

MORAL GOVERNANCE OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S)

PART II: ETHICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY

MOHAMMAD NASR ISFAHANI¹

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ABSTRACT: The Prophet Muhammad was sent to refine people's character as well as establish a community based on moral principles. In the power structure he formed, he encouraged public participation, eradicated idol worship in Mecca, and instead constructed places of worship for Muslims. The Prophet also created a comprehensive system of fundamental laws in which the duties of each person was considered to form an independent and unified nation. According to these guidelines, the Prophet succeeded in creating a system grounded on perfect principles in which all believers have equal rights rather than abiding by rules based on tribe, gender, race, or social class. In this part, Prophet Muhammad's ethical management of the economy in the Islamic state will be studied. He sought various ways of solving the economic difficulties of the Muslims by maintaining fair distribution of property and wealth through sources of income for Muslims such as zakāt (legal charity), spoils of war, khums (the Islamic tax), and tribute.

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While economics in any establishment has its laws and regulations, injustice and inequality persist within the system. However, from the onset, the Prophet (s) of Islam established a just society as he propagated and practiced the equal and fair distribution of funds. Even during the beginning of his mission, when poverty engulfed the Muslims, he attempted to eradicate neediness while maintaining a fair distribution of any amount of property or wealth that existed at the time.

Contrary to many political and social leaders who are inattentive to the economic problems of others and merely manage their own and their relatives, The Prophet (s) could not tolerate the pain of hunger faced by Muslims in Mecca and Medina. From the beginning of his presence in Medina, he strived with great effort to eliminate poverty in the newly established Islamic community.

Medina had severe problems in their livelihood and the *Muhajireen* (Emigrants) were the poorest in the city. Their property had been seized by the polytheists of Mecca who forced the Muslims to leave their own city. Unemployment was another problem in the agricultural city of Medina and because the Muhajireen were not skilled in farming, they could not gain any income, and even if they were skilled, there was no land available to them for farming. Moreover, the income of the *Ansār* (Helpers) was not sufficient to feed even their own families.

Additionally, the Emigrants did not have any place to reside. They were forced to live in a small corner of the Ansār's homes. The Prophet (s) managed to build rooms for himself and a few companions beside the mosque. It also became a place of residence for the homeless and those living alone. They lived primarily through charity and later became known as Companions of the Ledge (*Ashāb-u Suffah*).²

² Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 256.

Poverty had not only engulfed the companions. The Prophet (s) himself also lived like the poor in the community even though he was the leader of the Muslims. Regardless of whether he was financially stable or not, he lived in a simple manner to feel the hunger of the Muslims and prevent them from feeling any sort of spiritual pressure. Contrary to self-serving leaders who cared only for themselves and their social circles, the Prophet (s) gave everything he had to the needy Muslims to relieve some of their difficulties.

One day, Lady Fatima (a) brought a piece of bread for the Prophet (s). He put it in his mouth and said, "My daughter! This is the first food which was put in your father's mouth after three days."³ It is mentioned that one time three months passed without smoke rising from the Prophet's (s) home as a result of baking bread and cooking food. People would wonder as to what they have eaten and would later come to realize it was water and dates. Sometimes, the Ansār or the Prophet's neighbours brought milk for him.⁴ Ibn Abbās said, "There were many nights that the Holy Prophet's (s) family slept hungry."⁵ Āyisha narrated, "One night, we were sitting in the dark. Someone came and asked, "Do you not have castor-oil?" I replied, "If we had it, we would have eaten." She said, "Sometimes we did not have oil to light our home for forty days."⁶

Not only did these issues occur during the early years of Hijra, but they continued up to the last days of the Holy Prophet's (s) life. It is narrated from Āyisha that "The Prophet (s) never ate two kinds of food and he used to stop eating before he was full."⁷ When the Prophet (s) overcame on Naṭāh, Kunānah hid a camel's skin in which they had set their own gold and jewellery in an abandoned area. When The Prophet

³ Ibid., vol.1, p. 400.

