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The Economic Strategies Adopted by the Prophet (pbuh) and their Effects on Muslims' Economic Independence in Medina

Abdulkhaliq Saeidi Abu-Ishaqhi *, AliMohammad Mirjalili **,
Yahya Mirhoseini ***

*PhD student, Department of Qur'anic sciences and hadith, College of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.

Email: saeidy139@gmail.com

orcid.org/0600-0001-8818-3645

**professor, Department of Quranic Sciences and Hadith, College of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.

Email: almirjalili@meybod.com

orcid.org/0000-0003-2021-9360

***Associate professor, Department of Qur'anic sciences and hadith, College of Theology, Meybod University, Meybod, Iran.

Email: mirhoseini@meybod.ac.ir

orcid.org/0000-0001-5695-8267

Abstract

After Mohammad (pbuh) was made a prophet, the Quraysh imposed heavy economic pressures on the Muslims. To get the Muslims rid of this predicament and bring them economic independence, the prophet adopted certain strategies. This issue is examined in the present study through a descriptive-analytical method and with reference to Qur'anic verses, hadiths and historical sources. As the results of this study indicate, via various economic strategies, the prophet could not only abort the economic threats of his enemies but made the Muslims' economy rather independent too. Thus, the Quraysh, as the major enemy of Islam, were challenged economically, security was provided for the Muslims' trade lines, and the economic productivity was enhanced as a result of the flourishing domestic production in Medina. All this attracted much more people to Islam and made Muslims more self-confident. The prophet's economic strategies mainly included persuading the rich to help the poor, giving charitable loans, establishing a market and monitoring it, granting land to the needy for building and farming, diversifying the economic activities, making a drainage system in the lands around Medina so as to promote the agriculture there, expanding crafts and industrial activities among the Muslims, paying special attention to agriculture, and conserving the environment.

Keywords: The prophet (pbuh), Economy, Islamic economy, Prophet's economic policies, Economic solution, Economic strategy

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1. Introduction

In Islam, wealth is considered as the backbone of the society and its sustainability (Qur'an, 4:5). An individual or a society with no property is marked poor because a system with no economic backbone is fragile and feable enough to fall. Poor people and societies usually fail to resist oppressors and, thus, lose their independence soon (Javadi Amoli, 2012). Their esteem and independence can be preserved with a stout and dynamic economy, which serve as the major component of any progressive system.

According to some hadiths, poverty deters the fulfillment of rituals (Hakimi, 2001) and brings sociopolitical isolation (Sharif Razi, 2000). The spread of poverty leads to the cultural, scientific and educational backwardness of the society followed by certain abnormalities. These circumstances are in contrast to the Qur'anic teachings and the prophet's manners that aim at the sublimation of the society. Islam has encouraged everyone to have an easy life and the rather decent possession of facilities while it also recognizes economic distinctions among people (Qur'an, 43:32, 16:71). As advised by the prophet (pbuh), every Muslim is obliged to do honest economic activities. This provides motivation for economic dynamism in the Muslim society (Ibn-e Sho'beh Harrani, 1984). In this regard, one may refer to the prophet's descendants who all made a living by working diligently (Koleyni, 1986).

The question that this research seeks to answer is 'what were the prophet's economic policies after he founded a government in Medina so as to achieve economic growth and ensure the Muslims' independence with regard to the tough conditions in the Arabian peninsula, shortage of water resources, unproductive land, and sanguine clashes?'

2. Literature review

There are some studies conducted on the subject of this article. For example, In his book *Eghtesadona* (our economy), Seyed Mohammad Bagher Sadr addressed several dimensions of the Islamic economy. Mohammad Ali Taskhiri referred to the rules of Islamic economy in the book *Lessons from Islamic Economy*. Abd ul-Rahman Soneydi wrote

an article entitled ‘Economic confrontation between the Muslims and the Quraysh at the time of the prophet’ about how he coped with the economic threats posed by the Quraysh. Also, in his dissertation ‘The economic status of early Muslims’, Mohsen Tarafdar made some references to the prophet’s economic measures.

The present study is distinct in that it focuses on the prophet’s economic strategies and their effects on the publicity and expansion of Islam.

3. Economic problems in pre-Islam Arabia

Before Islam, the Meccans, especially the Quraysh, were economically well-off due to trade communications (Qur’an, 106:1-4). However, most of the other Arabians, who were nomads, were in tight conditions (Askari, 2004). Their property was mainly camels, which fitted the climate there.

