



THE VALUE OF LAWFUL PROFESSION IN ISLAM

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Abstract. *This article provides a scholarly analysis of the role of honest labour and lawful profession in ensuring social development, economic stability and social justice within the framework of Islamic teachings. It affirms that lawful occupation should be understood not merely as a source of income but as a significant factor in an individual's spiritual maturity, moral integrity and inner peace. Drawing upon verses from the Holy Qur'an, the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the views of Islamic scholars, the study highlights the importance of lawful sustenance in strengthening justice and social stability within society. The moral and social consequences of acquiring wealth through unlawful and illegitimate means are also critically examined. The article further analyses the idea proposed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev “Honest labour is the guarantee of a peaceful life and a prosperous society” in harmony with the Islamic principles of lawful profession, substantiating its theoretical and practical significance for the development of contemporary society.*

Keywords: *lawful profession, honest labour, spiritual development, social justice, economic stability, Qur'an and hadith, moral values, nationwide movement.*

Introduction

The stability of a society's development, economic growth and the establishment of social justice are directly connected with the content and quality of human labour. In particular, in those societies where the principle of lawfulness (halal) is dominant in the matter of labour and profession, economic stability, spiritual elevation and social solidarity are firm. From this standpoint, in the religion of Islam the question of lawful profession is regarded not merely as an economic but as a complex concept possessing a deep spiritual-ethical significance.

In the conditions of today's globalisation and market relations, the question of forming an economic system founded on lawful labour is acquiring a pressing significance not only from a religious but also from a socio-political and spiritual standpoint.

In this sense, the idea "Honest labour is the guarantee of a peaceful life and a prosperous society," advanced in the Address delivered by the head of our state, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan on 26 December 2025, is of particular importance for its harmony with the principles of lawful profession in Islamic teaching (Mirziyoyev, 2025). This idea is of strategic importance for the country's development and yields a positive effect in several important directions. First, lawful labour increases economic efficiency, develops production and entrepreneurial activity, and serves to raise the population's incomes and the prosperity of life. Second, a system founded on lawful labour restricts corruption and unlawful activity and strengthens trust, justice and social solidarity in society. Third, this idea serves as an important educational factor in raising the young generation in a responsible, disciplined, patriotic and industrious spirit.

MAIN PART

The religion of Islam regulates all spheres of human life including labour activity and economic relations on the basis of strict ethical norms. A lawful profession is a kind of labour that accords with the rules of the sharia, brings benefit to society and does no harm to the rights of others. Together with being a source of a person's sustenance, it is an important factor ensuring his spiritual perfection and the purity of his heart.

In the Holy Qur'an many verses are given concerning the seeking of lawful sustenance. Thus, in verse 172 of Surah al-Baqara it is graciously said:

"O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and give thanks to Allah, if it is He whom you worship." (Mansur, 2004:26)

This verse discloses the spiritual as well as the material importance of lawful sustenance, for in the worship of one who is not nourished by lawful sustenance there is neither sincerity nor blessing. Likewise, in verse 168 of Surah al-Baqara it is stressed: "O people! Eat of the lawful and good things on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; truly he is a manifest enemy to you." In this verse it is explained that unlawful paths are a temptation of Satan, while a lawful profession holds a person firmly on the

right path; all people are here commanded to consume what is lawful and pure (Mansur, 2004:25).

In verse 114 of Surah al-Nahl, too, the consumption of lawful and pure sustenance is commanded:

“So eat of the lawful and good things that Allah has provided for you, and give thanks for the favours of Allah, if it is He whom you worship.” (Mansur, 2004:280)

These verses show that a person’s economic activity is bound up not only with satisfying material needs but also with preserving spiritual purity.

The prohibition of unlawful gain

Together with promoting lawful profession, Islamic teaching strictly forbids the acquisition of wealth through unlawful and false paths. It sharply condemns consuming another’s property by false means, and becoming rich through gambling, deceit, bribery and unlawful trades. Thus, in verse 188 of Surah al-Baqara it is graciously said: “Do not consume your property among yourselves by false means, nor convey it to the rulers in order, knowingly, to consume a part of people’s property by sinful means.” The exegetes stress that this verse forbids gambling, deceit, bribery, usury (riba) and the acquisition of wealth through unlawful trades. For property acquired by an unlawful path exerts a negative influence on a person’s spiritual world, darkens the heart and hinders the acceptance of acts of worship. For this reason, in Islamic teaching a lawful profession is regarded not merely as a social obligation but as a religious duty of important standing in the sharia (Mansur, 2004:29).

