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***Al-Wasāṭiyyah* (Moderation): The Path to Success**

***Al-Wasāṭiyyah* (Bersederhana): Jalan Kejayaan**

Ibrahim Nuhu Tahir* & Gapur Oziev**

Abstract

The *Ummah* of Islam is experiencing a wide spectrum of difficulties, threats, and internal breakdown that is based mainly on negative behaviors e.g. extremism and alike. The unity and brotherhood amongst the members of the Muslim communities is either weak or does not exist anymore. The *Ummah* is broken into sects and groups where every group is labeling the others with all sorts of names. Concerning the matter of *Iqtisād* (economics) backwardness is observed in many parts of the Muslim world. The *Al-Iqtisād Al-Islamī* (Islamic economics) is based on earning and spending *ḥalāl* wealth in the correct manner. Both actions have to be well managed in order to create a sustainable society. This is contrary to the currently popular materialism that has led the world into a culture of excessiveness in spending and consumption. Subsequently this has increased the amount of debt owed by individuals, business and governments. An alarming trend is that there is minimal concern about attaining wealth through *ḥalāl* means and sources of *ḥarām* income are on the rise. Consequently, there has been a decrease of blessings in wealth and contentment regardless of the magnitude of one's wealth. Thus, observing *al-Wasāṭiyyah* is highly encouraged and appreciated by the *Sharī'ah* in all circumstances. This paper addresses the guidelines given by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* on *al-Wasāṭiyyah* and its importance in building a sustainable economy and society. The paper is mainly based on the revealed texts that address the above stated issues directly or indirectly.

Keywords: *al-Wasāṭiyyah, Infāq, Tabdhīr, Isrāf, Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*.

Abstrak

Umat Islam mengalami pelbagai kesulitan, ancaman, dan kerosakan dalaman yang berpunca daripada tingkah laku negatif, seperti ekstremisme dan sebagainya. Perpaduan dan persaudaraan dikalangan masyarakat Islam semakin luntur atau tidak wujud lagi. Umat Islam sekarang telah berpecah kepada kumpulan dan mazhab yang pelbagai sehinggakan setiap kumpulan melabel kumpulan lain dengan pelbagai jenis

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gelaran. Berhubung dengan Iqtisād (ekonomi), umat Islam dilihat mundur dan terbelakang. Al-Iqtisād Al-Islamī (ekonomi Islam) merujuk kepada perbuatan memperoleh harta melalui cara yang halal dan membelanjakannya dengan cara yang benar. Kedua-dua tindakan itu harus bergerak seiring untuk mewujudkan masyarakat yang stabil. Perkara ini bertentangan dengan ideologi materialistik yang masyhur dalam kalangan masyarakat sekarang yang menjadikan berlebihan dan pembaziran dalam berbelanja sebagai budaya. Natijah daripada budaya ini, ia telah meningkatkan jumlah hutang dimiliki oleh individu, perniagaan dan kerajaan. Keadaan masyarakat kini yang kurang memberi perhatian berkaitan dengan cara memperoleh harta melalui jalan yang halal dan peningkatan dalam memiliki harta melalui jalan yang haram adalah situasi yang amat membimbangkan. Akibatnya, tiada keberkatan pada harta yang dimiliki dan kurangnya rasa syukur tanpa mengira tahap kekayaan seseorang. Oleh itu, mengamalkan konsep al-Wasāṭiyyah (bersederhana) sangat digalakkan dan dianjurkan oleh Shari'ah dalam semua keadaan. Kajian ini membahas garis panduan yang ditetapkan oleh Qur'an dan Sunnah mengenai al-Wasāṭiyyah dan kepentingannya dalam pembangunan ekonomi dan masyarakat yang stabil. Kajian ini membahas isu di atas berlandaskan teks dan nas daripada quran dan sunnah yang berkaitan secara langsung atau tidak langsung.

Kata Kunci: *al-Wasāṭiyyah, Infāq, Tabdhīr, Isrāf, Qur'an and Sunnah.*

Introduction

Nowadays, the world is living in a state of chaos and disunity which has led to an increase in the emergence of sects and factions in the *Ummah*. This has already been prophesied by Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as it is narrated by Al-'Irbād ibn Sāriyah where he said: "One day after the morning Ṣalāh, the Messenger of Allah exhorted us to the extent that the eyes wept and the hearts shuddered with fear. A man said: 'Indeed this is a farewell exhortation. [So what] do you order us O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'I order you to have *Taqwa* of Allah, and to listen and obey, even in the case of an Ethiopian slave. Indeed, whomever among you lives, he will see much difference. Beware of the newly invented matters, for indeed they are astray. Whoever among you sees that, then he must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khulafā', cling to it with the molars.'¹" In another occasion he said: "The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of which will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He said: "The

¹Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Beirut; Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1996), vol. 15, p.15.

jamā‘ah.”² One of the main causes of this division in the *Ummah* is the absence of al-*Wasāṭiyyah* which has led to extremism in almost every affair of the *Ummah*, such as extremism in *Da‘wah*, *Infāq*, etc.

Confinement of the Truth to one Group

One of the most discussed issues of the *Ummah* in this era is the group of Muslims that call themselves *Salafīs*. They are a group that has permeated Muslims in different countries regardless of language and culture. Their primary objective is to call people to practice Islam according to Qur’ān and Sunnah as understood by a select group of scholars who they follow. There are different types of *salafīs* on a wide spectrum: they range from lenient groups to so called hardliners. Hardliners, occasionally referred to as *Madkhalīs*, take a no compromise position when it comes to scholars who they deem as innovators or deviants (even if the judgement is unsubstantiated). They reject them and all their works and anyone associated with them, as it is stated in one of their websites “We do not venerate or praise the scholars of the innovators. Rather we warn against them and we do not mention their good points. To mention their good points along with their innovations (*al-muwāzanah*) with the claim of establishing justice is an innovation. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “What I fear for you most are the Imāms of misguidance.”³

In addition to that, they do not accept an error in words or statements by contemporary scholars because to them someone has to be infallible to qualify as a *salafī*. The more extreme among them pronounce *takfīr* (declaring infidelity/disbelief) on anyone who is against or contrary to their methodology, or to be more specific anyone who criticizes them and the scholars they follow. Astonishingly, some of the scholars they attach themselves to, did not use this term, ‘*salafī*’ to refer to themselves nor their students. Linguistically they would not because it’s a term specific to our predecessors (who were upon the correct *manhaj* i.e. methodology), and their predecessors did not call themselves *salafīs*. They set themselves apart as a sect and refer to themselves as *salafīs* upon the methodology of the al-*salaf al-ṣāliḥ* (the righteous predecessors) but they do not consider other people who are upon the methodology of the al-*salaf al-ṣāliḥ* to be *salafīs* if they are not a part of ‘their’ grouping. On

² Ibid, vol. 2. p.1322.

