

Chapter 3: Economic Activity

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Preamble

The general economic activity of the virtuous community, as well as its financial capacity and public income, is looked upon as one of the most important issues on which the fiscal power of the virtuous community—plus its capability of movement and protection against dangers and perils and steadfastness against difficulties and pressures—depends. Without taking this issue into consideration, no community can attain perfection or survive the vicissitudes of time.

We have previously referred to the fact that Islam has paid much attention to the economic aspect. For instance, the great financial potential of Lady Khadijah al-Kubra (‘a) played an extremely vital role in helping Muslims withstand ordeals and resist the financial siege which was imposed upon them at the beginning of the promulgation of Islam.

Encouraging Economic Activity

While establishing the economic aspect, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) instituted a general principle for their followers, educated them about it and implanted it in their social culture. This general principle was the principle of work and exertion of all possible efforts to earn a livelihood. The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) disallowed reliance on others to meet one’s financial needs, considering work to this end to be among the obligatory sacred deeds that draw one nearer to Almighty Allah.

In an authentic tradition, Shaykh al-Kulayni reported ‘Umar ibn Yazid to have said to Imam al-Sadiq (‘a), “A man decides to stay at home and he offers prayers, fasts and performs devotional acts, believing that

his sustenance will inevitably find its way to him. What is your opinion about such an act?"

The Imam ('a) commented:

هَذَا أَحَدُ الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُمْ.

This man is among one of the three categories of people whose prayers are never responded to. [1](#)

According to another authentic tradition that is reported from 'Umar ibn Yazid, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said:

أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا دَخَلَ بَيْتَهُ وَأَغْلَقَ بَابَهُ، أَكَانَ يَسْقُطُ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ؟

If a man were to enter his house and lock its door, would anything fall on him from the heavens? [2](#)

Ayyub, the brother of Adim ibn Bayya' al-Harawi, is reported to have said that he and some others were sitting in the presence of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) when al-'Ala' ibn Kamil came and sat in front of the Imam ('a) and asked, "Pray to Almighty Allah to provide me with easy sustenance."

The Imam ('a) answered:

لَا أَدْعُو لَكَ! أُطَلِّبُ كَمَا أَمَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

No, I will not. You must seek sustenance as Almighty Allah has ordered you to do. [3](#)

This struggle to seek sustenance has been elevated to such a degree that it has attained the rank of *jihad* or even higher.

In an authentic tradition, al-Halabi has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

الكَادُ عَلَى عِيَالِهِ كَالْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

He who works to provide his dependents with sustenance is like a mujahid who fights for the sake of Almighty Allah. [4](#)

According to another authentic tradition, Zakariyya ibn Adam has reported Imam al-Ridha ('a) as saying:

الَّذِي يَطْلُبُ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، مَا يَكْفِي بِهِ عِيَالَهُ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

He who seeks the grace of Almighty Allah to provide enough sustenance for his dependents will have a

greater reward than fighting for the sake of Almighty Allah. [5](#)

Muhammad ibn Marwan has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

إِنَّ فِي حِكْمَةِ آلِ دَاوُدَ: يَنْبَغِي لِلْمُسْلِمِ الْعَاقِلِ أَنْ لَا يُرَى ظَالِعًا إِلَّا فِي ثَلَاثٍ: مَرَمَّةٍ لِمَعَاشٍ، أَوْ تَزْوُدٍ لِمَعَادٍ، أَوْ لَذَّةٍ فِي غَيْرِ ذَاتِ مُحَرَّمٍ. وَيَنْبَغِي لِلْمُسْلِمِ الْعَاقِلِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ سَاعَةٌ يُفْضِي بِهَا إِلَى عَمَلِهِ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَسَاعَةٌ يُلَاقِي إِخْوَانَهُ الَّذِينَ يُفَاوِضُهُمْ وَيُفَاوِضُونَهُ فِي أَمْرِ آخِرَتِهِ، وَسَاعَةٌ يُخْلِى بَيْنَ نَفْسِهِ وَلذَاتِهَا فِي غَيْرِ مُحَرَّمٍ، فَإِنَّهَا عَوْنٌ عَلَى تِلْكَ السَّاعَتَيْنِ.

The following statement is written in the book of wisdom of (Prophet) David's household: A Muslim of sane mind must not be seen busy except in three pursuits: improving his livelihood, supplying himself with provisions for the life to come, and seeking lawful pleasures. A rational Muslim is also required to dedicate an hour to acts directed to Almighty Allah, another hour to meeting his brethren-in-faith to discuss the affairs of the Hereafter, and a third hour to gain lawful pleasures. The third hour helps him do the work of the first two hours properly. [6](#)

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) provided excellent practical examples in order to emphasize the importance of work and clarified this principle empirically so that their followers would follow their examples.

According to an authentic tradition, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Hajjaj has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as recounting the following:

Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir used to say: I never thought that 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ('a) would leave a successor as excellent as himself until I saw his son, Muhammad ('a). I wanted to give him a lesson, but he gave me one. On a hot day, I went to al-Madinah where I saw Imam al-Baqir ('a). I said to myself, "A great man of Quraysh working at this hour of day in search of the material world! I will certainly give him some advice." I approached and gave a salutation. Still catching his breath, he returned my greeting. Sweat was pouring from his head and face because of the heat. I said, "May Allah help you! A great man of Quraysh is seeking worldly provisions at this time of the day! What will happen if death overtakes you in this situation?" He said, "If death overtakes me in this situation, I will be in a state of obedience to Almighty Allah. I am afraid of death only when I am committing a sin!" I said, "May Allah bless you! You are thoroughly right. I intended to give you advice but you gave it to me!" [7](#)

Muhammad ibn 'Adhafir has reported his father as saying:

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) gave my father one thousand and seven hundred dinars asking him to use it in business. The Imam ('a) then said:

أَمَا إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِي رَغْبَةٌ فِي رِبْحِهَا، وَإِنْ كَانَ الرِّبْحُ مَرْغُوبًا فِيهِ، وَلَكِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ يَرَانِي اللَّهُ، جَلَّ وَعَزَّ، مُتَعَرِّضًا لِفَوَائِدِهِ.

