

EARNING HALAL IN ISLAM

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Abstaining from Haram, and benefiting from the Halal income is as much necessary for the Muslims as the observance of Salah and payment of Zakah. It is a very surprising thing to mention that there is a very small number in the Muslim community who differentiate between the Halal and Haram methods of earning wealth. Many of them are of the opinion that as long as the end justifies the means, they do not have to care how they earn their money. To make the matter all the more difficult, some people even dare to say: “Why is a particular thing prohibited in Islam? What is wrong with benefiting from something? Why is a certain thing labeled as forbidden in the Islamic Shariah?” While the fact remains that it is derogatory to the rank of a Muslim to raise objections about the Revelations of Allah, the Almighty and harbor any doubts in his mind regarding His injunctions and Commandments in the Holy Qur’an.

However, it is a shocking phenomenon, and a sad fact for the Muslim society that a large number of Muslims now do not discriminate between the Halal and Haram earnings. They are involved in earning money by hook or by crook and seeking employments in undesirable occupations. They are deeply occupied in adopting all methods of amassing wealth, through all unfair and unjust means at their disposal.

For this reason, we want to enlighten the Muslim community on the do’s and don’ts of Islam where earning money is concerned, and employing themselves in questionable institutions to earn their livelihood for themselves and their families, and the punishment of accumulating wealth by unfair means, so that those who fear Allah may keep themselves from committing what is prohibited in Islam and adopt the ways that are hundred percent Halal, and in this way win the pleasure of Allah in both the worlds for it is a form of worship in Islam.

Earning Halal

First of all, it must be understood by all Muslims that Islam has enjoined its followers to only earn and benefit from what is Halal. The Companion of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad (saws) Anas Ibn Malik reports that Allah's Messenger (saws) said, "It is obligatory on every Muslim to seek what is Halal." (*Majma Az-Zawaid, 10:291*)

Abdullah Ibn Masud (ra) reports that Allah's Messenger once remarked: "It is Obligatory to seek to earn Halal after other Obligatory observations i.e. Prayers etc." (*Sunan Al-Baihaqi, 6:126*)

These two Traditions clearly point out that it is the responsibility of a true Muslim to seek the wealth, which is Halal and make himself busy in benefiting from all lawful means at his disposal. So, when a Muslim intends to adopt a profession, start out a business, or seek an employment, then he must seriously think that if they are lawful for him. For example, if a person has got the opportunity of landing a secure job in a bank, he must not take up this job, rather he should try to find another gainful substitute which is completely Halal and pure.

Virtues of Earning Halal

Islam has described many virtues for earning a Halal livelihood and seeking the lawful resources from the bounties of Allah. Abu Hurairah (ra) reports: "Once we were sitting in the presence of Allah's Messenger while a young person came to him from the mountains. When we saw him we wished that he invested his youth, energy and efforts in the way of Allah. Allah's Messenger heard our words and remarked, "Is the person killed in the way of Allah the only right person? The person who makes efforts for his parents is equal to the one who fights the battle in the way of Allah. And the person who tries to earn a lawful living for his family is also in the way of Allah and the person who tries to keep himself away from Haram is also in the way of Allah. On the other hand, the person who is always in the pursuit of seeking much more wealth is in the way of Satan." (*Al-Mujam Al-Awsat, Tabrani, 4:285, Sunan Al-Baihaqi, 9:25*)

Abu Hurairah (ra) reports that Allah's Messenger (saws) said, "The person who seeks his livelihood from lawful sources so that he could keep himself, his children and family from begging people, he will be raised on the Day of Resurrection with the Prophets and highly truthful people." (*Khatib in Tarikh Baghdad, 8:168*)

Caliph Ali (ra) is reported to have said: “It is lovable to Allah to see his slaves’ labor hard in seeking Halal.” (*Al-Jami Sagheer: 1882*)

These narrations make it obvious that if a believer tries to seek only what is lawful his status is raised higher by Allah.