³ Sulaimān ibn Ash’ath Al-Sijistānī Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr, 1969), vol. 4, p. 97.

one hand, they claim that *Salafism* is not a sect and they quote scholars explaining what the word *salaf* itself means but on the other hand they refer to themselves as *salaf* in a proper noun form which indicates a sect or group. What has happened is that a group within *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-jamā'ah* (those who follow the Qur'ān and the Sunnah according to the understanding of the companions) has segregated themselves from the rest. Similarly, there are those who call for integration with anyone and everyone who says they are Muslims, whether they identify as *Shī'ah* (or any other deviant group) though their *manhaj* (methodology) in practicing Islam clearly contradicts the well-established principles of Qur'ān and Sunnah. This approach is also wrong and unacceptable. Likewise, those who create disunity with people who our *salaf* themselves would have considered Muslims and not pronounced *takfir* on, are also going to another extreme. *Al-Wasatiyyah* in this case is needed, moderation in accordance with what Islam considers to be moderation.

Another kind of extremism with regard to the same topic is the emergence of the so-called *jihadist*. Extremism has led them to look at the Muslims who oppose them as non-believers whose blood is lawful to spill to the extent that they wage war against their Muslim brothers and sisters, by neglecting the Words of Allah: "And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein; and the Wrath and the Curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him."⁴ They also neglect the saying of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) "A believer continues to guard his Faith (and thus hopes for Allah's Mercy) so long as he does not shed blood unjustly".⁵ Similarly, they neglect the saying of the companion 'Abd Allah bin 'Umar: One of the evil deeds with bad consequence from which there is no escape for the one who is involved in it is to kill someone unlawfully.⁶

There are some critics who reject the bearers of the title *salafīyyah* even in instances when they are upon what the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came with. They claim that the group is too detailed in their Islam, stating that they have etiquettes for everything including how to use the bathroom. They claim that this is intrusive and extremism whereas this is Islam and it is a guidance for all matters. *Salman Al-Farisi* reported that it was said to him: Your Apostle (*ṣal-Allāhu*

⁴ Sūrah al-Nisā', āyah: 93

⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī with Fath* (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2000), vol. 9, p. 2.

⁶ Ibid., vol. 9, p. 2.

‘alayhi wa sallam) teaches you about everything, even about excrement. He replied: Yes, he has forbidden us to face the *Qiblah* at the time of excretion or urination, or cleansing with right hand or with less than three pebbles, or with dung or bone”.⁷ Islam is a comprehensive religion that includes all matters of life and a Muslim is supposed to hold up on it in total without any addition or subtraction. Thus, practicing every part of Islam according to the practice of the Prophet (ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) cannot be described as extremism and is instead the correct understanding of moderation or *al-Wasatiyyah*.

The history of Islam has witnessed the first division and separation that happened in the Muslim *Ummah*, starting from the case of al-Khawārij followed by Shi‘ah and those who came after them, they all deviated from the right path due to nothing but extremism. In these days a new trend exists which is also a kind of extremism (this is Salafism that was discussed earlier). Salafism or Salafīyyah as a *manhaj* has no problem, in fact that is the only *manhaj* every Muslim should be following, for it is nothing but strict adherence to the *Sharī‘ah* based on the Qur’ān and Sunnah. As a way out, the two Ḥadīths quoted at the beginning of this introduction suggested that the only way out from the tragedy of this life is to hold upon the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and to practice it in accordance with the understanding of the companions. The Messenger of Allah did not give any title to the best generations except Islam, which confirmed that whoever holds upon the Qur’ān and the Sunnah according to the understanding of the companions is the only successful person. This success will be granted to him even if he does not affiliate himself to any group or title. In this article the focus will be on the application of *al-wasatiyyah* in the Qur’ān and Sunnah. The main topics to be tackled here are *al-wasatiyyah* in religious practices, *da‘wah* and *infāq*.

Definition of al-Wasatiyyah

The term *al-wasatiyyah* is derived from the Arabic word "*wasat*" which means middle, fair, just, moderate, milieu and setting. The word in its different forms is used in several contexts in the Qur’ān, all the word forms revolving around similar linguistic meanings.⁸ Allah says: "*Thus, have We made of you an Ummah (Community) justly balanced*

⁷ Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2000), p.125.

⁸ Muḥammad ibn Ahmad as-Salih ibn as-Salih, *Wasatiyyah al-Islām fī samāḥati al-dīn wa tasāmuḥihī* (Riyadh: Dāru ‘Ālami al-Kutub, 2007), p. 4951.

(*wasāṭan*), that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves... ".⁹); "The best of them (*awsaṭuhum*) said: Did I not say to you, Why do you not glorify (Allah)?"¹⁰ "Be guardians of your prayers, and of the midmost (*wuṣṭa*) prayer, and stand up with devotion to Allah."¹¹ "And penetrate forthwith into the midst (*wasāṭna*) (of the foe) en masse."¹² And: "... So its expiation is the feeding of ten poor men out of the middling (*awsaṭ*) (food) you feed your families with..."¹³ These are some of the usages of the word in the Qur'ān. The word in its technical interpretation means nothing but practicing the *Dīn* (religion) in accordance with the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. This is because the method of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is always *wasāṭ*. In the subsequent topics examples of the practices of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in the religious and worldly affairs will be illustrated.

Al-Wasaṭiyyah in Religious Practices

It has been previously stated that Islam by nature is a religion of *al-Wasaṭiyyah* as such it is observed that the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was *wasāṭ* in all of his activities whether they were religious or worldly affairs. For example, in the religious affairs, it is reported that three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to inquire about the worship of the Prophet at home. When they were informed, they considered that their worship was insignificant and said: "Where are we in comparison with the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) while Allah has forgiven his past sins and future sins". One of them said: "As for me, I shall offer *Ṣalāh* all night long." Another said: "I shall observe *Ṣawm* (fasting) continuously and shall not break it". Another said: "I shall abstain from women and shall never marry". The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came to them and said, "Are you the people who said such and such things? By Allah, I fear Allah more than you do, and I am most obedient and dutiful among you to Him, but still I observe fast and break it; perform *Ṣalāh* and sleep at night and take wives. So whoever turns away from my *Sunnah* does not belong to me."¹⁴

⁹ Qur'ān, al-Baqarah 143

¹⁰ Qur'ān, al-Qalam 28

¹¹ Qur'ān, al-Baqarah 238

¹² Qur'ān, al-'Ādiyāt 5

¹³ Qur'ān, al-Mā'idah 89

¹⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, vol. 7, p. 2.

