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## The Strategies Adopted by the Prophet (Pbuh) to Cope with Economic Disorders after Hijra

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### ABSTRACT

Before the Prophethood of Mohammad (PBUH), there were certain customs and ceremonies which represented the social, moral and behavioral characteristics of the Arabian society. Under the influence of those customs and ceremonies, the economic behavior of the people was beset with deviations and disorders which did not conform with the new rules introduced by Islam. The present study seeks to detect the strategies that the Prophet adopted to eliminate incongruities from the Muslims' economy. The study is conducted through a descriptive-analytical method and with reference to Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and historical sources which point to the Prophet's economic practices and manners. As the results show, he used various strategies to cleanse economic activities to some extent. He also tried to facilitate the Muslims' economic growth by taking such measures as removing many pre-Islam economic deviations, creating economic balance, preventing monopolies, putting idle resources in circulation, curbing inflation, fighting bribery, cheating in deals and hoarding, discouraging unemployment and idleness, and linking economy to ethics.

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## 1. Introduction

Before the advent of Islam, Jaheli culture ruled over Arabs in all aspects of life including economy. This is, of course, apart from economic plagues such as plundering and robbery, which are hated by every human community, although they are punished with certain laws already set by the religion (Qur'an, 5:38). The discussion here addresses those wrong economic manners that resulted in further corruptions and were, thus, opposed by the Prophet (pbuh). This is not to mean that the Islamic laws could eradicate every corruption considering the rather great number of hypocrites and dissidents of Islam, who sometimes threatened the Prophet (Qur'an, 63:8). Even some of his companions continued their non-Islamic economic behavior. As a widely known example, Samara Ibn-e Jondab's misbehavior made the Prophet decree, 'Neither harm nor be harmed' (Kuliynī, 2008). These cases provide evidence for the hardships that the Prophet incurred to implement economic reforms and set up a new economic system based on Muslims rules. It was made even more difficult by the people in early Islam who were ardently attached to their Jaheli economic manners. Besides, economy was not the only domain to change; at the same time, the Prophet had to reorganize the human and educational affairs as well as the social and political systems on the basis of Muslim rules.

As a result of the economic reforms, Muslims could have a market of their own where to do commerce. Known as 'Bazaar of Muslims', this market was so valuable that Imam Ali (pbuh) compared it to a mosque (Ibid: 155). He actually implied that every economic activity would not be permitted in that bazaar, just as every act could not be done in a mosque. Since the type of the transactions people did would affect their personality, creating a religion-based bazaar needed certain modifications in the rules and criteria for economic activities (Majlisī, 1983). One of them was the attribution of the term 'ḥarām' to bad or dishonest deals.

It is to be noted that the adopted economic strategies were not more important than the other ones, such as the social, educational, psychological and political strategies. This is because economy is generally the superstructure of a society, while the other domains serve as the underlying substructures. Over time, the Prophet identified the deviated practices in the economy and corrected them step by step. His measures in this regard are discussed in the present article. Of course, due to its limited scope, the article skips the strategies that are imperative for economic growth. The research question to answer is then 'what were the policies that the Prophet adopted to remove disorders and anomalies from the economy of Muslims?'

During a 10-year period of being a ruler, the Prophet enhanced the economic status of the Muslim society so much so that he could supply an army of thirty thousand men in the Tabouk battle and use ten thousand horses there (Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, 1993). Supplying such a big army is obviously demanding even nowadays despite considerable facilities at hand. At that time, there were estimatedly over three hundred thousand Muslims (Sadr, 1995), but the Prophet could appropriately run the society under his rule, make the economy dynamic, and promote it such that the Islamic government matched the Iranian and Roman empires, the two superpowers of the time. This led to a new balance of powers at the international level.

## 2. Literature Review

Some researchers have studied certain aspects of the subject in this article. For instance, in his book, *Eqtiṣādunā* (Our Economy), Seyed Mohammad Bagher Sadr has pointed to some economic restrictions posed by the Prophet. Also, Mohsen Araki has dedicated a part of his book, *Islamic Economy Jurisprudence*, to some religiously prohibited transactions. Similarly, the book *Economic Affairs in the Qur'an and Sunnah* by Jafar Hadi refers to the economic activities prohibited in the Qur'an and hadith. In this context, most books of hadith have mentioned the bans that Islam imposes on economic deviations. For example, in his dissertation, 'Economic confrontation between the Muslims and the Quraysh at the time of the Prophet,' Sonaidi (1998) described the Prophet's ways and means of dealing with the sanctions and threats posed by the Quraysh and blocking their trade pathways. In another research entitled 'The Prophet and Imams' approach to price fluctuations', Yūsifi (2006) referred to factors such as draught, famine and hoarding that cause inflation and then brings up some hadiths regarding the pricing methods at the time of the Prophet. The author concludes that rulers are obliged to interfere with the pricing task in inflation is significantly against the public interests. Husiynzādeh Yazdī and Sharīfzādih (2016) came up with a joint article entitled 'The