The Blessings of Halal Wealth:

The livelihood earned through lawful means is a great source of Divine blessings, and provides the right spiritual environment for a Muslim for he is always mindful and on his guard to reject all sorts of Haram earnings, and it yields good results, for the Divine blessing of Allah is also involved in such means of earning wealth. One of the most important results of consuming Halal is that Allah most assuredly answers a person's prayers. It is reported that once the Companion Sa’ad Ibn Abi Waqqas asked the Messenger of Allah: “O Allah’s Messenger pray for me to Allah that He makes me the one whose prayers are accepted. Upon this, the Holy Prophet commented, “O Sa’ad, make your food Halal and your prayers will be accepted.” (*Al-Mujam Awsat, 6: 311*) This Hadeeth says that when a person consumes only what is Halal then it makes him highly accepted in the sight of Allah and He answers his Prayers and supplications.

It is recorded that Sa’ad Ibn Abi Waqqas prayers used to be accepted. Ibn Rajab has reported that once a few Companions asked Sa’ad as to why his prayers used to be accepted. Upon this he remarked, “I have never brought a morsel close to my mouth of which I did not know where it came from and where it went.” (*Jamiul Uloom wa Al-Hikam, Ibn Rajab, 1: 107*)

A person is given strength and courage to carry out righteous deeds if he really eats Halal, which is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, “O Messengers eat from the good things and act righteously. Of whatever you do, I am fully aware.” (*Al-Qur’an, 23:51*)

In the verse, above everything, the fact of eating Halal has been mentioned, and then doing good deeds, for consuming Halal helps a person do good deeds. It appears in a Hadeeth that once the sister of Shaddad Ibn Aus, Umm Abdullah, sent a bowl of milk to the Messenger of Allah (saws) when he was fasting. The day was very long and very hot. The Messenger of Allah (saws) returned the

milk to where it came from and sent a messenger to inquire about where it comes from. Umm Abdullah said that the milk was from her goat. When the messenger told the Holy Prophet this news, he again sent him to inspect from her that how the goat became her property. She told that she had purchased it with her money. Then he took the milk. The second day, Umm Abdullah came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (saws) and said: “O Messenger of Allah, I had sent milk to you on account of the prolonged day and the heat of the daytime but you returned it to me.” Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (saws) remarked: “All the Prophets have been commanded to this effect that they must not eat but what is pure and must not consume but what is good.” (*Mustadrak, Al-Hakim, 4:140 Al-Mujam Al-Kabeer, Tabrani, 25:174*)

If a person is blessed with eating Halal, then he has everything. There is nothing in this world that can harm such a person. Abdullah Ibn Amr (ra) reports that the Messenger of Allah (saws) has said, “There are four things, if present in you, then no matter whatever you lose from this world: Protection of the trust, truth in speech, decency in manners and purity in eating.” (*Musnad Ahmad: 6652, Mustadrak, Al-Hakim, 4: 349*)

Abu Said reports that Allah’s Messenger (saws) once said, “The person who earns Halal and then he uses it for himself or gives it to someone or clothes someone, then this act will become a cause of purity for him.” (*Sahih Ibn Hibban, 10:48, Mustadrak, 4:144*) All these narrations clearly confirm the idea that the act of consuming lawful earnings is highly commendable and appreciable in the sight of Allah.

The Ill Omen of Consuming Haram

On the contrary, consuming Haram is strictly prohibited and condemned in Islam. Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur’an, “O those who believe do not eat up each other's property by false means unless it is a trade with your mutual consent.” (3:29)

At another place in the Holy Qur’an Allah (swt) says, “And do not eat up each other's property by false means, nor approach the authorities with it to eat up a portion of a property of the people sinfully while you know (all that).” (2:188)

It is recorded in a lengthy Hadeeth that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said: “The person, who earns unlawfully and then spends for his needs, he will be

deprived of blessings. If he gives something in charity, his act will not be accepted. When he leaves his wealth as inheritance, then it will lead him to the Hell.” (*Musnad Ahmad, 36:72, Mustadrak, 2:43, Al-Mujam Al-Kabeer, Tabrani, 10:223*)

This narration speaks about the negative results of consuming Haram and its destructive effects in this world and in the Hereafter. The second great loss is that it will lead a person to the Hellfire, and he will be deprived of all Divine blessings on the Judgment Day.

Abu Hurairah reports that the Messenger of Allah (saws) has said swearing: "If any of you takes soil and keeps it into his mouth is better to him than he puts in his mouth what Allah has prohibited for him." (Musnad Ahmad: 7482)

All these citations make it obvious for us that it is highly essential for a Muslim to abstain from eating or using unlawful things.