The three companions mentioned in this *ḥadīth* went to extremes in seeking righteousness which is against the method of the Prophet. They all promised themselves to go against *al-wasāṭiyyah* in religious activities, the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) in fulfilling his role as a teacher guided them to the correct middle way of his Sunnah saying that he is always balanced between the two extremes. In the last part of this *ḥadīth* the three companions were informed by the Prophet that being balanced as he mentioned is his Sunnah and whoever turns away from his Sunnah by not following his guidance is not one of the *Ummah*. On another occasion, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amr said: Allah's Messenger (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) entered upon me and said, "Have I not been informed that you offer prayer all the night and fast the whole day?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so; Offer prayer at night and also sleep; Fast for a few days and give up fasting for a few days because your body has a right on you, and your eye has a right on you, and your guest has a right on you, and your wife has a right on you. I hope that you will have a long life, and it is sufficient for you to fast for three days a month as the reward of a good deed, is multiplied ten times, that means, as if you fasted the whole year." I insisted (on fasting more) so I was given a hard instruction. I said, "I can do more than that (fasting)" The Prophet said, "Fast three days every week." But as I insisted (on fasting more) so I was burdened. I said, "I can fast more than that." The Prophet said, "Fast as Allah's prophet David used to fast." I said, "How was the fasting of the prophet David?" The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, "One half of a year (i.e. he used to fast on alternate days)."¹⁵

As it can be seen from this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet tried a lot to advise him on how to be moderate in his religious practices but the companion depended on the strength of his youth at that age and could not comprehend the Prophet's advice, not understanding that the Prophet wanted him to have deep foresight because he might live longer until an old age where he wouldn't be able to maintain those rituals which he used to practice when he was young. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said the most beloved deed to Allah is the continuous one.¹⁶ Unfortunately, Ibn ‘Amr did not take his advice and indeed what the Prophet was afraid of took place. It is reported that in his old age he used to say I wish I had accepted the advice of the Prophet¹⁷. Ā‘ishah (May Allah be

¹⁵ Ibid, vol. 4, p.160

¹⁶ Muslim ibn Al-Hajjāj, vol. 2, p.188.

¹⁷ Ibid, vol. 2, p. 812.

pleased with her) reported: The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) came in when a woman was sitting beside me. He asked me, "Who is she?" I said: "She is the one whose performance of *Ṣalāh* (prayer) has become the talk of the town." Addressing her, He said, "(What is this!) You are required to take upon yourselves only what you can carry out easily. By Allah, Allah does not withhold His Mercy and forgiveness of you until you neglect and give up (good works). Allah likes the deeds best which a worshipper can carry out constantly"¹⁸.

This sort of moderation is not limited to these examples. In fact the Prophet applied the same moderation in his invocations, as well as his cultural practices. It was narrated that the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said "Let not one of you wish for death because of a misfortune which befalls him. If he cannot help doing so, he should say: 'O Allah, keep me alive as long as You know that life is better for me, and make me die when death is better for me.'"¹⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim said in his *Zād the Sunnah of Prophet (ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam)* when eating, drinking and health issues is the best guidance, and his Sunnah is the best of *Sunan* (traditions and practices). For example, dates are naturally hot, and as such the Prophet used to eat them together with another that carries an opposite nature such as watermelon.²⁰ There are many other examples from the Sunnah that can be used to support the concept of moderation in religious practices, but the little mentioned is enough to serve the purpose.

Al-Wasaṭiyyah and Tolerance in Da‘wah

The Qur’ān says: "Invite to the way of your Lord (i.e. *Islām*) with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided."²¹ In another place it says "Say: "This is my way; I invite to Allah with sure knowledge, I and whoever follows me. And Glorified and Exalted is Allah (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the *Mushrikūn* (those who worship others along with Allah or set up rivals or partners to Allah)."²²

¹⁸ Muḥammad Ibn Ismā‘īl, vol.1, p. 24.

¹⁹ Ibid, vol. 5, p. 2146.

²⁰ Ibn Al-Qayyim, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb, *Zād al-Ma‘ād fī Hady Khairi al-‘Ibad* (Al-Qāhīrah: Dār al-Fajr, 1999), vol.3, p.194. vol.1. p. 65-67.

²¹ Qur’ān, al-Nahl 125.

²² Qur’ān, Yūsuf 108.

Da'wah is one of the deeds that a Muslim can observe in order to please Allah. It is part of the necessities that must be preserved in the Muslim community to attain success in life. Allah says "By Al-'Asr (the time). Verily, man is in loss. Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to patience"²³. In another place it says "And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allah (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allah's (Islamic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims."²⁴

However, there are certain principles that must be achieved in order for the *da'wah* to be effective. This paper's emphasis is on being *wasat* in *da'wah* based on Patience, tolerance and leniency which are all part of the knowledge and wisdom required by the first two *Āyah* quoted in this section. These three are the basis of the *da'wah* of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). He used wisdom in all of his *da'wah*, adopting patience and leniency which resulted into an extra ordinary success and victory in guiding the nations. The *Āyah* says "And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)."²⁵

The following quotations are nothing but a clear manifestation of tolerance and leniency in *da'wah* by the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Mu'āwiyah ibn Al-Hakam Al-Sulamī reported: While I was in *Ṣalāh* with Messenger of Allah a man in the congregation sneezed and I responded with: '*Yarhamuk-Allah* (Allah have mercy on you).' The people stared at me with disapproving looks. So I said: "May my mother lose me. Why are you staring at me?" Thereupon, they began to strike their thighs with their hands. When I saw them urging me to remain silent, I became angry but restrained myself. When the Messenger of Allah concluded his *Ṣalāh*. I have never seen an instructor who gave better instruction than he, may my father and mother be sacrificed for him. He neither remonstrated me, nor beat me, nor abused me. He simply said, "It is not permissible to talk during *Ṣalāh* because it consists of glorifying Allah,

²³ Qur'ān al-'Asr 1-3.

²⁴ Qur'ān Fuṣṣilat 33.

²⁵ Qur'ān, Āl 'Imrān 159.

declaring His Greatness as well as recitation of the Qur'ān," or he said words to that effect." I said: "O Allah's Messenger, I have but recently accepted Islam, and Allah has favoured us with Islam. There are still some people among us who go to consult soothsayers." He said, "Do not consult them." Then I said: "There are some of us who are guided by omens." He said, "These things which come to their minds. They should not be influenced by them."²⁶ On another occasion "A bedouin urinated in the mosque and some people rushed to beat him up. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: "Leave him alone and pour a bucket of water over it. You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult."²⁷ On another occasion: 'Ā'ishah said that the Jews came to the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and said, "*Al-Sāmu 'Alaikum*" (death be on you). 'Aisha said (to them), "(Death) be on you, and may Allah curse you and shower His wrath upon you!" The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Be calm, O 'Ā'ishah! You should be kind and lenient, and beware of harshness and *Fuḥsh* (i.e. bad words)." She said (to the Prophet), "Haven't you heard what they (Jews) have said?" He said, "Haven't you heard what I have said (to them)? I said the same to them, and my invocation against them will be accepted while theirs against me will be rejected (by Allah)."²⁸ For this reason, the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: "Allah is *Rafīq* (kind, lenient and compassionate) and He loves *rifq* (kindness, leniency and compassion), and rewards for leniency while He does not reward severity, and does not give for anything besides it (*rifq*)."²⁹

The examples of this type of leniency in the life of the Prophet are countless. He practiced and observed leniency not only with Muslim but with non-Muslims as well, including his enemies. It was narrated that the Prophet sent some cavalry towards Najd and they brought a man from the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfā who was called Thumāmah ibn Uthāl. They fastened him to one of the pillars of the Mosque. The Prophet went to him and said, "What have you got, O Thumāmah?" He replied, "I have got a good thought, O Muhammad! If you should kill me, you would kill a person who has already killed somebody, and if you should set me free, you would do a favor to one who is grateful, and if you want property, then ask me whatever wealth you want." He was left till the next day

²⁶ Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, vol. 2, p. 70.

