5669 - Can he sell alcohol in order to pay off an interest-based loan?

the question

A brother owns more than five gas stations in which he sells liquor, lottery tickets and other haram items. Now, alhamdulillah, he realised that the earning from such inventory in forbidden He wants to give up but he still has to pay back the loans for those gas stations which include interest too. The question is: can he continue to sell liquor etc (which is the main reason for the success of his business)with the intention of paying back the huge debt? Please note that he already started working in another place with a halal earning. However, this earning of his is not sufficient to cover his debts. I request you to enlighten us. May Allah reward you for your efforts.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We put this question to Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen, may Allaah preserve him, who answered as follows:

He should hasten to pay off the loan so that he will no longer be liable for riba (interest).

Question: but he is not able to do so, and he has no liquid assets. Can he keep the gas station operating until the debts are paid off?

Answer: To sell alcohol and facilitate gambling? That is not permissible.

Question: So should we tell him to break the wine bottles and close down the gambling operation, and just keep the gas station, until the debt is paid off?

Answer: Yes.

Question: If he says, 'I cannot do that, because the income from selling gas is not enough. The bank is demanding the money and if I do not pay them I will be sent to prison.' Can he stay as he

is until the debt is paid off?

Answer: No, not at all. Alcohol and gambling are not permissible at all.

And Allaah knows best.