Moreover, there was widespread violence among the Arabs, which kept women from economic activities. Due to lack of security, it was usually men who could herd camels and go hunting. Thus, they viewed women as sponges and sometimes even killed their baby daughters (Qur’an, 6:151).

After entering Medina, the prophet and his migrating companions, already beset with poverty and homesickness (Meghrizi, 1999), began to suffer new economic problems due to a) the shortage of food and other needs, b) the rise of inflation caused by the grow of population and the demand for food, c) the increase of unemployment, and d) the dominance of Jewish usury and capitalism over the market in Medina. With Islam in the city now, transactions had to be done according to the new Islamic rules (Hosseini, 2005).

Through the accurate adjustment of economic relations and the fair distribution of wealth and work, the prophet could meet the basic needs of the Muslims, thus changing many socioeconomic flaws into opportunities and the corrupt habits of mammonism (Qur’an, 102:1-3) and snobbery (57:20) into cooperation.

4. Prophet’s strategies for economic prosperity

Upon arriving in Medina, the prophet had to do something to mitigate the economic problems of Muslims especially the immigrants who had

left all they had in Mecca. He started with new regulations for deals and trade. Faith was not well established in some new Muslim converts yet, and they were likely to walk out of Islam or ignore part of the religious scruples. Therefore, the prophet adopted certain strategies to save the poor Muslims from the immediate risk of poverty. This enhanced the Muslims' economic capability in such a way that they could not only meet their own needs but also spend part of their potential on attracting others to Islam (Qur'an, 9:60). The following subsections shed light on the prophet's economic strategies.

4.1. Intellectual and cultural incentives for production and labor

The Qur'an obliged Muslims to develop the land (11:61) and gave working a high value (53:39, 4:32). The prophet, too, highly cherished labor and production, thus trying to acculturate economic activities among Muslims and make conditions ready for it. In this regard, he stated, "Some of my followers like to make wealth with which to care for their relatives, help the poor and orphans, go on Hajj pilgrimage, contribute to virtues, and the like" (Ibn-e Mubarak, 2004, p. 238). Indeed, the Qur'an and the prophet associated labor and production with acts of worship. The Book considered wealth as a blessing and the labor for it as a virtue (2:198, 17:66, 28:73, 30:23-46, 35:12). The prophet also considered labor highly virtuous (Koleyni, 1986). One of the best ways to make the economy flourish is the religious acculturation of labor and production. It drives Muslims toward reviving the land and thereby meeting their needs (Qur'an, 11:61).

Moreover, the prophet had no good view of beggary and encouraged people to work for their needs (Koleyni, 1986). To him, economic activities were so dear as to consider them a kind of jihad (Payandeh, 2004). By integrating Islamic values to labor, he sought to induce economic mobility and esteem workers and producers. He sometimes even kissed the workers' hands while saying "This is the hand never to burn in the hell" (Baghawi, 2011, vol.2, p. 572). Interestingly, in the prophet's opinion, the toil and trouble of working for the sake of God and His forgiveness outweigh such rituals as praying and fasting (Ravandi, 1986).

4.1.1. Encouragement of making a living through production

As the prophet believed, income from productive work would be better than the earnings from other sources, so he advised investment in production. He also deemed agriculture, livestock raising and gardening as the best jobs and advised farmers not to sell their land, gardens or trees (Koleyni, 1986,). The prophet favored the cultivation of trees especially date palms; he liked dates so much so that he was sometimes called ‘date fan’ (ibid). Regarding cultivation, he once said, “If the Resurrection comes while you have a seedling in hand, just cultivate it although you are pressed for time” (Bokhari, 1985, p. 146). This quotation denotes the importance of farming and implies that it should be done even in the hardest situation.

By injecting the culture of production into the society, the prophet predisposed a great economic development. Also, through linking economic activities to divine matters, he motivated the Muslims to work better and reduced or eradicated many social disorders such as robbery, banditry and looting. Owing to this economic culture, the Muslims felt bound to work as long as they could.

