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Maintaining a Just Economy through Belief in the Hereafter

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Abstract

Islam advises heedfulness to the hereafter, and urges humankind to turn away from attachment to this world. What is the outcome of this attitude, and how is it related to the development of societies?

Referring to Qur'anic text, hadiths, and the conduct of religious leaders, this article expounds on the effect of Qur'anic belief in the hereafter on stabilizing a community in its economic development and social justice, as well as its spiritual condition.

A definition of belief in the hereafter will be offered, along with its impact on man's consumption and production, and reveals that – through belief in the hereafter – Islam paves the way for refraining from inappropriate economic behaviours in issues that commonly do not receive the attention of economic experts, such as justice, protecting the rights of the needy, and avoidance of a life of luxury.

Introduction

The prophets opened our eyes to the Unseen world, a world in which reward or punishment for the deeds done in this world, namely their inner aspect, emerges. After introducing monotheism, the main mission of the prophets and religions in general is to show life in the hereafter, its features, and its relation to man's deeds in this world. Thus, all religious injunctions are replete with attention to the next world – a basic difference between divine religions and man-made religions and schools of thought. On the other hand, the prophets were chosen from among the people, lived in this material world, and lived like the rest of humankind, with physical needs to be met.

Living in this world entails meeting the requirements of life. Human survival and reproduction lead to starting a family; consequently, man continuously needs to make a living. To have a more comfortable life, he also needs to ponder on hidden relationships in the material world.

Over the centuries, human life has changed from simple to the complicated modern one. Every day, new discoveries are made; as a result, man's ability to dominate and conquer the forces of nature improves, and his material life becomes increasingly more comfortable. All human beings are instinctively interested in life, survival, comfort, and material enjoyment. The intense love for wealth acquired through his efforts is found in all men:

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيد

"And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth" (***al-'Adiyat - 100:8***)

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

"And you love wealth with exceeding love" (***Fajr – 89:20***).

He loves increased wealth, power and comforts;

أَلْهَاكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ

"Abundance diverts you," (***Takathur – 102: 1***),

so he cannot be blamed on this instinctive interest.[1]

Thus, the prophets' efforts to show the next world and the role of man's behaviour in shaping his life in the hereafter was confronted with man's carnal desires because man is interested in material issues to satisfy his needs by a variety of possible means, and not all these means have a positive and desirable outcome in the hereafter. Man who can conquer this world tries to dominate other people and take possession of resources.

Throughout the history, oppression, invasion, usurpation, slavery and man's other evil behaviours have resulted from his love for wealth and power.

The conduct and lifestyle of prophets are completely different. They had a special approach to life in this world. According to the Qur'an and words of divine people, they on the one hand belittled this world and invited people to refrain from it, and on the other, they considered it an aid to achieve salvation in the hereafter and suggested using the world for this purpose. The divine people were very strict with their

personal use, but sought to realize a society replete with prosperity, security, and spirituality.

Thus, the following questions are raised: How much can man benefit from this world? What does asceticism in life mean? What is the relationship between this world and the hereafter? Does attention to this world prevent man from interest in the hereafter? To what extent can a religious society develop economically? How do consumption and production behaviours of a religious person differ from those of others? How does a government that believes in the hereafter behave? To answer the above questions, it is necessary to find out about the relationship between this world and the hereafter so that the basis for the economic development of a religious society can be known. Are the material prosperity and economic development the desired and valuable ideals for the religious community? What principles and criteria should be applied in order to achieve them?

This article addresses the economic development realized through belief in the hereafter. Religious belief in the hereafter is a constructive behaviour that promises sustainable and universal economic development. The growth and rise of the entire human community in a balanced way constitutes the basis of this belief. After introducing key concepts, the characteristics of this world and the hereafter as well as their relationship in the religious texts are presented, alone with a description of true asceticism. Finally, the impacts of belief in the hereafter on economic behaviours are defined.

Concepts

This world and the Hereafter

Because of its proximity to mankind, this world is called dunya or “close” in Arabic. In other words, this world is the first state of being, with the hereafter as the second state of being. In the religious texts, the word dunya has several meanings, such as nature, the material world, and that which prevents us from striving to attain a successful afterlife. The hereafter refers to the next world, the world of eternity, the world beyond this material world, and the realm of reward and punishment.

