MONTHLY AHKAM | JANUARY 2019 - 19 /Jan/ 2019

Presence of Obstacle Blocking View in a Congregational Prayer

Q.1| If participants in a congregational prayer located in the second or subsequent lines are prevented by the presence of an obstacle, such as a wall or a column, from seeing any of the worshippers of the lines ahead of them while being sufficiently connected to the worshippers standing next to them in the same line, is their prayer valid?

A. They are in fact disconnected from the congregational prayer on account of the fact that their view is blocked by an obstacle that prevents them from seeing any of the worshippers standing in the lines ahead of them, and therefore their congregational prayer is invalid.

Khums pertaining to Investments in the Stock Market

Q.2| Are the assets that we invest in the stock market or any other financial institution subject to khums at the end of one's religious fiscal year? That is, do we need to pay khums on these assets?

A. If the funds used to procure the invested assets were obtained as the result of one's work and financial activity, they are subject to khums.

Possible Debt to Individuals or Government Institutions

Q.3| Due to past negligence, I'm afraid that I might owe some money, of whose exact amount I am unsure (possibly around 200-300 dollars), to certain individuals or to certain institutions affiliated with the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. How should I go about repaying this possible debt?

A. The mere possibility that you may owe some money does not make you liable. If, however, you wish to repay your possible debt as a matter of caution, rather than obligation, you may offer the equivalent of the amount in question as charity to the poor on behalf of your possible creditors, if your possible creditors are individuals, or deposit it in designated accounts belonging to the Treasury of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, if you think you may owe money to government institutions.

Unilateral Wager

Q.4| In the games that my brother and I play together, my brother sometimes says that if I win, he will give me a certain amount of money, but I make no such promises in return. Is this a form of gambling, which would be impermissible and sinful? What is the status of the money that he gives me?

A. The aforementioned wager is in fact a form of gambling and is therefore impermissible, and any amount of money obtained in virtue of such a wager is illegitimate.

Canonic Prayers of Individuals Whose Work Is Ministering to and Serving Pilgrims

Q.5| Those (e.g., clerics, reciters,(1) group supervisors) whose work involves accompanying pilgrimage groups visiting the holy sites of Iraq multiple times every month, such that this is considered their job, what is the rule concerning their canonic prayers and their fasting?(2) Are their four-segment prayers restored to full length from the very first trip?

A. In the above-described scenario, as traveling is generally perceived as part of the profession of the specified persons, their four-segment prayers are restored to full length, effective as of the first trip. If, however, they happen to remain in one place for an interval of at least ten days, their four-segment prayers are curtailed to two segments during the first work-related trip taken after this interval but are restored to full length in all subsequent trips.

Liability to Khums for the Extra Floors of One's House

Q.6| A person owns a three-floor house, whose first floor is occupied by him and his family. The second floor is occupied by his son and daughter-in-law, and the third floor he has rented out to a tenant. Does he need to pay khums on the two floors not occupied by himself?

A. If the residence of his son and daughter-in-law in the second floor is generally perceived as falling under his own personal expenses, he need not pay khums on this floor. He must, however, pay khums on the floor rented to the tenant on two conditions: first, that he has never needed it for his own personal use and, second, that it was purchased by funds obtained as the result of his work and financial activity (that is, by funds subject to khums).

Making Use of Funds Mistakenly Transferred to One's Bank Account

Q.7| About three months ago, a considerable amount of money was mistakenly deposited in my bank account. I contacted the

institution that I thought might have made the deposit but received no answer or response from them. What is my responsibility vis-à-vis this amount of money and the little interest that has accrued as the result of it in my account?

A. Your use of the above-described amount of money and the consequent interest is impermissible, and it is obligatory that you return it to its rightful owner. If you are unable to identify or locate the owner, you must deliver the money and the resultant interest as charity to the poor on behalf of the owner.

Using Someone Else's Internet Connection

Q.8| Can we make use of someone's internet connection that is unlocked and always left on if there's a possibility that he may have done so knowingly?(3) Or would this be a possible violation of someone's personal rights and as such impermissible?

A. If you are uncertain as to whether the person to whom the internet connection belongs consents to the use of his internet connection by other people, it is impermissible to use his internet connection, and you are liable for the monetary value of the amount of time and bandwidth that you used from his internet connection.

Determining Whether a Substance Prevents Water from Reaching Body Part during Ablution

Q.9| If we want to make ghusl and we notice something on our nails that may or may not prevent water from reaching our nails, do we need to determine with certainty whether or not it prevents water? Or can we go ahead with the act of ablution without having to worry about the substance on our nails?

A. One is obligated to ascertain with certainty whether the substance prevents water from reaching the body part that needs to be subjected to the application of water. If it does prevent water from reaching the body part or if one fails to ascertain with certainty that it does not, one must remove the substance or somehow make sure that water reaches the body part in spite of the substance.

Making Use of Money or Property Obtained as a Result of Gambling

Q.10| If someone offers something (be it an item of food or something else) to us that he has obtained as the result of engaging in gambling, can we avail ourselves of it, considering that we did not in any way participate in the gambling? Or do we need to pay to the poor the equivalent of what the offered good is worth in order to make our use of it permissible?

A. Using that which is illegitimately obtained as the result of gambling is impermissible for all, not only for those who participate in gambling.

1. Reciters are generally the individuals whose job consists in reciting the Qur'an and devotional prayers and supplications and singing eulogies to the sacred Imams or other holy personages.
2. If one's work is contingent on or necessarily involves frequent traveling, the general precept regarding the canonic prayers and fasting of travelers (according to which their four-segment prayers are curtailed to two segments) do not apply to one.
3. That is, he may have left his internet connection unlocked deliberately and thus approves of its use by other people.