²⁷ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, vol.1, p. 89.

²⁸ Ibid, vol. 5, p. 2243.

²⁹ Muslim Ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, vol. 8, p. 22.

when the Prophet said to him, "What have you got, Thumāmah? He said, "What I told you, i.e. if you set me free, you would do a favor to one who is grateful." The Prophet left him till the day after, when he said, "What have you got, O Thumāmah?" He said, "I have got what I told you." On that the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Release Thumāmah." So he (i.e. Thumāmah) went to a garden of date-palm trees near to the Mosque, took a bath and then entered the Mosque and said, "I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and also testify that Muḥammad is His Apostle! By Allah, O Muḥammad! There was no face on the surface of the earth most disliked by me than yours, but now your face has become the most beloved face to me. By Allah, there was no religion most disliked by me than yours, but now it is the most beloved religion to me. By Allah, there was no town most disliked by me than your town, but now it is the most beloved town to me. Your cavalry arrested me (at the time) when I was intending to perform the *‘Umrah*. And now what do you think?" The Prophet gave him good tidings (congratulated him) and ordered him to perform the *‘Umrah*. So when he came to Mecca, someone said to him, "You have become a Sabian?" Thumāmah replied, "No! By Allah, I have embraced Islām with Muḥammad, Apostle of Allah. No, by Allah! Not a single grain of wheat will come to you from Yamāmah unless the Prophet gives his permission."³⁰

It can be seen from the ḥadīth how leniency and kindness changed the life of this leader from hatred and enmity towards Islām to love, conviction and support for the religion of Allah. For this reason, the Sunnah says that leniency has never been placed on something except that it beautifies it, and whenever it is removed from a thing it will make it ugly. Thus, Islām espouses the application of *al-waṣaṭiyyah* in dealing with people of other religions. "And insult not those whom they (disbelievers) worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge. Thus, We have made fair-seeming to each people its own doings; then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of all that they used to do."³¹ From this *āyah* we learn that even though Muslims are commanded to hate shirk, idols and idol worshiping, Allah has commanded them to follow the middle path which is not to insult the false gods and in the same *āyah* the wisdom behind that approach is explained. The same approach can be seen in the following ḥadīth: "Once

³⁰ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl, vol. 4, p.1589.

³¹ Qur’ān, al-An‘ām 108.

while a Jew was selling something, he was offered a price that he was not pleased with. So, he said, "No, by Him Who gave Moses superiority over all human beings!" Hearing him, an Ansārī man got up and slapped him on the face and said, "You say: By Him Who Gave Moses superiority over all human beings although the Prophet (Muhammad) is present amongst us!" The Jew went to the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and said, "O Abū Al-Qāsim! I am under the assurance and contract of security, so what right does so-and-so have to slap me?" The Prophet asked the other, "Why have you slapped". He told him the whole story. The Prophet became angry, till anger appeared on his face, and said, "Don't give superiority to any Prophet amongst Allah's Prophets, for when the trumpet will be blown, everyone on the earth and in the heavens will become unconscious except those whom Allah will exempt. The trumpet will be blown for the second time and I will be the first to be resurrected to see Moses holding Allah's Throne. I will not know whether the unconsciousness which Moses received on the Day of Tur has been sufficient for him, or has he got up before me. And I do not say that there is anybody who is better than Yūnus bin Matta."³²

In the abovementioned ḥadīth, the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) admonished us from saying the Prophet is better than the other when dealing with *ahl al-kitāb* and it is in line with the *ādāb* (ethics) Allah taught us in the *āyah* above. Although it is a fact that the Prophet is the leader of all of the Prophets, he did not boast or ask us to boast to the non-Muslims about it. This method avoids confrontation with the non-Muslims which could cause them to insult Islām. Furthermore, as a principle of moderation and tolerance in *da'wah* Allah says: "There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Tāghūt and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower."³³ This means that when calling people to Islām, compulsion is not applicable, non-Muslims are given room to decide for themselves and this is the case even if they live in a Muslim land under a mutual peace agreement. However, this leeway does not extend to allowing them to spread their religion or openly display symbols of their religion in the Muslim land. This is the middle path of tolerance of other religions and simultaneous protection of Islām and its symbols.

³² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, vol. 5, p. 2389.

³³ Qur'ān, al-Baqarah 256.

Tolerance in Matters of Ijtihād

The concept of *al-wasaṭiyyah* extends to include the method a person uses to make *da'wah*, how he tolerates people of other religions and or fellow Muslims who have different jurisprudential opinions. It is essential to note that it is natural to have differences of opinion among humans, as this happened even with the companions, they used to have differences in the way they understood the texts. The case of Banū Quraizah is one of the best evidences in this regard. Ibn 'Umar narrated that when the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) returned from the battle of Al-Ahzāb (The confederates), he said to us, "None should offer the 'Aṣr prayer but at Banī Quraizah." The 'Aṣr prayer became due for some of them on the way. Some of them decided not to offer the *ṣalāh* but at Banī Quraizah while others decided to offer the *ṣalāh* on the spot and said that the intention of the Prophet was not what the former party had understood. And when that was told to the Prophet he did not blame anyone of them.³⁴ The ḥadīth shows that they used to differ in their understanding the *nuṣūṣ* (texts), but the main difference between the people of the past generations and the present is that their society was based on accommodating differences in *fiqh* matters wherever *ijtihād* is possible. Although the *nuṣūṣ* of *Sharī'ah* are comprehensive, scholars are unequal when it comes to understanding a particular text. They have tried to the best of their ability to reach a proper understanding with sincerity. Thus, there is no blame neither on the scholars nor on their understanding. Ibn Taimiyyah said: "It should be noted that none of the recognized scholars (Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Al-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal) ever intended to go against the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), they all agreed that the *sunnah* of the Prophet must be followed, and the statement of other than the Prophet could either be accepted or rejected. Thus, whenever the statement of any of them is found to be in contrary to an authentic ḥadīth, there has to be justification for that. There are three main excuses for their contradictory: 1- Not believing in that statement to be from the Prophet. 2- Not believing that the Prophet intended with that statement that particular issue in discussion. 3- Believing in the legal ruling extracted from that statement to be abrogated. Based on these three excuses several causes were generated, some of these causes are the fact that the *Sunnah* did not reach him or it reached him with an inauthentic chain of narration or he got the authentic narration but misunderstood the

³⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, vol.1, p.321.

text”³⁵. Having said that, there are unclear revealed texts which are the areas of *ijtihād* for those who are qualified among the scholars. It is extremely important that before making any form of *ijtihād* or analysis a researcher must be knowledgeable and be well versed on the system that governs that issue. Otherwise it will be very difficult to reach a proper conclusion, as the scholars have always mentioned that being accurate in a judgment is based on having a clear picture of the judged issue³⁶. ‘Aliyyu ibn al-Madīnī was reported to have said: “for a judgement to be accurate and errors to be detected, whatever is said about that issue must be combined”³⁷. Unfortunately, this principle given by Ibn al-Madīnī and Ibn Taimiyyah is not heeded by many of those who adopt the method of extremism. A person will hate and promote hatred against a scholar just because he disagrees with him in an opinion that is based on *fiqh* matters. In some instances, the critic will criticize the said scholar simply because he came across a single text that sounds contradictory to that which is used by the scholar whom he criticized. Not knowing that the text he is holding upon (which he used as a base for his criticism) is supposed to be understood within the context of the other texts. That is why it is always necessary to refer to the scholars who are experts in the field to guide a person on how to deal with the *nuṣūṣ* (revealed texts) when they sound contradictory. Allah says, “Do they not then consider the Qur’ān carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many a contradiction. When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people); if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly). Had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah upon you, you would have followed *Shaitān* (Satan), except a few of you”³⁸.

³⁵ Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taimiyyah. *Raf‘u al-Malām an al-A‘immah al-‘Alām*. (Riyadh: al-Ri’āṣah al-Ummah Li Idārat al-Buḥūth al-‘Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftā’ wa al-Da‘wah wa al-Irshād, 1413), p. 8-9

³⁶ Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-‘Uthaimīn. *al-Usūl min ‘ilm al-Usūl*. (Al-Qāhirah: Dār ibn Al-Jawzī, 1416), p.83.

³⁷ ‘Abd Al-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥusain Al-‘Irāqī. *al-Taḥqīd wa al-Idāh sharḥ muqaddimah ibn al-Ṣalāh*. (Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah: Al-Maktabat al-Salafiyyah, 1969), p.117.

³⁸ Qur’ān, al-Nisā’ 82-83

Al-Wasaṭiyyah in *Infāq*

Infāq (spending) for the sake of Allah is one of the most important tools used by *Sharī'ah* in its effort to alleviate poverty and to bring ease to the life of humankind. It is a deed that Allah loves and He has encouraged Muslims to participate in it repeatedly in the *Qur'ān*. It is a key if used properly, will surely bring the community together because it strengthens the bond of brotherhood in *Islām*. However, many people have failed to maintain the required balance when it comes to spending. Thus, Allah sent a reminder in the *Qur'ān* as a remedy to this disease. The *Qur'ān* says: Believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you as believe and spend (in Allah's way), theirs will be a great reward"³⁹. The *āyah* indicates that the *rizq* that Allah has given humankind is a trust and it belongs to Him. Similarly, the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: "The son of Ādam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things: his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it and how he disposed of it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge."⁴⁰

Therefore, the *nuṣūṣ* of *Sharī'ah* teach that the wealth endowed upon any human being belongs to Allah. They are instructed to spend it on certain groups of people and in certain ways which they will be questioned about on the Last Day. Moderation in *Infāq* is the unique method provided by the *Sharī'ah* to ensure success in this issue.

Definition and Legality of *Infāq*

Infāq linguistically means "to take out money from the hand". The Arabs used to say: "When there are a lot of people buying goods, the Arabs explain the situation by saying '*nafaqa al-mabi'u*' which means the trading property has finished. They also used to use the same expression upon the death of an animal; this is when they say '*nafaqat al-dabbah idha kharajat ruhuha* when its soul goes out."⁴¹ *Infāq* technically, means spending upon those people or things that Allah loves for a Muslim to spend on. As for the legality of *Infāq*, the above-mentioned *āyah* serves the purpose. The *Qur'ān* says: "Believe in Allah and His

³⁹ Qur'ān, al-Ḥadīd 7

⁴⁰ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥussain Al-Baihaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īman* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah. 1410), vol. 2, p. 284.

⁴¹ ʿAliyyu ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAliyyu Al-Wāhidī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Basīd* (Saudi Arabia: King Said Islamic University, 1430), vol.1, p. 195.

Messenger, and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you as believe and spend (in Allah's way), theirs will be a great reward. Similarly, the series of *āyāt* in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* also indicate its legality and its prestigious position in *Islām*. Allah says: "The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah, is as the likeness of a grain (of corn); it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, *All-Knower* and whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allah's Countenance. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged (charity is) for *Fuqara* (the poor), who in Allah's Cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it *well*.... Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's Cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."⁴² These *āyāt* leave no doubt that *Infāq* is highly recommended in *Islām* and Allah loves to see His slave spending for His sake.

Benefit and Significance

The main benefit of *Infāq* is that it earns a Muslim the Pleasure of Allah and His reward. Allah has promised to reimburse the Muslim who spends for His sake in this life and to reward him in the hereafter. The *Qur'ān* says: "Say: "Truly, My Lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills of His slaves, and (also) restricts (it) for him, and whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allah's Cause), He will replace it. And He is the best of providers."⁴³ The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) also said in this regard: "There is never a day wherein servants (of God) get up at morn, but are not visited by two angels. One of them says: O Allah, give him more who spends (for the sake of Allah), and the other says: O Allah, bring destruction to one who withholds."⁴⁴ He also said: "*Ṣadaqah* does not decrease property and Allah increases the honor of him who

⁴² Qur'ān, al-Baqarah 261-274.

⁴³ Qur'ān, Al-Saba' 39

⁴⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, vol.2. p.522

forgives and no one will humble himself for Allah's sake except that Allah raises his status."⁴⁵

Infāq also plays a great role on poverty alleviation. A social benefit is that it increases the brotherhood among the Muslims and softens the hearts of the non-Muslims when they are spent on. *Infāq* also assists in providing the community with good social security. The main causes of crime are lack of a proper education and financial support, thus if *Infāq* is utilized wisely it will help prevent the brooding of criminals. This will eventually wake up the natural disposition which is the *Fitrah* given to them by Allah towards doing what is right. Those who have an inclination towards wrongdoing would have no excuse to commit crimes. Finally, being moderate in spending contributes significantly in achieving one of the *Maqāṣid* of *Sharī'ah*: the protection of *māl* and wealth. This is the reason why the scholars have mentioned that the sustainability of the Islamic economic system is based on two things:

- a. *Husn al-Iktisab* which means a wise and good earning. In other words earning *ḥalāl* by using *ḥalāl* means.
- b. *Husn al-Infāq* which means a wise spending. In other words being moderate in *ḥalāl* spending without *isrāf*, and staying away from *tabdhīr*.⁴⁶

These two pillars can only be maintained if a Muslim understands the divine decree of Allah in *rizq* (nobody will die before completing that which has been written for him) properly. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: "O people, fear Allah and be moderate in seeking a living, for no soul will die until it has received all its provision, even if it is slow in coming. So fear Allah and be moderate in seeking provision; take that which is permissible and leave that which is forbidden."⁴⁷

Isrāf and Tabdhīr

Although *Infāq* is highly recommended in *Islām* to the extent that it is made *wājib* in some circumstances, it strictly detests going beyond the boundaries. There are mainly two ways *Isrāf* can take place: *Isrāf* in what pleases Allah and *Isrāf* against the way of Allah. Moderation is needed in the first type to guard against *Isrāf*, whereas the second type is

⁴⁵ Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, vol.8, p.21.