Verily, I do not have the desire to gain profits from this business even though profit is something desired; rather, I just want Almighty Allah to see me seeking His interests.

My father made a one hundred dinar profit from the business he undertook. The Imam ('a), having been informed of this, rejoiced and had my father add the profit to the capital. When my father died and the investment was still with him, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) summoned me and wrote down, "May Allah grant wellbeing to you and us! I have given Abu-Muhammad one thousand seven hundred dinars to use them in business. So, please hand this amount over to 'Umar ibn Yazid."

When I searched in my father's register, I found the following written therein: "Abu-Musa has one thousand and seven hundred dinars invested with me, and I made a profit of one hundred dinars for him. 'Abdullah ibn Sinan and 'Umar ibn Yazid have full acquaintance with the matter."⁸

General Trend of Economic Activity

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) founded a set of principles to be the general trend in the economic activities of their followers. The first principle was to seek sustenance without indolence by exerting all possible effort to provide for oneself through work.

Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported, through a valid chain of authority, that Sadir asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a), "What is a man required to do to seek sustenance?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

إِذَا فَتَحْتَ بَابَكَ وَبَسَطْتَ بِسَاطِكَ فَقَدْ قَضَيْتَ مَا عَلَيْكَ.

*If you open the door [of your store] and stretch your rug [on which you exhibit your goods], you will have done perfectly what you are required to do.*⁹

Al-Tayyar is reported to have said that Imam al-Baqir ('a) asked him, "What is your current profession or what kind of job are you currently doing?"

He answered, "I have no job."

The Imam ('a) instructed:

فَخُذْ بَيْتًا وَاكْنُسْ فَنَاءَهُ وَرُشَّهُ وَابْسُطْ فِيهِ بِسَاطًا، فَإِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ قَضَيْتَ مَا وَجَبَ عَلَيْكَ.

"Betake yourself a store, sweep the confines, and stretch a rug therein. If you do so, you will have done perfectly what you are obligated to do."

The reporter said, “When I carried out the Imam’s instruction, I was given ample sustenance.”¹⁰

Ibn al-Qaddah has reported Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) as saying:

عَدُوُّ الْعَمَلِ الْكَسَلُ.

Laziness is the enemy of work. ¹¹

Imam Musa al-Kazim (‘a) is reported to have said:

قَالَ أَبِي، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، لِبَعْضِ وَلَدِهِ: إِيَّاكَ وَالْكَسَلَ وَالضَّجَرَ، فَإِنَّهُمَا يَمْنَعَانِكَ مِنْ حَظِّكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

My father said to one of his sons, “Beware of laziness and tedium, for they deprive you of your share of this world and the Hereafter.” ¹²

The second principle was commitment to seeking only legal sustenance. Almighty Allah, ordered man to seek of His sustenance and guaranteed it to him—provided it was sought through lawful means.

He, the Almighty, has thus said:

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

In heaven is your sustenance, and (also) that which you are promised. (51:22)

Complying with this divine instruction, the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) asserted that, while seeking sustenance, it is necessary to maintain balance between obligation and what Almighty Allah has determined for each individual. As a result, man is required to seek sustenance and, at the same time, be committed to the regulations and general rules determined by Islam, avoiding squandering or violations of these regulations.

Abu-Hamzah al-Thumali has reported on the authority of Imam al-Baqir (‘a) that the Holy Prophet (S) said in his famous sermon at the Farewell Pilgrimage:

أَلَا إِنَّ الرُّوحَ الْأَمِينَ نَفَثَ فِي رَوْعِي أَنَّهُ لَا تَمُوتُ نَفْسٌ حَتَّى تَسْتَكْمِلَ رِزْقَهَا، فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَجْمِلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ وَلَا يَحْمِلَنَّكُمْ إِسْتِبْطَاءُ شَيْءٍ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ أَنْ تَطْلُبُوهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَسَمَ الْأَرْزَاقَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ حَلَالًا وَلَمْ يُقَسِّمْهَا حَرَامًا. فَمَنْ اتَّقَى اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَصَبَرَ أَتَاهُ اللَّهُ بِرِزْقِهِ مِنْ حِلِّهِ، وَمَنْ هَتَكَ حِجَابَ السُّتْرِ وَعَجَلَ فَأَخَذَهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ حِلِّهِ قُصَّ بِهِ مِنْ رِزْقِهِ الْحَلَالِ وَحُوسِبَ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Verily, the Trustworthy Spirit (the Angel Gabriel) inspired in me that no single soul will die before fully

receiving its sustenance. So, (you must) fear Almighty Allah and seek sustenance. Do not make the delay in an amount of your sustenance incite you to seek it through an act of disobedience to Almighty Allah, for He, the Blessed and Exalted, has divided lawful sustenance, never unlawful sustenance, among His creatures. Therefore, whoever fears Almighty Allah and waits patiently, Almighty Allah will give him his lawful sustenance, but whoever ravages the curtain of protection and rushes to take his sustenance unlawfully, Almighty Allah will reduce it from his lawful sustenance and leave him to compensate for it on the Day of Resurrection. [13](#)

Ibrahim ibn Abi'l-Ballad has reported on the authority of his father that Imam al-Baqir ('a) said:

لَيْسَ مِنْ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا وَقَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، لَهَا رِزْقَهَا حَلَالًا يَأْتِيهَا فِي عَافِيَةٍ، وَعَرَضَ لَهَا بِالْحَرَامِ مِنْ وَجْهِ آخَرَ. فَإِنْ هِيَ تَنَاوَلَتْ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْحَرَامِ قَاصِّهَا بِهِ مِنَ الْحَلَالِ الَّذِي فُرِضَ لَهَا، وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ سِوَاهُمَا فَضْلٌ كَثِيرٌ، وَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

There is no single soul but that Almighty Allah has decided for it its sustenance to be gained in a lawful and wholesome way, but He has also determined the same sustenance if gained unlawfully; therefore, if a soul takes any of its sustenance in an unlawful manner, Almighty Allah will reduce it from its lawfully-earned sustenance, which He has determined. With Almighty Allah, however, there is much more grace than sustenance that is gained either lawfully or unlawfully, to which He has referred, saying, “Ask Allah of His grace. (4:32)” [14](#)

The third principle was to take considerable interest in preserving one's funds and maintaining equilibrium in spending in order to avoid both squandering and parsimoniousness.

