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Islami Muaashiyat

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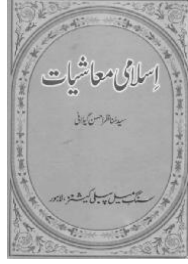
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BOOK

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Islami Maaashiyat

By Sayyid Munazar Ahsan Gilani,
Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications,
2007, 478pp.

This valuable and absorbing book brings out facts not generally discussed in the field of economics. It presents complex ideas of Islamic Economics from the Quranic and *Hadith* perspective in a literary and lucid style. Sometimes novice Urdu reader is digressed, but the author's artistic style keeps the reader engaged to the end. Gilani begins with factors of production, capital and Quran, labor and Quran, and world as a system of earning bread and butter, equal rights of men and women in the field of economics and then logically links these with prerequisites by mentioning just two words "guardian scholar" (*Hafeez o Aleem*). In fact, Prophet Hadhrat Yousaf introduced himself to the Egyptian King saying "I am *Hafeez o Aleem*, so appoint me as a custodian of your lands." These two words are hardly found in the vocabulary of economic scholars.

Gilani categorically refutes the western *monks* and eastern *Jogis*. Notably Gilani said that one can simultaneously reach the height of spirituality and economic progress. He highlights the importance of economic issues by quoting prayer of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) for economic prosperity of the *Ummah*. For instance, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) face glowed with pleasure upon receiving the news of economic prosperity of his companions. Gilani is of the view that *Salat-e Tahajjud* was suspended to facilitate economic activity. Again, he quotes Hadhrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that even at the Day of Judgment if someone had a plant in his possession and if he could plant it, then he should do so, said the beloved Prophet (peace be upon him).

Gilani explains the concept of cosmic beauty with examples of earth, horses, shroud of the dead, graves and properly trimmed beard and even the beauty of Allah. Allah is beautiful and likes beauty (*Sahih Muslim*). Gillani also gives definition of *Ihsan* – to create beauty, and *al-Mohsinin* are those people who create beauty in every aspect of their *Iman* (Faith) and good deeds. There is no concept of laziness and idleness as Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I hate a person who is totally useless: neither doing anything for worldly good nor for the Hereafter" (*Musnad Ahmad*). Gilani explains the prophetic station with examples: Prophet Hadhrat Nuh was the inventor of a large size boat and Prophet Hadhrat Daud made shields from iron. Arabs made Iranian bows. Our beloved Prophet (may Allah be pleased with him) himself made *Rumi Dabdaba*, and Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) learned foreign languages and industrial knowhow. Wind mills were used in Madinah Munawwarah during the period of Hadhrat Othman (may Allah be pleased with him). The idea of digging the ditch (*Khandaq*) was given by Hadhrat Salman Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him).



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Gilani provide examples from the life of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions such as the history of pulpit in mosque, use of chair in the Prophet's Mosque and use of Iranian *Shalwar* and Hindi wood as medicine. Gilani describes the concept of virtuous life (*Hayat-e Tayyabah*) and gives ample examples form Quran in warding off troubles through piety (*Taqwah*). Gilani describes Quranic method of earning livelihood by a blend of two perfect strategies: praying to Allah (*Tadbir-e Duaiyyah*) and the use of wisdom (*Tadbir-e Aqliyyah*). He mentions the Prophetic passion and deep absorption in praying to Allah at the battle of Badr, yet he left no stone unturned in his strategic moves. Gilani is of the view that *Tadbir-e Aqliyyah* is incomplete without *Tadbir-e Duaiyyah*. Quran demands us to adopt both. In *Surah Quraish* Quran exhorts us to accept Allah as the ultimate sustainer (*Ilah al-Ma'ash*) through extensively praying to Him. Gilani explains the causes of economic difficulties and salient characteristics of human nature from Quranic verses:

1. Man is born meek.
2. Man is greedy and impatient
3. Man is highly ambitious. He always wants more and more. (if you give him two valleys of money he will desire the third one.
4. Economic productions are always limited.
5. Men are at different levels due to their different born characteristics.

Gilani explains two scales of economic distribution from the Quran. He also explores philosophy of capitalism, socialism, Buddhism and scholasticism. According to him, all these ideologies are fighting against laws of Nature through, what he calls, *Izala* or a strategy of elimination. Only Islam advocates the *Amala* approach that is aimed at reorientation. Unlimited desires can never be fulfilled from limited resources. Only unlimited power of Allah can fulfill the unlimited desires of human beings. Only through *Amala* can one fulfill unlimited desires. By the use of *Amala* one can rectify one's morality and ethics and start fighting against the Satan. Herein lies the evolution of humanity. In describing two scales of *ma'ashiyaat* (poor and rich), Gilani explicates some of the responsibilities of the rich such as thankfulness, paying *Zakat*, feeding hungry, poor and orphans while those of the poor include patience and fixing their gaze upon Allah. He also enumerates consequences of violations of these obligations.

Gilani argues that our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not scorn wealth and power, but taught how to make proper use of both. There is no dichotomy of human affairs into spiritual and temporal in Islam. Islam teaches exertion and struggle, not merely in the recesses of one's heart, but also in the field of action. The Quran portrays the life of the Companions of our beloved Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) in these words "Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah." They carry on their trades and professions as well as seek the pleasure of Allah. They do not give up one for the other, but apply themselves to both in the same breath.

Gilani's book reveals a man of unusual mind as Syed Salman Nadvi had rightly called him the King of the Pen (*Sultan al-Qalam*). Manazir Ahsan Gilani's book is a living proof of Syed Nadvi's attribution.

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