4.1.2. Encouragement of the rich to help the poor

After the prophet migrated to Medina, the Muslims experienced a fast economic growth. This was partly due to the change that the prophet made in the legal-economic system of the Arabia. Before Islam, the economy was monopolized by those in power and the tribal or ethnic trustees. The wealth distribution system established by the prophet, however, was such that the economy relatively grew along with social justice. This system was based on obligatory supports; that is, every Muslim was obliged to meet the other Muslims’ needs. The prophet’s emphasis on this sense of obligation is evident in his quote “Help the needy even with a handful of dates or half a date. If you cannot afford, speak to them sweetly at least” (Koleyni, 1986, vol.4, p. 4). The society was thus encouraged to be generous as well as gentle so that no one would be annoyed or offended. The prophet especially persuaded the rich to help the poor (Tousi, 1993). Their sense of obligation to help was strengthened by the 700-fold reward that the Qur’an promised

(2:261, 262, 265, 275). The problems of poor Muslims were largely solved by the incentives of the Qur'an for generosity (59:9, 2:261).

4.2. Enactment of specific rules for financial contracts

The prophet had to adopt proper policies to provide the funds required for the Islamic state and the elimination of poverty from the society. Certain factors pushed the Muslims toward various economic activities. Those factors included the productive land and favorable climate in Medina, the strategic location of the city for commerce, relations with the tribes that had industrial crafts, and, above all, the prophet's strategic management practiced through enacting specific rules and regulations.

Before Islam, some Qureshis committed various types of usury that they had devised. Despite having many permanent markets, they made phony deals in which the buyer or the seller was cheated, but the prophet abolished them all (Sadr, 1995).

The prophet enacted the laws according to the economic interest of the Muslim society. For example, to let the economy up, he allowed short-term participation agreements such as *modharebah* (interest sharing), *mosaghat* (sharecropping), *mozare'eh* (farmletting), partnership, *jo'aleh* (reward), and *solh* (mutual consent) (Meghrizi, 1999). These agreements yielded very desirable results (Sadough, 1992). They provided funds for those who were physically able to work but lacked the required capital. They also activated the capital of those who possessed it but had no ability or opportunity to put it in the cycle of economic activities. As the corresponding contracts were concluded between the Muhajerin and the Ansar, a boost occurred in the productivity, yield of farming lands, income, and rate of employment. Following the Baninadhir Jews' treachery against the prophet, the Muslims captured their lands in Medina, and the prophet won the Ansar's consent to divide those lands among the Muhajerin and the poor Ansar (Vaghedi, 1988). This led to the increase of the Muslims' cultivation area, production, employment and exports as well as the public welfare.

4.3. Encouragement of interest-free loans and prohibition of usury

Besides prohibiting certain acts like usury and selling sinful goods, the prophet encouraged giving interest-free loans and called it a good deed

so as to make the Muslims economically active. It led funds toward production and motivated many Ansaris to grant their capital to the Muhajerin on the purpose of mitigating their poverty (Qur'an, 59:9).

These loans were highly encouraged by the prophet, as he considered them better than charity at the reward ratio of eighteen to ten (Koleyni, 1986). They are highly rewarded by the Qur'an too (2:245, 57:11, 17, 64:17). The promised rewards motivated the rich to give loans to those who could work but had no capital. Thus, many people were enabled to start their business on loans, the production of goods grew, and the society gained relative welfare.

4.4. Controlling and monitoring the market in Medina

To enhance the Muslims' market independence and economic security, the prophet established a new market in an appropriate place (Meghrizi, 1999). Before hijra, Medina Bazaar mainly belonged to Banigheinogha Jews (Hamawi, 1995). As the new market started under the prophet's supervision, the Jews in Medina and the Meccan polytheists who dominated Akkaz and Zelmajar Bazaars (Ya'ghubi, 2000) lost the control of the economy, resulting in the independence of the Muslim market. Moreover, the prophet recruited some agents to prevent hoarding and other economic crimes. They warned hoarders once. If hoarding continued, they would confiscate the hoarded goods (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, Letter 53). Also, the businessmen who avoided supplying their goods were given a hard time (Ibn-e Hayyoun, 2006).

The prophet sometimes visited Medina Bazaar in person. He once noticed a man who was selling good and bad goods mixed together. The prophet told him, "Whoever cheats the customers is not a Muslim" (Tahawi, 2004, vol.3, p. 366). In another case, he warned a man who was selling fake goods, "This is dishonesty, and whoever does it is not a Muslim" (Ibn-e Majeh, 1997, vol.3, p. 564).

