

## The Rise of Food Banks and Food Waste

### News:

There are at least 2,000 food banks operating in the UK, giving out emergency food parcels on a weekly basis to people in hardship, according to research that shines fresh light on the rapid growth of charity food provision in austerity Britain. (Independent Newspaper, 30 May 2017)

### Comment:

A report in the *Independent* Newspaper highlights the growth of food banks throughout the UK. With more and more families facing difficulty with cuts to many services and benefits. This is on the one hand, whilst on the other, the *Independent* reported, earlier this month that food waste is also on the rise.

As food production has seen a rise due to newer farming methods, it is alarming to know that fruit and vegetables that are perfectly edible are being left to rot in fields or end up in landfills.

“It’s simply absurd that more than eight million people in the UK are living in food poverty, and yet vast quantities of perfectly good food goes to waste,” said FareShare (the UK’s largest redistribution charity) chief executive Lindsay Boswell. “The food waste hierarchy states that any food that can be safely eaten by humans should be, but this simply isn’t happening.”

In the report there is also praise for Supermarkets as in the last three years they have doubled the amount of surplus food sent to feed the needy. Despite this a lot of food is still discarded.

In January 2017, the *Independent* reported that an average of £470 worth of food is wasted per household in the UK. Shockingly, £13bn of food each year went in the bin when it could have been eaten.

So, some people are unable to feed themselves, yet at the same time food is being wasted by both retailers and households. It seems absurd but this is the reality of Capitalism. The trickle down of Capitalism where the wealth of the “haves” is passed down to the “have not’s” is a complete fallacy.

The over producing of goods to satisfy insatiable appetites arises with no accountability and the fulfillment of needs and wants above what is right and sustainable. With increased farming, land is over used, fertilizer and pesticides create long term havoc and yet food is wasted.

Islam’s view is very simple and most effective where the economy is run with a view of distribution and all citizens have the right to basic food needs without discrimination. It is impossible to save people through acts of charity and food provided by supermarkets generosity, as the people most in need seem to be increasing in number despite the increase of food banks and retailers donations of food to the needy.

To solve this problem, requires a complete overhaul of the system that allows such practices and does not give individuals a sense of accountability when producing food or wasting it. Food, water and all the favors of Allah (swt) cannot be wasted at will. Only the correct application of Islam will teach citizens and farmers the responsibility they have. This same system will push the government to adopt policies that do not make average citizens humiliated and weak. Both go hand in hand but it is the overall policies of capitalism that are leading to poverty where there was once prosperity and this is the same system that has wrecked havoc in the Muslim world and the less developed world, where food is produced to satisfy a few and the majority are not able to afford basic needs.

There is no place on earth that is safe from the evil clutches of Capitalism that results in misery and hunger while perfectly good food is dumped to rot and decay! Allah (swt) warns us: ﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنِّي فَسَأَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَعْرَضُوا﴾ “And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind.” [Ta-Ha: 124]

The world as a whole, from East to West, is in need of the complete remembrance of Allah (swt) through the establishment of the rightly guided Khilafah state (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood. This is the State that will ensure prosperity for all and respect for the blessings of Allah (swt) inshaAllah.

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