⁴ Ibid., vol.1, p. 401.

⁵ Ibid., vol.1, p. 402.

⁶ Ibid., vol.1, pp. 405 & 406.

⁷ Ibid., vol.1, p. 404.

(s) found it, it included many gold bracelets, anklets, armlets, necklaces, some strings of emerald and pearl, and a ring of plating stones with Yemeni gold. There was a necklace of pearl that The Prophet (s) had given to Āyisha or one of his daughters. She had sold it and divided its money among the poor and widows. At night, The Prophet (s) came to ‘Āyisha or his own daughter and asked for the necklace to be returned. After explaining what she had done with it, he praised God and left.⁸

The report of Imam Āli (a) is very clear about the Holy Prophet’s (s) living conditions. In *Nahjul Balāgha*, he (a) states:

The Prophet took the least share from this world and did not take a full glance at it. Of all the people of the world, he was the least satiated and had the most empty of stomachs. The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. When he knew that Allah, the Glorified, hated a thing, he too hated it; that Allah held a thing low, he too held it low; that Allah held a thing small, he too held it small. If we love what Allah and His Prophet hate and hold great what Allah and His Prophet hold small that would be enough isolation from Allah and transgression of His commands.

He used to eat on the ground, and sat like a slave. He repaired his shoe with his hand, and patched his own clothes. He would ride an unsaddled donkey and would seat someone behind him. If there was a curtain on his door with pictures on it he would say to one of his wives, "O [so-and-so], take them away because if I look at it I recall the world and its allurements." Thus, he removed his heart from this world and destroyed its remembrance from his mind. He loved that its

⁸ Maghāzī, p. 513.

allurements should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not secure good dress from it, should not regard it a place of stay and should not hope to live in it. Consequently he removed it from his mind, let it go away from his heart and kept it hidden from his eyes. In the same way he who dislikes a thing should dislike looking at it or hearing about it.

Certainly there was in the Prophet of Allah all that would apprise you of the evils of this world and its defects, namely that he remained hungry along with his chief companions, and despite his great nearness, the allurements of the world remained remote from him. Now, one should see with one's intelligence whether Allah honoured Muhammad - the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his descendants - as a result of this or disgraced him. If he says that Allah disgraced him, he certainly lies and perpetrates a great untruth. If he says Allah honoured him, he should know that Allah dishonoured the others when He extended the (benefits of the) world for him but held them away from him who was the nearest to Him of all men.

Therefore, one should follow His Prophet, tread in his footsteps and enter through his entrance. Otherwise he will not be safe from ruin. Certainly, Allah made Muhammad - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - a sign for the Day of Judgment, a conveyor of tidings for Paradise and a warner of retribution. He left this world hungry but entered upon the next world safe. He did not lay one stone upon another (to make a house) till he departed and responded to the call of Allah. How great is Allah's

blessing in that He blessed us with the Prophet as a predecessor whom we follow and a leader behind whom we tread.⁹

Incomes of an Islamic government

The methods of earning an income varied among the pre-Islamic Arabs. One of the usual unethical ways of doing so was to plunder and rob the tribes which were militarily weak, an act which is forbidden in Islam. The Prophet acted differently. During the battle of Ghābah, when Muslims reached beside the well of Hamm, they asked The Prophet (s), "O Messenger of Allah! Will you not confiscate this well?" He replied, "No, buy it and donate it as a charity." Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubadullah bought it and then endowed it.¹⁰

Furthermore, The Prophet (s) sought various ways of solving the economical difficulties of the Muslims and eradicating poverty in Muslim society. He also tried to benefit from the opportunities and events in the best possible way to enable others to earn a living. In that time, property was spent on defending the Muslims and buying arms. This increased the Muslims' state of poverty. In these circumstances, the only possible sources of income for Muslims were the spoils of war and for the government were *zakat* (legal charity) and *khums* (one fifth).

a) Zakat

In Islam, honourable work and effort is the ideal way to make a living. In the beginning, when the Muhajireen moved to Medina, economic activity by work was the way to provide a livelihood. In principle, *zakat* is a source of income for the government in order to provide for the public costs in an Islamic society. People were voluntarily paying a

⁹ Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 154.