4.5. Granting lands to the needy for work and residence

Since the Muslims who migrated to Medina had no resistance there, the prophet gave them the lands gifted by the Ansar. This land distribution, known as *Eghtha' al-Daur*, led to construction and development in Medina (Hamawi, 1995). As the Muslims were settled in their own houses, they leisurely began economic activities and established the

religion. The Muhajerin took a total of fifty six pieces of land for housing, agriculture and pasture (Ahmadi, 1998). Of course, some of the immigrants temporarily resided in the prophet's mosque (i.e., on Sofa) or in the other Muslims houses (Koleyni, 1986). Some Muslims found a job due to the growth of agriculture and house construction, and the revival of the lands around the city provided food for the people.

Furthermore, as the prophet told the people, whoever revived a barren land could own it (Sharif Razi, 2001). This induced broad productive activities, created job opportunities, and eliminated unemployment. Muhajerin also got to know more about agriculture, and farming products increased so that the surplus could be exported (Sadr, 1995).

Lands were granted to Muslims in other places than Medina too. These grants were often for the needy so that they could live in independence (Ahmadi, 1998). A few of those who received a land were Mojja'eh bin-Marareh Hanafi in Yemen, Forat bin-Hayyan Ajali in Yamameh (ibid), Zaid al-Khair Taie in Tay (Tabarsi, 2011), Belai bin-Harath Mozni in Aghigh Desert (Ahmadi, 1998), Abyaz bin-Hammal and Sam'an bin-Amr, Sanbar al-Abrashi, Zubair bin-Awam, and Jahdam bin-Fedhaleh (ibid).

The culture of Pre-Islam Arabs was associated with murder, plunder and bloodshed. Their battles would sometimes last for long. Since some Arabs had livestock, they always had to be on the move for grass and water. The prophet, however, gave them a land and made them settle in one place to live decently rather than nomadically (ibid). Thus, he could keep them in Medina. He actually aimed to supply the workforce from the very city and raise the Muslims' population so as to ensure their security and faith. In this regard, he considered the act of leaving the city as a shame and a sin (Koleyni, 1986). This led to economic enhancement through the considerable reduction of unemployment and its consequent social evils.

For job creation in Medina, the prophet spotted economically talented people and put them in charge of certain tasks so that they could make their own living rather than depending on the Islamic government funds (Asghalani, 1994).

4.6. Encouragement of women to work alongside men

Women comprise half of the population in every society. Their economic activity is not only desirable but allowed in Islam if they behave decently at work (Qur'an, 28:23-25). Their permission to work is actually implied in the Qur'an (4:7).

The prophet paved the way for women's economic activities in consistence with their physical and psychological features. For example, just young women were allowed to do commerce (Tousi, 1986). In general, women could make a living by nursing the wounded and dressing wounds (Ibn-e Abdulber, 1991), manufacturing, tanning leather to make clothes (Asghalani, 1994), selling perfume (Koleyni, 1986), spinning, and weaving mats. Thus, they shared the household income (Ibn-e Sa'd, 1989). In his book *The System Of The Prophet's Government*, Al-Kitani (2010) refers to more than forty jobs at the time of the prophet many of which were done by women as well.

4.7. Sustenance of the poor and the proper distribution of wealth

The prophet felt obliged to provide a chance for everyone to work. He would use the government revenues to help those who could not make a living or were not given a job by the government. Considering the general rule that everyone has a share of the public funds, poor people were sustained so much as to meet their basic needs (Koleyni, 1986). To this end, the financial sources that the prophet drew from were anfal, khoms and zakat. The contributions brought economic livelihood to those who were creative or talented enough to work but had no means and resources.

The prophet even felt responsible for the Muslims who died in debt. He said, "It is my duty to pay the debt of whoever dies while not affording it (ibid: 407). He also paid the living costs of poor men's widows (ibid). As the case is in Islam, the property of those who die with no heir or heiress is inherited by the head of the state, namely the prophet, Imam or their representative (ibid). The prophet's government was accountable for sustaining not only the Muslims but the Jewish and Christian citizens as well (Tousi, 1986). This generosity drove many Jews into Islam (Koleyni, 1986).

4.8. Encouragement of waqf for public benefits

One of the decent economic approaches introduced by the prophet was waqf (dedication). According to it, the rich would dedicate a part of their assets to the welfare of the poor, thus contributing to the public interests even of the next generations. For example, a Jew named Mokhairigh gave his property away to the prophet, and he, in turn, granted it in donation (Belazari, 1996). Being one of the early waqf practitioners, the prophet himself donated Nedtat, Wadtih and Solalem lands (Ahmadi, 1998).