The characteristics of this world and the Hereafter in Islamic texts

In the religious texts, some of the negative and positive characteristics of this world as related to human beings are as follows:

1. This world that flows into the next world has been created carefully and systematically by God. It is a place where creatures live and humankind has the potential to be the vicegerent of God, and in which people spend their lives taking advantage of its beauty.

2. The world is the mount of the believer. Through it, he achieves the good and is saved from evil and hardship. It is a place where the prophets worshipped God, revelation was sent down, the angels pray, and lovers of God live. It is the abode of honesty for those who choose to live an honest life. Also, for

those who stock up with otherworldly provisions in it, it is the place of freedom from attachment to this world and needlessness from the people. It is also for those who take advice, the abode of advice. For the Friends of God, it is the marketplace where they can gain the mercy of God and Heaven. For that reason, Imam Ali rebuked the one who blamed this world for anything wrong.2

3. This world is the place of affliction, trial, suffering, calamity, and corruption:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

***"Surely, We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* [*as to*] *which of them is best in works"* (*Kahf-18:7*).**

In contrast, the hereafter is the place of punishment, reward, and consequences of our deeds.

4. This world is a place from which we emigrate and travel to the hereafter. It is a passage and a means; not a place for stay. It declines quickly and is short-lived while the hereafter is eternal and permanent.3 As a passage, this world is a place to stock up otherworldly provisions for the hereafter as well as a place where we experience parting from this world with death.4 Conversely, the next world is the abode of survival and settlement. For this reason, it is wise to use the transient for the purpose of the eternal.5 Compared to the hereafter, we live for a short time in this world. In addition, man does not know how long he will live here.

5. This world is surrounded by carnal desires, whereas the hereafter is surrounded by hardships and problems.6 The man's carnal desires take him to comfort, arrogance, domination, seizure of others' properties, and access to comforts at any cost and by any means. On the other hand, in order to achieve salvation in the afterlife, a person's deeds must conform to religion and wisdom.

6. This world has been created for man, and man has been created for the afterlife.7 Thus, the aim of this world is the hereafter, and the life in this world is an introduction to the life in the next world and a bridge to reach the latter.8 The Prophet likened this world to a farm for the hereafter; life in it is an opportunity to prepare for a contest, and the hereafter the contest where we reap the rewards.9

7. Like a deep sea, this world is the place where people perish. Like a shadow, it is illusive and transient; it flees if you seek it, and if you turn away from it, it will follow you. Finally, like a dream, it is sweet and true only before awakening. People are travellers and guests who stay in it, but only for a short time. The world is like a mirage and does not quench the thirst of a thirsty one.10 It resembles poison, a serpent, carrion, salty water, and a trap, all which harms man. This world and the hereafter resemble two pans of a scale, east and west, and the rival wives; closeness to each leads to distance from the other.11

8. According to Imam Ali, "This world is the farm of evil and the market of loss."12 It is the abode of arrogance, deception, and deceit. In the Qur'an, God said,

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

"I swear by the time. Most surely man is in loss" (***al-Asr- 103: 1-2***).

9. This world is the place of frivolity, whereas the hereafter is the abode of life (Ankabut: 64). It is the place where sins are committed, and the house of oppressors and wrong-doers. It is also the prison of the believer and the disbeliever's heaven.[13]

10. To God, the Almighty, this world is less valuable than a fly's wing. It is the least valuable creature of God and lower in quality than carrion. God does not look at it and does not want it for His friends. It is more worthless than patchy shoes, pig bones in the hands of a leprous, a goat's mucus, and a chewed leaf in the grasshopper's mouth.[14]

Thus, sometimes this world is defined in relation to man and sometimes separated from him and only as a creature of God. As related to man, it is considered both positive and negative. Religion aims to raise man's awareness of the realities. If man has a correct understanding of the world and the hereafter, his deeds, behaviours and conduct will be influenced by that understanding, and he will make the most out of this world. Considering the above features of this world and the hereafter, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The relationships between this world, man, and the Hereafter

The world can also be viewed in isolation, regardless of its relationship with mankind. Alternatively, it can be examined by taking the quality of man's relationship with it into account. Accordingly, the first sense refers to the material world irrespective of man's approach to it, and the second refers to people's approaches to it.

1. This world refers to the material cosmic universe created by God, and man lives on the earth. This world has been created systematically and accurately as an outcome of God's work. Pondering on it leads to belief in monotheism and resurrection. Its beauties indicate the power and knowledge of its Creator, and it is the dwelling of men who benefit from its blessings. In the Qur'an and hadiths, it is sometimes called creatures, or its constituents such as the sky, earth, air, clouds, wind, and plants are mentioned. In this sense, the world is the outward aspect of the universe compared to its inward aspect. It is also considered as a stage of universe, and the Day of Judgment are regarded as its end and returning point.