Almighty Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just balance between those extremes. (25:67)

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) also instructed that one's funds must be cared for and managed personally, especially when such funds are considerable.

Tha'labah and other narrators have reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said:

إِصْلَاحُ الْمَالِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ.

Proper management of funds is part of faith. [15](#)

Dawud ibn Sarhan has reported that he once saw Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) weighing dates with his own hands. He thus said to him, “May Allah accept me as ransom for you! You could have ordered one of your sons or servants to save you from this deed.”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

يَا دَاوُدُ، إِنَّهُ لَا يُصْلِحُ الْمَرْءَ الْمُسْلِمَ إِلَّا ثَلَاثَةٌ: التَّفَقُّهُ فِي الدِّينِ، وَالصَّبْرُ عَلَى النَّائِبَةِ، وَحُسْنُ التَّقْدِيرِ فِي الْمَعِيشَةِ.

O Dawud, three matters can lead a Muslim to uprightness: (1) mastery in religious knowledge, (2) steadfastness against misfortune, and (3) good management of livelihood. [16](#)

Yunus has reported that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) instructed him saying:

بَاشِرُ كِبَارِ أُمُورِكَ بِنَفْسِكَ، وَكُلُّ مَا شَفَّ إِلَى غَيْرِكَ... ضَرْبَ أَشْرِيَةِ الْعَقَارِ وَمَا أَشْبَهَهَا.

Manage your major affairs in person, and employ others to manage minor dealings...major affairs include purchasing real estate and matters of a similar nature. [17](#)

The fourth principle is commitment to a policy of economization, which includes saving one’s annual provisions, according to the religious law of Islam, so as to eliminate neediness and avoid requiring aid from others.

Al-Hasan ibn al-Jahm has reported that he heard Imam al-Ridha (‘a) saying:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ إِذَا أَدْخَلَ طَعَامَ سَنَّتِهِ خَفَّ ظَهْرُهُ وَاسْتَرَاحَ. وَكَانَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ وَأَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ، لَا يَشْتَرِيَانِ عُقْدَةً حَتَّى يُحْرَزَا طَعَامَ سَنَّتَيْهِمَا.

If one saves the provisions of a year, one’s burdens will be light and one will rest. Abu-Ja’far (al-Baqir) (‘a) and Abu-’Abdullah (al-Sadiq) (‘a) did not purchase even a knot before they would have already saved provisions for that whole year. [18](#)

Ibn Bukayr has reported on the authority of Imam al-Ridha (‘a) that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ إِذَا أَحْرَزَتْ قُوَّتَهَا اسْتَقَرَّتْ.

Verily, after a person saves his (annual) provisions, he will certainly be stable. [19](#)

The fifth principle was autonomy in business such that the investments and profit of one's business would be one's own concern rather than dealing with partners.

Al-Mufadhhal ibn 'Umar has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

مَنْ آجَرَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ حَظَرَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرِّزْقَ. وَكَيْفَ لَا يَحْظُرُهُ وَمَا أَصَابَ فِيهِ فَهُوَ لِرَبِّهِ الَّذِي آجَرَهُ؟

Whoever becomes an employee of another has in fact banned sustenance on himself. [20](#) *This is because whatever he gains goes to his employer.* [21](#)

'Ammar al-Sabati has reported that he once said to Imam al-Sadiq ('a), "Men who are employed in business give whatever they earn to their employers."

The Imam ('a) commented:

لَا يُؤَاجِرُ نَفْسَهُ، وَلَكِنْ يَسْتَرْزِقُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَيَتَّجِرُ، فَإِنْ آجَرَ نَفْسَهُ حَظَرَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرِّزْقَ.

They must not accept to be used as employees; rather, they should seek Almighty Allah's sustenance and work in business for themselves. If they accept to be used as employees, then they will have banned sustenance on themselves. [22](#)

The sixth principle was to distribute funds in a number of economic occupations and not invest everything in one area.

According to a valid tradition, Mu'ammal ibn Khallad has reported that he heard Imam al-Ridha ('a) recounting the following:

A man came to Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) to try to give him advice. "O Abu-'Abdullah," said the man, "Why have you separated the funds in scattered sectors. If they were all put in one occupation, it would be easier to supervise and provide greater benefit."

The Imam ('a) answered:

إِتَّخَذْتُهَا مُتَفَرِّقَةً، فَإِنْ أَصَابَ هَذَا الْمَالَ شَيْءٌ سَلِمَ هَذَا الْمَالُ، وَالصُّرَّةُ تَجْمَعُ بِهَذَا كُلِّهِ.

I have distributed them among various sectors so that if one sector loses, the other funds will be saved. At any rate, the total is the composite of all these funds. [23](#)

The seventh principle was avoidance of saving, storing, or transferring all of one's funds into currency, gold, or silver. One should conduct business with one's funds or transfer them into real estate, farms, or commercial enterprises.

Zurarah has reported that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) say:

مَا يُخَلِّفُ الرَّجُلُ شَيْئًا أَشَدَّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَالِ الصَّامِتِ... يَجْعَلُهُ فِي الْحَائِطِ، يَعْنِي فِي الْبُسْتَانِ أَوْ الدَّارِ.

No legacy is worse than money that lays stagnant...money must be transferred into estates; i.e. farms or houses. [24](#)

Through these principles, we get an idea about the general economic activities that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) determined for their followers.