¹⁰ Maqḥāzī, p. 414.

sum of money annually to governmental officers from their own extra income as a form of worship. The Prophet (s) practiced equity in collecting zakat. He had ordered the managers of zakat to treat the tribes with acceptance and not seize their most excellent and valued property and leave them for the owners. Instead, they were to collect zakat by randomly selecting sheep from among cattle. He would send tax officers who were well-liked by the people. In one incident, when the Prophet (s) asked Bani al-Muṣṭalagh as to whom they would like for a zakat officer, they recommended ʿAbād ibn Bashīr, and the Prophet (s) employed him.¹¹

According to the order of God in the Holy Qur'an, public use of zakat has been allocated to provide for the needs of the poor and the collectors of zakat, to console the Muslims, to providing credit to freeing slaves, and to assist debtors who are unable to pay their debts and travellers.¹²

b) Tribute

Muslims paid zakat to provide for defence and public expenses. As the Islamic empire spread, non-Muslims received protection under this government as well. They paid a sum called tribute (*jizyah*) for the use of public facilities and for the protection of their own security. The Islamic government determined the amount of tribute while considering the financial ability of the people.¹³

c) Charity, loans, and gifts

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 741-747.

¹² *Charities are only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for] the freedom of [the slaves and the debtors, and in the way of Allah, and for the traveller.] This is [an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise. (The Qur'an 9:60)*

¹³ Ḥur al-ʿĀmulī, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Wasā'il al-Shīa, vol. 11, chapter 68, pp. 113, 114.

Charity was another way of paying government's expenses and for the livelihood of the needy. In the first year of Hijra, the extent of unemployment, sanctions, and commercial closures caused destitution among many Muslims. In this period, an attempt was made to reduce economical gaps through donations, charity, and gifts. God in the Holy Qur'an considers charity a vital part of faith and piety and has encouraged people to practice it.¹⁴

The Prophet (s) also encouraged people to help each other and collect provisions for the hereafter by being generous. He said, "If one can protect himself from the fire of Hell by donating half of a date, then do this, but if he cannot, then speak a good word."¹⁵ Through this action,

¹⁴ Charity and its dimensions have been mentioned in the chapter The Cow (Sura al-Baqarah). Verses 261 to 274 are about charity. Verses 275 - 281 deal with anti-ethical loans. Verses 282 - 283 deal with the ways of paying a loan by the people to God.

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the Godwary, (2:2)

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; (2:3)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْإِنْسَانِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

They ask you as to what they should spend. Say, "Whatever wealth you spend, let it be for parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and the traveller." And whatever good that you may do, Allah indeed knows it. (2:215)

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Those who spend their property for the cause of God and do not make the recipient feel obliged or insulted shall receive their reward from God. They will have no fear nor will they be grieved. (2:262)

¹⁵ Ibn Hishām, Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah, vol. 2, p. 114.

he managed to develop and institutionalize the feelings of responsibility and kindness towards others.

