

## SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC ECONOMIC THOUGHT (II)\*

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### *Special(ized) Sources*

In the first part of this study we defined the sources of the *History of Islamic Economic Thought* (HIET)<sup>1</sup> as the set of Islamic texts that contain explicit expressions of economic ideas. Likewise we saw that the classical Islamic texts that qualify for such a status could, depending on the overall relevance of their contents to the subject, be classified into *general* and *special* (or perhaps better to say "*specialized*") sources. Classical Islamic texts that deal explicitly with economic matters alongside non-economic ones were considered to be "*General Sources*", and the others that are devoted to economic matters in an exclusive way were accepted as "*Special Sources*" of HIET. Since an overview of general sources preceded by a synopsis on general Islamic reference works has already been provided, we can now proceed with a relatively brief examination of special or specialized sources followed by a brief account of the 19th century economic literature that was prompted by the impact of Western political economy.

As may again be remembered, texts that were in the same category in their capacity as works devoted exclusively to economic matters were, on the basis of some other criteria, subdivided into two further categories: "*Independent Works Forming Different Families of Literature*" and "*Single Independent (or Unique) Works*".

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\* This is the second part of my article "Sources of the History of Islamic Economic Thought", *Al-Shajarah*: 2: 21-62.

<sup>1</sup> Henceforth I shall refer to the *History of Islamic Economic Thought* as HIET.

### *A. Independent Works Forming Different Families of Literature*

Some of the works that feature in this category carry identical titles and some carry titles that differ with nuances. We shall treat them here ignoring such small differences. However, the reader will be able to easily notice differences of this kind in the examples we are going to provide.

#### *1. Al-Ḥisbah Literature*

*Al-ḥisbah* is the historical name for the institutionalized form of an Islamic social obligation (*farḍ al-kifāyah*) derived from the Qur'anic injunction known as enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is bad. *Al-ḥisbah* literature, on the other hand, signifies the considerably rich literary production that has grown in relation to the study of the legal, ethical and philosophical foundations, and organizational structure, rules and regulations of this institution. Since, *goodness* and *badness* or *vices* and *virtues* are concepts with extremely wide connotations and denotations, *al-ḥisbah* literature as the study of the institutionalized form of encouraging the one and discouraging the other goes well beyond the economic sphere in terms of its scope, and in this capacity it could as well be classified within General Sources. But since the part of this literature that corresponds to economic matters overweighs the other, we found it appropriate to examine it under Special(ized) Sources.

Literature on *al-ḥisbah* is not homogenous. Some of the works such as Ibn Taimiyyah's (1263–1329) *al-Ḥisbah fī al-Islām* put greater emphasis on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of *al-ḥisbah*, whereas others like al-Shaizari's (d. 589/1193) *Nihāyat al-Ruṭbah fī Talab al-Ḥisbah* do the opposite by giving greater weight to the practical aspects of the subject and serve somewhat as *al-ḥisbah* handbooks or as *al-ḥisbah* manuals. On the other hand, while some examples of the same literature such as the two books just mentioned deal with *al-ḥisbah* in general and in a comprehensive way, there are others that are devoted to more specific aspects of the same topic.