



The Impact of Economy on Social Health in Ayatollah Makarm Shirazi's Tafsir Nemooneh

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Abstract

For decades, social health has been one of the issues that has attracted the attention of sociologists. Since the creation of the universe, God has directed man's attention towards the issue of social health and the society they live in by setting rules and regulations. Society is in dire need of achieving health in all aspects so that a person can grow and prosper in their living environment to contribute to security and welfare of the society thanks to a healthy social environment. In order to achieve welfare, human beings need collective and social work that can meet their material and spiritual needs through work and activity in society. And in order to meet these needs, a healthy and calm environment is needed. A proper economic cycle behavior has a great impact on the society's social behavior. Man can meet their needs and use their own income if there is fair distribution of wealth and economic prosperity and if poverty is eradicated. By paying Khums and Zakat, social gaps are filled and thanks to the security created as a result of based on justice economic system, the individuals in the society can meet each other's living and economic needs together and they can live a happy and a healthy life in greater context. The fair distribution of wealth and economic welfare, and a healthy production and sale of products cycle all contribute to healthy economic behavior in society. In Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi's Tafsir Nemooneh, different dimensions of a Muslim's behavior in the society and how the Islamic society looks like is explained. This paper invokes Quranic verses that touch upon the issue of economic behavior in a way that help improve social health in society in all aspects of life discussed in the book Tafsir Nemooneh.

Keywords: *Economics; Social Health of Society; Sample Interpretation; Verses; Narrations*

Introduction

One of the major elements and components of society that directly take the helm of it is the economy, and any step taken to make reforms in it to make it better is a step towards ascendance of other sections of society and public welfare and also is considered as an activity to enhance the level of the

establishment and the country. In the Islamic economic system, ensuring public welfare and eradicating poverty in society, as well as achieving economic power and independence, requires a prosperous and flourishing economy. The importance of economic independence and growth can be deduced from the verses of the holy Qur'an. (Abdollahi Abed, Ghobadi, 1393, p.3) Islam introduces certain particular ethical norms and values pertaining to individual and social economic behavior. Therefore, Islam has an economic system on its own. (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 11, p. 318). According to Islam, if the system governing the economy of a society is a system of piety, righteousness, God consciousness (Taqwa), collectivism, cooperation and Infaq, as a result without a doubt the society will be strong and successful, but if it is the system is based on exploitation, fraud, plunder, cruelty, transgression and negative individualism (it does not care about other people) such a society will be economically backward (retarded or underdeveloped), and their material life will be break apart. (Makarem Shirazi, 1371, vol. 11, p. 318)

Economy plays an important role in individual and family life, in social and international relations, in individual, family and social health. The economy's role in family and society's health has been widely covered by researchers and several scientific studies have been conducted in that field such as: Mehregan et al. (2016) in the article "The impact of economic and social conditions on mental health: case study people in different Iranian (2000-2012)"; Irandoost (2018) in the article "A Review of socio-economic factors determining health with a focus on justice in the health system"; And Ghaderi Charmahini (2017) in the article "A Study of the role of economic factors on family health". However, this study focuses on social health from the perspective of religious teachings. Given the fact that this paper has not conducted an independent research, it aims to study the impact of economic factor on the social health using a descriptive and analytical research method.

1- The Role of Economy in Islam

In line with the mission of the prophets in establishing order and justice in trade and rightful transactions, Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) prays for the people of Mecca: "My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits - those of them who believe in Allah and the Last Day." Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah or verse:126. Interestingly, Prophet Ibrahim first asked for "security" and then for "economic blessings", and this implies the fact that it is not possible to establish a healthy economy until security prevails in a city or country! (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 1, p. 452))

2- The Role of a Proper Economic System in Social Health

Islam attaches great importance to a healthy economy. In fact, a healthy economy comes after in terms of importance after Tohid(monotheism) and proper beliefs. Economic anarchy is the root cause of widespread corruption in society. Allah Almighty in holy Quran has advised the Muslims to seek legitimate wealth and properties. God has warned them that wealth accumulation- wealth gained through oppression and exploiting others- will not make you needless. Rather, "What remains [lawful] from Allah is best for you, if you would be believers. But I am not a guardian over you." (Surah Hud Aya 86) (Makarem Shirazi, 1391, vol. 9, p. 203)

After inviting to monotheism, the prophets used to call on the people to observe justice and fairness in their financial and trade affairs, showing that the economic affairs in society were of great importance and also that the messengers were not sent on a mere moral mission but social and economic reforms were also an important part of their mission that came after their invitation to monotheism.