Sometimes the poor from amongst the Muhajireen and even the Ansar regularly approached the Prophet (s) and complained about the unfavourable economic conditions. They would say, "We do not have sufficient provisions nor does anyone care to help us or give us food." The Prophet (s) advised people to donate in the way of God and to refrain from greed, because self-indulgence would be the reason for their perdition. They would say, "How can we give while we do not have anything to eat?" He responded, "Give to others even with a half of a date to satisfy their hunger or tip of an arrow by which someone can struggle in God's way to attack the enemy."¹⁶ Charity consists of any kind of assistance in religion. A man once asked the Prophet (s), "O Messenger of Allah! What charity is the best?" He replied, "Everything which is given in God's way; whether it be the shadow of a tent, service, or providing a horse for a brave and warlike man."¹⁷

One day a poor man requested help in a bad language as if the Prophet (s) was allocating the public treasury to himself. The Prophet replied, "God has not allocated charity to any angel close to Him nor any prophet; it is for one of the eight groups: 1) the poor Muhajireen who did not request anything from the people; 2) the homeless who were temporarily living in the mosque, such as the Companions of the Ledge; 3) the agents and officers who were collecting zakat and receiving a sum of money moderately for their expenditure and journeys; 4) for the individuals or tribes who received charity from the Prophet (s) in order to attract them to Islam, known as "those whose hearts are won over", 5) the mukātab and slaves who had signed a free contract with their owner but had no money; 6) the needy debtors; 7) the soldiers and those who strive for the Islamic country and, 8) the

¹⁶ Maghāzī, p. 588.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 787.

travellers who do not have sufficient money to return to their land; hence, charity was given to secure their necessities.¹⁸

The Prophet (s) assisted anyone with financial needs. When orphan boys reached maturity, they were expected to work and no longer needed charity. If one of them requested khums, the khums officer would give khums the first time provided that the receiver realizes that khums does not belong to those who are competent.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Prophet (s) was not able to comfortably sleep unless he gave what he had attained. One day he had six dinars and sent five of it to five families of the Ansar and ordered to give the remaining dinar to a poor person as soon as possible. He said, "I do not want to have anything."

It is narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that when the Prophet (s) passed away, no dinar or slave remained with him. Even at the time of his death, his armour was pledged to a Jewish man in return of 30 šāʾ [equal 4 mudds] of wheat.²⁰

The Prophet (s) observed fairness when accepting charity. When he went to visit Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Saʿd said to him, "I am a rich man and do not have any heir except my daughter. Is it all right that I give two-thirds of my property as charity? The Prophet (s) replied, "No." He said, "What about its half?" Again, he replied with a "No." And then he continued, "If you like to give charity, one-third of it is enough, if not too much, because it is better to leave your heirs rich and needless than leaving them poor. Any generosity you do in God's way, you will receive the reward in the hereafter even if it is a morsel of food that you put in your wife's mouth."²¹

While the Prophet (s) assisted people, he protected their reputation as well. Once, the Prophet (s) requested Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh, an

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 813.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 306.

²⁰ Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, pp. 226, 227, 292.

²¹ *Maghāzī*, p. 853.

underprivileged man, to sell his camel to him, but Jābir wanted to present it to him instead. The Prophet (s) refused by saying, "I will buy it from you, but you can still benefit from it just as before."²² Moreover, presents were equally divided among the Muslims. On the way to Ḥudaybiyyah, when The Prophet (s) and Muslims reached Abwā', Imā'ibn Raḥḍah sent some plump calves, a hundred sheep, and two camels to The Prophet (s) with his son, Khafāf. The Prophet (s) accepted his gift, and prayed and asked God to forgive him. Then, he ordered that the sheep be divided between the companions. They poured milk into a container and all drank from it.²³

The Prophet (s) did not differentiate between his relatives and others. Umme Salamah, the Holy Prophet's (s) wife said, "We received the same amount of meat as others."²⁴

The Prophet (s) appreciated those who presented him with gifts and if possible, he offered them gifts in return. On the way to Ji'rānah, a shepherd came to The Prophet (s) and gave him a sheep as a gift. He said, "I do not receive any gifts from pagans." He said, "O Messenger of Allah! I believe in Allah and His Messenger and I also pay the zakat from my own wealth." The Prophet (s) told him, "When we reach Ji'rānah, come to us but do not bring your own sheep." When they reached there, he gave the man a hundred sheep in gratitude for his benevolence.²⁵