Regarding this world as related to man, there are three categories:

a) This world means attachment to – and fondness of – material embodiments and transient comforts and blessings as well as sacrificing all the values for it. It also implies separating this world from the hereafter, considering the former independent of the latter, spending one's life to find salvation in it, and

not using it for the purpose of human and religious values. The only assets the lover of this world has are his properties and power. In this sense, the world deceives man. Whatever exists in this material life is considered worthless compared to the hereafter and does not bring about anything for man but evil and loss because it leads to his neglecting the truths of the universe. This sense of world is blameworthy in shari'ah and is warned against. Regarding preference of the world over the hereafter, God says:

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

[***Behold***]***, you prefer the life of this world; But the Hereafter is better and more enduring"*** (***A'laa – 87: 16-17***)***;***

and

مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا

يُبْخَسُونَ أُولَـٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ

مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Those who desire the life of the present and its glitter, - to them we shall pay [***the price of***] ***their deeds therein, - without diminution. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the designs they frame therein, and of no effect the deeds that they do!"*** (***Hud: 15, 16***)***.***

Those who possess this world are delighted at it, relying on it and disbelieve in the hereafter. (Yunus: 7, 8). Imam Sajjad said, "Do not rely on this world as a permanent dwelling."[15] The life and comforts of the world cause its lover to behave arrogantly before God (Fatir: 5). As Imam Ali says: "This world has not deceived them, but they have been deluded by it."[16]

Delusion by this world means man trusts it and is delighted by it which becomes the main objective of his endeavours. This world turns into his greatest aim and his ultimate knowledge, and he does not have sufficient understanding of the eternal abode.[17]

b) Man's relationship with this world means abandoning it and adopting extreme monasticism and austerity. Throughout history, this lifestyle has been chosen by Christian monks, Indian ascetics, and Sufis. In early Islam, sometimes Muslims refrained from permissible (halal) worldly pleasures and abandoned their families in order to strengthen their spirituality and get closer to God. The verse 87 of

the chapter al-Ma'idah states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

"O you who Believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you" (***Maa'ida – 5:87***)

was revealed to negate their behaviour. Prophet Muhammad prohibited his companions from constantly fasting, keeping a vigil the whole night, and abstaining from their wives.[18] Imam Ali also reproved Asim ibn Ziyad for his abandonment of this world and his seclusion. In addition, the first Imam prohibited Asim from being like him, namely being strict on himself, and abstaining from delicious foods and soft clothing because the Imam of Muslims has another duty.[19] Likewise, Imam Sadiq considered Sufis' behaviours against Islam, stating that they did not have complete knowledge of Islam.[20]

c) The world which refers to a means of – and an introduction to – achieving the highest values and the next world. This view does not consider this world independent; rather, it is regarded as a means of reaching perfection and benefiting from this life. In other words, worldly blessings are used reasonably and enough to the extent that one's needs are met, and the rest is saved for attaining salvation in the afterlife and gathering provisions for it. And if the worldly blessings (even the halal ones) are used unreasonably and more than enough, on the Day of Judgment one will long for higher ranks. Prophet Muhammad said three times, "Leave this world for its people," and "Whoever hoards it too much will not make use of it and only reserves it for others without benefiting from it himself."[21]

Of course, these sentences definitely do not mean that one should not earn more than his need because the Prophet earned more than he needed. Rather, they mean one should not amass wealth more than his needs; instead, he should spend it on the afterlife.[22] In his will to his son, Luqman said, "Do not get involved in this world in such a manner that your hereafter is harmed, and do not abandon it so that you may become needy."[23]

In this sense, salvation in the afterlife is achieved through this world, wherein it is a good opportunity to worship God, generously serve people, meet other's needs, and endow one's property in the way of God. In this approach, as this world is a means of achieving salvation in the afterlife, it is not blameworthy to go after it as it is indeed seeking the hereafter.[24]

Hence, this world is important. It is necessary for mankind to use it, and thus Muslims are prohibited from monasticism. People pass through this world to attain salvation in the afterlife through their endeavour and work. They make money, spend whatever money is necessary, and their family, neighbours, and relatives also benefit from their income; all ways to achieve the hereafter. They also spend the surplus money on Muslims and all humankind. Commenting on the verse,

