

Conclusion: What do Islamic Economics Lack?

I do not know why those who deny the existence of Islamic economics are so generous in granting the label "economic doctrine" to capitalism and socialism while being so stingy in granting the same to Islamic economics, preferring to term the latter as "a collection of ethical codes." We have the right to ask them, "What has made both capitalism and socialism worthy of being called economic doctrines which Islamic economics do not have?"

We can observe the fact that Islam has dealt with the same subjects as capitalism has, and on the same level, assigning to them injunctions derived from its own viewpoint which differs from that of capitalism. There is no justification at all, therefore, to say that capitalism is a doctrine while Islam is preaching, that is, an ethical code.

Let us provide you now with two examples which testify that Islam has provided its views on the same level the other economic doctrines have:

The first example is related to ownership which is the focal point of difference among all economic doctrines. Capitalism considers private ownership as the rule, and general ownership as the exception.

This means that every sort of wealth, and every natural resource, allows private ownership unless there is a specific need that necessitates its nationalization which brings it out of private ownership.

Marxism considers common ownership as the basis and the rule, and no private ownership is allowed for any sort of natural resource or means of production unless there is a particular necessity which enforces the opposite; it is only then that private ownership becomes permissible, within the limits of the necessity, and as long as such necessity exists.

Islam, on the other hand, is different from both doctrines in its treatment of this subject. It calls for the principle of "combined ownership," that is, diversified ownership, considering both common and private ownerships to be on one and the same footing, each having its own scope.

Does not this Islamic attitude express an Islamic viewpoint on the doctrinal level of the capitalist and socialist positions? When the principle of private ownership makes a cornerstone of the capitalist

doctrine, and the principle of common ownership a cornerstone in the socialist Marxist doctrine, why can't the principle of combined ownership (the one that has both public and private sectors) be the cornerstone in the Islamic economic system?

Another example is related to the income earned from the ownership of the sources of production. Capitalism permits such earning in all its ways. Whoever owns a source of production has the right to rent it and earn an income from its rent without doing any labor at all.

Marxist socialism prohibits all sorts of income earned from the ownership of the sources of production because such earning, according to its philosophy, does not require any labor. The wages which, say, the owner of a mill receives from those who use his mill, and the wages the capitalist receives in the name of interest from those who borrow his money, are not allowed in Marxist socialism, while they are permitted in capitalism.

Islam treats the same subject-matter from a third viewpoint. It distinguishes between the earning methods based on the ownership of the sources of production and other methods as well. It prohibits interest while allowing the mill's wages.

Capitalism permits both interest and the mill's wages in agreement with the principle of economic freedom or free enterprise.

Marxist socialism does not permit the capitalist to earn interest on loans, or the mill's owner to receive the wages, because *labor* is the only justification for legal earning: When the capitalist lends his money, and when the mill's owner lends his mill, neither of them does any labor at all.

Islam does not permit the capitalist to earn interest, but it admits the mill's owner to collect rents, according to the capitalist theory of distribution which we will explain in the coming issue [of these series], *Insha-Allah*.

These are three various situations, each varies according to its own viewpoint regarding distribution.

When someone describes the capitalist or Marxist stance as "doctrinal", why can't he say the same about the Islamic stance, even though the latter expresses the viewpoint of a third economic doctrine which differs from both of the other two?!

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