The Harmful Effects of Haram Wealth

This is an accepted fact that the wealth obtained through Haram means is deprived of blessings and increase though it is greater in amount contrary to the wealth earned through Halal means. The harms that emerge from such Haram resources appear in the following ways:

First, Allah sends calamities over the person receiving wealth through Haram means and thus all his wealth is destroyed. This fact has been clearly pointed out in the Holy Qur'an. It says, "Allah destroys Riba and nourishes charities. And Allah does not like any sinful disbeliever." (2:276)

This verse makes it obvious that usury is destroyed and the wealth gotten in this manner is ended. It is reported in a Sahih Hadeeth on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Masud that Allah's Messenger (saws) once commented, "No matter how much Riba increases, it will decrease ultimately." (*Musnad Ahmad: 4026, Ibn Majah: 2270, Mustadrak, 2:43*)

Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi says commenting on the above-mentioned verse, "The money or property of which Riba (interest or usury) becomes a part is sometimes destroyed taking with it all that was before it. This is a common sight in markets, which deal in Riba and stock exchanges of those companies

where millionaires and capitalists of yesterday become insolvents and paupers of today. No doubt, there are chances of profit and loss in Riba-free business activities and there are many businessmen who face a loss in business deals but a loss that turns a millionaire into a beggar is witnessed only in Riba markets and stock exchanges, which are interest-based in their dealings. There are so many statements of the experienced and the knowledgeable, which say that the wealth collected through Riba may increase, faster and higher, but it generally does not survive long enough to run through their descendants, the children and their successors. In between, comes some calamity or the other and effaces everything accumulated in the form of wealth by such a person. Sayyidna Ma'mar said that they have heard from their elders that forty years hardly pass on the Riba consumer when a major loss overtakes his wealth.” (*Ma'ariful Qur'an, 1:671*)

Another way of decrease in such a wealth is that the person will not be able to secure a life of peace in this world. That is why, nowadays, people have abundance of wealth and they are reveling in money but they are totally deprived of inner peace and bliss of mind, which they may otherwise experience if their wealth was earned by lawful means. The abundance of wealth has made them seriously insecure, vulnerable and mentally distressed.

It is possible that the wealth or property of a person dealing in interest may not ruin him outwardly that can be seen by men, but this is quite certain that its benefits, utilities, and blessings will go away. Since, this is no secret that gold and silver are not desirable or useful as such. They cannot remove from them their hunger or thirst. They cannot help beat the heat or serve as quilt or wrap in winter. Neither can they be used as cloths or utensils. The only purpose for which a wise person goes through thousands of exercises to procure and secure these, can hardly be anything else except that gold and silver are means to procure things that go to make man's life pleasant and that he may live a life comfort and self-respect. Then comes man's natural wish that his children and relatives should also enjoy the same comfort and self-respect as he did. Hence, it will be no use to a person hoarding such gold, but to leave it as a legacy to his descendants. The descendants of this man, will reap its benefits and the person, who has placed his Hereafter after his thirst for gold will find that after his death, it will be of no use to him in his grave, or on the Day of Judgment, even if he were to ransom all his wealth to escape the wrath of Allah from Hell fire!

Negative Effects of Consuming Haram Income

One of the most ruinous and ill-fated drawbacks of consuming Haram income is that; Allah (swt) leaves a person to himself, without his prayers and supplications being heard Him, and hence he is denied blessings even though he may observe all the obligations, which are required for him as a Muslim. A person consuming Haram has no chance of making his religious activities approved and accepted by Allah. It is reported that when Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (ra) requested the Messenger of Allah to pray for him so that his supplications are accepted by Allah, he had urged him to take only what is Halal and abstain from what is Haram, and then had commented: "By the being in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, a slave (of Allah) takes a Haram morsel into his stomach, then his no act will be accepted until forty days. And whose flesh grows out of Halal income and interest, and then he's most deserving of the Hellfire." (*Al-Mujam-Al-Ausat, 6:311*)

In another Hadeeth Abdullah Ibn Umar narrates that the Apostle of Allah (saws) commented: "Whoever purchased a cloth worth ten Dirhams, while a Dirham of it is of Haram, Allah will never accept his Prayers until he is clad in a garment, which is earned by Haram means." After mentioning this tradition, Abdullah Ibn Umar (ra) put his fingers into his ears and said, "May my ears be deafened, if I did not hear these words i.e. he was absolutely sure of listening to this Hadeeth from the Prophet."