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ

***"To those who do right is a Husna* [*good reward*] *– Yes, more* [*in measure*]*!"* (*Yunus – 10:26*),**

Imam al-Baqir said:

"'Husna' means Heaven and 'more in measure' refers to this world. God, the Almighty, will not reckon what He has granted them in this world and will reward them well in both worlds."[25]

True believers pay attention to both worlds simultaneously. According to Prophet Muhammad and the Imams, the believer does not abandon either of worlds for the sake of the other; they take advantage of both.[26]

God said:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّـهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۚ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَن تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّـهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَن تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّـهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

***Say, 'Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of* [*His*] *provision?' Say, 'These are for the faithful in the life of this world, and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.' Thus do We elaborate the signs for a people who have knowledge. Say, 'My Lord has only forbidden indecencies, the outward among them and the inward ones, and sin and undue aggression, and that you should ascribe to Allah partners for which He has not sent down any authority, and that you should attribute to Allah what you do not know.'* (*Araf – 7:32-33*).**

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّـهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ ۖ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَأَحْسِن كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّـهُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّـهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

***By the means of what Allah has given you, seek the abode of the Hereafter, while not forgetting your share of this world. Be good* [*to others*] *just as Allah has been good to you, and do not try to cause corruption in the land. Indeed Allah does not like the agents of corruption.'* (*Qasas – 28:77*)**

Thus, from an Islamic perspective, this world and the hereafter are connected. While giving attention to this world in his lifetime, one must save up provisions for the afterlife. Islam has developed a unified plan for and guarantees salvation in both worlds. It prohibits us from going to extremes in worship and belief in the hereafter in such a way that we might avoid all halal worldly pleasures. Negating non-Islamic

monasticism, Islam considers Muslims' monasticism to be jihad, hajj, umrah, prayer and fasting, and it disapproves of inattention to family members' rights and seclusion.27

It also considers providing livelihood and handling worldly affairs as necessary.28 When one makes endeavour to improve his worldly conditions, he is not regarded as a lover of this world; rather, he makes money for family needs as well as the hereafter,29 and such a person's face will shine in the hereafter. According to Imam Baqir:

*"Whoever makes a living to save his face to provide his family's livelihood and or to help his neighbours will meet God with his face shining on the Day of Judgment."*30

Islamic asceticism

Throughout history, various groups and sects have defined asceticism in several ways, sometimes in the form of complete abstinence from this world, austerity, and prohibition of all halal pleasures. They even attributed themselves to being religious leaders while the lovers of God– who emphasized on positive and active asceticism – rejected them.

In general, asceticism means reluctance to a thing to which one is naturally attached. Imam Ali described asceticism with the verse,

لِّكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ

"In order that you may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favours bestowed upon you,"31

because the ascetic does not regret the past and what he has lost and is not delighted by what he has gained.32

Qur'anic asceticism has ranks, the first of which is refraining from prohibited acts or haram. This is the basis of piety. The second rank of asceticism is reluctance to prohibitions. The ascetic avoids worldly aspirations, is content with divine providence, is thankful for divine blessings, opposes his carnal desires, and patiently refrains from haram.33 This rank is higher than avoiding haram. Imam Ali said:

*"If it is difficult for you to uphold all these issues (i.e., avoidance of high aspirations, gratitude for blessings, and piety when faced with haram), at least do not give up gratitude for blessings and patiently refraining from haram because no excuse is accepted in this regard."*34

Although asceticism is a mental quality, where one is not attached to this world, and in Imam Ali's words, he is only willing to have what God will grant him in the afterlife, this attitude should be revealed in man's behaviours and deeds. Asceticism in this world accompanies willingness for the hereafter, and in

numerous narrations, these concepts appear together:

"The best of you is the most ascetic in this world and the most eager for the hereafter."[35]

Thus, attention to anything worldly that is useful for the afterlife is not incompatible with asceticism. Although acquiring halal wealth is not consistent with all ranks of asceticism, it is not contrary to it either. According to Imam Ali, "*The ascetic accepts what is he advised for and puts what he knows into practice. He reacts to his certitude about the hereafter and is aware of a bad ending.*"[36]

However, the pretentious behaviour without an intellectual and spiritual basis is not regarded as asceticism. The main principle is the full attention to truth, spirituality, and non-attachment to transitory worldly blessings – albeit gained by halal means – and this is a higher rank. The Prophet said:

"Asceticism does not refer to the prohibition of halal and the destruction of one's property; rather, it is being content with divine decree and patient with afflictions and hardships as well as not pinning one's hope on [*what*] *people* [*have*]*."*[37]

The Prophet also said:

"Asceticism does not mean prohibition of halal and the destruction of one's property; instead, it means not relying on what one has more than on what God has, and if an affliction is inflicted on, you should be so willing to receive its reward that you want it to be permanent."[38]

It is important to make a belief-based use of blessings; hence, it is not improper to use blessings to the halal extent.