In verses of the Qur'an, God explains economic rules to improve economic relationships between people in order to lay the ground for the society's prosperity and make sure it would be safe from a state of anarchy. "O believers! Do not devour one another's wealth illegally, but rather trade by mutual consent. And do not kill 'each other or' yourselves. Surely Allah is ever Merciful to you." (An-Nisa vers

29). This would mean that any illegal seizure of other people's property which takes place without a logical and rational permission is banned and "null and void" which has a broad meaning but it mainly refers to unjust transactions (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 3, p. 355).

The issue of declaring the "illegal takeover of other people's properties" as null and void is emphasized elsewhere in the holy Qur'an, for example: when God condemns the Jewish people and mentions their ugly deeds, he says: "for their devouring of the properties of the people by false means. We have prepared, for the disbelievers among them, a painful punishment." (An-Nisa 161) or in (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse: 188) God says "And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]." The sentence "do not consume one another's wealth unjustly" forbids people from suing and convicting people in the court based on lies and empty and baseless accusations to seize their properties. Hence, any kind of takeover, fraud, deceit, usurious transactions, transactions whose limits and boundaries are completely unknown, buying and selling goods that are not of any logical and rational benefit, buying and selling means of corruption and sin, all are forbidden under this general law. (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 3, p. 355).

Moreover, in An-Nisa Aya 29, when God says "Believers! Do not devour one another's possessions wrongfully; rather than that, let there be trading by mutual consent. You shall not kill yourselves. Surely Allah is ever Compassionate to you," the last sentence "You shall not kill yourselves. Surely Allah is ever Compassionate to you," forbids people from committing suicide while he says after that "Surely Allah is ever Compassionate to you." This means that God would not like you to be killed by other people but also he will not allow you to kill yourselves on your own decision. Moreover, Ahl al-Bayt's hadiths say that by "killing yourself" in the above verse God means "suicide". But, now the question is what relationship is there between "suicide" and declaring the "illegal takeover of other people's properties" as null and void? The answer to this question is clear. The holy Quran discusses these two issues together to highlight an important social matter: If people's financial relations are not carried out in a proper way and the economy does not pursue a healthy path and the people illegally takeover each other's properties, the society will suffer from a suicide. Not only individuals' suicides increase, social suicide will follow. The events and revolutions that have taken place in different societies in the modern world can bear witness to this. And because God is merciful to his people, he warns them to be careful that improper financial exchanges and unhealthy economies would lead their society towards collapse and disintegration. God Al-Mighty says in (An-Nisa Aya 30) that "Whoever does that out of aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire. This is an easy thing for Allah." (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 3, pp. 356-357.)

3- The Role of Economic Justice in Social Health

Economic justice means observing economic rights in the fields of economic behaviors and relations. This, as an economic goal, is fully achieved when each member of society achieves his or her right to the wealth and income in the society. (Yousefi, 2005, p. 2)

"We see the economic justice was practiced by Hazrat Shoaib (pbuh) in Surah Al-Shu'ara in such a way that after his call to piety and obeying God's command, in the second part of his teachings, he touches upon the immorality and social deviations in that society, and criticizes it. He focused his divine mission on reforming the most important misconducts of the rich people including blatant oppression, violation of rights and exploitation of others," (Makarem Shirazi, 1371, vol. 15, p. 332)

God gave Hazrat Shoaib five short but principled and considered commandments (rulings) to that ignorant community:

- 1) Give just measure (Sura Ash Shuara Aya 181;)
- 2) Cause no loss (to others by fraud) ((Sura Ash Shuara Aya 181;)): “Mokhaser” in the Aya means someone who exposes a person or thing to damage, it also has a broad meaning that in addition to selling less than what it has been paid for, it includes any factor that causes losses and damages to the other party in the transaction.
- 3) And weigh (things) with a right balance (Sura Ash Shuara Aya 182;)
- 4) And do not defraud people of their things. Do not go about acting corruptly, creating disorder in the country (Sura Ash Shuara Aya 183) “La Tabakhasu” is originated from “Bakhs” which means oppressive diminishing of the rights of the people, and sometimes means fraud and deceit that leads to the violation of the rights of others, so the above sentence has a broad meaning that entails any deception and fraud in the transaction, and any violation of other people’s rights.

