85562 - Repent to Allaah and you do not have to hasten to pay off the riba-based loan

the question

I got married and lived in a small apartment for four years. When I was blessed with a child, we wanted to move to a bigger apartment, so I sold this apartment and used the price as a 50% down payment for a new apartment in a new suburb, and I wanted to pay off the rest of the price with the city, but suddenly I found out that the city’s system of accepting payments in instalments is very unfair, and they do not care that I have paid half of the price of the apartment, and they are going to charge interest on the full price, so I was forced to take a loan from the bank with riba. From that day I have been confused as to whether what I did comes under the heading of one who has no choice or not. If it was haraam, should I sell my old car in order to pay off some of this loan by way of a partial expiation for what I have done, and try to buy another car by instalments so long as the instalments are halaal, as I have read? I adjure you by Allaah to help me, because I am living in a country where the daar al-ifta’ regards most fiqhi issues as halaal too readily, and when I went to them they told me that this loan was permissible for me, but I know that it is haraam.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Taking loans from banks or elsewhere under the interest system is a form of jaahili riba which was abolished by Islam, and declared to be extremely haraam, and concerning which a warning is issued that is not issued with regard to any other sin. Buying a house is not regarded as a necessity that makes riba permissible, because necessity refers to something the loss of which will cause death or almost cause death. The need for accommodation may be met by renting, or by staying in a small house, until Allaah makes things easier.

It would have been better for you to put up with the wrongdoing of the increase of the price of the apartment, instead of resorting to dealing in riba. Hence you have to repent to Allaah from this

grave sin, and resolve not to do it again.

See also question no. 39829.

Remember that the more you hasten to pay off this loan, the better it will be, so that you can get rid of the effects of riba and its bad consequences, but you do not have to do that. Based on that, you do not have to sell your car in order to pay off part of the debt.

And Allaah knows best.