Another purpose pursued through waqf was to put wealth in circulation. The prophet declared waqf as a highly rewarded deed of permanent effect (*Sadagheh jarieh*) (Deylami, 1991). This persuaded the Muslims to give away their belongings, which resulted in depots of consumer's goods for the poor (Sadr, 1990). As the practice of waqf expanded, poverty and unemployment began to reduce.

4.9. Integration of Muhajerin's merchandising to Ansar's farming on the purpose of economic growth

Many Meccans were merchants (Ibn-e Hesham, 2016), while most Medina residents were farmers owing to the abundance of water there. By combining the merchandising of those from Mecca and the farming of Medina people, the prophet could boost both the commerce and the agriculture; Medina Bazaar began to flourish as some Mohajerin traded in Ansar's farming products (Saleh, 2006).

For the better exportation of goods from Medina, the prophet provided the means of transportation, mostly camels, and the required funds through partnership contracts. The camels captured in battles raised the capacity of exports; thousands of camels were captured by Muslims in the battle of Honeyn (Ibn-e Sa'd, 1989). As the commerce thrived on the side of Muslims, Meccan polytheists lost their monopoly on trades. The prophet's persuasion for trade (Sadough, 1992) not only had economic benefits for the people in Medina but also paved the way for the spread of Islam and the prophet's cultural and political activities (Sadr, 1995). Trading became easier for Muslims as incentives were given to those who could supply the basic goods, security was provided for foreign merchants, and imports into Medina were facilitated (Sadr, 1990).

4.9.1. Encouragement of trade based on certain principles

The prophet advised the Muslims to do commerce in Islamic manners. In this regard, he prohibited usury, taking oaths, concealment of the flaws of goods, speaking highly of the goods to sell, and speaking ill of the goods to buy (Koleyni, 1986). He also obliged traders to revoke the deal at the request of the buyer, take the sold goods back, allow a payment delay if the customer has no cash (ibid), take it easy about the price (Horr-e Ameli, 1988), be generous, and stick to one's agreements (ibid). Regarding trading manners, there are numerous remarks by the prophet, some of which Sheikh Horr-e Ameli compiled into a chapter titled *بَابُ جُمْلَةٍ مِمَّا يُسْتَحَبُّ لِلتَّاجِرِ*.

4.10. Encouragement of non-Muslims to have trades with Muslims

In addition to encouraging the Muslims for economic activities, the prophet called non-Muslims for trade in the territories of Islam and ensured their economic security. In this regard, he promised he would compensate for any damage to their goods and treat them as guests in Medina (Sadr, 1995). This guaranteed security led to the spread of commerce between Muslims and non-Muslims. Numerous cases have been reported for the commercial activities of non-Muslim merchants at the time of the prophet. As an example, Nabatean traders supplied oil and flour for Medina. Muslims gave a rise to commercial activities in Medina by making the trade pathways secure. This also undermined the economic status of the Meccan polytheists. As Mecca was captured by Muslims, the polytheists completely lost their monopoly on commerce (ibid). Then on, the trade in almost the whole Arabian Peninsula was done under the Muslims' surveillance.

4.11. Diversification of economic activities

An abominable feature of the economy before Islam was to look down on non-offensive tasks, thus considering farming and craftsmanship as the duty of slaves and cherishing whatever involved recklessness, bravery and physical strenuity (Tabatabaie Ardakani, 1995; Montazer al-Ghaem, 1992). However, the prophet encouraged various types of work so that the required goods and services could be provided and nobody would feel ashamed of any job. In this regard, he once stated,

“Collecting wood, carrying it on the back, selling it to make an honest living, and giving the surplus in charity is better than requesting others for help; requests may be met or not. A giving hand is certainly better than a taking hand” (Warram, 1990). The prophet pioneered working in person to eradicate the common false notion that work was a shame. For instance, to make the walls of his own house, he carried stones himself. This behavior was so effective that even the invalid were persuaded to make their own living as far as they could (Koleyni, 1986). The prophet took advantage of every opportunity to motivate his companions for economic activities. He also approved of every honest job especially agriculture and livestock raising. In this case, he believed that God has placed His blessings in these two jobs (Barghi, 1992). As he once met a herdsman, he equated that man’s job to jihad and Hajj in reward (Ibn-e Hayyoun, 2006). Similarly, to support spinning and tailoring, he said, “My good male followers go for tailoring, and my good female followers do spinning” (Warram, 1990). He also motivated traders with the remark “God has placed blessings in trade” (Sadough, 1983).