Directing Economic Activity

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) did not stop at principles; rather, they directed the economic activities of the virtuous community after examining the social, political and economic circumstances under which the Muslim community in general and the virtuous community in particular lived.

Common Activities

A general view of professions that produced greater benefit pointed out the following fields of economic activity:

- (1) **Agriculture:** cultivating lands of the ruling regime (i.e. annexed lands), cultivating derelict lands, entering into a farm-sharing contract (*muzara'ah*), or irrigating lands by digging wells and canals.
- (2) **Animal Husbandry:** shepherding, providing fodder and in-house breeding.
- (3) **Trade:** facilitating processes of exchanging money for goods, distribution of goods internally and externally through transport of goods to various regions and countries (i.e. import and export).
- (4) **Manual labor:** weaving, saddle making, blacksmithing, construction, etc.
- (5) **Extracting natural resources:** mining, diving, hunting and fishing.
- (6) **Professions and crafts:** tailoring, goldsmithery, tanning, preparation of medications, and similar professions and services.
- (7) **Clerical jobs:** clerks, constabulary, jobs in the military forces, tax collection, employment, governorship and the like.

(8) **Cultural, educational, and the arts:** teaching, writing, oration, poetry, novel writing, drawing, sculpture, ornamentation, calligraphy, etc.

(9) **Complete avoidance of religiously forbidden professions:** sorcery, witchcraft, black arts, sale of wine and intoxicants, managing brothels and so on.

Of course, economic activities vary with regard to the social conditions and circumstances. However, except for forbidden earnings, these activities are necessary for human societies because they help in their perfection and, sometimes, some of these activities are even obligatory according to the religious code of Islamic law; that is, they are obligatory collectively upon the society and when some individuals carry out those activities such that the needs of society are met, the others will be released from responsibility in that regard.

In the past, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) would engage in a large variety of economic activities, other than those that were forbidden—a fact that can be understood from the reports on the religious laws appertaining to such activities. Other reports have also asserted that the followers practiced various activities and would ask the Holy Imams (‘a) about the details of laws pertaining to their jobs.

Forbidden Activities

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) prohibited their followers from practicing certain activities, previously mentioned as religiously forbidden professions.

According to an authentic tradition, Abu-Basir has reported that he asked Imam al-Baqir (‘a) about the legality of occupying offices in the ruling regimes of unjust rulers.

The Imam (‘a) answered:

يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ، لَا وَلَا مَدَّةَ قَلَمٍ. إِنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُ مِنْ دُنْيَاهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَصَابُوا مِنْ دِينِهِ مِثْلَهُ.

O Abu-Muhammad, never help them in any matter even if it be as trivial as handing them over a pen. No one can obtain any worldly benefits from them without losing a part of their faith in the same amount as the benefit. [25](#)

According to another authentic tradition, Ibn Abi-Ya’fur has reported the following:

I was once in the presence of Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) when one of our acquaintances (i.e. followers of our faith) visited him and said, “May Allah lead you to more success! One of us who is exposed to penury or indigence might be offered (by the despotic ruling authorities) employment to construct a building, clear waste from a river, or fix a beaver-dam. What is your opinion in this regard?”

The Imam (‘a) said:

مَا أَحِبُّ أُتِّي عَقَدْتُ لَهُمْ عُقْدَةً أَوْ وَكَيْتُ لَهُمْ وَكَاءً وَإِنَّ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لِابْيَيْنِهَا، لَا وَلَا مُدَّةَ قَلَمٍ. إِنَّ أَعْوَانَ الظَّلْمَةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِي سُرَادِقٍ مِنْ نَارٍ حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ.

I would never desire to do anything for them, even if it be as trivial as untying a knot or sewing a bag, even if they give me whatever lies between its (i.e. al-Madinah) two extremes (i.e. mountains on either side). Definitely not! Even if it be handing over a pen. On the Day of Resurrection, the assistants of the tyrants shall be put under a canopy of fire and kept there until Almighty Allah finishes settling accounts with all His worshippers. [26](#)

Likewise, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) forbade their followers from practicing other banned activities that were common in that age, such as rearing girls for singing, using them as slaves, or selling them; selling forbidden things like corpses, blood, filthy things, and intoxicants; working for the benefit of the singing profession, sorcery, witchcraft, or black arts; cheating, counterfeiting, or working in prostitution in addition to other banned activities mentioned in the books of practical laws.

They also instructed their followers to avoid certain activities and occupations which were considered by them to be objectionable or requiring precaution. The reason for this was that such occupations required high proficiency in religious law to be practiced properly—either because ordinary people do not pay enough attention to details of religious requirements or because of certain subtle spiritual and moral aspects. Money-changing, goldsmithery, and butchery are examples of these objectionable economic activities.

According to a valid tradition, Ishaq ibn 'Ammar has reported that he once visited Imam al-Sadiq ('a) and informed him about the birth of his son, “May Allah accept me as ransom for you!” said Ishaq, “Which craft should I teach him?”

The Imam ('a) answered:

إِذَا عَدَلْتَهُ عَنْ خَمْسَةِ أَشْيَاءَ فَضَعُهُ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ؛ لَا تُسَلِّمُهُ صَيْرَفِيًّا فَإِنَّ الصَّيْرَفِيَّ لَا يَسْلَمُ مِنَ الرِّبَا، وَلَا تُسَلِّمُهُ بَيَّاعَ الْأَكْفَانِ فَإِنَّ صَاحِبَ الْأَكْفَانِ يَسُرُّهُ الْوَبَاءُ إِذَا كَانَ، وَلَا تُسَلِّمُهُ بَيَّاعَ الطَّعَامِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَسْلَمُ مِنَ الْإِحْنَاكِ، وَلَا تُسَلِّمُهُ جَزَّارًا فَإِنَّ الْجَزَّارَ تُسَلِّبُ مِنْهُ الرَّحْمَةَ، وَلَا تُسَلِّمُهُ نَحَّاسًا فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، قَالَ: شَرُّ النَّاسِ مَنْ بَاعَ النَّاسَ.