On the way to the battle of Tabūk, the Prophet (s) stopped in Wādī al-Qurā where the Jewish inhabitants brought some food to him. He ate from them and ordered forty loads of dates to be allocated to them annually. This in turn softened their hearts and encouraged them to peacefully coexist with the Muslims. Concerning this generosity of the

²² Ibid. p. 298

²³ Ibid. p. 437

²⁴ Ibid. p. 449

²⁵ Ibid. p. 717

Prophet (s), a Jewish woman said, "The goodness which Muḥammad (s) did toward the Jews is more than the entire amount of inheritance which they had received from their own fathers."²⁶

When the financial condition of Muslims improved, the Prophet (s) offered gifts to the agents who had come to make contacts, negotiations, or familiarize themselves with Islam. Indeed, he observed justice and equality in allocating these gifts. When he offered gifts to the representatives of Banī Tamīm, he asked them, "Is there anybody who did not receive presents from us?" They replied, "Yes, there is a little boy who is watching our goods." He stated, "Send him to me to receive his gift." Qays ibn 'Āṣim said, "He is just a child." The Prophet (s) said, "In any case, he has come as an agent and has a right."²⁷

d) Spoils of war and ransom of captives

Before the advent of Islam, many Arabs sought their livelihoods by plundering from other tribes. With the advent of Islam in Mecca and the gathering of Muslims in Medina, the pagans of Mecca felt that their own existence was in danger. The Jews and the nobles of Medina found that the present situation would be difficult for their own position. All three groups were eager to create conditions to destroy Islam or return to the state of affairs that existed in the past. For this reason, plots, sabotages, and military aggressions were being carried out one after the other, leaving no room to achieve any sound economic activities necessary for social security such as agriculture, animal husbandry and trade for Muslims. Although Islam spread peace and security and God commanded the Muslims to demonstrate it,²⁸ they also prepared themselves, by the order of God, against possible invasions.²⁹

²⁶ Ibid. p. 766

²⁷ Ibid. p. 746

²⁸ *And if they incline toward peace, then you] too [incline toward it, and put your trust in Allah. Indeed He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.* (The Qur'an 8:61)

²⁹ *Mobilize your (defensive) force as much as you can to frighten the enemies of God and your own enemies. This also will frighten those who are behind them whom you do not know but*

Considering the imposed condition by the enemy, the Muhajireen and the Ansar provided the security of the city and managed their own life through the income obtained from these spoils of war. Of course, taking into consideration that in Islam, the goal of war must not be to earn spoils; rather, the goal is to defend oneself and to fight in the way of God (*jihād*). The criterion of *jihād* is not the existence or non-existence of spoils. In *jihād*, it is possible that the spoils do not exist.

During the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet (s) told his companions to be ready to fight. At this time, some people who had not participated in *jihad* in Ḥudaybiyyah wanted to accompany the Prophet (s) in this battle for taking spoils, because they believed that Khaybar was the most abundant village in terms of meat, food, and property. The Prophet (s) ordered a town crier to proclaim that those who come in order to join *jihad* are welcome, but those who come for taking spoils should not come.³⁰ What Muslims could earn from war included movable and immovable spoils and captives. Movable spoils were divided between fighters after appointing one-fifth of it as the share of God and the Prophet (s). The Prophet (s) was optimistic that the difficulties of the Muslims would be solved largely through fair distribution of income obtained from spoils of war and the ransom which Muslims received by freeing the captives. During the battle of Badr, the ransom for captives of war who had wealthy families had an important role in providing the economic needs of the community, but those captives who belonged to poor families, the Prophet (s) freed them without receiving ransom.³¹

In the first confrontation with pagans in Badr, the Prophet (s) prayed for a resolution of the Muslims' poverty and was hopeful to resolve social poverty this way. The Prophet (s) implored God, "O God! They

God knows well. Whatever you spend for the cause of God, He will give you sufficient recompense with due justice. (The Qur'an 8:60)

³⁰ Maghāzī, p. 482.