4.11.1. Denouncement of some jobs

There are some hadiths referring to certain denounced jobs (Ibn-e Hayyoun, 2006). The denouncement seems because of traders’ unawareness of trade ethics or forgetting God in their deals. Among the jobs denounced by the prophet, one may refer to dealing in slaves, selling coffins or shrouds for the dead, hoarding even at the time of abundance, animal breeding, silver and goldsmithing, blood cupping, and overslaughtering animals (Horr-e Ameli, 1988). A slave dealer makes money by selling human beings, and a coffin seller desires people’s death. Also, cupping may result in hardheartedness. As for dealing in gold and silver, people may be done wrong if their belongings are mixed up. So, jobs like these are naturally detestable.

4.12. Measures to enhance productivity

After arriving in Medina, the prophet sought to raise the economic productivity by taking measures such as a) changing the agriculture pattern by cultivating date palm seedlings rather than tamarisks in Ghabbeh region in the northwest of the city so as to supply food and fruit, b) allocating Ghanat region to the cultivation of wheat, and c)

encouraging people to rise early (Koleyni, 1986) and start working after the morning prayer. The prophet considered early morning as the best time for productive work, higher income, blessed living, and independence of others (Payandeh, 2003, hadiths 376, 643, 1078, 1149, 1858).

Something noteworthy that the prophet did to improve productivity was to build canals that could drain stagnant water to farming lands; considering the location of Medina, a lot of water would always gather in the pits around the city (Saleh, 2006). The drainage of useless water not only gave a rise to agriculture and construction but also reduced the spread of pollution and many diseases such as malaria (ibid).

4.13. Levying Khoms, Zakat and Jezyeh as Islamic taxes

To balance the economy, support the poor, and solve the problems in the Muslim society, the prophet levied specific taxes on Muslims. As termed by the Qur'an, the taxes are Zakat (9:103) and Khoms (8:41). They were levied when the Muslims were already active in various economic areas and the society had an upward trend.

The Qur'an introduced Khoms on war booties in the second year after hijra (2 AH). The prophet divided the booties into five parts, kept one, and distributed the rest among the Muslim warriors (Tabarsi, 1993). This was done to help the needy, create jobs for them, and boost the production. Thanks to booties, within a few years, many Muslims stepped out of poverty. Two other taxes, namely Zakat and Jezyeh (9:29), were introduced in 9 AH. They served as new sources of funds for the Islamic government (Makarem, 1995).

By levying Zakat and Khoms, the prophet turned paying taxes into a religious issue. This made Muslims pay taxes voluntarily and on free will. Upon economic growth toward the end of the prophet's life, people paid more taxes and the economy came to a balance. This led to the control of inflation and mitigated the decline of public revenues once tax payment reduced and economic depression occurred in the future (Sadr, 1995). Moreover, the collection of taxes and other incomes entailed the establishment of *Beyt al-Mal* (i.e., bureau of public funds). Then, the prophet put some clerks in charge of it (Ahmadi, 1998). They kept careful tabs on the collected taxes and the flow of money in and out, thus maintaining a discipline in the financial system.

Half of the incoming Khoms was dedicated to certain individuals in Bani Hashem tribe including the poor, orphans and those in debt. The other half stayed with the prophet to be spent on public benefits and the government expenditures. Similarly, part of the incoming Zakat was spent on the mentioned Bani Hashem groups, but the share dedicated to religious purposes (i.e., *fi sabil al-Allah*) along with the revenues from the captured territories was just spent for public benefits such as reconstructing pathways, financing the army, funding the government affairs, and the like.

As for where to use taxes, the prophet gave priority to the collection place but saved the surplus for the central government. This economic policy made people more eager to pay taxes, reduced the tax collection cost, and ensured the simultaneous economic growth of different places (Sadr, 1995: 14).

