

Arab Republic of Egypt

Ministry of Awqaf

Jumada Al-Akherah ١٤, ١٤٤٠ A.H/ March ١, ٢٠١٩ C.E.

The Sound Economic Construction and Its Impact on the Stability of the Society

All praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds Who says, "He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it ..." I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that our Master and Prophet Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger.

Strong economy is of the most important pillars and foundations of any country that cannot dispense with. In truth, the stable, strong economy enables countries to fulfill their local and international duties and to provide their people with decent life. So, weak economy means the spread of poverty, diseases, unrest, conflicts, and corruption of morals, let alone the spread of crimes on a large scale. Not only that, but it also creates the opportunity before the country's opponents, who exert their utmost to cause unrest in these countries and to drive them towards chaos, to easily do them harm. For this reason, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used, in the aftermath of every prayer, to seek refuge with Allah, the Almighty, from poverty, "O Allah, I seek refuge with You from disbelief, poverty, and the grave punishment."

In actuality, those nations that do not have or produce their yields, food, clothes, medicine, and weapons do not indeed control their affairs, or will, or decision or dignity. That is why the proverb reads, "Do good to whomever you want, you will be his emir; keep away from whomever you want, you will be his counterpart; and ask your need from whoever you want, you will be his captive."

Our purified religion has taught us that the upper hand is better than the lower hand. In this regard, our Prophet (PBUH) said: "The upper hand is better than the lower hand ...;" he (PBUH) also says: "The hand which gives is the upper hand, and the hand which begs is the lower one ..." This is undoubtedly applicable to nations, institutions, families and individuals, for none of these all will evolve but in light of a number of elements, including:

Work and Boosting Production: What is required in this regard is not just to increase the production, but to add to that perfection, creativity, innovation, and breaking into fields of more importance and income and economic revenues. In fact, work and production come under the category of Sharia orders and national duties, since Allah, the Almighty, has ordered us to disperse in the earth for provision after fulfilling His Duty; He, Glorified is He, says: "And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed." That is because by work, the earth is constructed; man's vicegerency on the earth is realized; man's dignity and honor is maintained, because a worker gives and do not ask; and spend

and do not beg. That is why Prophet (PBUH) clearly stated that the best food to be eaten by a person is that which he earned as a result of his work: "Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet (PBUH) of Allah, David used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor." In the same connection, he (PBUH) warned those who prefer laziness, adopting begging as the main means for getting their provision, saying: "When a man is always begging from people, he would meet Allah (in a state) that there would be no flesh on his face." That is why our master U'mar (Allah be pleased with him) said: "Beware of laziness, for it is but negligence."

Islam highly appreciates the value of work, and even views it as one of the highest ranks of worship, that is, Jihad in the Cause of Allah. Man is rewarded for his work; and if he dies in search of it, his death will be some sort of obedience to Allah. In this regard, Ka'ab Ibn U'jarah (Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man passed by the Prophet (PBUH) and the Companions saw his vigor and hard work; they said: "O Messenger of Allah, if only this was done in the Cause of Allah;" whereupon he (PBUH) said: "If he goes out striving to provide for his young children, then it is in the cause of Allah. If he goes out striving to provide for his elderly parents, then it is in the cause of Allah. If he is striving in order to suffice himself against begging from others, then it is in the cause of Allah. But if he goes out to show off and boast, then it is in the cause of Satan." Calling for (promoting) production, our Prophet (PBUH): "If the Final Hour comes

while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it."

He (PBUH) even used to come up with solutions to create opportunities of work and to make use of people's energies and capabilities. Anas Ibn Malik (Allah be pleased with him) reported that a man from among the Ansar came to the Prophet (PBUH) and begged from him. He said, "Do you have anything in your house?" He said: "Yes, a blanket, part of which we cover ourselves with and part we spread beneath us, and a bowl from which we drink water." He said: "Give them to me." So he brought them to him, and the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) took them in his hand and said, "Who will by these two things?" A man said: "I will by them for one Dirham." He said: "Who will offer more than a Dirham?" two or three times. A man said: "I will buy them for two Dirhams." So he gave them to him and took the two Dirhams, which he gave to the Ansari and said: "Buy food with one of them and give it to your family, and buy an axe with the other and bring it to me." So he did that, and the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) took it and fixed a handle to it, and said: "Go and gather firewood, and I do not want to see you for fifteen days." So he went and gathered firewood and sold it, then he came back, and he had earned ten Dirham. (The Prophet (PBUH)) said: "Buy food with some of it and clothes with some." Then he said: "This is better for you than coming with begging (appearing) as a spot on your face on the Day of Resurrection. Begging is only appropriate for one who is extremely poor or who is in severe debt, or one who must pay painful blood money."

