260381 - Ruling on using water without a meter and without paying for it

the question

We use water, but without paying for it because there is no water meter in our house, but the water comes to us. Is this regarded as drink acquired by unlawful means?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If the state does not allow anyone to use water except those who have meters – as is the case in most countries – it is not permissible to use tricks to take this water without paying for it, whether it is because no meter has been installed, or because it has been sabotaged, or because you avoid paying the bills, because that is cheating, deceiving and consuming public wealth unlawfully.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent} [an-Nisa' 4:29].

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever cheats is not one of us." Narrated by Muslim (102).

And the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Scheming and deceiving lead to the Fire." Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Eemaan*; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*. Also narrated by al-Bukhaari in a mu'allaq report in his *Saheeh* as follows: "Cheating leads to the Fire and whoever does an action that is not part of this matter of ours, it will be rejected."

The Permanent Committee were asked: Is it permissible to stop the meter for electricity or water in a non-Muslim country so as to weaken that state? Please note that this country takes unjust

taxes from me against my will.

They replied: That is not permissible, because it comes under the heading of consuming people’s wealth unlawfully." (*Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa’imah* 23/441).

The Permanent Committee were also asked: Is it permissible to use tricks to avoid paying bills for electricity, water, telephone, gas and so on? Please note that most of these things are provided by companies with shares owned by many people.

They replied: That is not permissible, because it comes under the heading of consuming people's wealth unlawfully, and not rendering back trusts. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due} [an-Nisa’ 4:58]

{O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful} [an-Nisa’ 4:29].

Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa’imah (23/441).

So what you must do is install the meter and pay for the water, whether water is provided by the government or a private company, otherwise your use of the water is haraam and it comes under the ruling on water that is seized unlawfully, unless the company allows you to do that.

And Allah knows best.