Prophet's manners of facing economic threats' to identify the types of those threats and the Prophet's methods to cope with them. Also, in the article, 'Challenges and methods of establishing economic security within the framework of the Qur'an and the common economic practices,' Mu'tamid et al. (2017) mention evils like usury, mammonism and inflation as challenging factors. According to them, the Qur'anic solutions for creating economic security are mainly incentives on production, respect for private possession, and avoidance of wastefulness.

In contrast to the research ever conducted, the present study focuses on the monitoring of the economy by the Prophet and his campaign against adverse economic activities. The study also addresses the effect of this disapproving approach on the economic development of early Islam. In other words, the Prophet's economic policies are dealt with here in this article distinctly from similar studies.

### **3. Economic Disorders as Approached by the Qur'an**

Economy is always exposed to the risk of deviation or corruption, and such evils may run through the other aspects of a Muslim society. One way to avoid them is to take lessons from the history. According to the Qur'an, the purpose of gaining wealth is to achieve the otherworldly salvation, and spending it on absurdities makes the economy disordered. After God granted Korah a massive wealth, he became arrogant and attributed it to his own economic genius. His delusion, however, was all dashed by God (Qur'an, 28:76-78).

One of the corruptions in economy is overcharging. It makes the practitioner deprived of blessings and, as the Qur'an (83:1-3) implies, displeases God with him. The scripture labels such a person as corrupt so as to highlight the indecency of this economic deviation, show the hatred of God for it, and scandalize those who commit it:

*"Be just and fair with measures and scales. Do not reduce people's goods and do not corrupt the land with mischief."* (11:85)

Another economic corruption admonishingly discussed in the Qur'an is to ignore the poor and deprive them of the bounties created for them (Qur'an, 68:17-33).

There are more such economic deviations mentioned in the Qur'an, the consequences of which are a sense of independence of God and the tendency to disobey Him (96:6-7). Being foresightful of economic disorders, the Prophet proposed certain ways of weakening or eliminating them.

### **4. Protecting the Economy and Preventing its Failure**

The possessions of a government serve as its backbone. A government or a nation with no good economy is like a disabled person with no power to move (Jawādī Āmulī, 2007). An inefficient economic system gives rise to poverty, mammonism, and other disorders in the society. In contrast, dynamic economy has positive effects not only on socio-cultural security but also on political stability. Thus, proper policies should be adopted to make the economy secure (Mu'tamid, 2017). In this regard, the Holy Qur'an considers assets and property as a means of upholding one's individual life and the society:

*"Do not put the possessions that God based your life on at the disposal of the stupid."* (4:5)

Similarly, the Prophet (pbuh) deemed a good economic status as a requisite for protecting one's religious beliefs and practices. In this case, he stated:

*"Oh Lord, bless our bread and do not take it from us. If we were not sustained, we could not fast and pray and do other rituals."* (Barqī, 1992, vol. 2: 586)

In this quotation, bread is just an example representing the economy; a bad economy would mean bad religiosity.

Economic growth and social power call for production and protection of wealth. Thus, the factors that waste funds and assets should be identified and eliminated. In this respect, the challenges in production, distribution and consumption should be tackled on the basis of religious teachings (Shafī'ī, 2021: 187).

## 5. The Prophet's Strategies for a Wholesome and Secure Economy

In general, adoption of economic strategies, creation of economic infrastructures, and economic acculturation play vital roles in dealing with the threats and challenges in an economic system (Husiynzādeh Yazdī, 2016). As the Muslims started their business activities in Medina, the Prophet decided to reform transactions based on the principles of Islam. To this end, he took important steps to cleanse the economy and, at the same time, provide conditions for its growth.

Far from being beneficial to the Muslim society, some economic activities exerted pressures on the poor segments, and some others were detrimental enough to undermine the whole economic system. In these circumstances, the Prophet proceeded to stop those activities, thus making the economy somewhat secure.