Considering Zakat as the major source of income for the Islamic government, the prophet regulated the collection of taxes by recruiting some agents called '*Jobbat*' to collect Zakat (Tousi, 1990), some others called '*Khares*' to estimate the collected quantity and value (Ibn-e Athir Jozori, 1988), and some called '*Kottab*' to serve as bookkeepers who recorded how and how much Zakat was used, thus improving the official aspect of the economic system (A group of authors, 1999). Those who asked the prophet for help were given a share of the government income to meet their basic needs. Whoever poor or unable to work was identified, and even those who would convert to Islam with incentives were given a gift or grant (Koleyni, 1986). The Qur'an refers to this manner of attracting people as '*mo'alefat al-gholoub*' (9:60). Using this policy, the prophet could attract many people to Islam and reinforce the faith of shaky Muslims (Sadr, 1995).

4.14. Designing a legal system in line with economic security

The legal, economic and political systems in a Muslim society should be designed such that there is enough security to invest for economic activities until productivity is gained (Mir Mo'ezi, 2012). To show the significance of economy, the prophet equated it to one's blood and reputation (Koleyni, 1986). As he stated, "You must respect the others' blood and property. Give back what is entrusted to you. Just like a Muslim's blood is forbidden to shed, his possessions cannot be seized

without his consent” (ibid). To ensure people’s security of possession, the Qur’an ordered the canon of hand amputation (5:38) as deterrence against robbery. Perhaps, before this canonical order, the people who had grown up in the age of ignorance and lived on looting and robbing could not perceive the significance of possession security. With that punishment on robbery, economic activities were made rather secure.

Another policy adopted and publicized by the prophet was the preference of social interests to personal benefits. According to the regulations postulated by the prophet, the conflicts of economic or financial interests between the society and individuals were always resolved in favor of the society. In this regard, he set forth the principle of *لَا ضَرَرَ وَ لَا ضَرَارَ* (neither harm nor be harmed), which originally concerned the trouble that Samoreh Ibn-e Jondab made for a Muslim (Koleyni, 1986). The prophet also entered peace negotiations and contracts with the tribes around Medina that could threaten trade activities, thus posing threats to the trade of Meccan polytheists but providing security for Muslim merchants (Ibn-e Sa’d, 1995).

4.15. Ensuring Muslims’ economic independence by spreading craftsmanship among them

Arab nomads always looked down on urban culture and considered crafts like artistry, manufacturing and sailing as slavery (Tabatabaie Ardakani, 1995). They, indeed, had no good view of non-offensive tasks and no approval for farm jobs and craftsmanship (Montazer al-Ghaem, 1992). Due to their herding job, they always had to be on the move. Nomadic people accounted for the majority of the Arabian Peninsula population, while the urban population with fixed dwellings, as in Mecca, Medina and Ta’if, was low. The prophet managed to gradually change the nomadic lifestyle into urbanism. As a result, more people settled in one place, and various crafts flourished.

To be economically independent of others, the Muslims had to produce what they needed on their own. Since defensive tools were not sophisticated, they had to be either imported from the manufacturing places or made locally. Both ways were tried by the prophet. He sometimes sent certain groups out to other places so as to supply the goods that could be produced in Medina. He also tried to make Muslims

self-sufficient for warfare products by sending some young ones to Yemen to learn arms production. This aborted the plans for leaving Muslims bareheaded in the case of a battle. Besides, it eliminated the Muslims' anxiety about the shortage of arms (a group of authors, 1999). Regarding the attempts for self-sufficiency, a Muslim went to Iran on the prophet's permission and got back to Medina with four experts in swords, shields, helmets, spears and bows along with some iron ore and wild almond wood. They set up furnaces and made those arms (Sadr, 1995). At that time, of course, there were several sword makers such as Khabbab Ibn-e Arat in Mecca (Ibn-e Hesham, 1996), but the low number of the swords at hand was not on a par with the great threats.

What the prophet had in focus was not merely arms; he encouraged the Muslims to learn other crafts too, thus giving a rise to weaving, tailoring, blacksmithing, construction, leatherworking, and well and qanat digging to use underground water (Sadr, 1995). According to Sheikh Abd al-Hayy Kattani, a famous Moroccan jurist, this led to the relative independence of the Islamic state in economy and industry.