If you turn him away from the following five crafts, you may then teach him any craft you like: (1) You must not put him in the craft of money-changing, because a moneychanger cannot avoid usury. (2) You must not involve him in the craft of coffin-selling, because a coffin-seller is pleased when a plague comes upon the people. (3) You must not involve him in food-brokerage, because monopoly rarely leaves a food-broker. (4) You must not teach him to be a butcher, because mercy and sympathy has been divested from butchers' hearts. (5) You must not put him in the slave-trade, because Allah's Messenger (S) has said, “The most evil of all people are those who sell people.” [27](#)

According to another validly reported tradition, Talhah ibn Zayd reported on the authority of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

إِنِّي أُعْطِيتُ خَالَتِي غُلَامًا وَنَهَيْتُهَا أَنْ تَجْعَلَهُ قَصَّابًا أَوْ حَجَّامًا أَوْ صَائِغًا

I have given my (maternal) aunt a slave-boy and I warned her against teaching him to be a butcher, a cupper, or a goldsmith. [28](#)

Abu-Isma'il al-Razi (i.e. of Ray, currently Tehran), the sword-polisher, has reported that he visited Imam al-Sadiq ('a) carrying two garments. "Abu-Isma'il," The Imam ('a) said, "I have been gifted many garments by you but none of them was as fine as these two."

Abu-Isma'il said, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! These were spun by my wife and woven by me."

The Imam ('a) asked astonishingly, "Are you a weaver?"

"Yes, I am" Abu-Isma'il answered.

The Imam ('a) warned, "Do not be a weaver!"

Abu-Isma'il asked, "If I do not, then what should I be?"

The Imam ('a) instructed, "You may be a sword-polisher!"

Abu-Isma'il commented: I had two dirhams with which I bought swords and antique mirrors. I then went to Ray and sold them at great profit. [29](#)

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a), of course, demonstrated that these crafts are not objectionable in themselves, but rather are undesirable because they were attached to some complicated matters. They clarified that the warning against engagement in such crafts was because of confusing ethical and legal matters attached to them. On other occasions, they also confirmed that honesty must be present in every job.

According to a validly reported tradition, Imam 'Ali Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ، عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، يُحِبُّ الْمُحْتَرِفَ الْأَمِينَ

Verily, Almighty Allah loves trustworthy professionals. [30](#)

Unambiguous Economic Activities

In addition to their directives in this field, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) chose for their followers a set of economic

activities to be the main object of their attention and the center of their activities. In this respect, we will refer to three activities: commerce, agriculture (in its common sense), and utilization of real estate.

Commerce

Commerce is considered the chief and most important economic profession. It identifies market value and balances prices within the frame of supply and demand and in the field of production. Accordingly, commerce contributes largely to provide the vital necessities of human societies.

Founded on this fact, commerce had a special significance in the Islamic economic theory and was preferred over other economic activities.

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) used various methods of expression to urge engagement in business and commerce.

Clarifying the vital role of commerce, they are reported to have said that **nine tenths of sustenance or blessings lie in commerce.**[31](#)

They also declared that **commerce increased the dignity of man.**

Shaykh al-Saduq has reported al-Mu’alla ibn Khunays as saying:

As he noticed that I was late for work, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) urged me saying:

أُغْدُ إِلَى عِزِّكَ.

Go and join your dignity.

According to another tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) said to one of his servants:

يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ، إِحْفَظْ عِزَّكَ... غُدُوكَ إِلَى سُوقِكَ وَإِكْرَامَكَ نَفْسَكَ.

O servant of Allah, watch over your dignity...it is to go to markets and honor yourself therein.[32](#)

Furthermore, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) declared that **doing business keeps men’s intellects sound.**

According to another valid tradition, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

تَرَكُ التِّجَارَةَ يُنْقِصُ الْعُقْلَ.

Abandonment of business reduces faculty of reason.[33](#)

Mu'adh, a garment seller, has reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) asked him, "O Mu'adh, have you become too weak to do business or have you forsaken it?"

Mu'adh answered, "Neither of these two!"

The Imam ('a) thus asked for justification (about why he was not working), and Mu'adh explained, "I have more than enough money for my livelihood and I am not indebted to anyone. Hence, I do not think that I will consume all my savings up to my death."

The Imam ('a) instructed:

لَا تَتْرُكْهَا، فَإِنَّ تَرْكَهَا مُذْهِبَةٌ لِلْعَقْلِ. إِسْعَ عَلَى عِيَالِكَ، وَإِيَّاكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا هُمُ السُّعَاءَ عَلَيْكَ.

Do not forsake business, because forsaking it decreases one's reason. Work for your dependents and never let them work for you. [34](#)

Burayd al-'Ujali is reported to have asked his son-in-law Muhammad ibn Muslim to ask Imam al-Sadiq's opinion about a matter that he had decided to undertake, "Many deposits and funds have been given to me for safekeeping and I am anxious because of them. I would like now to forsake all worldly affairs and give these back to their owners."

When Muhammad conveyed the matter to Imam al-Sadiq ('a), the Imam said:

يَا مُحَمَّدُ، أَيْبِدُ نَفْسَهُ بِالْحَرْبِ؟ لَا، وَلَكِنْ يَا خُذْ وَيُعْطِي عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

O Muhammad, is he intending to wage war against himself? No, he must not do thus; rather, he can receive (income) and give (to others) for the sake of Almighty Allah. [35](#)

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) also declared that doing business saves the virtuous community from begging.

Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported on the authority of Muhammad ibn Muslim on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) that Imam 'Ali Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) said:

تَعَرَّضُوا لِلتَّجَارَةِ، فَإِنَّ فِيهَا غِنًى لَكُمْ عَمَّا فِي أَيْدِي النَّاسِ.

Engage yourselves in business, because this will save you from being in need of what others hold in possession.

