

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Khutbah on Labor Rights in Islam-

Labor Day 2023

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۗ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ

فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا ۗ وَرَحِمْتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

- In a few days' time, this nation will celebrate Labor Day!
- It all began as a Federal Holiday since June 28, 1894
- This is a day intended:
 - to honor and recognize the American labor movement and
 - the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements of the United States.

1. In Islam work is honorable

- Deep in our Islamic faith, work is considered a virtuous deed and obligatory upon all able-bodied person in society.
- Man has many needs to fulfill for himself and those depending on him within the family
- Basic needs such as:
 - Food and water
 - Shelter
 - Clothing
 - Medicine

- Education etc. and since he is required to fulfill these needs for himself and his family through lawful means, he is obliged to work.
- While work is mandatory, begging is highly discouraged unless extremely necessary.
- Prophet SAS said:

لَأَنَّ يَحْتَطِبَ أَحَدُكُمْ حُزْمَةً عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ أَحَدًا، فَيُعْطِيَهُ أَوْ يَمْنَعَهُ "

"No doubt, it is better for any one of you to cut a bundle of wood and carry it over his back rather than to ask someone who may or may not give him."

- Obviously, there are cases where begging is allowed, such as when someone is in dire need and has exhausted all other means of support.
- In these circumstances, the community is encouraged to assist such needy people.
- Thus, the Qur'an and the teachings of Rasoolullah SAS emphasize the importance of helping those in need and giving to charity to those less fortunate through practices such as:
 - Zakat (obligatory almsgiving) and
 - Sadaqah (voluntary charity)

2. [A Few Points to note about working in Islam:](#)

a. Work is an act of Worship

- Work to provide sustenance for oneself and one's family is considered as an act of worship.
- This can be illustrated by the following incident:

Once the Prophet (PBUH) was sitting with his companions and they happened to see a young man busy working in the early hours of the morning.

The companions watched him and commented on how beneficial it would be if he put his effort in worshipping Allah instead. When the Prophet (PBUH) he heard this, he said to them:

إِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَى عَلَى وَلَدِهِ صِغَارًا فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ،

If he left seeking sustenance for his small children then he is in the way of Allah SWT.

وَإِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَى عَلَى أَبْوَيْنِ شَيْخَيْنِ كَبِيرَيْنِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

If he left seeking sustenance for his parents who are old then he is in the way of Allah SWT.

وَإِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَى عَلَى نَفْسِهِ يَعْقُهَا فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ،

If he left seeking sustenance to be independent and self-sufficient, it is in the way of Allah.

وَإِنْ كَانَ خَرَجَ يَسْعَى رِيَاءً وَمُفَاخَرَةً فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ الشَّيْطَانِ

But if he left and is arrogant in his efforts and for show then he is working in way of Satan."

b. Work for your own provisions is the best way to feed oneself

On the authority of Al-Miqdam, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ طَعَامًا قَطُّ، خَيْرًا مِنْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ، وَإِنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ دَاوُدَ كَانَ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ

"Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet (ﷺ) of Allah, David used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor."

(Al-Bukhari)

c. Laziness and wishful thinking are highly discouraged

- Umar ibn-ul-Khattab, the second caliph of Islam, said:

لَا يَقْعُدَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ عَنْ طَلَبِ الرِّزْقِ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي، فَقَدْ عَلِمُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاءَ لَا تُمَطِّرُ ذَهَبًا وَلَا فِضَّةً

"Let not one of you sit in his house, rather than actively seeking sustenance saying: 'O Allah provide for me.' When you know quite well that the sky does not rain gold and silver."

3. Allah SWT does not want exploitation

- We learn the importance of work in our faith and
 - it is highly encouraged in order to promote growth in society.
- This celebration on Labor Day shows the importance of workers to the well-being of society.

- Thus, our faith has instituted laws to manage workers and prevent them from being abused or exploited.
- Islam emphasizes justice, fairness, and compassion in all aspects of life, including the treatment of workers
- Islam made a clear path forward of workers' rights are and how they are to be fulfilled and protected.
- Notably, by fulfilling these rights, one serves The Creator, because these rights are given to us by The Creator Himself.
- These rights are only but manifestations of belief in The One who created man and a test how they behave with each other.
- Surely, Allah Almighty does not want His creation to be exploited or abused.
- So through His Messengers to mankind, He SWT has informed us that exploitation and injustice must not be practiced.
- Instead, fair treatment and justice must be the basis of all human relations.