As a matter of fact, economic security is the cornerstone of a society and the major condition for economic development and wellbeing. To maintain the movement of the society ahead, the Prophet (pbuh) had no other choice than eradicating the economic corruptions.

Upon arriving in Medina, the Prophet started a series of measures to provide the Muslims with decent sustenance and make them economically independent of the other sects. So, certain regulations were enacted to facilitate productive processes and wealth creation. A few of the corresponding policies, which expedited the economic growth, are explained below.

### 5-1. Activating the Idle Lands and Resources

A major means of creating wealth and providing food is land. According to Islam, whoever revives a piece of barren land has the right to possess it. As the Prophet (pbuh) stated, "*a barren land belongs to the one who revives it*" (Kuliynī, 2008). This statement is elaborated on by Imam Musa Kazim (pbuh) as follows:

*"Anyone who unduly keeps his land idle for three consecutive years loses its possession, and it is given to another person"* (Ibid: 494).

Islam has restricted the scope of possession for social reasons. This is based on the decree, "a deserted or run-down land is taken away from its owner and given to someone who can work on it and revive it" (Ibid: 432).

Never would the Prophet allow potential economic capacities to remain stagnant, especially agricultural lands, which could feed the society and make the economy flourish. An idle and deteriorating land could not remain in its owner's possession (Ṭūsī, 1987). Moreover, Since natural resources belonged to the Islamic government, those who embarked upon them but failed to activate them or left the job unfinished would not have a share of them (Sadr, 1995).

### 5-2. Prohibiting Privileged Utilization

The privileged possession and use of resources in a society leads to corruptions in the economic system. Some people unduly feel deserving to have the right of possession more than the others, which causes economic inequality and exerts adverse psychological effects on the society. Unequal conditions of gaining wealth are not endorsed by Islam; rather, Muslims have been advised to base their economic activities on and in proportion to the needs of the society (Dāwarī, 2019). Indeed, any unfair privilege is against the teachings of Islam, as a religion of justice. So, the Prophet forbade it. An instance of unfair self-granted rights was a specific type of land grabbing, known as 'Hemye'. It was a wrong but commonly practiced tradition in the era of Jahiliyyah. Once men of wealth or power found a new pleasant place, they built a hut or house there and grabbed the lands around it as far as their dogs could be heard. They took the possession of large extents of barren lands along with whatever of value in them and kept the others from entering, using them, or intervening (Kuliynī, 2008). The Prophet (pbuh) abolished this bad tradition and evicted those occupants from the property that they had seized unjustly. In this case, he stated, "There is no Hemye except for God and His Prophet" (Bukhārī, 1990). After the abolishment of this privilege, justice and equity were enhanced, and the revenues of the freed lands were spent for the interests of Islam (Ibn Idrīs, 1990).

### 5.3. Prohibiting Dishonest Possessions

The money earned in return for no work or attempt is not honest. The right of possession in a Muslim society should be based on the rules and values set by Islam, and the activities that bring economic

rights are admired as good deeds in the Qur'an. On the other hand, activities, such as usury, usurping, robbery and forbidden transactions, which do not contribute to production and social wellbeing, are all considered dishonest (Qur'an, 2:188) and banned by the Prophet. Some of these banned businesses and activities are discussed here in the following.

Before Islam, the wars between Iran and Rome affected the trade relations of the East and the West and shifted them from the mainly favored ground transportation to marine commerce through the seas in the south of Iran as well as the Red Sea. This paved the way for the Arabian people, especially those in Mecca, to begin economic brokering between the two empires. They bought Iranian and Eastern goods from Yemen and sold them in the Levant. On return, they bought Roman goods in the Levant and sold them in Yemen (Javad Ali cited in Mūsawīyān, 1980). Thus, trips were numerous taken in summer and winter, as also mentioned in the Qur'an (106:1-2).

