using gold and silver vessels, what is the ruling and the punishment for it?

The Hadith:

وعن أم سلمة رضي الله عنها قالت:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم:

(الذي يشرب في إناء الفضة إنما **يجر جر** في بطنه نار جهنم) متفق عليه.

**Narrated Umm Salama: Allah's Messenger said, "He who drinks in a silver vessel is only swallowing the fire of Hell in his stomach."
[Agreed upon.]**

The Explanation:

After narrating the hadith regarding the prohibition (laa ta'kaloo, laa tashraboo), which indicates tahreem, yet someone may understand this prohibition to mean karaheeyah (dislike). Since one should avoid the worldly things, and perhaps this is a type of Zuhd and avoiding worldly things that are beyond what one needs.

For example, some crystal goblets cost hundreds of dollars, and this is a type of wastefulness and ostentation, and for this reason it is disliked, but we cannot say they are haram.

So some people dislike this type of extravagance in dishware. For this reason, the Author, may Allah have mercy on him, in order to remove

the idea that the Prophetic prohibition was for karaheeyah and Zuhd, and not hurmah, we brings this second hadith that indicates that the prohibition is for tahreem, and it also explains the punishment for one who partakes in this sin.

“He who drinks in a silver vessel...”

So gold is even more worth of prohibition.

“Innama yujarjiru..”

‘Yujarjiru’ means gulping, and if we study the Fiqh of Language, we see that in Arabic many words point towards their meaning by the very way they sound.

If one reflects on them, one sees that these words indicate their meaning by the way they are pronounced. For example, Salsalatul Jarass (the ringing of a bell), it sounds like the back and forth motion sal-sal-sal-sal. As if you are speaking the sound of a bell.

Or when you say, Zaq-zaqatul Asafeer, (the chirping of the birds), if you repeat the word it is as if you hear the bird nearby.

Other examples, are like:

Khareer al miyaah, the trickling of a stream, or Al ghalayaan, boiling of water, or Al jarayaan, anything that runs.

In the Fiqh of language, we come across many words like this.

“yujarjiru” refers to a motions that come one following the other, the sound of water in the throat of a person.

This word actually refers to the sound that a camel makes when it drinks, it produces a loud sound.

This hadith is saying, “He who drinks in a silver vessel, is only gulping fire...”

This hadith has been narrated in two different ways, with the word “naarun” and with the word “naaran.” The first narration means that the fire itself is gulping, in his stomach. The second narration means that he himself is the one gulping the fire.

Likewise, this hadith can be understood in two different ways. One is that the water that he is drinking from the vessel is like fire, since it is the means by which it will lead one to drink fire in the afterlife.

Or it is said that ‘fire’ in the hadith is a type of reference to what a thing will become. For example, in the story of Yusuf one of his companions in the prison said, “I saw in my dream that I was pressing wine.” Although it was grapes that he was pressing, that would later become wine.

Likewise in this hadith, he is gulping fire, for that water that he is drinking will become fire later, or it is the reason for the gulping of fire later on.

So this hadith mentions the stern warning for drinking from vessels of gold and silver.

Have we finished, brothers and sisters, with the subject of gold and silver vessels?

There is still another subject in this chapter, regarding gold and silver plated or inlaid vessels and utensils, and Imam al-Nawawi devotes part of his book, al-Majmu', to the subject.

He says, if the vessel is made from wood or ceramic materials, but it has some gold color on its surface. Is this part of what has been prohibited, or is it permissible?

Imam Nawawi says that vessels that are neither gold nor silver, but they have in them some traces of gold, are divided into two categories.

The first type is called "mumawwah": A vessel lightly plated with gold or silver.

The second type is called "matlee": A vessel coated with gold or silver.

The difference between matlee and mumawwah is that if you took a container coated (matlee) with gold or silver and touched it with fire, the gold or silver will flow down and become fluid. Likewise, if you took a knife and scratched it, you would find part of the gold or silver on the knife.

But as for the vessel plated lightly (mumawwah) with gold or silver, if you exposed it to fire it would turn black, and if you scratched it you would not find any traces of gold or silver.

The ruling of the Matlee container is that it is the same as a container made entirely of gold, since the container is covered with gold.

But as for a Mumawwah container, there is no harm in using it, it is simply color.

And it is mentioned that ‘Umar bin Abdul Aziz, when he became the Khalifah in Madina, he found that the Khalifas before him had the habit, when they accepted the Caliphate, of imprinting their Khutbah of Authority on the door of the masjid. When he found this writing in gold, he gathered the Ulema around him and they said to him: Look, is this writing Matlee (gold inscribing) or Mumawwah (light gold painting)?

If you are able to scratch it off and arrive at some measurable amount of gold, then remove it. But if you cannot arrive at any measurable amount of gold, then leave it, since removing it will ruin it and bring you no benefit, since there is no precious metal in it.

So he tried scratching it, and did not find anything, so he left it.

The scholars say, everything Matlee, coated in gold, has the ruling of gold.

And everything that is Mumawwah, lightly plated or painted, such as the many utensils that you find today, on tea cups for example, along the edges, you may find some traces that are gold or silver plating. Also, some bowls and plates have this time of trim on the rims. So whatever is lightly plated does not fall under the prohibition mentioned in this chapter.

And whenever there is more than that, Matlee, and there is a measurable amount of gold in it, then it falls within the scope of this Tahrim.

Now, is there any other subject we have left out regarding using gold?

What about matters of necessity, where only gold will suffice, and using any other metal will not do?

There is a dispensation (Rukhsaa) for a man to use a certain amount of gold that cannot be replaced by other than it. For example, a gold tooth, or the tip of the nose, or a fingertip.

All Ulema agree that these things, for example a gold tooth, can be used if a natural tooth will not suffice. This is because a tooth made out of iron, or brass, or other materials does not provide the same benefit as

gold. Gold does not corrode. This is part of the intrinsic nature of gold, so it is the most appropriate material for the mouth of a person.

Likewise, gold can be used in the nose, as was mentioned in the hadith about a Sahabi whose nose was injured in a battle and he repaired it with some silver, but the silver became infected, so he asked the Prophet if he could use gold, and the Prophet gave him permission to do so. And likewise, a finger tip.

There are also Ulema who state that it is permissible to use a light amount of silver, not gold, for things like zippers or buttons, and the like, based upon the hadith, "Make light and playful use of silver." However, the chain in this hadith is weak, and cannot be used for evidence.

And what is strong is this hadith, about not using vessels of gold and silver. And as Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid and many other Ulema state, other uses of gold and silver are similar to eating and drinking.

End of Class Ten