Of course, as in the hereafter, one will be asked about both halal and haram, the higher rank of asceticism is that he sacrifices his wants and avoids halal as far as possible, is content with what is sufficient for him, and spends the rest on the hereafter so that he will be reckoned easily on the Day of Judgment. Imam Sadiq said:

"People act differently in this world. There are those who are 1) *content with halal and avoiding the dubious, 2*) *content with the halal and the dubious and avoiding haram, 3*) *satisfied with haram, and 4*) *not desiring sheer halal. The believer also makes use of this world only as much as it is necessary."*[39]

If in this world man is content with the least, refrains from the haram and even the halal, and is fearful of the Day of Judgment, he reaches a higher rank of asceticism. The Prophet and Imam Ali were quoted as saying:

"Blessed is the ascetic in this world who is willing to attain the hereafter; those who regard the ground as their tablecloth and their seat, water as their perfume, the Qur'an as their motto, and supplication their appearance(*outfit*)*; and the ones who, like Jesus Christ, detached themselves from this world.*"[40]

Sometimes attachment to this world means the desire to live one day longer in it. From the first Imam's perspective, this is a worldly aspiration and abstinence from it promises a higher rank of asceticism.[41]

In a narration about the Prophet's ascent to heaven, God told him, "*O' Ahmad! If you would like to be the most pious, then be an ascetic in this world and yearn for the afterlife*." The Prophet then asked God, "*How should I be an ascetic?*" God replied, "*Do not acquire of this world except for a little food and drink and a few articles of clothing. Do not reserve anything for the future and remember Me constantly.*"[42]

Of course, the physical appearance of ascetics should conform to the requirements of their time and place so that they are not accused of hypocrisy and pretense. In fact, one should not conduct himself in such a way that he becomes well-known. In numerous narrations, Imam al- Sadiq came across some of his contemporary Sufis such as Sufyan Thawri and prohibited them from pretense, saying, "*I wear a beautiful garment so that people do not accuse me of hypocrisy, but in order not to be attached to this world, I also wear some coarse clothing beneath this*."[43]

The point to be underlined here is that man's appearance differs under various circumstances. Even though man is not attached to this world, he should make use of comforts and blessings. Sometimes it is haram for man to use something while it is permissible to do so under normal circumstances. The just rulers acquire of halal worldly comforts differently from others. In response to Asim ibn Ziyad Haithi, who objected to the way Imam Ali used to eat and dress, the Imam said, "*God has required just rulers to live as simple a life as the poor so that*
poverty was not harsh and grievous on them."[44]

Thus, empathy with the poor and the needy is a duty that the Friends of God perform through leading a simple life.

Sometimes one's lofty spirit and freedom from caprice cause him to ward off any internal and external embodiment of attachment to this world, fulfilling the highest rank of asceticism. A feature of the Prophet was his acquiring of worldly comforts the least in order to emancipate his soul from any worldly constraint. The ascetic behaviour is intertwined with the spirit of contentment.

Sometimes Imam Ali did not use halal comforts so that his ego might not get used to them; or on the Day of Judgment he will not be distanced from the rank and position of Prophet Muhammad; and sometimes his self-sacrificing spirit made him not use some comforts and instead grant them to others. Asceticism makes man devote his comforts to others and prefer them over himself even though it is not obligatory for him to spend so generously. He is not attached to this world and gives up pure halal worldly blessings in return for a high position in the hereafter. Examples are setting many slaves free by means of one's income, helping the needy and the poor, and endowment of one's properties and gardens in the way of God.[45]

What can be concluded from the above discussion is that – in contrast to seeking the world – belief in the hereafter eliminates attachment to this world; as a result, one is content with the halal when it comes

to acquiring worldly blessings, avoids prohibitions, and even uses the halal less either due to his eagerness for spiritual elevation or his social position. The following are ascetic ranks in Islam:

1. Mere avoidance of haram;

2. Mere unwillingness to haram;

3. No attachment to the worldly halal;

4. Adequate use of worldly blessings;

5. Minimum and strict use of worldly comforts to empathize with the needy along with complete disregard for this world.

Every higher rank includes the previous one which is reinforced, but this is the case with personal use of this world and not the case with making an income, manufacturing goods, and producing wealth.