Rationalization of consumption: Rationalization is a key factor for the development of earth, and the achievement of renaissance of nations. The Islamic Shari'ah has called upon its adherents to be rationale to avoid the wasteful use of the blessings of Allah (Glory be to Him) in various walks of life, as the Almighty Allah says: "those who are wasteful are the brothers of Satan, and Satan is most ungrateful to his Lord," and says, "and eat and drink [as We have permitted] but do not be extravagant: God does not like extravagant people." And the Prophet (PBUH) called for the rational consumption saying, "No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing." However, we stress that rationalizing consumption is not limited only to food and drink. Rather, it should cover all aspects of the economic process including: water, electricity, gas, all raw materials, and medicines that one uses in his life. This is promoted by religions. We find this practice in the statement of Prophet Joseph (PBUH) when he said, "You will sow for seven consecutive years as usual. Store all that you reap, left in the ear, except for the little you will eat." It is a call to increase production through hard work and to rationalize consumption to the highest possible way, as Allah said, "except for the little you will eat."

Now I ask Allah to forgive me and you!

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All Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the seal of Prophets, Our Master Muhammad, and upon his household, Companions and those who follow him to the Day of Judgment.

Brothers of Islam!

In fact, one of the most important factors of economic development is that every citizen should perform his duties towards his nation, to get rid of the spirit of indifference, and to stop using services without paying for them, or even not to pay its real value. The one who consumes without producing, receives a salary without working, gets services without paying in return, all those contribute to the retardation of economic conditions of his nation. The overall economy of a given country is the total behaviors of its citizens. To give an example, we can speak about electricity. We experienced hard times of blackout and the deterioration of the electrical service. This had a very negative impact on the economy of our country on one hand, and the citizens on the other. However, the Ministry of electricity was unable to provide the service, not to say improve it, in light of non-commitment by some citizens to pay the due fees, in a way that enables the Ministry and its companies to develop infrastructure, not to mention the expenses and requirements of operation, restoration of stations, building new stations, and providing the necessary fuel to run them. However, in case of the citizens would pay the fair value of the service, the Ministry, undoubtedly, will be able to provide the service and improve it. This applies also to the railway, subway, and other services.

However, to escape the payment of the value of these services or to care only for the personal interest at the expense of public one, is contrary to all religious values and the fair economic principles. This leads to worsening economic conditions of any country, which in turn causes public deterioration.

Thus, it is obligatory upon everyone to pay the due fees on time, as these are the terms of the contract between the providers of such services, such as electricity and water, and consumers of the services. It is not permissible to neglect paying for such services. The Almighty Allah the orders us to fulfil the terms of contracts saying, "O You who believe, fulfil your obligations." The verse is general as it includes all contracts and covenants.

In one Hadith, The Prophet (PBUH) says, "Muslims should abide by their terms, except the conditions that make the lawful unlawful, or the unlawful lawful." Those who refuse to pay for a contract they entered into, have made two evil things: First, they have neglected their obligations; Second: they are taking something which is not lawful for them.

Therefore, refraining to pay for services that one gets is prohibited in the Shari'ah as it meant neglecting terms of a contract, wasting people's rights and weakening the institutions and State.

While we stress the importance of increasing social protection programs, we also underline the importance of directing these programs to most deserved classes. Thus, everyone should abide by the religious, moral and humanitarian values so that the allocations of the protection programs shall go to those who deserve them.

May Allah help us to do our duties towards our country! □

And may Allah save Egypt and all countries around the world!