In addition, such important factors as the sacredness of Mecca to the Arabians and trade contracts between Quraysh merchants and those from Iran, Rome, Yemen and Abyssinia as well as other tribes resulted in the establishment of various bazaars, such as Okaz Bazaar set up in Mecca during the Hajj ceremony (Meghrizi, 1999; Huwayzī, 1994). These bazaars helped to promote the commerce among the people in the Arabian Peninsula, especially in the town of Mecca. To make higher profits through commerce, some Meccans borrowed money from the rich and paid it back on an interest. This act of usury had become a business for some heads of the Quraysh. At the advent of Islam, the most common mode of providing money for commerce was to borrow it on the condition of paying back a higher amount. Some also sold their goods at an unreasonably high price. In these circumstances, usury was the best way for the rich in the Quraysh to boost their wealth; they could make big profits without having to travel or make their presence in the bazaar. Sometimes, the conditions of borrowing were so hard. If a borrower failed to return the borrowed money along with the interest on it, the lender would take him or one of his relatives as a slave (Sadr, 1995).

Arabs practiced usury so commonly that it was considered a part of their culture, and it seemed impossible to be prohibited or eliminated from economic activities all at once. The people who had lived in such a culture, where gaining wealth through usury was common, were surprised when Islam banned it. They argued that 'business is a kind of usury, why should it be prohibited?!' This disapproval is also mentioned in the Qur'an (2:275). Those people believed that usury was inseparable from economy, while this economic evil had already been prohibited by the previous Prophets and scriptures. In this respect, Imam Reza stated:

*"Every Prophet and scripture has marked is ḥarām"* (1986: 256).

Therefore, just as wine was, usury was prohibited step by step. During the Prophethood of Mohammad (pbuh), God sent a number of verses with which to predispose the prohibition of usury. He started by criticizing, then denouncing it, but ended up with a complete ban on it (Zuhaylī, 1997; Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995). Indeed, shortly after the advent of Islam, the Qur'an gave hints of how bad it was to give with the aim of getting more back (74:6). This was an early notice on the prohibition of usury (Ṭabāṭabāyī, 1996). As the Muslims evolved morally, usury was more and more restricted. The following verse is quite suggestive:

*"What you give in usury may increase with people, but it does not with God"* (30:39).

Finally, Islam banned usury in whatever kind and to whoever extent and considered it one of the deadly sins on a par with fighting against God and His Prophet (Qur'an, 2:279). According to some interpreters, the Qur'anic verse on usury reproached those who had not quit that evil yet (Ibn Kathīr, 1998). The gradual introduction of these verses in several steps is suggestive of how important and hard it was to fight the widespread usury at the time of the Prophet (Ghafūrī Charkhābī, 2009: 183). On the side of divine verses, there are numerous scholastic quotes in this regard. For example, *"The worst job is usury"* (Ibn Bābawayh, 1992).

In the light of Islamic teachings, usury came to be known as a despicable act until it was relatively eradicated from the Muslim society. As a result, the economic activities were cleansed, the stagnant capital of Muslims got into circulation, and economy and employment flourished.

Usury stops human beings from pursuing sublime goals, kills their motivation for charity, raises greed and selfishness in the society, hurts social justice, and pushes one to domains with individual and social detriments (Ḥurr Āmilī, 1988). Regarding the reasons for the prohibition of usury, Imam Sadigh (pbuh) states:

*“If usury was allowed, people would stop trades and businesses needed by the society. God banned it so as for people to turn away from ḥarām to ḥalāl and do honest business.” (Ibid: 120)*

By forbidding usury, Islam made a distinction between the funds in cash and the revenues from real estate, with the latter being based on the work done on it as well as its utility for those who rent it, hence distinct from usury. The prohibition of usury yields benefits in two ways. First, it prevents the waste of commercial and industrial interests. Second, it makes dishonestly accrued incomes fade away. Thus, people are encouraged to put their capital in productive activities, which creates jobs and raises production (Taskhiri, 1991). Along with usury, gambling and witchcraft were also banned by Islam; they were Jaheli ways of making money with no efforts. (Qur’an, 5:90)

#### **5-4. Prohibiting Mammonism and Extravagance as Well as Wealth Concentration in the Hands of the Rich**

The accumulation of funds and assets without putting them into the cycle of economy is a deviation that may endanger the economic system. This arises from excessive love of wealth. As the Qur’an states, *“You ardently love wealth”* (89:20). Since economy can run only if wealth is put into circulation, Islam has prohibited keeping wealth stagnant and advised people to contribute part of their wealth to those who cannot work or can work but have no capital (Qur’an, 2:261-274). In line with this, God has threatened those who pile up mammon and do not put it to work:

*“Give the good news of a painful punishment to those who gather gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of God.” (9:34)*

In addition, those who withdraw their cash from the economic circulation and change it to gold or silver have to pay a tax termed *‘Zakāt.’* With this taxation policy, Islam has tried to prevent the consequences of cash shortage in society (Taskhiri, 1991). The implementation of this policy in early Islam resulted in economic growth, job creation, trade promotion, and provision of the goods needed by Muslims.