In Medina, spinning wool and making clothes was done by women, and such jobs as farming tools production, carpentry and blacksmithing were in the hands of Jews especially Banigheinogha Jews (Saleh, 2006). Along with the growth in agriculture, house construction and arms production, the Muslims needed more equipment and efficiency for these economic activities. Therefore, the prophet declared it as a duty of Muslims to gain skills in various crafts (Saffar, 1984). He also invited non-local craftsmen to Medina for the vocational training of Muslims. This enhanced the technical skills of the Muslims and created jobs for some of them (Sadr, 1995). It also made them industrially independent while breaking the technological monopoly of the Jews and unbelievers. The acquisition of the sciences of the day and their localization in Medina brought self-sufficiency and the possibility of producing basic and strategic goods (ibid). It ultimately resulted in more power for Islam, growth in all fields of economy, and the conversion of more Arabians to Islam.

4.16. Putting financial capitals in circulation for economic growth

As advised by Islam, Muslims should let their capital circulate so as to make profits for themselves and the others. The prophet called this circulation ‘utilization of capital’ and considered it as a sign of faith and generosity (Horr-e Ameli, 1988). Utilization of capital aims at economic growth (Mousavian, 2021) and independence from others, which is a dignity for a Muslim (Koleyni, 1986). There are a set of hadiths commending the circulation of capital and condemning its stagnancy (ibid).

In a Muslim society, individuals should use their property partly for material motives and better worldly life and partly for spiritual prosperity and otherworldly rewards (Qur’an, 28:77). This maintains one’s independence and dignity.

5. The rate of economic growth at the time of the prophet (pbuh)

The economic status of the early Muslims in Mecca was not good, and it became even worse under the Quraysh sanctions. The Muslims sometimes felt so hungry as to fasten their bellies with a cloth or tie a stone to it (Beihaghi, 1982). This tight situation turned into economic flourishing after the prophet’s hijra to Medina. His economic strategies yielded good results after a short time. This improved status can be exemplified with the ability of Imam Ali, as one of the prophet’s companions, to afford certain extraordinary tasks such as liberating a thousand slaves, dedicating one hundred thousand date palm trees and some lands in Kheybar, Wadi al-Ghora, etc. to Muslims, digging a hundred wells in Yanbo and dedicating them to the Kaaba pilgrims, and digging wells in Mecca and Kufa (Helli, 1995). The prophet’s remarks on economic empowerment induced the continual and institutionalized growth of activities for benevolent and otherworldly purposes, which also sustained the low-income segment of the society.

Further evidence for the role of the prophet’s policies in economic growth comes from Imam Ali’s words. According to him, the prophet was one of those who suffered a lot in She’b-e Abutalib and was so poor when he entered Medina. However, his hard work made him so rich as to say “the Zakat on my property is high enough to cover the needs of all the Bani Hashems” (Ibn-e Tavous, 1996, p. 182). The will that the

prophet made on his property in different places also signifies that he had gained a high economic status while being at a top level of piety and asceticism (Ibn-e Hayyoun, 2006). Of course, he could not be rich without troubles; he toiled through doing construction work, establishing gardens of date palms, and preparing many pieces of land for agriculture. As put by Ibn-e Ab al-Hadid (1984, p. 146), “The prophet worked by hand, tilled the land, watered it, and planted date palms”.

6. Conclusion

There are several general points to conclude from this research. Firstly, upon arriving in Medina, the prophet (pbuh) began to threaten the trade pathways of the Meccan polytheists so as to reduce their pressure on Muslims. He also set up ties with various merchants and tribes to expand the Muslims’ economic domain so that the sanctions imposed by the enemies would not harm their economy.

Secondly, to enhance the economic status of the Muslim society and to reinforce and spread Islam, the prophet adopted certain economic policies such as providing intellectual and cultural incentives for production and labor, encouraging the rich to support the poor through interest-free loans and dedication of part of their property, enacting specific laws for economic growth, taking the control of markets and monitoring them, giving land to the poor for work and residence, paying special attention to the needs of poor Muslims, integrating Muhajerin’s merchandising to Ansar’s farming, encouraging non-Muslims to have trades with Muslims, diversifying the economic activities, appreciating workers and producers, draining the lands around Medina to boost agriculture and prevent diseases, receiving taxes from the rich and spending them duly, designing a legal system in line with economic security, propagating different crafts among the Muslims, putting capitals in circulation, paying special attention to agriculture and the preservation of the environment, and planning to create jobs and reduce unemployment.

Thirdly, the aforementioned policies had some positive outcomes for the Muslim society. In this regard, one may refer to economic growth and development, economic balance and justice, social security and

economic independence, defeat of the sanctions banned by the enemies of Islam, improvement of the economic status of poor people, elimination of unemployment, and conversion of many non-Muslims to Islam.

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