

# Islamia

# الإسلامية

EVERY FRIDAY

## Treat Your Workers with Respect: It's the Muslim Thing to Do

"Give to the worker his wages before his sweat dries" -- Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), (Ibn Majah).

**J**USTICE in Islam is not a truism, a redundant phrase of a hallow principle. Justice in Islam is a foundation to which believers are urged to, in fact compelled to adhere. But then, why is injustice rife in some Muslim countries? Among other injustices, why are labourers treated so poorly, so unfairly in some countries that call themselves Muslim? Needless to say that if the abuse of a person, a group of people or even the environment is strongly condemned in Islam, then the mistreatment of a worker is unquestionably rejected, and should not practiced by anyone who calls himself a Muslim.

Back to the concept of justice. Almighty Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an: [O you who believe, stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do] (An-Nisaa' 4:135).

Islam values hard work and dedicated labour. It sets rules to govern the relationship between employers and employees; it also determines rewards and punishment.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Allah said, 'I will be an opponent to three types of people on the Day of



Resurrection: one who makes a covenant in My name but proves treacherous; one who sells a free person and eats his price; and one who employs a worker and takes full work from him but does not pay him for his labour" (Al-Bukhari).

Almighty Allah (STW) said in the Qur'an: [Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order.] (Al-A'raf 7:85)

Neveen Shedid of Reading Islam summarised her understanding of labour rights in Islam as: "Long before unions were established to protect workers' rights, Islam acknowledged a whole set of rights for workers 1,400 years ago. Islam praised the notion of work, and stressed that the one who works to

sustain his living is more pious than the worshiper who worships day and night and who has the ability to work but relies on others for his sustenance. The truest example of this concept is the fact that all God's prophets worked to sustain themselves."

"It was part of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) teachings to encourage work and assure basic rights for all categories of workers whether employees or day labourers. Workers should be treated with dignity and honour regardless of the kind of work they are performing, as long as this work is lawful."

There is hardly any shortage in Islam's unquestionable emphasis on the rights of workers or the exploitation of people, regardless of their age, colour, cultural backgrounds, genders and even

religion. If there is a lacking of any sort, it's in our understanding of such great teachings. If the world gleans from this universal wisdom, it will certainly become a much better place. For now, it hardly is.

But Islam provides its adherents and the world at large an answer. Indeed, a religion which is founded on, among other fundamental concepts, welfare (which naturally lessens exploitation) and justice (which is there to guarantee rights for everyone) is sure to have an answer.

Allah says [Serve Allah, and make not any partners with Him in His divinity. Do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the way-farer (you meet) and those whom your right hands possess (your workers): for Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious. (Nor) those who are stingy, or enjoin stinginess on others, or hide the bounties which Allah has bestowed on them; for We have prepared, for those who are ungrateful, a humiliating punishment] (An-Nisaa' 4:36-37).

Let's always remember this verse from the Holy Qur'an. Please be fair to your workers, treat them with respect and humility. Honor your contracts and promises. Fear Allah (STW), and win his pleasure, and that of his Prophet. That is certainly the way of the righteous.



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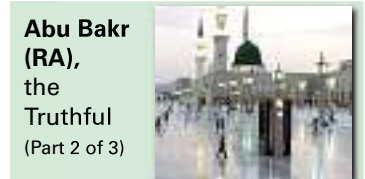
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