There are some statements that 12,000 Derhams is a threshold for piling up wealth (Ibn Humām, 1984), but it just seems to be an example. Generally speaking, piling up any amount of any property resulting in monopoly and injustice to others is considered mammonism (Ḥakīmī, 2001).

In the pre-Islamic Jaheli culture, it was a common practice to spend money on trifles lavishly and show it off snobbishly. This abnormality has lasted to date; much is wasted with no outcome, while there are many people in need. To fight waste and extravagance, Islam prohibited expenditures on luxuries and trifles, strongly condemned wasteful individuals, and considered them satanic:

*“...and avoid squandering. Surely, the wasteful are the brothers of Satan.” (17: 26-27)*

The Qur’an also states, *“Do not waste; God does not like the wasteful”* (6:141). From the Prophet’s viewpoint, God does not bless wasteful individuals and avoids helping them if they fall into poverty, which is a punishment for their wastefulness when in wealth (Kuliynī, 2008). Wasting adversely affects economy so much so that the Prophet said, *“No expenditure is better than the one in the way of God, but He detests wastefulness”* (Barqī, 1992). It also may end in poverty and destitution (Tamīmī Āmidī, 1987).

The need to avoid squandering is also evident from Imam Ali’s words. He advised his agents and employees to avoid even the least waste in the affairs of the Islamic government:

*“Sharpen your pens, keep your lines close together, omit your extra words, write to the point, and beware of verbosity. Beware that the public funds should not be wasted”* (Ibn Bābawayh, 1983).

This policy would prevent the spending of funds and assets on non-necessary acts or items, direct the saved funds to productive activities and meeting the needs of the poor, and reduce economic deviations among Muslims. Unfortunately, seeking luxuries took a rise again under some caliphs later.

Once wealth is accumulated in the hands of a certain group, the gap between the high and low social classes widens, poverty spreads, many have to stop their economic activities, many fall below the red line of poverty, large masses fail to meet their needs, and the public purchasing power decreases. Therefore, Islam prohibited the accumulation of wealth by the rich:

*“...so that it (the property) would not be taken in turns by the rich among you.” (Qur’an, 59:7)*

With this policy, Islam seeks to create an economic balance in society, considering that the concentration of wealth in one social class entails the violation of the rights of the other classes as well

as the loss of many opportunities for production. While respecting private ownership, Islamic economy is planned in such a way that a certain segment of the population cannot monopolize everything to the detriment of the rest of the society; indeed, wealth should change hands across the society (Tabātabāyī, 1996, vol. 19: 204). If wealth is allowed to be concentrated somewhere, products are stacked and production loses its dynamism. This is why the Qur'an emphasizes the constant circulation of capital.

Of course, this does not imply that the government should take the wealth of a group and give it to another; rather, it means that Islamic teachings in the field of wealth, tax and income, if implemented correctly, are inclusive enough to meet the public interests while respecting the honest business efforts of individuals. This keeps the society from bipolarity, where a rich minority lives alongside a poor majority. The Qur'an strongly condemns ignoring the poor and depriving them of material bounties, so it states that those who do so deserve punishments in both worlds (68:17-33).

### **5-5. Prohibiting Effortless Incomes**

Unnecessary brokering in trade and transactions, which imposes costs on both producers and consumers, is prohibited in Islam (Kuliynī, 2008). It was a common practice for Arabs to await a trade caravan that was about to enter an area, buy its merchandise, and sell it at a higher price in that area. The Prophet banned this brokerage with the orders, "None of you can trade outside the city" (Ibid: 168) and "Do not go to welcome the trade caravan" (Ibn Abī Jumhūr, 1985).

According to the Islamic jurisprudence, it is prohibited to rent a land from someone and give it to a third party at a higher fee. This would be an example of gaining effortless incomes. The removal of brokers between land owners and farmers leads to enhanced economy. This is because brokers play no part in production and provide no beneficial service but are imposed on the production system (Sadr, 2003). So, it is advisable for those in business to be aware of the Islamic jurisprudential decrees on economic activities. This is based on the hadith, "*First jurisprudential knowledge, then commerce*" (Kuliynī, 2008; Ibn Ḥayyūn, 2006).