⁴⁶ Al-Shanqīṭī, Muḥammad Al-Amīn ibn Muḥammad al-Mukhtār, *al-Islāmu Dīnun Kāmilun*, (Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Al-Sunnah, 1995), p.18.

⁴⁷ Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Beirut; Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1996), vol. 1, p.15.

entirely rejected in *Islām*. Spending in a way that does not please Allah is what is known as *tabdhīr*. The following section will discuss both of them Insha'Allah. *Isrāf* linguistically means extravagance; this is where a person takes beyond his need or spends beyond the requirement which leads to wastage.⁴⁸ It is hated in *Islām* and the one who does it gets a sin. The *Qur'ān* says: "O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes) while praying and going round the *Ka'bah*, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not *Al-Musrifīn* (those who waste by extravagance)."⁴⁹ It also says: "And it is He who produces Gardens trellised and untrellised, and date-palms, and crops of different shape and taste (its fruits and its seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof (its *zakat*, according to Allah's orders 1/10th or 1/20th) on the Day of its harvest, and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not *al-Musrifīn* (those who waste by extravagance),⁵⁰

These *āyāt* (by rejecting *Isrāf*) are indicating that moderation in *infāq* is encouraged, it is not only encouraged in the normal circumstances, but it is also encouraged in spending for the sake of Allah. The *Qur'ān* says: "And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)."⁵¹ In another place it says "And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty"⁵². In these two *āyāt* Allah recommends Muslims to exercise moderation in whatever they spend for the sake of Allah upon the needy. This is because *Islām* is the religion of logical reasoning and wisdom, and it is not part of wisdom for a person to spend upon others while he or his family is in need. Consequently, *Islām* encourages a Muslim to follow the orders given to them by the *Sharī'ah* when dealing with *nafaqah*. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) recommends that one should start by satisfying himself then his family, followed by other people. The following *ḥadīth* is a confirmation of this principle: Abū Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Spend for the sake of Allah," a man said, "Yā

⁴⁸ Muḥammad al-Ṭahīr ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭahīr Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī, 2000), vol.15, p.81.

⁴⁹ Qur'ān, Al-A'rāf 31

⁵⁰ Qur'ān, Al-An'ām 141

⁵¹ Qur'ān Al-Furqān 67

⁵² Qur'ān al-Isrā' 29

Rasūlullāh, I have one dinar," the Prophet said, "Spend it on yourself," he said, "I have another one", the Prophet said, "Spend it on your child," he said. "Yā Rasūlullāh I have another one," the Prophet said, "Spend it on your wife," he said, "Yā Rasūlullāh, I have another one," the Prophet said, "Spend it on your servant," he said, "Yā Rasūlullāh, I have another one," the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "You know better where to put it."⁵³

The above *ḥadīth* shows that a person's family are supposed to be given priority over everyone else. This is illustrated more in the following *ḥadīth*. Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī narrated: On *'Īd al-Fiṭrī* or *'Īd al-Adḥā* Allah's Messenger (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) went out to the *Muṣallā*. After finishing the prayer, he delivered the sermon and ordered the people to give alms. He said, "O people! Give alms." Then he went towards the women and said. "O women! Give alms, for I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-Fire were you (women)." The women asked, "O Allah's Messenger (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*)! What is the reason for it?" He replied, "O women! You curse frequently, and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. O women, some of you can lead a cautious wise man astray." Then he left. And when he reached his house, Zainab, the wife of Ibn Mas'ūd, came and asked permission to enter. It was said, "O Allah's Messenger (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*)! It is Zainab." He asked, "Which Zainab?" The reply was that she was the wife of Ibn Mas'ūd. He said, "Yes, allow her to enter." And she was admitted. Then she said, "O Prophet of Allah! Today you ordered people to give alms and I had an ornament and intended to give it as alms, but Ibn Mas'ūd said that he and his children deserved it more than anybody else." The Prophet replied, "Ibn Mas'ūd had spoken the truth. Your husband and your children had more right to it than anybody else."⁵⁴

On another occasion the Prophet made it clearer that the family of a person should have the priority before anybody else. 'Āmir ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ narrated: That his father said, "In the year of the last *ḥajj* of the Prophet I became seriously ill and the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to visit me inquiring about my health. I told him, 'I am reduced to this state because of illness and I am wealthy and have no inheritors except a daughter, (In this narration the name of 'Āmir ibn Sa'd

⁵³ Aḥmad ibn 'Aliyyu Ibn Ḥajar. *Bulūgh al-Marām*. Riyadh: Dār Ihyā' al-'Ulūm, 1994), p.261-262.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.262

is mentioned and in fact it is a mistake; the narrator is ‘Ā’ishah bint Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ). Should I give two-thirds of my property in charity?’ He said, ‘No.’ I asked, ‘Half?’ He said, ‘No.’ then he added, ‘One-third, and even one-third is much. You’d better leave your inheritors wealthy rather than leaving them poor, begging others. You will get a reward for whatever you spend for Allah’s sake, even for what you put in your wife’s mouth.’ I said, ‘O Allah’s Apostle! Will I be left alone after my companions have gone?’ He said, ‘If you are left behind, whatever good deeds you will do will upgrade you and raise you high. And perhaps you will have a long life so that some people will be benefited by you while others will be harmed by you. O Allah! Complete the emigration of my companions and do not turn them renegades.’ But Allah’s Apostle felt sorry for poor Sa‘d ibn Khaula as he died in Mecca.” (But Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ lived long after the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).⁵⁵

It can be concluded from the above mentioned *aḥādīth* that satisfying one’s family is given preference over the satisfaction of any other person’s need. If these principles of priority in *infāq* are taken into consideration the families of rich people would never suffer. This is contrary to the attitude of some rich people in this era where they might have billions but their close relatives are still in a state of need or even begging other people to support them with the basic needs of their daily life. *Islām* is against this behavior which is why Allah did not ask one to spend all of their wealth for the sake of Allah. A person has to be moderate and save something for his own needs as well as for the needs of the family. This is the secret behind the saying of Allah in the early verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* when He praises the believers who spend a portion from that which Allah has provided them with. It should be noted here that Allah did not say they are spending all of their wealth but only a portion of it. For this reason Allah commanded the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) not to take everything from them (as some may suggest) but only a portion of their wealth when He says: “Take *ṣadaqah* (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it, and invoke Allah for them. Verily! Your invocations are a source of security for them, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”⁵⁶

