

property as he respects his own. Devouring the wealth of others also encourages others to do likewise if they have the power to do so.

Taking other people's wealth is of two types: lawful and unlawful. What is unlawful is taking it and devouring it by unjust means, which is what is referred to here.

That also includes taking wealth by force, stealing, betraying a trust, failing to pay back a loan, and so on, as well as taking it on the basis of a transaction involving haram dealings such as *ribâ* (usury) and all forms of gambling. All of these come under the heading of consuming wealth unlawfully, because it is not in exchange for something that is permissible. It also includes taking wealth by deceit when buying and selling, renting and the like; employing hired workers and not paying them; taking payment for work that was not done properly; taking payment for doing acts of worship, which is not valid, because these acts should be done only for the sake of Allah (ﷻ); taking from zakâh and charity money, or *awqâf* (Islamic endowments) and bequests, by one who has no right to do so, or taking more than one is entitled to.

All of these and similar actions that come under the heading of consuming wealth unlawfully are not permitted under any circumstances; even if a dispute arises and is referred to the shar'i judge, and the one who wants to consume wealth unlawfully gives stronger evidence than that presented by the one who is in the right, and the judge rules in his favour on that basis, the ruling of the judge does not make permissible what is forbidden. Rather the judge rules on the basis of what he hears, but matters remain as they are and cannot be changed by the ruling of a judge. The verdict of the judge should not give the wrongdoer a sense of having got off scot free.

If a person presents false evidence to the judge and gets a verdict in his favour by means of that, that does not make it permissible for him, and he will be knowingly consuming the wealth of others unlawfully and sinfully. Therefore his punishment will be more severe. On that