

RAFFLES AND LOTTERIES

When people buy lottery tickets, what is the aim behind this purchase? It is clearly to win the jackpot or a high prize. In other words, a person may be willing to pay one hundred currency notes just to have a chance of winning a prize of, say, one hundred thousand currency notes. If he wins it, then he is getting one thousand currency notes for each note he had spent. That is a great gain by human standards. It is certainly to make such gains, or to win such prizes, that people buy lottery tickets. Little do they think of the cause for which a lottery is organized.

On the other hand, governments organize national lotteries to raise funds, which they may use for financing public sector projects or some other government business. Governments certainly raise large amounts of money in this way. They normally allocate about 30% for prizes and around 25% for the administration and expenditure, while the remainder goes to finance its projects. People part with their money knowing that they have little or no chance of landing a major prize or hitting the jackpot. But it is to satisfy their dreams of sudden wealth that they are prepared to buy such worthless tickets.

There is no doubt that such an exercise is forbidden in Islam. The reason is that, for the major part, this exercise lures people and offers them next to nothing. If raffles are organized on the same lines, then the same verdict of prohibition applies.