Moreover, the jobs and activities that are of no benefit for the Muslim society, such as smuggling, witchcraft and conjuring, are prohibited as well. Note the following Qur'anic verse:

*"Oh believers, drinking wine, gambling, worshipping idols, and divining are the evil acts of Satan. Avoid them in order to be salvated."* (5:90)

Making a living through those unwholesome jobs puts the usefulness of wholesome economic efforts into question. It also results in social evils, such as spite and hostility (Qur'an, 5:91).

In short, all the prohibitions discussed above aim to eliminate brokers from production so that no one can make effortless profits and customers can obtain their goods at lower prices.

### **5-6. Prohibition of Overcharging**

Another economic deviation is overcharging, which keeps the business from being blessed. God has reprimanded overchargers in the Qur'an (83:1-3). He has called their act a corruption to demonstrate how He hates this abominable act and to defame those who do it:

*"Be just when measuring and weighting. Do not reduce people's goods on the scale, nor do commit corruption with malice."* (11:85)

As quoted from the Prophet (pbuh), "*Once overcharging prevails, God punishes people with famine and a shortage of goods*" (Kirājakī, 1974: 65). The Prophet also stated that overcharging is a deadly sin just like murder (Ibn Shu'bih Ḥarrānī, 1984: 422). If this sin permeates the society, poverty rises and, consequently, people tend to lose their faith. As a precaution, the Prophet advised his successor to curb poverty so that it would not undermine the people's faith (Ḥamīrī, 1992: 100). The admonitions of the Qur'an and the Prophet had a significant effects on the reduction of overcharging in Muslims' bazaars.

### **5-7. Allowing the Stupid to Control no Fund or Property**

God has granted his blessings to everyone, but He prioritizes social interests over individual interests if the latter is harmful for the former (Tabātabāyī, 1996, vol. 4: 273). Whatever asset in a society, although the result of its members' efforts, serves to hold that society up (Qur'an, 4:5). For those assets not to be wasted, Islam does not allow their use and control by unliable owners. These

individuals include immature children and people with mental problems. So, based on the Qur'anic verse below, economically unwise owners are excluded from making decisions regarding their possessions:

*“Do not give the fools your wealth with which God has upheld you.”* (4:5)

The verse above also implies that managerially inefficient or incapable people should not be allowed to hold positions in the economy; the harm they may cause is not less than that caused by fools. Besides, economic authorities should be responsive to the society for their services in various domains.

Thus, underage individuals with some possession but lacking the tact or ability to use it properly, such as wealthy orphans, should be kept aloof from the management of their possession until they reach a certain level of maturity:

*“And test the orphans until they grow to the age of marriage. If you perceive in them right judgment, hand over to them their wealth, and do not use it wastefully or hastily before they are grown.”* (Qur'an, 4:6)

Based on a hadith, 'right judgment' in the above verse means the ability to protect one's property (Hurr Āmilī, 1988, vol. 18: 411). It is to be noted that the word 'grow,' as used in the verse, refers to mental rather than physical maturity. In connection to growth and lack of it, there are many hadiths on the issue of interdicted right of possession and the ways to deal with it. (Ibid: 410)

### 5-8. Prohibiting Bribery

In any society, there are individuals who try to gain an unjust privilege over others by giving government officials or authorities something under labels, such as tip, gift or present. In this case, the given item is considered a bribe, and the one who gets it usually violates the rights of others. This has been prohibited by the Qur'an:

*“Do not spend your wealth among you on bad purposes, nor tempt a judge to sinfully take a portion of someone's belongings, while you are aware of that.”* (2:188)

Interpreters have considered bribery as an instance of the term 'Soht' (haram) used in verses 42, 62 and 63 of the Al-Ma'idah Chapter (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 4: 445). To cleanse the economy, the Prophet (pbuh) banned this injustice and stated that God curses the briber, the bribee and the one in between (Ibn Abī Jumhūr, 1985, vol. 1: 266). He earnestly fought against bribery. For example, he was once informed of a ruler who had been bribed with a so-called gift. He was very angry, summoned the ruler, and asked him, "how can you take what is not yours?!" The ruler apologized and responded, "what I took was a gift". However, the Prophet argued, "If you were home with no job position, would people bring you gifts?!" Then, at the Prophet's order, the gift was taken from the ruler and added to the public funds. He was also dismissed from his position (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 2: 8). This behavior of the Prophet shows his seriousness in fighting bribery and closing the contexts for it.