³¹ Ibid., p. 96.

are on foot and do not have any horse, give them a horse; they are nude, clothe them; they are hungry, feed them; they are needy, make them needless."³²

Perhaps the prayer of the Prophet (s) was answered after the battle with the Banī Naḍīr Jews since following it, the distribution of their property and lands were divided among the Muhajireen.³³

After the victory of Muslims over the Meccan pagans in the battle of Badr, the order of distribution of spoils of war was sent down to the Prophet (s) through the first verses of the chapter *Anfāl*. According to these verses, spoils were divided into two unequal parts: one-fifth of it was considered as khums belonging to the government and used for the poor's public affairs on the expediency of the Prophet (s), and four-fifth of it was equally divided among the fighters who were present in the battle.

Before the emergence of Islam, it was customary among Arabs that one-fourth of the spoils of war belonged to the chiefs of the tribes. But after the emergence of Islam, according to God's order,³⁴ one-fifth of the spoils was allocated to the Prophet (s) as the governor of Muslims and the rest of it was distributed among Islam's soldiers in accordance to the norms of that era, their fair customs, and the Holy Prophet's (s) discretion.

Some have said that the Prophet (s) had considered a special share for children. For example, Sahlah, daughter of 'Āṣim who was born during the battle of Khaybar and was also a newborn whom God had granted to 'Abd Allāh ibn Anīs in this battle. And some have said that

³² Ibid., vol.1, p. 19.

³³ Sīrah, Ibn Hishām, vol. 2, p. 716.

³⁴ The Qur'an 2:219

the Prophet (s) gave them a share of spoils, but not as much as the share of the fighters for the faith (*Mujāhidīn*).³⁵

The Prophet (s) took ten people from the Jews of Medina along with himself to the battle of Khaybar and allocated them a share similar to the Muslims. Some have said that their share was not as much as Muslims, but the Prophet (s) granted them a part of the spoils. He gave rewards to all of the slaves. 'Umayr, slave of Abi al-Luḥm stated, "The Prophet (s) granted me some furniture."³⁶ He also allocated a share of spoils to the slaves and servants who were present in the battle of Badr and had assisted the fighters.³⁷

Ethics in maintaining the treasury

It was very important for the Prophet (s) to maintain the treasury of the Islamic state and public property such as the spoils of war and he reacted strongly against wrongfully taking it. After the battle of Ḥunayn, the Prophet (s) ordered fighters to collect the spoils and warned against committing treason against the spoils if they believe in God and the day of Resurrection. For this reason, when 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib had given only a needle of spoils to his own wife, the Prophet (s) took it back and returned it. Also, 'Abdillāh ibn Zayd returned a bow which he had taken from the spoils and had even used it against the pagans.³⁸

Before the division of the spoils from the battle of Khaybar, somebody requested something from the spoils from the Prophet (s). He said, "Even a string and a piece of cloth is not lawful and I will not take any possession from it or also give something from it." Another man

³⁵ Maghāzī, p. 524.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 522.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 78.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 700.

requested from him fetters of camel. He said, "Let us divide the spoils so that I can give it to you."³⁹

After the battle of Ḥunayn, a man came to the Prophet (s) with a package and requested him for it. The Prophet (s) stated, "From these spoils, what is my share and the sons of Abd al-Muṭṭalib will be for you." In this battle, a man had found a rope and tied himself with it he requested it from the Prophet (s) as his own share of spoils. He said, "My share belongs to you, but what do you do about people's shares?"⁴⁰ After the battle of Khaybar, the town crier of the Prophet (s) loudly proclaimed, "Even if someone has taken a string or a piece of cloth, he must return it to the spoils, because fraud will be the cause of misfortune, humiliation, and the fire of Resurrection." Before the battle, the Prophet (s) had told companions that Muslims must not sell anything from the spoils before its position becomes clear and if they have ridden on a horse, to return it, and if they have put on a cloth of spoils, to return it before it becomes old.⁴¹

