

Abstract

This written work deals with the meaning of the terms usury and interest over the course of time from the anthropological-historical point of view given by the philosophical and theological authorities and painters of the time. The work reflects the socio-ethical interpretation of moral dilemmas associated with usury in today's civic-economic practice, especially in the context of the Czech Republic.

In the introductory section, the concept of usury is defined. On the basis of legal science, the principles governing the legal area in the decision-making and the definition of usurer behaviour in criminal and private law relations are highlighted. For the proper understanding of the issue are illuminated the meanings of terms such as debt, bond, compound and simple interest, annual average cost rate.

The second part of the work is devoted to usury in selected biblical passages of the Old and New Testament. In the context of the comparison, a modest comparative insight into Islam is given in relation to usury (ribá), and some morally controversial banking transactions under sharia Islamic law are introduced.

In the third section, an extensive historical and legal part the development of credit issues, usury from the perspective of selected philosophers and church authorities are described.

Specific institutes authorizing money loans, a typology of contracts that were morally and legally acceptable while, on the other hand, contracts that were questionable or forbidden and morally unacceptable, are dealt with in the fourth part.

In the fifth part, social teachings of the Church and its view of usury through the social encyclical letters, Christian social teachings of the Church are described including concrete examples of the popes' speeches on the issue of debt and credit. The sixth part describes the specificities in the legal and institutional conditions of a democratic state governed by law, with a focus on the situation in the Czech Republic.

Attention is paid to unfair business practices in the past up to the present. On specific company typologies, a variety of current licentious practices in consumer credit from non-bank and banking companies is demonstrated. The perception of usurers given by the client (the borrower), the client's motivation to negotiate unfavorable loans and borrowing in consumerism and in the utilitarianistic reality of democratic civil society is shown in some examples. At the same time, the usurer's perception of the debtor and his or her method of earning are presented with the use of Slovak sociological research. Some modest solutions to the prevention of usury (e.g. ethical banks, changes in thinking and understanding of money, the credit institution, the re-setting of living values and the goals of a satisfied and fulfilled life determined not only by material goods but also spiritually) are reflected in the work.

Keywords

Good morals, usury, interest, ethics, law, justice, autonomy of will, debt, money Islam, Christianity, Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Reformation, Znojmo, Jews, Montes pietatis, consumer contract, usurper, debtor, greedy society, commercial company, permissive company, leasing usury, ethical banks, insolvency proceedings, encyclical letter.