### 5-9. Fighting the Inflation

One of the factors that could disturb the Muslims' market was inflation. To prevent it and create a balance in the market, the Prophet linked the economy to ethical principles. In this regard, he stated, *“low prices are a proof that God is pleased with His servants, but inflation denotes His anger with them”* (Kuliynī, 2008, vol. 5: 162). Inflation induces social maladjustment, lack of trust, and stress (Ibid, vol. 10: 55). A society makes no progress unless the people living there have peace of mind. The Prophet also monitored the market constantly to control the prices and prevent the hoarding and shortage of goods (Ibid: 57). As numerous hadiths imply, a ruler is permitted to interfere with prices and make them fair if they are not duly affordable for customers. (Yūsifī, 2006: 53)

### 5-10. Renouncing Laziness and Encouraging the Work Culture

The Prophet brought economic independence to Medina by modifying the economic structure of the city and promoting the work culture among the Muslims. To encourage them to work, he made the following remark:

*“Making an honest living is an act of servitude to God. Whoever does it will be blessed, judged on a par with Prophets, and permitted into the heaven.”* (Shu'ayrī, n.d.: 139-140)

The Prophet also stated that “*God hates a healthy but idle person, who has the enjoyment of neither world*” (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1984, vol. 17: 146). There are other hadiths pointing to the disgrace of idleness and lethargy; lethargic people cannot see about their this-worldly and the other-worldly affairs, thus living by sponging off others (Kuliynī, 2008, vol. 9: 562). The Prophet hated laziness and warned the Muslims against it. After morning prayers, he always invoked, “*Lord, keep me away from sorrows, incapability, lethargy, laziness, and lack of liveliness*” (Ibn Bābawayh, 1992, vol. 1: 335). Such quotes all denote the Prophet’s attempts to keep the Muslims active in economic domains.

Giving up religiosity in exchange for a little, i.e., overlooking the truth just for material benefits, is a significant blow to the Islamic society. In the Prophet’s opinion, this evil can be attributed to unemployment and idleness. Once he met someone he liked, he would ask whether that person had a job. If he had none, the Prophet would say, “he just fell off my eyes; whoever has no job lives on his religion.” (Shu‘ayrī, n.d.: 140)

According to another hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) stated, “God curses two groups of men, those who can work but depend on others and those who do not duly spend on their wives” (Kuliynī, 2008, vol. 7: 234). The Prophet also advised people to start working early in the morning as it would bless their life. Here is his statement in this regard:

*“If one of you want something, get it early in the morning; I asked my Lord, the Almighty, to bless my followers in early mornings.”* (Ibn Bābawayh, 1992, vol. 3: 157)

Based on the quotes of the great figures in Islam, a constant state of sloth induces evils and deviations (Mufīd, 1992, vol. 1: 298). This is what the Prophet tried to prevent by any appropriate means. His promoting the work culture and condemning idleness motivated the Muslims to work diligently, which saved them from poverty, boosted the economy, and wiped the idleness culture off the society.

There are numerous hadiths handed down to us about work and economic activities, and some hadith books contain distinct chapters dedicated to livelihood, jobs, honest work, and similar topics (Ibn Bābawayh, 1992, vol. 3: 156; Tamīmī Āmidī, 1987: 354; Shu‘ayrī, n.d.: 139). This all suggests the wise directions of Islam to make honest earnings and avoid relying on others for a living. (Wisālī, 2021: 44)

### **5-11. Introducing the Principle of ‘Neither Harm Nor be Harmed’**

Any economic activity that disturbs other people’s life is rejected by Islam. In this context, the Prophet postulated the general principle of ‘neither harm nor be harmed’ based on which nobody has the right to harm or disturb others under any pretext (Kuliynī, 2008, vol. 5: 280). For example, in early Islam, Samara Ibn-e Jondab, a resident of Medina, possessed a tree in a garden owned by an Ansari. To access his tree, Samara had to enter the Ansari’s garden, which made a disturbance. He would neither sell the tree nor stop disturbing the garden owner. The Prophet did not recognize Samara’s right of possession, ordered the Ansari to cut the tree down, and told Samara, “You are a harmful man”. (Ibid, vol. 10: 486)

Based on this story, one can infer that society has a right to individuals’ property; if a person’s ownership is not appropriate for the rest of the society, the Islamic government has the right to evict him or her. Indeed, the principle set by the Prophet can solve many social problems.