During the battle of Khaybar, a man named Kirkirah who accompanied the Prophet (s) and used to hold the Prophet's horse was killed. Some asked the Prophet (s), "Does he die a martyr?" He replied, "He is burning in fire because of a bath towel which he had stolen from the spoils of Khaybar." Another man asked, "I took two old shoelaces from the spoils." He said, "Both of the two laces is fire."⁴² At this time, a man from Ashja' tribe passed away and the news of his death reached the Prophet (s). He stated, "Say prayer on the body of your friend!" The audience became disturbed because the Prophet (s) had not recognized him as a martyr and needless of a ritual bathing." He said, "He has committed fraud in the way of God." People searched his goods and

³⁹ Ibid., p. 519.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 700.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 520, 521.

⁴² Ibid., p. 541.

found several cheap beads from the Jews which cost only two dirhams.⁴³

Likewise the Prophet (s) did not permit the unlawful use of people's property for himself and his own companions, or the unethical use of enemy's property as well.

Yasār Ḥabashī, an African slave who grazed sheep for his Jewish master 'Āmir, learned about the prophethood of Muḥammad (s) approached him and said, "What are you inviting us towards?" He stated, "To Islam. Testify there is no god except Allah and I am His messenger." Yasār asked, "If I accept it, how will I benefit by it?" He replied, "Paradise will be for you." Yasār said, "These sheep are a deposit." The Prophet (s) then stated, "Take those sheep out of the military camp and lead them toward their owner. God will remove that deposit from your charge." The sheep went to their owner and the Jewish man informed that his slave has become a Muslim.⁴⁴

In another narration, Mughayrah had gone on a journey along with some pagans who had drunk wine although Mughayrah refused to drink. He took their goods and property and went to give one-fifth of it as khums to the Prophet (s). However, the Prophet (s) refused to accept it and said, "Because this property has been achieved by deceit and trickery, I do not accept it as khums."⁴⁵

Even if the property gained was unlawful, the Prophet (s) gave it back to its owners. Imam Āli (a) reached Zayd ibn Ḥārithah who had gone in a venture and said, "The Prophet (s) has ordered that you must return any captive and property you have seized from this tribe." Zayd said, "Do you have any proof from the Prophet (s)?" Imam Āli (A)

⁴³ Ibid., p. 520.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 494

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 452

answered, "This is his sword." Zayd recognized it and ordered those who have seized a captive or property to return it.⁴⁶

Cases of usage of the Holy Prophet's private spoils

The Prophet (s) spent these properties to provide for himself, his family, and the Muslims.⁴⁷ Because of the people's poverty, the Prophet (s) did not take khums from the spoils of the battle of Badr. In this battle, his financial share was as much as the other fighters. The sword "Dhulfiqār" and the camel of Abū Jahl which was sacrificed later for the Hajj ceremony in Ḥudaybiyyah were his only share of spoils. After the verse (8:41) was revealed, the Prophet (s) allocated a share for himself.⁴⁸ He had three cases of private spoils: One was for the Banī Naḍīr, which belonged to the Prophet (s) who distributed among his relatives and granted it to anyone that he deemed proper while providing the share to the wives and descendants of 'Abd ul-Muṭallib with the products and incomes of its palm groves; the rest of it was spent for buying arms, war equipment and horses used in the time of Abū Bakr and Umar. The income derived from Fadak was granted to the poor and the needy. The income of Khaybar had been divided into three parts: Two parts for the Muhajireen and one for the poor relatives of the Prophet (s).⁴⁹ He bought some arms and clothes from his own share of khums from the spoils and gave some furniture, clothes, and valuable beads to his own close family such as women and men of 'Abd ul-Muṭallib and also allocated some to the poor and orphans.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 423

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 13

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 73-7

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 280

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 519

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