During the battle of Tabūk, when the companions gave the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) their wealth he used to inquire about their family needs (in spite of the strong financial need of the *jihād*

⁵⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl, vol.5. p.2343

⁵⁶ Qur’ān, al-Tawbah 103

at that moment) saying: “What did you leave for your family?” as it is reported in the following *hadith*: ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb: The Messenger of Allah commanded us one day to give *ṣadaqah*. At that time I had some property. I said: Today I shall surpass Abī Bakr if I surpass him any day. I, therefore, brought half my property. The Messenger of Allah asked: What did you leave for your family? I replied: The same amount. Abū Bakr brought all that he had with him. The Messenger of Allah (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) asked him: What did you leave for your family? He replied: I left Allah and His Apostle for them. I said: I shall never compete you in anything.⁵⁷ This indicates that they should give only a portion of their wealth and not all of it (Abū Bakr was an exception to this general principle, that is why he was treated differently by the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*)). Some of it should be left for the family’s needs. If Muslims are to apply this principle then no one would harbor regret in the future. That is why Allah says in the previously mentioned *āyah*, “And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty.”⁵⁸ From this *āyah* we understand that giving away everything someone has can cause regret in the future. In general, moderation is the only solution to maintain the balance.

In the case of *Tabdhīr* as it has been mentioned, it is spending in other than the way of Allah or using money without any logical justification in that which does not benefit. In this regard, moderation is not required. Instead a Muslim should completely abstain and refrain from this evil act which Allah describes as an act of the devil and the ones who do it are the brothers of *Shayāṭīn*. Allah says: “And give to the kindred his due and to the *Miskīn* (poor) and to the wayfarer. But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the *Shayāṭīn* (devils), and the *Shaiṭān* (Devil - Satan) is ever ungrateful to his Lord.”⁵⁹ The *āyah* clearly shows that *Tabdhīr* is prohibited in all of its forms whether in spending on *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* matters. The main cause of this evil act is the absence of a sense of responsibility that whatever Allah has bestowed upon His slaves has to be accounted for in the hereafter. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said:

⁵⁷ Sulaimān ibn Ash’ath Al-Sijistānī Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr, 1969), vol.2, p.54.

⁵⁸ Qur’ān, al-Isrā’ 29.

⁵⁹ Qur’ān, al-Isrā’ 26-27.

“The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things: his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it and how he disposed of it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge.”⁶⁰ If spending was to be placed in a continuum, *infāq* begins with *wājib*, *mustahab*, then *ḥalāl* and then *Isrāf* (which is spending beyond the need) which is followed by *tabdhīr* which is beyond *Isrāf* in its evil. However, there is another way of distinction between *Israf* and *Tabdhir*: *Israf* is about wastage which can be in any form, like wasting food, properties etc. while *Tabdhir* is limited to wasting money/wealth only. Therefore, every *Tabdhir* is *Israf* but not vice versa.

Application of *al-Wasaṭiyyah* in one’s personal wealth

In current times it is necessary to adhere to moderation in *infāq*. The abandonment of this *Qur’ānic* injunction has led to the collective *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* of people and nations alike. This was a major cause of the recent global recession which left many people in financial difficulty. In some cases people are acquiring debts to pay off other debts. Hence, people are falling prey to loan sharks and *ḥarām* bank loans because of spending more than they can afford to spend. Muslims have not been excluded from this trend especially regarding the procurement of micro-loans taken by the poor and needy. These types of loans which contain *ribā* have contributed immensely to the state of poverty in the *Ummah*. This is one of the wisdoms behind the prohibition of *Ribā*: The Prophet (ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said: “Allah cursed whoever consumes *ribā*, whoever pays *ribā*, the two who are witnesses to it, and the scribe who records it.”⁶¹ (Muslim 2000) In another place he said: “A dirham of *ribā* which a man receives knowingly is worse than committing adultery thirty-six times”. Al-Baihaqī has also reported the above *ḥadīth* in *Shu‘ab al-Īmān* with the addition that, “Hell befits him whose flesh has been nourished by the unlawful.”⁶² In another place the Prophet (ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “*Ribā* has seventy two segments, the least serious being equivalent to a man committing adultery with his own mother...”⁶³ That is why in *Islām barakah* is removed from any dealing that contains *ribā* in it. Allah says: “Allah will destroy *Ribā* (usury) and

⁶⁰ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥussain Al-Baihaqī, vol.2, p.284.

⁶¹ Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj, vol.5, p.50.

⁶² Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥussain Al-Baihaqī, vol.5, p.56.

⁶³ Sulaimān ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb Al-Ṭabarānī, *Mu‘jam Al-Ṭabarānī* (Riyadh: Dār al-Sumai‘ī, 1994), vol.7, p.158.

will give increase for *ṣadaqāt* (deeds of charity, alms, etc.) and Allah likes not the disbelievers, sinners.⁶⁴

The major contributor to this evil act is the love for this *dunya* while neglecting the hereafter. Materialism has produced people who buy products that they do not need with money that they do not own. The only justification is the desire to compete with those who are stronger than them financially. This attitude of seeking *dunya* at whatever cost is an indication of the extent materialism has reached in the hearts and it is a cause of failure. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: Whoever has the world as his only concern, Allah will disintegrate his affairs upon him and will make distress apparent upon his face and will not grant him of worldly benefits, except that which was written for him. And [on the contrary,] whoever has his eyes set on getting the rewards in the Hereafter, Allah will organize his affairs for him and will grant fulfillment to his heart and will grant him of worldly benefits, while he considers such benefits insignificant.⁶⁵ Another major contributor to this trend of *isrāf* and *tabdhīr* is the absence of a sense of accountability. Many people act as if they are oblivious to the fact that a person will be held accountable for all his actions in this life especially the wealth Allah has given him. It was stated earlier that the Prophet *ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: “The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things: his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it and how he disposed of it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge.”⁶⁶

This *ḥadīth* is enough to deter a person from misusing what Allah has entrusted him with. Man is only mandated to act as a care taker and an agent to put the wealth in its proper place. When a person benefits from the warning in this *ḥadīth* then his sense of responsibility will be enthused and deter him from excessiveness or miserliness. He would then pay due diligence and vigilance to fulfilling his *amānah*. Failure to benefit from this warning can only lead to deep regret when regret will never be of benefit. Allah says: “And Hell will be brought near that Day. On that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance (Then)

⁶⁴ Qur’ān, al-Baqarah, 276.

⁶⁵ Muḥammad ibn Isa ibn Sawra Al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1998), vol.4, p.224.