Abu Hurairah (ra) reports that once the Messenger of Allah (saws) said, "If you pay the Zakah of your wealth, then you are absolved of your duty. And, whoever accumulated a Haram income and then gave some of it in charity, he will be deprived of its reward and even he will incur sins towards him." (*Musnad Ahmad: 5732, Musnad Abd Ibn Humaid, 1:267, Shuab Al-Iman, 5:142*)

These Prophetic narrations clearly indicate that consuming even a morsel of Haram or putting on a Haram cloth deprives a person of the acceptability of his religious activities by Allah and His blessings are withheld from such a man until he repents for his sins sincerely and resolves to earn his living henceforth only through Halal means. All his acts of worship will come to naught. Generally, people think that once they have performed all the Obligatory worships of Islam like Saum, Prayers, Sadaqah and Zakah, then they are

successful in their religious duties that have been made Obligatory upon them by Allah. However, when they will stand before Allah (swt) on the Day of Reckoning accounting for their deeds, they will find all their exertions and efforts made at them are as good as nothing, for they had been denied the blessings of Allah (swt) by consuming the Forbidden (Haram) things that have been enshrined and preserved in numerous books down to the last detail. They will find, on the other hand, that they have been engulfed by punishment. The only reason that prevents them on walking towards the Path of Paradise would be that they had consumed Haram.

Abu Hurairah (ra) reports that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said, “O people Allah is pure. He likes only what is pure. He has commanded the believers what He had commanded His Prophets and Messengers to do, then he recited the following verse, “O Messengers, eat from the good things and act righteously...”

Then, the Holy Prophet (saws) gave the example of a person who came to a sacred place in a state that his hair was disheveled and his body covered with dust from his top to bottom. He made himself busy in his supplications and prayers and said “O my Lord, O my Lord!” But his food and drink are Haram. His clothes are Haram and he was brought up with a Haram wealth. So, how could his prayers be accepted?” (*Muslim: 1686, Tirmidhi: 2915, Musnad Ahmad: 8330, Musannaf Abdur Razzaq, 5:20, Sunan Al-Baihaqi, 3:346*)

This Hadeeth, in fact, is an answer to a frequently asked question. Many people keep on saying that they pray a lot but weeks, months and years pass by without their prayers being heard and accepted by Allah, the Almighty. Why are their prayers not accepted? This Hadeeth is an answer to this very question. Nowadays many Muslims who are noted for their promptness in offering their Prayers, and have performed the Hajj pilgrimage; but they do not abide by Islamic rules and engage themselves in consuming Haram wealth, then how it is possible that their prayers may be accepted by Allah (swt) Whose Prophet has clearly indicated that they will come to naught, and will not be added to their aid on their judgment when their deeds are annulled because of their follies on earth. Instead of earning the Pleasure of Allah (swt) on that Day, when they will need it most, they will be incurring His wrath and displeasure. And, if they are

found wanting on their good deeds they will be consumed to the everlasting Punishment by Hellfire.

The Punishment of Consuming Haram in the Hereafter

This is what the consumers of Haram suffer in the world. In the Hereafter the punishment for this is that they will be thrown into the Hellfire. Jabir Ibn Abdullah (ra) narrates that once the Messenger of Allah (saws) commented, “The flesh grown out of Haram wealth can never enter Paradise. He is most deserving of the Hell.” (*Musnad Ahmad: 14481, Ibn Hibban, 5:9, Mustadrak, 4:141, Musnad Abd Ibn Humaid, 1:345*)

It is reported on the authority of Abu Bakr Siddique (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said, “The body that is grown by taking Haram food can never enter Paradise.” (*Al-Mujam Al-Ausat, 6:113, Musnad Abu Yala, 1:84, Musand Al-Bazzar, 1:105*)

In another Hadeeth it is stated, “The person who does not care from where he earns his wealth, Allah also will not care from which gate He will throw him into the Hell.” (*Al-Kabair: 119*)