If we take a closer look at the board meaning of the sentence, it is an invitation to observing all the rights of individual and social rights of other people from different races and all nations and in different eras. “Bakhs Haq” could happen in any time anywhere, and even in the time of assistance or in the cooperative work or giving loansd (As it is the case with exploiters in the modern time.)

Therefore, every exploitation (abuses), deceit, and fraud, and any attempt to inflict losses on the other side, be it in quantity or quality in the transaction, are all included in the above divine rulings.

- 5) “...do not act corruptly in the earth, making mischief” (Sura Ash Shuara Aya 183) God orders to put an end to any type of exploitation and oppressive violations of other people’s rights. (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 15, pp. 332-333). Corruption can take place at the time of selling a thing less than the price that has been paid for, usurpation of people's rights and the violation of their rights, by the disruption of accepted social rates scales, corruption through the defect of property and persons, and finally committing corruption by the entering other people’s privacy and invading their honor and lives as well as destroying their reputation. (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 9, p201)

4- Distribution of Wealth’s Role in Social Health

Appropriate economic behavior in any society has impacts on the social behavior of people. Fair distribution of wealth and economic welfare, a healthy production cycle and sale of products all contribute to healthy economic behavior in society. In many verses, the Holy Qur'an explains to people how to deal with God's blessings and forbids people from squandering any of the blessings. As after the departure of Jewish tribe "Banu Nadir" from Medina, they left behind gardens and agricultural farms and houses and other properties in Medina. Then, a group of Muslim approached Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and according to a Jahiliyyah tradition (Age of Ignorance-before the emergence of Islam) to say to him that consider a certain proportion of gains plus one fourth of it for yourself and leave the rest for them to divide among themselves. God warned that gains must not change hands among the wealthy. “...Wealth may not merely circulate among your rich.” (Surah Al-Hashr Aya 7.) This verse recounts a principle in Islamic economics that stresses while Islam respects the "private property," it does not allow the wealth to change hands among a limited group of wealthy people. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we are allowed to act arbitrarily and take the property and wealth from a group and give it to another. Rather, it means that if the Islamic rules pertaining to the acquisition of wealth as well as taxes such as Khums, Zakat, Kharaj, as well as the rules about Beytolmal (public property) and Anfal are put into practice correctly, it will lead to creating an environment where individual efforts are respected while at the same time the other people’s interests are secured. This way, bipolarization of the society (between minority (the rich) and majority (the poor) will be avoided. (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 23, p507)

5- The Role of Economic Balance in Social Health

Any economic establishment that is not based on divine economic rules and laws, it will lose a chance to enjoy a healthy society and the society will suffer from anarchy in their economic system. There are many reasons why economic order loses equilibrium. It is only economic balance that can reestablish order in the economic system. By establishing economic balance, all members of society are obliged to respect each other's social rights, whereby they increase the level of society's health to its apex and everybody becomes a guarantor of their social health. In social life, the loss of an individual or a group affects the entire society, and therefore the keeping individuals and their assistance benefits the whole society. Therefore, if the system that governs the economy of a society is established based on piety, righteousness, God consciousness (Taqwa), collectivism, cooperation and Infaq, such a society will undoubtedly become strong and glorious, but if the system is based on exploitation, fraud, plunder, oppression and cruelty, transgression and negative individualism (it does not care about other people) such a society will be economically backward (retarded or underdeveloped), and their material life will break apart (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 11, p. 317).

The holy Quran talks about the role of economic balance in social health in a lot of Ayahs, such as: Surah A'raf Aya 85 says "Give just measure and weight nor withhold from the people the things that are their due." It is clear from the Ayah that the existence of any betrayal, cheating, deceit, and fraud in transactions undermines and destroys the people's trust, on which economic systems are built, and inflicts irreparable losses on the society (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, Vol. 6, p250).

6- The Role of Labor, Economic Efforts and Production Boost in Social Health

One thing that matter a lot in social health is labor and workforce, which are two important means in society. So labor's role in the economy is like a pillar in a house; Meaning that, just as a house without pillars cannot be there, so does economics without work, and in that case, there is no difference between individual and social economics. Hence, it is obligatory for a person to have a profession and work in such a way as to meet his own needs and those of the society. This way, he can add to his nation's wealth, and for that reason, God Almighty gave man the power to work (Abdullahi Abed, Ghobadi, 2014, p. 10).