⁶⁶ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥussain Al-Baihaqī, vol.2, p.284.

avail him? He will say: "Alas! Would that I had sent forth (good deeds) for (this) my life!"⁶⁷

Al-Wasāṭiyyah in Business and Government Spending

The concept of moderation in *infāq* is not limited to personal wealth but should also be practiced in the corporate world. *Infāq* is a sustainable concept which if utilized by businesses can prevent or reduce insolvency. Furthermore, resources will not be wasted on unnecessary things. Businesses can also engage in charitable work that can get the owners continuous reward even after their death. Although the concepts of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility exist in the business world, they differ profoundly from the Islāmic concept of *infāq*. The main difference is that the latter is done purely for the sake of Allah and its benefit extends to the hereafter.

Furthermore, Governments can implement the concept of moderation in *infāq* by putting the nation's wealth in the proper place. This would prevent taking excessive taxes from the wealth of the people and the acquisition of expensive loans from other nations. The government is the caretaker in the area of natural resources as well as in matters of national security. But in areas where the involvement of the private sector would be more cost effective and cost efficient than the government should not spend public funds on these and should allow the business cycle to flow uninterrupted. This would be incongruence with the concept that the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) taught the *Ummah* where he refused to indulge in price fixing but left it to the supply and demand in the market. The following *ḥadīth* is a support for that: Anas ibn Mālik narrated: The people said: Messenger of Allah, prices have shot up, so fix prices for us. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: Allah is the one Who fixes prices, Who withholds, gives lavishly and provides, and I hope that when I meet Allah, none of you will have any claim on me for an injustice regarding blood or property.⁶⁸ Thus, government interference in market activities (especially price control) is impermissible except where it is necessary.

There is a trend to bailout large corporations using the taxpayers' money. Governments should not be spending the wealth of the people on bailing out businesses because of their own lack of planning. They

⁶⁷ Qur'ān, al-Fajr 23-24.

⁶⁸ Ahmad ibn 'Aliyyu Ibn Ḥajar, *Bulūgh al-Marām* (Riyadh: Dār Ihyā' al-'Ulūm, 1994), p.335.

should constantly remember that they are none but trustees entrusted by Allah. Their responsibility is to make sure the wealth of the *Ummah* is preserved. This can be done if wise spending based on *Maṣlahah* takes place. The resources the Creator provides for humankind are more than enough to meet their needs. But oppression, injustice and misuse of public wealth have rendered the abundance inadequate and insufficient.

The negative effects of *Isrāf* and *Tabdhīr*

It is commission of a sin that usually leads to disaster, Allah says: “And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much.”⁶⁹ (Sūrah al-Shūrā, *āyah*: 33). In another place He says “Evil (sins and disobedience of Allah, etc.) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds, etc.), that Allah may make them taste a part of that which they have done, In order that they may return (by repenting to Allah, and begging his Pardon).”⁷⁰ It also usually leads to the commission of sins and this is because when *isrāf* becomes a person’s attitude, it leads to an excessive usage of wealth on unnecessary wants and desires which can never be satisfied. Allah says “Verily, He likes not *Al-Musrifīn* (those who waste by extravagance),”⁷¹

Extravagance normally leads to an unsupervised accumulation of wealth. This type of people spends a lot of money seeking to fulfill desires, wants and worldly pleasures. Their sole purpose becomes how to earn more money even if they might have to get it through *ḥarām* means. When both *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* means are exhausted or prove futile they are mostly like to become depressed if their mental health does not deteriorate altogether. The evil consequence of this act does not only affect the person alone, instead it might also include his family especially when he is the provider of their *nafaqah* (necessary expenses). Allah says: And fear the *Fitnah* (affliction and trial, etc.) which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but it may afflict all the good and the bad people), and know that Allah is Severe in punishment.”⁷²

Extravagance contributes to the increase of poverty in the society. People are spending on unnecessary things while those near to them are suffering from hunger. It may lead to bad traits such as greediness from

⁶⁹ Qur’ān, al-Shūrā 33.

⁷⁰ Qur’ān, al-Rūm 41.

⁷¹ Qur’ān, al-An’ām 141.

⁷² Qur’ān, al-Taubah 25.

the rich, while causing enmity and rancor in the heart of the poor and needy towards the rich. This is especially when the wealthy person is not giving the poor their due rights. Furthermore, it kills a Muslim's sense of responsibility and develops an attitude of negligence and carelessness towards one's responsibility. It causes regret in the future of those of who indulged in it. This is due to the fact that this act usually leads to a complete exhaustion of wealth with nothing to meet even the most basic needs. The *Qur'ān* says: "And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty."⁷³ These are some of the consequences of *Isrāf* and *Tabdhīr*, they all support the impermissibility of the act, and whoever does not adhere to the Law of Allah on this issue verily will be one of the brothers of the devils. Allah knows best.

Conclusion

Weakness in *īmān* and lack of proper understanding of the *Sharī'ah* are the main contributors to the decrease of moderation in the lives of many. A Muslim should fear Allah and watch over his actions with care in order to avoid regret in this life as well as in the hereafter. He should understand the fact that preserving the unity as well as the *māl* or wealth of the *Ummah* are among the important objectives of the existence of *Sharī'ah*. The adherence to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is the only way out for the *Ummah*. His affairs were all *wasat*, as such the correct understanding on how to be moderate should only be taken from his guidance. For the nation to ensure a proper application of the *Sunnah* the true and honest scholars must always be contacted. These are those scholars who fulfil the following two conditions; knowledge and *taqwā* (the fear of Allah). They are those whose main purpose is to bring the *Ummah* together and to unite upon the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Concerning the matter of being extravagant, Jābir ibn 'Abd Allah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: "O people, fear Allah and be moderate in seeking a living, for no soul will die until it has received all its provision, even if it is slow in coming. So fear Allah and be moderate in seeking provision; take that which is permissible and leave that which is forbidden."⁷⁴ If a person believes in the hereafter and that he will be brought back to Allah for accountability,

⁷³ Qur'ān, al-Isrā' 29.

⁷⁴ Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājah, vol .1, p.15.

then he will not dare to spend unnecessarily. A good Muslim will definitely watch over his expenses and moderation as recommended by the *Qur'ān*. The ḥadīth said: “The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things: ... his wealth and how he earned it and how he disposed of it,” Therefore, a Muslim should always reflect upon what has been said and watch over his actions. He should constantly remember that the wealth given to him by Allah is nothing but a trust which he will be questioned about it in the hereafter, the Day a person will regret where regret will never benefit him. Therefore, to avoid this unwanted situation a Muslim has to be mindful of Allah in everything he does especially in *infāq*. The following *ḥadīth* is the best reminder to conclude with. Al-Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah said: The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Allah has forbidden for you, (1) to be undutiful to your mothers, (2) to bury your daughters alive, (3) to not to pay the rights of the others (e.g. charity, etc.) and (4) to beg of men (begging). And Allah has hated for you (1) vain, useless talk, or that you talk too much about others, (2) to ask too many questions, (in disputed religious matters) and (3) to waste the wealth (by extravagance).⁷⁵ Allah knows best.

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⁷⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl, al-Bukhārī, 2000, vol.2. p.848.

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