In another Hadeeth it is related that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said, “Some people will be brought on the Day of Judgment whose good acts will amount to the Mount of Tihama. When they will be brought in the presence of Allah, He will render their acts like dust. And then, they will be thrown into the Hell. The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what will cause this to happen?” He replied, “These people used to pray, fast, give Zakah and perform Hajj except that when they came across anything Haram, they used to take it. So Allah (swt) nullified all their good deeds.” (*Al-Kabair: 121*)

All these Traditions urge the believers to abstain from consuming or earning Haram wealth. If anyone consumes or earns Haram wealth, he will be thrown into the Hellfire as it is mentioned in the above narrations. When the punishment is so severe and so unbearable for such activities then we should try to save ourselves and strive hard on this earth to see that we do not consume any of the forbidden things that might lead us towards the Hellfire.

The Extraordinary Precautions taken by the Holy Companions against Consuming what is Haram in the Religion of Islam:

The biographers of Sayyidna Abu Bakr Siddique (ra) have recorded that he had a slave. Once he brought some food to him. Abu Bakr took a morsel from it. Later he discovered that the food was Haram. The slave told him that he used to work as a foreteller and a seer in the Days of Jahiliyyah and he had purchased that food from that income. Abu Bakr (ra) said, "You have destroyed me." Abu Bakr wanted to put his hands into his mouth to vomit out the food but he could not. Some people told him that he might vomit easily if he took water. He sent for water and kept on drinking it and vomiting the food until he had emptied all the food in his stomach and he could vomit no more. Some onlookers commented and said, "Why are you suffering so much for a small morsel of food?" He said, "I will take out this morsel from my stomach even if at the cost of endangering my life for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (saws) as saying that the body grown with a Haram food deserves the Hellfire." (*Sifatus-Sufwah, 1: 252, Hilyatul-Auliya, 1: 13, Ar-Riyad An-Nadira, 2:141*)

In the same way, something to this effect has been mentioned about Umar Ibn Khattab. It is reported that once he drank some milk. He tasted something strange in it. He enquired from where the milk had come. The person answered that he had gone to the forest where some camels of Zakah were grazing. This milk is from those camels. When he heard this, he vomited out for "this was not Halal for him." (*Muwatta Malik, 1: 269, Sunan Al-Baihaqi, 7: 14, Shuab Al-Iman, 5: 60*)

Ismaiel Ibn Muhammad reports that once some Musk and Ambar were brought to Umar Ibn Khattab (ra) from Bahrain. He said, "By God, I want a woman who may weigh this musk and Ambar, so that I could distribute them among the Muslims. Upon this, his wife Atiqah Bint Zaid said, "I know how to weigh well." He said, "No." She asked, "Why?" Upon this, Umar answered, "It is possible that you take something from it accidentally, in the way that you wipe your hands with your neck." (*Al-Wara Imam Ahmad: 37, Az-Zuhd Ibn Abi Asim, 1: 119*)

Attara says, "Umar Ibn Khattab used to give perfumes to his wife who would sell them. When necessary she would break them with her teeth. Once she wiped some perfume with her scarf. When Umar Ibn Al-Khattab came to his

house he asked what type of perfume is that she told the whole story. Then he said, “You have used the perfume of the Muslims.” After that, he took her scarf and started to wash it until he was completely sure that all the perfume was gone from the scarf.” (*Al-Wara: 37*)

Caliph Ali (ra) had appointed a person from Bani Thaqeef as a governor in a village of Kufah. The person says that once Ali (ra) told him to offer his Zuhr prayer with him. He went to him freely. He saw some water and a bowl there. He took out Sattu (wheat flour mixed with jaggery and other ingredients) from a glass pot. The person said "O Commander of Faithful is that what happens in Iraq, while Iraq has abundant food? He said, "I have not done it with miserliness but I do not want to take anything into my stomach which is Makrooh or undesirable.” (*Al-Wara: 75*)

All these incidents show that the Companions of the Prophet used to shun all doubtful foods and be extremely cautious about taking something, which could possibly be Haram. They would fight shy from consuming it until they were sure what they were eating was completely earned in the Halal way. These are the noble examples set for us by our illustrious predecessors for the Muslims to follow. If they follow what is lawful in the Islamic Shariah and avoid the Prohibited then they are following the best commandments of the Holy Qur’an and the Noble Traditions.