According to another tradition, the Imam ('a) said:

However, at the same time that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) urged their followers to engage in commercial activities, they warned them against involvement in ethical and religious problems that might accompany such activities.

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah has reported that he heard Imam 'Ali Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) saying from the *minbar* (pulpit):

يَا مَعْشَرَ التُّجَّارِ، الْفِقْهَ ثُمَّ الْمُتَّجِرَ، الْفِقْهَ ثُمَّ الْمُتَّجِرَ، الْفِقْهَ ثُمَّ الْمُتَّجِرَ. وَاللَّهِ، لَلرِّبَا فِي هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَيْبِبِ النَّمْلِ عَلَى الصَّفَا. شُوبُوا إِيمَانَكُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ. التَّاجِرُ فَاجِرٌ، وَالْفَاجِرُ فِي النَّارِ، إِلَّا مَنْ أَخَذَ الْحَقَّ وَأَعْطَى الْحَقَّ.

O group of traders, give priority to learning religious laws over engagement in business. Give priority to learning religious laws over engagement in business. Give priority to learning religious laws over engagement in business. By Allah (I swear), usury in this nation is more observed than ants' creeping on the Hillock of Safa. So, fuse your faith with honesty. Except those who give duly and take duly, a dealer is wicked and the wicked will be in Hellfire. [38](#)

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَنْ بَاعَ وَاشْتَرَى فَلْيَحْفَظْ خَمْسَ خِصَالٍ وَإِلَّا فَلَا يَشْتَرِيَنَّ وَلَا يَبِيعَنَّ: الرِّبَا، وَالْحِلْفَ، وَكِتْمَانَ الْعَيْبِ، وَالْحَمْدَ إِذَا بَاعَ، وَالذَّمَّ إِذَا اشْتَرَى.

He who is engaged in buying or selling must avoid the following five things and, if not, must neither buy nor sell: (1) usury, (2) taking oaths, (3) concealment of an item's defects, (4) speaking highly of a commodity to be sold, and (5) finding fault with the commodity to be purchased. [39](#)

Objectives of Encouraging Commerce

In particular, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) encouraged their followers to engage in commerce because they intended to achieve definite objectives for the virtuous community. These objectives can be summed up in the following points:

(1) Economic activity begets positive moral and spiritual results as mentioned in traditions already referred to. In plain words, economic activity is regarded as one of the most important social activities and people that engage in commerce gain the respect and esteem of others. All high-ranking personalities have engaged in economic commerce.

(2) Such business activities produce flexibility, freedom, and continuous motion. The nature of doing business requires activity, travel, and building expansive relations with various social milieus and provides flexibility in choosing how to spend one's time, how to invest one's capital, and what categories of people to deal with.

(3) Such activities earn sizeable profits for those who participate in them. According to some traditions one attains up to nine tenths of his sustenance through commerce. Such wealth increases the financial capacity of the virtuous community and ensures a definite and considerable financial resource to its administration through the *khums* that are levied from such assets.

Agriculture

In its all-inclusive sense (which includes animal-husbandry) agriculture and agricultural investment are counted among the most important economic means for nations and communities both because they are chief sources of food and major sources of raw materials that are used in many essential, transformative and manual industries.

Therefore, the Islamic economic theory has conferred upon agriculture the second level of importance after commerce and even the highest level under certain economic circumstances (such as a besiegement) or for certain social classes (such as working class). Moreover, no nation or community can ever achieve ideal independence unless there is sufficiency in agricultural production.

Increasing its importance, the funds obtained from agricultural activities are usually pure, legal, and free from legal obscurity. As a result, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are reported to have classified agriculture as the most lawful and pleasant of all professions.

In his book, *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a valid chain on the authority of Sayyabah that a man seeking certainty said to Imam al-Sadiq (‘a), “May Allah accept me as ransom for you! I heard some people saying that agriculture is disapproved of.”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

إِزْرَعُوا وَاعْرَسُوا، فَلَا وَاللَّهِ مَا عَمِلَ النَّاسُ عَمَلًا أَحَلَّ وَلَا أَطْيَبَ مِنْهُ.

You may sow and plant. By Allah (I swear), people have never been engaged in any job that is more lawful and more pleasant than agriculture.[40](#)

According to another tradition, the Imam (‘a) is reported as saying:

خَيْرُ الْأَعْمَالِ الْحَرثُ، يَزْرَعُهُ فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ الْبَرُّ وَالْفَاجِرُ.

The best of jobs is the sowing of a cultivated land from which both the good and the bad eat.[41](#)

According to a third tradition, the Imam (‘a) is reported as saying:

الزَّارِعُونَ كُنُوزُ الْأَنْعَامِ، يَزْرَعُونَ طَيِّباً أَخْرَجَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَحْسَنُ النَّاسِ مَقَاماً وَأَقْرَبُهُمْ مَنْزِلَةً.
يُدْعَوْنَ الْمُبَارَكِينَ.

Farmers are the treasures of all creatures. They plant pleasant things that Almighty Allah causes to grow. On the Day of Resurrection, they shall be the best of people in rank and the nearest in standing. They shall be called the blessed ones. [42](#)

According to an acceptably reported tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported as relating the following:

When he was asked about the best of income, the Holy Prophet (S) answered:

زَرَعَ زَرَعَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَأَصْلَحَهُ وَأَدَّى حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ.

It is (the income from) a crop that is tended and refined by the planter who then gives its due on its harvest day.

When he was asked about the next category in superiority, the Holy Prophet (S) answered:

رَجُلٌ فِي غَنَمٍ لَهُ قَدْ تَبِعَ بِهَا مَوَاضِعَ الْقَطْرِ، يُقِيمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتِي الزَّكَاةَ.