### **5-12. Prohibition of Hoarding**

Hoarding is a corruption that makes the economy insecure. What a hoarder does is to make life hard for people by stashing the goods they need. According to Islam, wealth, in whatever form, should be circulated in economic transactions. Hoarding, however, keeps wealth stagnant and causes economic decline. It is so abominable that the Prophet said, “*The one who hoards people’s food for forty days is worse than a robber*” (Ibn Bābawayh, 2006, vol. 2: 693). He also threatened hoarders to punishments in both worlds and deprivation of heaven:

*“God punishes whoever hoards the Muslims’ food with leprosy and poverty”* (Hurr Āmilī, 1988, vol. 13: 275) and “*Whoever hoards goods for more than forty days will not even feel the breeze of the heaven for five hundred years.*” (Ibid: 273)

At times, the Prophet gave salesmen personal warnings against hoarding. For instance, Hakīm Ibn-e Hezam, who was a Qureyshi man and bought all the food that entered the city, was warned by the Prophet in person. (Kuliynī, 2008, vol. 10: 59)

The hoarders who accumulate great quantities of goods when Muslims need them endanger the interests of the society as well as the entire economy. Of course, possessing goods is not considered hoarding; rather storing them at the time of need is religiously prohibited. This is why the Prophet referred to hoarders as damned people (Ibid: 60). Due to his words and measures against hoarding, many of the Muslims' problems were solved, the goods that they needed became available, and the concerns about the shortage of goods as well as its social and psychological consequences were removed.

### 5-13. Prohibition of Risky Transactions

From the viewpoint of Islam, economic activities should not put the social peace at risk. If they do, regardless of the amount, they are prohibited. One of those activities is a risky deal, which take various forms. A representative example is the trading of a commodity that looks attractive but is vague or unknown in substance. It actually involves a risk which may end in arguments or hostility between the buyer and the seller, thus labeled as 'ḥarām'. (Mūsawīyān, 2021)

In addition, according to Muslim scholars, a good deal is the one in which the seller has the ability to provide the purchased goods and the buyer knows everything about it; otherwise, the deal is a risky one, as prohibited by the Prophet:

*"Oh people, fear God and correct your relationships."* (Ibn Bābawayh, 1999)

The quote above is part of a hadith in which the Prophet advises people to avoid risky deals. As it implies, such deals damage public trust. Similarly, many of the economic activities commonly done before and after Islam could induce displeasure or quarrel between the parties involved, hence prohibited by the Prophet (Bukhārī, 1990; Nūrī, 1988; Sadr, 1995). The abolishment of all these deals or transactions in Islam was on the purpose of providing a calm space for business (Majlisī, 1986).

## 6. Conclusion

This study indicates that the Prophet (pbuh) could eliminate deviations and corruptions from the economy of the newly established Muslim society, set the cornerstone for a wholesome economy, and pave the way for its growth. The results of the study are itemized as follows:

- Using various policies, the Prophet eradicated many economic deviations that were common in the era of Jahiliyyah and replaced them with practices based on Islamic regulations.
- Before Islam, there were only a few people of means and resources compared to a majority of poor people and servants. However, Islam could create a relative economic balance in the early Muslim society.
- The Prophet prevented various types of monopoly and privileged rights of utilization. He gave the God-granted resources such as lands, for public economic exploitations.
- The major economic evil in the era of Jahiliyyah was usury. It involved various social abnormalities and the economic dominance of the rich over the others. In a step-by-step process, Islam fought against it and managed to limit it.
- By virtue of the Islamic rules and regulations, a significant amount of stagnant funds joined the circulation of the Muslims' economy and helped to boost it.
- As wastefulness was prohibited, many unrestrained expenditures and Jaheli extravagances were stopped, and the wealth was put to beneficial use.
- The prohibition of effortless incomes made the Muslims' economy free from certain problems, such as inflation, which injected a sense of peace and security into the markets.
- With the constant monitoring of the economy and the bazaar by the Prophet, various harmful practices in business, such as overcharging and hoarding, were eliminated.
- The economy grew due to the enhancement of work culture and the discouragement of laziness.
- In cases of economic conflicts, the Prophet took the side of public rather than individual interests; at times, individual interests are against the public.
- The Prophet (pbuh) linked economic issues to spiritual values, thus encouraging the public to act according to their conscience and controlling economic disorders with the people's faith-induced self-restraint.

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