

Rizq (رزق Sustenance) Is From Allah (swt), Whilst Seeking Earning (سعي Saa'ee) Is a Shariah Obligation

In the era of materialistic consumerism, many questions arise about the balance between effort for earning, and other Shariah obligations, such as carrying the Dawah to Islam. How does Islam view our economic transactions? Will it distract us from our goal of pleasing Allah (swt)? In the current hard economic times, are we angering Allah (swt) by working to make ends meet? We are pushed towards sin in our transactions, what guidance does Islam give? Why work hard when Rizq is written and fixed from Allah (swt)? Let us consider the following:

Firstly, economic transactions are for the pleasure of Allah (swt):

As with 'ibaadah (rituals like Salah), the goal of mu'amalaat (transactions), like economic transactions, is the pleasure of Allah (swt). We achieve seek the pleasure of Allah (swt) by implementing the commands of Allah (swt), including the rulings on company structures (شركات) and hiring (إجارة) and reviving barren land for cultivation. So, Islam is not a secular religion, viewing the pleasure of Allah (swt) only in rituals of individual worship.

Secondly, the material value includes profit and wages:

In addition to the goal of pleasing Allah (swt), within rulings regarding economic transactions, Islam has stipulated the seeking of the material value, whether it is material profit or wages. So Islam is not a monastic religion, calling the Muslims from turning away from the Shariah obligation of seeking earning (سعي).

Thirdly, hiring is for the material value of wages

So when hiring, Islam orders us to establish the earning. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «إِذَا اسْتَأْجَرْتَ أَجِيرًا فَأَعْلِمْهُ أَجْرَهُ» **“When you hire a worker, tell him of his wages.”** [an-Nisaa'i].

So, the hiring is not without a purpose or in vain. The worker must be paid his due, otherwise Allah (swt) will contend on his behalf. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «قَالَ اللَّهُ تَلَاثَةً أَنَا خَصْمُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ أَعْطَى بِي ثُمَّ غَدَرَ وَرَجُلٌ بَاعَ حُرًّا فَأَكَلَ ثَمَنَهُ وَرَجُلٌ اسْتَأْجَرَ أَجِيرًا» **“Allah, the Exalted, says, ‘I will contend on the Day of Resurrection against three (types of) people: One who makes a covenant in My Name and then breaks it; one who sells a free man as a slave and devours his price; and one who hires a workman and having taken full work from him, does not pay him his wages.’”** [Al- Bukhari].

Fourthly, reviving barren land is for the material value of ownership of cultivation:

In agriculture, Islam grants a material value, as earning of a barren land through its cultivation. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «مَنْ أَحْيَا أَرْضًا مَيْتَةً فَهِيَ لَهُ» **“If anyone brings barren land into cultivation, it belongs to him.”** [Abu Dawood]. So in the Khilafah (Caliphate) state, anyone who revives barren land becomes its owner, as long as he cultivates it. The Khilafah will assist revival through grants and gifts as well.

Fifthly, the material value in business is profit:

In industry and trade, Islam allowed the formation of companies and within this action, the Muslims achieve the material value of profit. The company formations include Anaan, Adnaan, Mudarabah and Mufaawadh. Regarding the Mudarabah company, ‘Abdurrazzaq narrated in Al-Jami’ that Imam Ali (ra) said, «الْوَضِيعَةُ عَلَى الْمَالِ، وَالرَّيْبُ عَلَى مَا اصْطَلَحُوا عَلَيْهِ» **“The loss is on the capital. The profit is according to what they stipulated.”** So the Muslim as a partner in the company, looks to earn the profit and take his share from what is agreed and this too is the material value.

Sixthly, Rizq is from Allah (swt), Whilst Seeking Earning is a Shariah Obligation

Allah (swt) said, «إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ» **“Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills openhandedly,”** [TMQ Surah Aali-‘Imran: 37].

Indeed, Rizq is from Allah (swt). It is an assuring fact that ensures that we do not undertake the forbidden in our pursuit of Rizq. We confine ourselves to the Shariah strictly when we strive for Rizq.

At the same time, we engage in economic mu’amalaat, we are mindful to achieve the material value and we are not neglectful. We do not undertake the actions in vain or are lazy and lethargic, on the grounds that Rizq is from Allah (swt). Indeed, the Rizq is from Allah (swt) alone, however, the seeking of earning (sa’ee) is a command of Allah (swt) that must not be neglected. Let us all understand the command for seeking of earning, in light of understanding Rizq itself. Allah (swt) said, «هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ ذُلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ» **“He it is Who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk in its paths and eat of His Rizq.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Mulk: 15]. And Allah (swt) said, «فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ» **“And when the Salah is ended, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah’s bounty.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Jumu’ah: 10]

Seventhly, Muslims are productive, as is their society

Achieving the material value through adhering to what pleases Allah (swt), makes the Muslim personality a productive personality. He strives hard to provide for his family of needs and luxuries, seeking the Pleasure of his Lord (swt). He is not the one who is lazy, lethargic, taking loans without care, and asking for charity, without careful consideration. Such care for the material value, makes the Islamic society a society of wealth, prosperity and capability, where the needs of the poor, those in hardship and those in debt, are taken care of with ease. Indeed, in the era of the Khilafah, the Islamic Lands were sources of marvel due to their great material progress.

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