It is the money of a man who tends his sheep leading them to rainwater and, at the same time, maintains prayers and defrays the zakat tax. [43](#)

Due to the significance of agriculture and the fortune and reformation found therein, the Prophets and Imams used to work in agriculture in various stages of their lives.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَ رِزْقَ أَنْبِيَائِهِ فِي الزَّرْعِ وَالضَّرْعِ لِنَلَّا يَكْرَهُوا شَيْئاً مِنْ قَطْرِ السَّمَاءِ.

Verily, Almighty Allah has made the sustenance of His prophets in agriculture and shepherding so that they would not resent any drops from the sky (i.e. rain). [44](#)

According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

مَا بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيًّا إِلَّا زَرَّاعاً، إِلَّا إِدْرِيسَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ خِيَّاطاً.

All the prophets that Almighty Allah has sent were farmers except (Prophet) Idris ('a) who was a tailor. [45](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) and Imam 'Ali Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) worked in agriculture. In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

كَانَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ، يَضْرِبُ بِالْمُرِّ وَيَسْتَخْرِجُ الْأَرْضِيْنَ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، يَمُصُّ النَّوَى فِيهِ وَيَغْرِسُهُ فَيَطْلُعُ مِنْ سَاعَتِهِ، وَإِنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْتَقَ أَلْفَ مَمْلُوكٍ مِنْ مَالِهِ وَكَدَّ يَدِهِ

The Commander of the Faithful, peace of Allah be upon him, used a shovel and cultivated the soil. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his Household, used to take out the seeds (of date-palm trees) and then plant them, and they would grow from that moment. The Commander of the Faithful manumitted one thousand (bonded slaves) out of the money he had obtained from work with his own hands. [46](#)

In his book, *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni through a valid chain of authority has also reported the following account on the authority of Imam al-Baqir ('a):

لَفِي رَجُلٍ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، وَتَحْتَهُ وَسُقٌ مِنْ نَوَى، فَقَالَ لَهُ: مَا هَذَا، يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ، تَحْتِكَ؟ فَقَالَ: مِائَةٌ أَلْفٍ عِذْقٍ، إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ. فَعَرَسَهُ فَلَمْ يُغَادِرْ مِنْهُ نَوَاءً وَاحِدَةً

One day, a man met the Commander of the Faithful ('a) and found a small quantity of seeds (of the date-palm tree) beside him. "Abu'l-Hasan," the man asked, "What is this beneath you?" The Commander of the Faithful ('a) answered, "These shall be a thousand bunches, Allah willing." Hence, the Imam ('a) planted all these seeds without leaving even a single one. [47](#)

According to many traditions, Imam al-Baqir, Imam al-Sadiq, and Imam al-Kazim ('a) worked in agriculture. [48](#) The other Holy Imams ('a) also worked in this field when they had a chance. Traditions have asserted that agriculture was the general means of livelihood practiced by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

It goes without saying that all economic activities are contingent upon God-wariness and defraying religious dues, including *zakat* and others, because success and prosperity are conditional upon observation of such religious duties.

In this regard, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

مَنْ زَرَعَ حِنْطَةً فِي أَرْضٍ فَلَمْ يَزَكْ زَرَعُهُ، أَوْ خَرَجَ زَرَعُهُ كَثِيرَ الشَّعِيرِ، فَبِظُلْمٍ عَمَلُهُ فِي مَلِكٍ رَقَبَةِ الْأَرْضِ، أَوْ يَظْلَمُ لِمُزَارَعِهِ، أَوْ أَكْرَمَتِهِ، لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ

فَيُظْلَمُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا

If someone plants wheat but the crop fails to produce or much barley grows in its place, this means that the planter must have committed a wrongdoing in ownership of that land or in employment of workers; that is, he must have wronged an employee in work or in wage. Almighty Allah says, “Wherefore, for the iniquity of those who are Jews, did We disallow to them the good things which had been made lawful for them. (4: 160)”⁴⁹

Social Objectives of Agriculture

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) intended to achieve definite social objectives for the virtuous community in particular and wanted to create an accord between this economic activity and the political and social conditions of the community. Some of these objectives can be summed up in the following points:

- (1) Agricultural activities have been presented as the best of deeds, as shown by the previously mentioned traditions, because they highlight man’s spiritual connection with Almighty Allah and because they are the most pleasant, most lawful and purest means of earning money.
- (2) Engagement in agricultural activities procures self-sufficiency for the individuals of the virtuous community. It also teaches them reliance on Almighty Allah alone in addition to self-dependency in managing their affairs. Under harsh social conditions a self-sufficient farmer can dispense with the help of others completely and has the freedom to manage his life, worship Allah and carry out his duties on his own initiative.
- (3) Engagement in agricultural activities provides the members of the virtuous community with a safe refuge and averts direct contact with the despotic authorities and their officials. As a result, a good, yet proportional level of security is achieved for the individuals of the virtuous community who, under such circumstances, can practice their activities and private rituals freely, because the ruling authorities usually lack influence or power in the rural and agricultural regions. Therefore, such regions were important shelters for the descendants and followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) who were pursued by the ruling authorities. These regions were also good grounds for promulgating the true guidance that is represented by the faith of Shi’ism.
- (4) Agriculture, in its capacity as a vital economic activity, provides good income. It is regarded as one of the best means of production and the best method of investment. It also increases the financial capacity of the virtuous community and ensures a considerable financial resource to the governing system of the community through *khums* and *zakat*, as well as other dues which are levied from its assets.

Real Estate

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) held real estate as one means of earning important funds. They also persuaded their followers to buy and keep real estate, preferring real property to 'silent' properties (i.e. currency).

Real estate contributes to construction and improvement of derelict lands. It thus can be a means of production when used as a farm or an orchard, a means of service and aid when used as a dwelling place, or a place of offering commercial services when used as a hotel, hospital, or commercial shop. Real estate, therefore, plays a vital role in human life in general.

A view at the narrations reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) shows that they laid stress on a number of aspects concerning real estate:

(1) Real estate helps achieve a livelihood and guarantees commercial work and reciprocal movement. Therefore, it is better than 'silent' property.

