

Islam's Care For Man's Livelihood

Today, economic problems come at the head of man's present plights. They may be considered the root of life's problems that leave a pervasive impact on man's material interests and social conditions. The result has a direct effect not only on the life of the individual but also on the community and on the level of their material progress and civil development.

Economic conditions of the Ummah (Muslim community), like elsewhere, have a backlash on security and stability, and consequently, advances in health, scientific gains and the process of achieving social justice. In Islam, life's stability is viewed as a base in a committed Muslim community. Similarly, catering man's basic necessities is a factor conducive to solidifying piety and winning divine rewards in the Hereafter.

Present life and the Hereafter, economic welfare and moral and spiritual ascendancy are tightly connected together through a sound insight in having all-embracing way of life, which only Islam can offer.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

“And seek by means of what Allah has given you the future abode, and do not neglect your portion of this world, ...” Holy Qur'an (28:77)

A Prophetic tradition from the Holy Messenger (s.a.w.w.) pointedly records:

“He is not from us who gives up his worldly life in favour of his Hereafter, nor is he who gives up his Hereafter in favour of his worldly life.”

The Prophet (s.a.w.w.) is further quoted to saying:

“How excellent is Wealthiness in strengthening man's fear of Allah”. [1](#)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), in interpreting the following verse,

(... Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment

of the fire) (Qur'an 2:201)

has elaborated that the good referred is associated together in seeking the pleasure of Allah and Paradise in the Hereafter and the provision and good morals in worldly life. [2](#)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) is quoted himself to have said:

“There is no good in him who does not like to collect wealth lawfully, by which he satisfies his needs, pays off his debts and keeps up his relations with his relatives”. [3](#)

“How excellent is worldly life when it helps one to prepare oneself for the Hereafter”. “Wealthiness that prevents you from wronging others is better than poverty that leads you to do evils.” [4](#)

The Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has also said:

“O Lord! Make bread blessed for us. Do not separate us from it. If it were not for bread we would not have kept up prayers, fast not have discharged our divine duties.” [5](#)

“It is better for the faithful to wake in the morning or in the evening at the loss of a beloved one than to go in the morning or the evening plundering others' property. We take refuge in Allah from plundering others' possessions.” [6](#)

Through these Islamic texts about the importance of the economic side of man's life, the role of the growth of money and wealth in a Muslim's life, in relation to his quest on earth can be seen. They present a clear understanding of Islam's concern with economic life and the necessity of fair distribution of wealth, and the providing of a satisfactory standard of living to every individual so as to keep his faith sound and his life stable.

Based on this plain concept is Islam's stress on man's managing his financial life and its concern to set up a fair economic system based on the belief in man's lawful right to satisfy his natural needs. These include providing an adequacy of foodstuff, clothing, residence and the rest of material, ideological and psychological needs on whose availability, the justice of an economic system and the betterment of the community's welfare depend.

Qur'anic ayahs (verses) and Prophetic traditions are bountiful in dealing with the concerns of everyday economic lives of individuals. So exactly and meticulously they attend to production, earnings, distribution of wealth, management of money and all aspects of the economy that they never fail to draw admiration of economists and political scientists the world over.

How excellently perfect is the Qur'anic concept of Islam's view of daily economic life in which it confirms man's right to gain comfort. It is vividly expressed in this Qur'anic address to Adam (a.s.):

“Surely it is (ordained for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing. ”Holy

Qur'an (20: 118)

Man's economic needs should be met, whether he himself, achieves this goal or someone else, be it an individual, a group of people or the state. The following verse enriches this concept:

"... so let them worship the Lord of this House, Who feeds them against hungry and gives them security against fear." Holy Qur'an (106:3-4)

It makes it clearer and more positive, the connection of Allah's worthiness of being worshipped to favouring man by providing his basic necessities of life. Tackling starvation and furnishing the basic economic needs of man, in the shadow of peace and security and is explained by this verse. It is a sacred feature of man's relationship with Allah and a stimulus to worship and submit to His will.

It is quite evident, in Islam's view, that the issues raised and questions emerging from thanksgiving, or to which worship is related, must be the focus of man's concern. They must be provided, for they form the path leading to worship and the causes of thankfulness and gratitude.

In a nutshell, Islam's view of man's rights to earn a daily living can be outlined as:

1. Money and property are Allah's. People are equal in gaining them and making use of them. Imam Ali (a.s.) is reported to have said:

"Were it my money I would have distributed it among them equally. But it is Allah's."

2. Man has an inalienable right to earn his livelihood. Under no circumstances should he be deprived of it and at the time of infirmity or incapability, it must be provided for him.

3. Man is obliged to exert his utmost efforts in working and utilizing nature's resources to his interests. Allah, the Exalted, Says:

"... therefore go about in the spacious sides thereof, and eat of His provision, and to Him is the return after death. "Holy Qur'an (67: 15)

4. The system of economic life and the methods of earning money, distributing wealth and consumption should be in accordance with a specific moral and legal line. Man's freedom and his economic rights should be similarly subjected to this lawful commitment, which safeguards the rights of all and balances everyone's interests.4. The system of economic life and the methods of earning money, distributing wealth and consumption should be in accordance with a specific moral and legal line. Man's freedom and his economic rights should be similarly subjected to this lawful commitment, which safeguards the rights of all and balances everyone's interests.

[1.](#) Al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, vol. 5, p. 71,

[2.](#) Al-Kulaini, op. cit.

[3.](#) Al-Kulaini, op. cit.

- [4.](#) Al-Kulaini, op. cit.
- [5.](#) Al-Kulaini, op. cit.
- [6.](#) Al-Kulaini, op. cit. p. 72.

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