Belief in the Hereafter and economic activities

A brief look at the Qur'an and other Islamic texts reveals that God has stressed attention to the hereafter to encourage believers to engage in positive economic activities such as protecting the rights and properties of orphans; taking care of the poor; avoiding stinginess; paying zakat; spending money in the way of God (phrased "lending Him money" in the Qur'an); refraining from accumulation of wealth, revolt against God, disdain, usury, hypocrisy, short-changing, frivolity, wastefulness, self-glorification, corruption, and disvaluing others' properties; selling according to exact measure and weight; setting slaves free and being content and satisfied with halal sustenance.

Making use of the origin and the end of man and world, the Quran encourages and warns people. There are hundreds of verses on the link between the hereafter and economic issues, all of which warn against being deluded by the life in this world and neglecting the hereafter. Negligence leads to excessive attention to ephemeral wants and pleasures, increased covetousness and avarice, ignorance of others' rights in society, use of false methods to accumulate wealth and a having life of luxury. The verses seek to guide man to moderation and protection of others' rights, and to prevent them from going to extremes. In no verse is man prohibited from making money and producing wealth; rather, he is warned against how money is made and spent.[46]

A) Individual consumer conduct

Belief in the hereafter leads people to consume only halal and avoid haram (Taha: 81). Thus, there is no wastefulness and a life of luxury in one's consumption behaviour (Araf: 31-32; Qasas: 76-83). Hence, a person's income is spent on necessities and essentials as befits him. Likewise, one does not live like Sufis and monks who even give up an ordinary life.[47]

Therefore, this is a happy medium between wastefulness and stinginess. Denial of a life of luxury results in definite amount of consumption as well as savings. As a result, people will voluntarily spend their savings on more production and their increased income on others, particularly the needy or in the public section in which the way for other people's use of these savings is paved through endowment.[48]

Low consumption is not the primary meaning of the Islamic asceticism, which is unwillingness to this world. Sometimes while the ascetic has enough income, having divine motives, he tries to reduce his consumption. Motives like assistance to others and empathy with them pave the way for lower consumption.

Sometimes the motive behind lower consumption is unworldliness and negating any dependence on others or this world, in other words, consuming the halal results in some kind of dependence that is not desirable for mystics and the chosen by God. Hence, the Friends of God have always chosen to live a simple life and have consumed less of the halal.[49]

Contentment is considerably praised in Islam, as it leads to correct consumption and avoiding wastefulness. Contentment means being satisfied with what we have, and not coveting what is not achievable. It is revealed more in consumption than in production, so it does not mean none or decreased production. In terms of production, it refers to efficient use of productive sources and trying to avoid wasting raw materials that are used least in order to produce the most. Of course, sometimes excessive production involves inappropriate use of nature and leads to its destruction. Here, contentment means being satisfied with sufficient production because loss of the natural environment is remarkably huge compared to other losses.

The content man is the opposite of the covetous one. Covetousness are epitomes of love for this world, causing man to unnecessarily accumulate wealth that prevents him from attention to the hereafter.[50]

The content man is neither lazy nor idle; rather, he endeavours as much as necessary (Najm: 39), but he spends money reasonably (Taha: 81). He is content with what God has ordained for him and does not go after others' share. He is a person who makes efforts, is content with what he gains in this world, does not commit any error, and does not disregard any rule to accumulate wealth either.[51]

The content person is modest and takes rational steps to achieve his goals. He benefits from this world moderately and is also careful not to indulge in pleasures and not to go to extreme consuming halal less. The fruit of such modesty and avoidance of carnal desires is contentment. When contentment is coupled with asceticism, luxuries are used minimally and as long as they are usable. It paves the way for using savings to endow properties and spend money in the way of God.[52]

B) Production behavior and income-making

Belief in the hereafter and Islamic asceticism do not conflict with one's efforts to develop this world, use the natural environment, and produce necessary goods in society, whether basic necessities or some

goods for people's convenience. Due to his belief in the hereafter, the ascetic does his best to consume the halal less and increase his efficiency at the service of society.

