RIDING THE CAMEL

(TWO MEN ON CAMELS. DESERT.)

MAN 1

Nice day today, eh?

MAN 2

If you say so.

MAN 1

Whoa. What side of the bed did you get up on?

MAN 2

Listen, I’ve got debts.

MAN 1

How much?

MAN 2

Too much.

MAN 1

It could be worse.

MAN 2

Yeah, I could have more debt.

MAN 1

Listen, look at the bright side.

MAN 2

Bright side?

MAN 1

Sure, there’s always a bright side.

MAN 2

Give me a break. Can’t you see I’m upset?

MAN 1

No, here, think of this. Look around you. What do you see?

MAN 2

Desert. What else has ever been here?

MAN 1

Well, do you know where this desert came from?

MAN 2

What do you mean, where it came from? I was born, it was here. My father was born, it was here. My grandfather was… shit, it’s always been here.

MAN 1

Nope.

MAN 2 (getting angry)

‘Nope?’ What do you mean ‘nope’?

MAN 1

Okay. Imagine a forest of trees. Pine trees.

MAN 2 (wanting to get out of his bad mood)

Okay. And…?

MAN 1

There are forests and then in the middle is a huge city with huge stone buildings and people and people going about doing their business. Life.

MAN 2

Yes…?

MAN 1

Well, this desert used to be like that, long time ago.

MAN 2

How do you know this?

MAN 1

The history of Mesopotamia is studied now in universities. It is understood by many scholars.

MAN 2

No kidding! And what has this all to do with my debt?

MAN 1

Well, it was debt that caused Mesopotamia to change from the Garden of Eden to a desert.

MAN 2

You mean my debt is like a desert – nothing to look forward to?

MAN 1

No, literally, debt can turn a garden into a desert.

MAN 2

You’re talking nonsense. What have you been taking?

MAN 1

I’ve been reading some history. Listen to this. In Mesopotamia, the leaders were a king and the priests of the temple. The priests were the ones who managed the temple factories making products, collected taxes, gave loans.

MAN 2

Why loans?

MAN 1

You see, most people were farmers. They worked the land. But if there was a problem with the harvest, the farmer would need a loan to buy seed to sow the next season.

MAN 2

Of course.

MAN 1

So the priests in the temple would give the loans.

MAN 2

That’s good.

MAN 1

Yes, but the priests were loaning silver. And they were charging interest in silver too.

MAN 2

Well, you don’t expect someone to loan something without some interest, right? You’re giving them your money!

MAN 1

But where was the farmer to get the silver to repay the interest?

MAN 2

Well, do what I do. Work more hours, more jobs, to make more money to repay my goddamn bank.

MAN 1

But the farmer didn’t have a silver mine on his land. He was working fulltime on his farm to feed himself and his family.

MAN 2

Well, what did the farmer do before he moved to this big city Mesopotamia? He must have figured things out then.

MAN 1

Before Mesopotamia, there were only villages of farmers. If a farmer needed seed, the neighbor in the village loaned him seed, and the farmer would plant the seed, harvest his crop, and give back to his neighbor the seed he had borrowed plus a little more of the seed for the interest.

MAN 2

Umm..

MAN 1

So the farmer had the means to generate the interest. But now in Mesopotamia, he did not. He could not generate more silver from the land.

MAN 2

So what happened?

MAN 1

The farmer lost his farm to the temple. He and his family became slaves. The king and the priests became more wealthy and more powerful.

MAN 2

Whoa! At least I won’t become a slave.

MAN 1

Haven’t you already become a slave? All the money you and your family needs to live comes from the temple.

MAN 2

You mean the bank?

MAN 1

Yes, the banks.

MAN 2

No way. I earn my money, and if I get into trouble and need a loan, then I go to the bank. I have a business, and that business earns me my money and pays my workers. That’s where the money comes from, from me and my workers.

MAN 1

No, it comes from the people who buy your widgits.

MAN 2

Well…. Yes.

MAN 1

Where do they get the money?

MAN 2

Okay, okay. You want to tell me something. Say it straight.

MAN 1

If you trace back where business gets the money to pay their workers and make their products, all of it comes from the bank when someone takes a loan from the bank.

MAN 2

Oooo—kay… So the bank has all that money and needs to lend it.

MAN 1

No, the bank doesn’t have money…

MAN 2

Wait a minute, stop fooling with my head! A bank is a place where people keep their money.

MAN 1

The bank doesn’t lend the money from its depositors. It creates the loan money in its accounting records. It creates what we use as money, but it’s really debt, you see?

MAN 2

You’re making me have a headache.

MAN 1

All our money comes from banks when they make a loan. Sometimes the loan is to you or me, sometimes to our worthy government, sometimes to a businessman. But all of the money it loans is debt. I call it DEBT-MONEY.

MAN 2

Well, say this is true. What difference does it make. We all still have to have money to pay our workers and buy food for our families.

MAN 1

But all our money comes with interest.

MAN 2

And…?

MAN 1

Where do we all get the interest?

MAN 2

We earn it.

MAN 1

But the banks never created the money for the interest. They only created the money for the loan.

MAN 2

Oh! Why did they do that?

MAN 1

Remember Mesopotamia and the king and the priests loaning silver to the farmers?

MAN 2

Yes.

MAN 1

Who ended up with the wealth? And why?

MAN 2

Well, the king and the priests because the farmer didn’t have the means to get the silver interest on his silver loan.

MAN 1

So… do we have the means to find the interest for our loans to the banks from our money supply?

MAN 2

Well, I’ll be damned! Those f\*\*\*\*\*.

MAN 1

Now you know how the forests of Mesopotamia were turned into deserts. The repaying of unpayable debt caused the people, over time, to over-produce, over-mine, over-use their land.

Debt was hanging over everyone’s head. Farmers were forced to produce cash crops and could not afford to let their land lie fallow and restore its nutrients from the natural cycle.

Land was not cared for. So we see a desert in front of us.

MAN 2

As we all feel, none of us can afford to lose our business or our job. We have to work harder all the time or we’ll be out of our homes!

MAN 1

Is that not being a slave?

And what have we done to OUR EARTH because of unpayable debt needing to be paid?

THE END