Through a valid chain of authority, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported on the authority of Murazim that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) advised Musadif, his servant, saying:

إِتَّخِذْ عُقْدَةً أَوْ ضَيْعَةً، فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ إِذَا تَزَلَّتْ بِهِ النَّازِلَةُ أَوْ الْمُصِيبَةُ فَذَكَرَ أَنَّ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ مَا يُقِيمُ بِهِ عِيَالَهُ كَانَ أَسْخَى لِنَفْسِهِ.

Betake yourself a building or a farm. When one is exposed to a misfortune or a conflict, one becomes readier to make self-sacrifice if one realizes that there is something left for the dependents to live on. [50](#)

Through a valid chain of authority, Shaykh al-Saduq has reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) used to say:

مَا يُخَلِّفُ الرَّجُلُ بَعْدَهُ شَيْئًا أَشَدَّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَالِ الصَّامِتِ... يَجْعَلُهُ فِي الْحَائِطِ؛ الْبُسْتَانَ أَوْ الدَّارَ.

No legacy is worse than silent property...it must be transferred into estates; i.e. in gardens or houses. [51](#)

(2) There is a moral and spiritual aspect in acquiring real estates which is associated with selflessness and altruism. To put in plainer words, the possession of a piece of real estate can bring comfort that there is security for one's family members; as a result, this can be encouragement to sacrifice oneself for the sake of one's faith if the need arises, given that individuals of the virtuous community have always been objects of pursuit and persecution by the tyrannical ruling authorities. This aspect has been confirmed by the previously mentioned report of Murazim.

(3) The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) cautioned their followers against selling their real estate unless they wanted to substitute it with a better piece of real estate. They therefore encouraged their followers to hold real

estate because it is blessed and brings about sustenance and good fortune unlike 'silent' money, which is unblessed and diminishes in value.

Referring to this fact, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are reported to have said:

تَمَنُّ الْعَقَارِ مَمْحُوقٌ إِلَّا أَنْ يُجْعَلَ فِي عَقَارٍ مِثْلِهِ.

The financial return on an estate is unblessed unless it is used to purchase another estate.

Musmi' has reported that, seeking the advice of Imam al-Sadiq ('a), he said, "I have a land that many are asking me to sell and offering good prices."

The Imam ('a) answered:

يَا أَبَا سَيَّارٍ، أَمَا عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ مَنْ بَاعَ الْمَاءَ وَالطِّينَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ ثَمَنَهُ فِي الْمَاءِ وَالطِّينِ ذَهَبَ مَالُهُ هَبَاءً؟

Abu-Sayyar, know that whoever sells water and mud (i.e. land or estate) but does not put its financial return in some other water and mud has verily lost his money in vain.

Musmi' said, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! I will sell it at a good price and purchase a larger plot of land."

The Imam ('a) answered, "If so, there is no objection to selling it."

According to another narration, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are reported to have said:

مُشْتَرِي الْعُقْدَةِ مَرْزُوقٌ، وَبَائِعُهَا مَمْحُوقٌ.

A purchaser of real estate will be granted sustenance, but the seller of it will be deprived of blessing. [52](#)

(4) It is more highly recommended to purchase various estates in different places rather than in one place, as has been confirmed in the aforementioned report of Mu'ammār ibn Khallad from Imam al-Ridha ('a).

As a distinctive feature, real estate assets are so blessed that they are free from suspicion and legal and moral confusion, which can accompany merchandise, transactions, or even manual professions.

[1.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:77, H. 1.

[2.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:77, H. 2.

[3.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:78, H. 3.

[4.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:88, H. 1.

This section and the following ones bear positive traditions that demonstrate this concept.

[5.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:88, H. 2.

[6.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:87, H. 1.

[7.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi: 5:73–74, H. 1.

Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir was one of the superior master and most trustworthy scholars of Sunnis. He died in AH 130 or 131.

This section of the previous reference book comprises many narrations about the Ahl al-Bayt's acting as examples to be followed.

[8.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:76, H. 12.

[9.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:79, H. 1.

[10.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:79, H. 2.

[11.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:85, H. 1.

[12.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:85, H. 2.

[13.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:80, H. 1.

[14.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:80, H. 2.

[15.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:87, H. 3.

[16.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:87, H. 4.

[17.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:90–91, H. 1.

[18.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:89, H. 1.

[19.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:89, H. 2.

[20.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:90, H. 3.

[21.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:90, H. 1.

[22.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:90, H. 3.

[23.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:91, H. 1.

[24.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:91, H. 2.

[25.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:129, H. 5; Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, 5:107, H. 5.

[26.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:106–107, H. 5.

[27.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:114, H. 4.

[28.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:114, H. 5.

[29.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:114, H. 6.

[30.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:113, H. 1.

[31.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:3–5, H. 3, 4, 5, 8, 12.

[32.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:3–5, H. 2, 10, 12.

[33.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:6, H. 1.

[34.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:6, H. 4.

[35.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:7, H. 9.

[36.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:4, H. 11, 8.

[37.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:6, H. 5.

[38.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:150, H. 1.

[39.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:150–151, H. 2.

[40.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 13:193, H. 1.

[41.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 13:194, H. 6.

[42.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:261, H. 7.

[43.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:260–261, H. 6.

[44.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:260, H. 2.

[45.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:25, H. 3.

The same is recorded in 'Awali al-La'ali and other reference books of tradition, yet with a very little difference.

[46.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:74, H. 2.

[47.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:74–75, H. 6.

[48.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:73–77, H. 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15.

[49.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:306, H. 9; Tafsir al-'Ayyashi 1:284–285, H. 304; al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 103:66, H. 15.

[50.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:92, H. 5; al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 12:44, H. 3 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[51.](#) – Sayyid al-Borojerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 17: 136, H. 8 as quoted from Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:91, H. 2, 7 & Shaykh al-Saduq, man-la-yahdhuruhul-faqih 3: 170, H. 3642.

[52.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 5:92, H. 6, 8, 4.

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