The world that the ascetic abandons refers to indulging in a life of luxury and being distanced from moral perfection. At the peak of asceticism, Imam Ali revealed his complete inattention to this world in his actions and sayings, never giving up making endeavours. When he was finished with the smaller jihad, he got involved in cultural activities and spreading Islamic principles. When his wilayah was not accepted, he turned to taking economic measures and developed many lands himself, then endowed all of them in the way of God. He did not consider having a spacious house as it was inconsistent with asceticism.[53]

In Islamic culture, working is considered an act of worship; and in an Islamic state, it is mandatory to meet the needs of people by producing what the country needs. It is also right to make money in the above ways, since people can choose between the halal and the allowable goods. The community should avoid idleness and lethargy and efficiently use raw materials, work forces, and techniques – along with abstaining from wastefulness.

In addition, a maximal balanced use that is not beneath one's dignity prepares the ground for savings as well as material and spiritual investments. The one who believes in resurrection regards this world as a farm for the hereafter. As he does not know how long he will stay in this world, he takes every opportunity to increase his efficiency. In order to fulfill his religious obligations to his family (prosperity, improvement of life quality, and financial independence) and those to the society (i.e., helping the needy and solving social problems, etc.), he tries to make enough money to be spent on family, relatives, or others.

Having a decent life and meeting various commitments involve enough income that cannot be made except through economic activities. Imam Ali would endow numerous gardens and water wells, and set many slaves free in the way of God. Through working, he would earn money and accumulate wealth. Spending money in the way of God entails earning income and acquiring wealth. Belief in the hereafter links man to society, not separating him from it. A main part of worship involves spending one's wealth in the way of God, helping the needy, and endowing one's property in the way of God.[54]

Belief in the hereafter prepares work forces for more efforts; as a result, they stay more committed and avoid neglecting their duties. They keep the employees' properties in trust, and this leads to increased efficiency and income. In Islam, people are urged to acquire sciences that prevent wastefulness and improve the economy.

Such workers avoid making an income through false means such as usury and short-changing.[55] They also refrain from being greedy, accumulating wealth, and appropriating others' properties[56] as well as oppressing the orphans and appropriating their properties (Nisa: 10). They pursue a pure course of actions available to them and make a halal living.[57]

C) The effect of belief in the hereafter on government

The goal of the Islamic government is to benefit from this world for the purpose of salvation in the hereafter. A government that believes in the hereafter considers itself accountable to God and meets the people's needs. Among the duties of an Islamic government is to create economic welfare leading to people's use of God's blessings in a way that this does not result in a life of luxury and wastefulness; its other duty is meeting people's basic and conventional needs. As welfare is only an introduction to salvation in the hereafter, all that is done for this world must be in line with the spread of spirituality. Thus, government objectives include both worldly and otherworldly issues that are juxtaposed in a balanced way. The purposes of establishing an Islamic government include safety, social security, economic welfare, urban development, and rectifying people's behaviours to attain proper morals.

As the government believing in the hereafter considers rulership a divine trust and its duty is administering justice,[58] it does its best to provide social security, develop cities, improve people's livelihood, and protect public properties.[59]

Government in itself is a trust, and it is the governor's duty to treat people justly and kindly. Since government considers itself accountable to God, it establishes some rights for people and should render those rights. Among the ruler's responsibilities to people are paying their monetary rights, teaching them the sciences and moral principles, and treating them benevolently.[60]

Having a look at religious teachings, we can identify instances where a ruler or governmental authorities' behaviours are linked to the hereafter. All of man's deeds are revealed on the Day of Judgment, so in the divine words and sayings of religious leaders, the hereafter is used to urge rulers to be mindful because all governments look for security, although many do not seek to redistribute money in society. Economic issues linked to the hereafter include:

1. Administering justice and eliminating oppression in every respect – as this will occur in the rule of Imam Mahdi.[61]

2. Satisfying the needs of the poor.[62]

3. Safeguarding the rights of farmers and workers when it comes to their relations with employees and investors.[63]

4. Implementing divine punishments, reviving prophetic Sunnah, and keeping up religious rituals.[64]

5. Natural redistribution of money and government properties to prevent social class divides.[65]

6. Properly gathering and redistributing the public treasury (Tawbah: 103–105).

Conclusion

The society that heeds to belief the hereafter – besides benefiting from economic advantages (such as security, development, and production of necessary goods and services) limits manufacture to prevent production of harmful or inappropriate goods. Avoiding a life of luxury and consumerism, the excess of income is to be saved, invested, or devoted to creating job opportunities and meeting the needs of the poor.