Abstention of our Ancestors from Haram things in their Lives!

Abdullah Ibn Rashid, who was appointed by Caliph Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, as the manager of perfumes in the Public Treasury, says, “Once, I brought the perfume of the Public Treasury before the presence of the Caliph, which used to be prepared and served to the other Caliphs before him. He kept his fingers on his nose and commented that what benefit it yields, except for the waft of the perfume! Upon this, Abdullah Ibn Rashid said, “May I narrate this incident to others?” Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz gave him the permission. (*Al-Wara, Imam Ahmad, 1:37*)

Bishr Ibn Harith used to say that Muafa Ibn Imran often commented, "There were ten people among the knowledgeable personalities in the past, which used to be extremely careful with regard to the Halal and go to extreme lengths to avoid the Haram in the sight of God. They used to make sure that nothing

entered into their stomach, which was Haram. If they were unable to confirm the nature of their food, they used to depend on mere water. Then, Bishr specified the names of those fortunate and righteous people. They were Ibrahim Ibn Adham, Sulaiman Al-Khawwas, Ali Ibn Fudail, Abu Mu'awiyah Al-Aswad, Yusuf ibn Asbat, Wuhaib Ibn Al-Ward, Hudaifah from Harran, and Dawood At-Tai.” (*Al-Wara, 1:10*)

Imam Ghazali has narrated an incident that, once a sage was sitting beside a person who was on the threshold of his death. Meanwhile, the person passed away while there was a kindle burning over that place. The sage ordered the lamp to be put off. For now, only the inheritors of the deceased were authorized to use the oil of this lamp i.e. it was not lawful to apply or use it without the permission of the inheritors.” (*Ihyaul Uloom, 2:96*)

Imam Dhahabi has reported that once a sage was seen in the dream of a person after his death. He was asked how Allah treated him. He answered that he had been treated well, but he had been barred from entering the Paradise for he had borrowed a needle from a person, which he was unable to return to its owner. (*Al-Kabair, Dhahabi: 121*)

Maulana Muzaffar Hussain Kandhlawai is counted among the great sages of Islam in India. Once he intended to come back from Delhi to his place of origin, Kandhla. He rented a bullock cart. While on his way, he started to talk to the owner of the bullock cart. During the conversation, the person guiding the bullock cart informed him that it belonged to a prostitute, which I have rented from her for earning my livelihood. When he heard this, he got out of the bullock cart on the pretext of passing water. He eased himself and then told the person that sitting on the bullock cart was making his legs numb, and he wanted to walk the rest of the way on foot. He told him to go ahead with his cart. And, he started to walk on foot. When they went for a long distance, the person said to the Maulana, "Please sit in the cart!" This time, too, he postponed and declined to sit on the cart on some pretext or the other. Finally, the person realized the point and asked the Maulana, "Don't you want to sit on the cart owned by a prostitute?" The Maulana gave him his wage, which was agreed upon in full, but he never sat on the cart all the way back to his home. (*Arwahe Salasa, Maulana Thanwi: 214*)

All these incidents are an eye-opener for us. They speak of the great care, which our ancestors used to have in the matters relating to that of Halal and the Haram.

Words of Wisdom by the Great Sages

Now, let us consider some of the words of wisdom uttered by our great sages and true Islamic spiritualists, and our other illustrious and pious ancestors so that we could draw inspiration and lessons from them.

Yusuf Ibn Asbat says: “When a person is engaged in worship, the Satan says to his subordinates and executives to check the food of the person. When his food is Haram, the Satan advises them to leave him with this condition that; although he keeps on striving in his worship and suffering; for the Haram he is taking is sufficient to destroy him.” (*Shuab Al-Iman, 5:60*)

The famous sage of Islam, Sari Saqati, says that Salvation lies in three things: Consuming Halal, perfection in Taqwa, and going the straight path. (*Shuab Al-Iman, 5:60*)

Ishaq Al-Ansari reports that once Huzaifah Marashi saw some people running in order to get a place in the first row of the mosque. He commented after he observed this, “Would that these people run for obtaining Halal in this way!” (*Shuab Al-Iman, 5:60*)