Efforts and endeavor in life not only take away laziness and depression from human beings, they also they bring you happiness and liveliness. Work is a very good means for people's mental and physical health. Had it not been endeavor and if everything was available to man, how the world would look like? A bunch of unemployed people, with their full stomachs, uncontrollable would create a chaos, because we know that the people of this world are not like heavenly people, whose lust, selfishness, arrogance and immorality have been cleaned from their hearts and souls. Rather, they are human beings with all the good and bad habits who have to be in this world to become mature. And what better way than effort and endeavor that can make them mature. As such, just as poverty and need leads man to immorality and misery, needlessness and extravagant life is the origin of corruption and destruction (Makarem Shirazi, vol. 11, p. 57).

A society can have a dynamic economy on its own only with a healthy and efficient workforce. As a result of healthy workforce society provides life, happiness, liveliness and success at work to different sections. In such a society, production plays a crucial role. Then, there comes economic prosperity followed by social health. In the realm of economy, the issue of "more production" does not always matter. Sometimes, "consumption control" becomes more important. At the time of holy Prophet Joseph, he tried to control consumption strictly during those seven years of abundance of blessings in order to store a significant portion of agricultural products for the next difficult years. In fact, the two cannot be segregated, more production is useful when it becomes more accurate than consumption control, and consumption control will be more useful when it is accompanied by more production. Joseph's economic policy in Egypt showed that a principled and dynamic economy cannot always look to

the present, but it must look to the "future" and take into account future generations. And that it would be arrogance at its highest level if we only care about our interests. For example, Let's plunder all the available resources of the earth and do not think at all about the conditions in which they will live in the future. Are those who live with us today our brothers and those who will come in the future are not our brothers? (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 10, p. 11)

There are hadiths that argue that Joseph used the years of famine to end class exploitation and the gap between the strata of the Egyptian people. this way, for many years, he bought food from the people and stored it in the big warehouses that he had prepared for this purpose, and when these years were over and the years of famine came, in the first year, he sold food in Dirham and Dinar. He sold the dinar and collected a significant portion of the money. In the second year Joseph he exchanged the food with jewels (except those who could not afford) and in the third year he exchanged the food with herd and beasts, and in the fourth year in exchange for slaves and maids, and in the fifth year in exchange for houses, and in the sixth year in exchange for farms, and the waters, and in the seventh year in exchange for the Egyptians themselves, then he returned them all (justly) to them, and said that his goal was to save them from catastrophe and disorder . (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, vol. 10, p. 11)

7- The Role of Economic Management in Social Health

One cannot ignore the special role that economic issues play in society. Prophet Joseph highlighted the importance of treasury among all other sections of the economic system, because he knew that if the treasury was managed well, most of the other disorders in the Egyptian country would be resolved, and he could control other organizations through economic justice. Islamic Hadiths have also attached great importance to this issue, including in the famous hadith by Imam Ali (as), "one of the two main pillars of the material and spiritual life of the people is economic issues, while the other pillar is science and knowledge." (Ibid, 1991, Vol. 10, p9).

Holy Quran cites Prophet Joseph as saying: "Place me in charge of the treasures of the land. I am a good keeper and know my task well." Joseph knew that an important cause behind the problems in that society was that it was full of oppression, cruelty and injustice in its economic affairs, and now that they had to approach him [to run the economy], he could take the pulse of the Egyptian economy and rush to the aid of the oppressed, to diminish discrimination as much as possible, to take the rights of the oppressed from the oppressors, and to organize the vast land. He has to focus on the agriculture sector as the prime objective. Given that there were years of abundance and then years of drought ahead, he invited people to further grow crops and produce more agricultural products to store them based on a rationing program for the years of famine. So he could not see better option but to offer to chair the Egyptian treasury. (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, Vol. 10, p. 5)

Prophet Joseph noticed the deterioration of the situation in Egypt, and through a divine thinking he was able to promote the health of the Egyptian society, which until then had been suffering from difficulties. Through his divine guidance and management, Joseph distributed wealth fairly among the people and could turn the disturbed society into a healthy and unified society. The organized and unified society gained the confidence of the deprived people who did not enjoy social health.

Conclusion

Based on the discussions in Ayatollah Makrem Shirazi's Tafsir Nemooneh, some dimensions of the impact of the economy on social health were examined in this paper. First, the importance of economic issues was explained and then the role of proper economic system, economic justice, wealth distribution, the role of economic balance, the role of labor, economic effort and boosting production, as well as the role of economic management in society's health were discussed. The results show that the economy and people's livelihood play undeniable role in achieving social health.

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