Lawful labour in the Prophetic tradition

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) widely promoted lawful labour and exalted it as one of the most honourable and virtuous of deeds in human life. Specially stressing that lawful sustenance is of decisive importance for a person’s spiritual perfection and for the acceptance of his acts of worship, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) presented earning one’s living through independent labour as a high value. In this sense, although the rank of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was lofty, he cited as an example that the prophet of God Most High, Dawud (peace be upon him), too earned his sustenance by the labour of his own hands. Thus the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

“No one has ever eaten food better than what he has earned by the labour of his own hand; indeed, the prophet of Allah, Dawud (peace be upon him), too ate from the labour of his own hand.” (al-Bukhari, 2002:499)

From these hadiths it is understood that a person's lawful labour is important not only as a source of material provision but also for his spiritual and moral development. It follows that a part of worship and of spiritual felicity is hidden in a person's orientation toward just and lawful labour.

Islamic teaching commands everyone to occupy themselves with a profession beneficial to all, and turns a person away from greed and begging. The Messenger of Allah's (peace be upon him) hadith “By the One in whose hand is my soul, that one of you should take his rope and carry firewood on his back (working lawfully) is better than that he should go to someone and ask for help, whether that person gives to him or refuses him” shows that lawful labour holds an important place in preserving a person's dignity (al-Bukhari, 2002:358).

In a hadith narrated by Imam al-Bayhaqi it is stressed: “Seeking a lawful livelihood is an obligation after the obligatory acts.” This shows the high standing of lawful profession in the sharia (al-Bayhaqi, 2000:420).

In a hadith narrated by Imam al-Tabarani, a stern warning is given concerning the negative effect of an unlawful morsel upon a person's deeds; according to it, an unlawful morsel causes a person's deeds not to be accepted. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “By the One in whose hand is Muhammad's soul, no sooner does a servant cast a single unlawful morsel into his stomach than his deeds of forty days are not accepted; and whichever servant's flesh has grown from the unlawful and from usury is more deserving of the Fire” (al-Tabarani, 1995:310–311).

This hadith shows that the choice of a lawful profession is of decisive importance not only for worldly but also for otherworldly felicity. The scholars of Islam in particular Imam al-Ghazali assess lawful sustenance as the foundation of a person's morals. According to him, lawful sustenance purifies a person's heart and forms in him the feelings of contentment, patience and gratitude. A person who occupies himself with lawful labour is at peace in his conscience, gains respect in society, and strengthens an atmosphere of trust in social relations. On the scale of society, the wide spread of lawful profession ensures economic stability, social justice and the transparency of

the financial system; bribery, fraud and unlawful activity diminish, and lawfulness and ethical norms become dominant in society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in the religion of Islam a lawful profession is regarded as one of the central questions of human life. It is not only a source of material sustenance but also an important means to a person's spiritual purification, the tranquillity of the heart, and the attainment of the pleasure of God Most High. The verses of the Holy Qur'an, the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the teachings of the scholars of Islam vividly show that a lawful profession is of high religious, ethical and social importance for every Muslim. These sources stress that lawful labour is inseparably bound up with the acceptance of a person's acts of worship, with his moral perfection, and with the establishment of justice in society.

According to Islamic teaching, every person must conduct his professional activity by a lawful and just path, strictly keep away from unlawful and false paths, and raise his labour to the level of worship. Lawful labour forms in a person such virtues as responsibility, contentment, patience and gratitude, while on the scale of society it strengthens economic stability, social justice and an atmosphere of mutual trust. In this sense, a society founded on lawful labour develops as a spiritually mature, economically stable and socially just society.

From this standpoint, the idea "Honest labour is the guarantee of a peaceful life and a prosperous society," advanced in the Address delivered by the head of our state, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan on 26 December 2025, acquires particular importance for its harmony with the principles of lawful profession in Islamic teaching. By turning lawful labour into a nationwide movement, this idea envisages the strengthening of justice, efficiency and responsibility in the activity of every citizen and economic subject, and serves as a firm foundation for the country's long-term development and social stability.

Thus, the principles of lawful profession in the religion of Islam are of pressing significance for the development of modern society as well; through their application in life, it is possible to attain a balance between the interests of the individual, society and the state. Every person's striving to perform lawful labour is an important condition not only of personal perfection but also of general prosperity and stable development.

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