Belief in the hereafter leads to moderation in production, consumption, and allocation of budget. In such a society, the government emphasizes on the protection of public properties and the rights of the oppressed as well as administration of justice and implementing religious rituals. Attention to the hereafter is not a barrier to satisfying economic needs; rather, it leads to a balanced enjoyment of worldly blessings.

When there are ascetics in society, particularly its rulers, the principle that will be established in society is that excessive consumption and a life of luxury are considered appropriate only if all people enjoy the minimum comforts. In such a society, it is not only the government that is responsible for providing the society with necessities and security; rather, all people consider themselves responsible; "*All of you are protectors of each other, and all of you are responsible to your subordinates.*"[66]

The economy may grow slowly, but it is immune from economic and social crises arising from improper wealth redistribution in society. Islamic belief in the hereafter is positive and dynamic. The life in this world is taken seriously, but its opportunities are taken to develop the hereafter.

Islamic belief in the hereafter is also distinct from the Sufi belief. Through this belief, the positive consumption behaviour exempt from wastefulness and a life of luxury is formed, and active production behaviour is displayed and leads to progress, proper behaviour of statesmen, justice, and welfare. All these bring about economic development coupled with spirituality; as a result, wealth is redistributed evenly and appropriately. This way, improper personal behaviours that stem from avarice and love for wealth and rebellion against God are not exhibited.

Saving and investing systems will not be disrupted; there will be no over-accumulation of wealth, and the dealing of goods and the offering of services will be transparent with no corruption. Finally, through legal obligatory and recommended payments (i.e., zakat and spending money in the way of God), the system of wealth redistribution improves, and the desirable economic balance is achieved.

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عن أمير المؤمنين عن رسول اللّه أنه قال قال اللّه تعالى في ليلة الإسراء يا أحمد إن أحببت أن تكون أورع النّاس فازهد في الدّنيا و ارغب في الاَخرة فقال إلهي و كيف أزهد في الدّنيا (و أرغب في الاَخرة) فقال خذ من الدّنيا
خفّا من الطّعام و الشّراب و اللّباس و لاتدّخر شيئا لغد و دم على ذكري
43. Kulayni, 1362, vol. 5, pp. 65, 66
44. Nahjul-Balaghah, sermon no. 209, p. 324
45. Reza'i, 1380 solar, p. 179-184
46. Ma'arij: 24-25; Hadid: 7, 10-11 & 18; Shu'ara: 183; Balad: 20; Araf: 31-32; Fatir: 5; Taha: 81 &131; Qasas: 83-76; Ma'un:1-4; Humaza: 1-9; Muddaththir: 11-26; Qalam: 14-33; Alaq: 6-7; Baqarah:262, 254, 245 & 275; Nisa': 10, Muhammad: 36; Tawbah: 34; Takathur: 1-8; Fajr: 15-26; Mu'minun:51, 56
47. Ma'ida: 5; Araf: 31-32
48. Luqman: 4; Fatir: 29; Hadid: 7, 10-11 & 18; Ma'arij: 24-25
49. ibid., p. 188-189
50. Nazi'at: 37-39; Nisa: 32
51. Alaq: 6-7; Muddaththir: 11-26; Hijr: 93-88
52. Muzzammil: 20; Hadid: 7; Ma'arij: 24-26; Baqarah: 177, 215 & 277
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55. Muttaffifin, 1-8; Baqarah, 275; Hud, 84-86
56. Takathur, 1-8; Tawbah: 34; Fajr: 15-26
57. Hud, 61; Malik: 15; Taha: 81; Qasa: 77; Ma'idah: 2-3
58. Nahj-ul-Balaghah, sermon no. 3, p. 50
59. ibid., letter no. 53, p. 427
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61. Kulaini, 1362, vol. 1, pp. 405, 542; Hakimi, 1409 A.H., vol. 2, pp. 25-30, pp. 53-58; Majlisi, 1372, vol. 52, p 338
62. Nahj-ul-Balaghah, pp. 438-439
63. Hakimi, 1409 A.H., vol. 2, p 495
64. ibid., vol. 2, pp. 32, 414 & 417

65. Hashr: 7; Hakimi, 1409 A.H., vol. 5, pp. 272 –276, pp. 282–289

66. Bihar al–Anwar¸vol. 72, p. 38.

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