Allah Almighty says:

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۗ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ

دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا ۗ وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord? It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in this world, and We raised some of them above others in ranks, so that some may employ others in their work. But the Mercy (Paradise) of your Lord (O Muhammad SAW) is better than the (wealth of this world) which they amass. (32)

4. [Among those directives from Allah SWT and His Messenger SAS are the following:](#)

a. **Fair Compensation**

- Islam emphasizes fair compensation for labor.
- Workers should be adequately for their work.
- Allah SWT says:

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ

"Give full measure and full weight, in justice; no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear (6:152)

b. Timely Payment:

Workers should not run around for their wages but be paid promptly as agreed upon.

The vast majority of workers have bills to pay and families to feed.

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

أَعْطُوا الْأَجِيرَ أَجْرَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَجِفَّ عَرَقُهُ

"Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries." (ibn Maajah)

c. Avoid overburdening workers

- Exploitation of workers, such as forcing them to work excessively long hours or under oppressive conditions, is strictly prohibited in Islam

إِنَّ إِخْوَانَكُمْ حَوْلَكُمْ جَعَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَحْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ، فَمَنْ كَانَ أَحُوهُ تَحْتَ يَدِهِ فَلْيُطْعِمَهُ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ، وَلْيَلْبِسْهُ

مِمَّا يَلْبَسُ، وَلَا تُكَلِّفُوهُمْ مَا يَغْلِبُهُمْ، فَإِنْ كَلَّفْتُمُوهُمْ مَا يَغْلِبُهُمْ فَأَعِينُوهُمْ " .

"(Your employees) are your brothers upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, let him feed him out of what he himself eats, let him clothe him out of what he clothes himself with; and he should not overburden them with what they cannot bear and if you do so, then help them in their job." (Al-Bukhari)

At the end of the day employees happen to be your brothers in humanity, your brother in faith and should be treated with respect.

Employers and employees all must be honest and must deal with each other justly and with respect. The relationship of employer-employee ought to be based on trust and respect and this will bring out the best of both parties.

5. Mistreating workers has grave consequences in the Hereafter

- In the end, all mankind will be gathered back unto his Lord and will be questioned on the rights of His creation. Did he fulfill those rights or did he violate them?
 - If he fulfilled them, he will be rewarded abundantly by the mercy of Allah SWT
 - If he violated them there will be severe consequences
- On the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAS) who said:

مَنْ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لِأَخِيهِ فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ مِنْهَا، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ تَمَّ دِينَارٌ وَلَا دِرْهَمٌ، مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُؤْخَذَ لِأَخِيهِ مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ أُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَخِيهِ فَطُرِحَتْ عَلَيْهِ ."

"He upon whom his fellow brother has a right, be it of the nature of money or honor, let him compensate for it before he is made to compensate for it on a day when there will be neither dinar nor dirham to deal with. Instead, if he has a good deed in his account it will be taken away from him and given to the person he had wronged. And if he has no good deeds in his account, sins of the other person will be taken from him and added to his account" (al-Bukhari).

- And in a Hadith Qudsi Rasoolullah SAS said that Allah SWT says:

ثَلَاثَةٌ أَنَا خَصْمُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، رَجُلٌ أَعْطَى بِي ثُمَّ غَدَرَ، وَرَجُلٌ بَاعَ حُرًّا فَأَكَلَ ثَمَنَهُ، وَرَجُلٌ اسْتَأْجَرَ أَجِيرًا فَاسْتَوْفَى مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُعْطِهِ أَجْرَهُ

'I will be an opponent to three types of people on the Day of Resurrection:

- one who makes a covenant in My name but proves treacherous;
- one who sells a free person and eats his price; and

- one who employs a worker and takes full work from him but does not pay him for his labor" (Al-Bukhari).

Conclusion

In conclusion, if workers are treated with respect and dignity, they will generally work very hard with diligence and honesty. It is a win-win situation.

If not no matter how many Labor Day celebration we may have it will not recompense for injustices done to workers.