Fuzail Ibn Iyaz reports that once a person asked Sufiyan Thauri about the merit of being present in the first row in the mosque during congregational Prayers. He said to him, “First of all, look at the loaf of bread, which you eat, from where it has come and then strive to stand in the first row to gain its due merits.” (*Shuab Al-Iman, 5:61*)

Sahl Ibn Abdullah Tustari said that our Sufis have five basic principles to guide people on the Straight Path: holding fast to the Qur'an, following the Holy Prophet, eating the Halal, abstaining from sins and all that is Haram, and fulfilling the rights of others. (*Shuab Al-Iman, 5:60*)

Shuaib Ibn Harb said: “Righteousness is composed of ten parts out of which nine parts lie in seeking Halal.” (*Al-Wara, 1:9*)

Yahya Ibn Mua'adh said: "Worshiping Allah and obeying Him is a great divine treasure which can only be opened by the key of Prayers. And, the teeth of this key are to consume only Halal morsels." (*Ihya'ul Uloom*, 2: 91)

Sahl Ibn Abdullah Tustari said, "The person who consumes Haram food, the parts of his body disobey Allah whether he likes it or not, and whether he knows it or not. On the other hand, the person who consumes Halal, his physical parts obeys Allah and is dedicated for good services." (*Ihya'ul Uloom*, 2:91)

In brief, where the Holy Qur'an has urged the believers to seek Halal livelihood and look for a lawful source of income in order to achieve abundant blessings and great spiritual bliss in this life, it has also advised them in unequivocal terms about abstaining from the Haram way of life that has been outlined for them in the Shariah. The Holy Qur'an has clearly mentioned the evil results of consuming Haram and given clear details of the terrible and humiliating Punishment in the Hereafter for those earning wealth through unlawful means.

Our ancestors and forefathers set an example for us by acting according to the requirements of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. Now, if we try to seek for the good things in life through Halal means and abstain from Haram, we will find, and experience the blessings and happiness, which these people had earned in their lives by abstaining from Haram; and in the process emerge out as successful both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter.

Our Society is marching on the Wrong Line

Now, if we take stock of the situation of our surroundings, and the happenings in our society, and analyze how far they act in line with the Islamic Shariah, then we know that our society has greatly distanced itself from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadeeth and the moral values of our famous ancestors known throughout the world for their piety and high Islamic moral values, which they enforced on themselves, and in the process set an example to others. The Muslim society of our days has unfortunately moved away from the Right Path treaded on by our renowned Islamic scholars and great sages since the beginning of the Islamic era.

Now, it appears that there are very few people, who can be counted on our fingers, who have the ability to distinguish between the Halal and the Haram. So, many people nowadays try to rename the Haram things in order to make

them Halal. New methods are devised and have been included in the business deals and trade techniques, which are absolutely prohibited in Islamic Shariah. Many ways of taking interest and usury from others have been invented and made prevalent amongst the society - by giving them different labels to fool the gullible Muslims in order to make it appear as Halal to them. The Muslims have adopted them in their daily lives without questioning the rights and wrongs of it in the light of the Shariah, ignorant of the teachings of Islam in this regard. A large section of the society is involved in unlawful professions, employments, interest related activities, theft, robbery and many other things that are termed as Haram by the Islamic Shariah.

It appears that the prophecy made the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saws) has come to pass. Abu Hurairah (ra) has reported that the Messenger of Allah (saws) said: “There will come a time for the people in whom a person will not care what he earns, whether it was from Halal or Haram means.” (Bukhari: 1954, Musnad Ahmad: 9618)

Basic Rules Regarding Seeking Halal

Now, we mention here a few basic rulings and guidelines regarding as to how a person should go about seeking his Halal livelihood for himself and his family, and in the process gain rich material and spiritual rewards, from Allah (swt) the Most High. And, this means abstaining from all the ways, which have been prohibited or forbidden in Islam. They should be shunned by all Muslims, in all their manifestations: for example, taking interest or accepting bribes for favors done by them to others, gambling, lottery, theft, robbery etc. Almost every Muslim knows that all these ways are prohibited in Islam. So, it would be strictly forbidden for them to depend on these means of livelihood and increase their earnings by employing these means in their daily lives.