

LAWFUL EARNING

Rating: 5.0

Description: This lesson explains the importance of earning a permissible livelihood, and mentions some of the major ways of impermissible earnings.

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Objectives

- To learn six reasons why you should earn halal income.
- To understand the concept of '*baraka*'.
- To appreciate the principle: "In worldly matters everything is permissible except specifically prohibited and in religious matters only that is permissible for which there is proof".
- To learn some of the major sources of *haram* income.

Arabic Terms

- Baraka* - increase, blessing.
- Hadith*- (plural – *ahadith*) is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- Halal* - permissible.
- Haram* - forbidden or prohibited.
- Riba* - Interest.
- Sunnah*- The word *Sunnah* has several meanings depending on the area of study however the meaning is generally accepted to be, whatever was reported that the Prophet said, did, or approved.

Wealth is one of the countless blessings of the Creator on a Muslim. It stays a blessing, something useful to enjoy in this life, as long as it is used within the bounds set by Allah and to benefit others, including the family.



“Wealth and children are the attractions of this worldly life...” (Quran 18:46)

At the same time, wealth can be a test to see who is grateful and who gets preoccupied with the blessing itself and forgets the Giver. In short, Allah grants prosperity to whoever He wishes as a test.

“Be aware that your possessions and your children are only a test, and that there is a tremendous reward with Allah.” (Quran 8:28)

Just like during a test in school we are fully cautious of how we perform, similarly when we take a job, do business, or earn our livelihood in any other way, we must ensure that we are doing so within the boundaries set by Allah. We should avoid sources of income that are forbidden in Islam.

Reasons Why We Should Pay Attention to Our Source of Income

The following are some reasons to motivate us:

1. By seeking *halal* income we follow the footsteps of Allah’s prophets. Allah says in the Quran, **“O Messengers, eat good things and do good deeds. I am well aware of what you do.”** (Quran 23:51) Eating ‘good things’ means to eat *halal*. Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad said,

“Allah the Almighty is Pure and accepts only that which is pure. And indeed Allah has commanded the believers to do that which He has commanded the Messengers. So the Almighty has said:

‘O Messengers! Eat good things, and perform righteous deeds’. (Quran 23:51)

And the Almighty has said:

‘O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided you’. (Quran 2:172)”

[1]

2. Eating *halal* food from *halal* income takes one to Paradise. Prophet Muhammad said, *“Whoever eats the good and pure and acts in accordance with the Sunnah,*

and the people are safe from his harm, he will enter Paradise.”^[2]

3. A person won't move from his place until he answers Allah where he earned his income from. Prophet Muhammad said, “The feet of the son of Adam shall not move on the Day of Judgment until he is asked about five things: about his life and what he did with it, about his youth and how he led it, *about his wealth and how he earned it* and where he spent it, and what he did with what he knew.”^[3]
4. The prayers of a person who eats, drinks, and wears clothes from *halal* income are answered. A hadith mentions, “...Then he (may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned [the case] of a man who, having journeyed far, is disheveled and dusty, and who spreads out his hands to the sky saying ‘O Lord! O Lord!’ while his food is *haram* (unlawful), his drink is *haram*, his clothing is *haram*, and he has been nourished with *haram*, so how can [his supplication] be answered?!”^[4]
5. The Prophet prophesied that a lax attitude towards one's income is a sign of end times. He said, ‘There will come a time when a man will not care where his wealth comes from, whether (the source is) *halal* or *haram*.’^[5]
6. *Halal* income is blessed by Allah. The concept of blessing is called ‘*baraka*’ in Islam. ‘*Baraka*’ is Allah's favor upon the person in a way that you cannot lay a finger on. Everything in which an increase can be seen without notice is blessed; it has ‘*baraka*’ in it. *Halal* income can be blessed in a way that your expenses might be reduced. If your income was not *halal*, you might have unforeseen expenses. You may get more money from *haram* sources, but might spend more on those unforeseen expenses.

Major Sources of *Haram* Income

Earning a *halal* income is an economic struggle of a believer, and it should be carried out as a religious obligation. Thus, a Muslim must engage in *halal* professions and businesses.

There is an Islamic rule which states that all worldly matters are permissible, that includes jobs and businesses, unless they are specifically prohibited. On the other hand, in religious matters, everything is impermissible unless there is Islamic proof for it. Based on this principle, most jobs and businesses are permissible with the following major exceptions:

1. *Riba* (interest), gambling, pornography, and liquor are *haram*, and no matter how attractive the financial rewards of engaging in those enterprises may seem to be, a Muslim must refrain from them. It is also not allowed to work in a company whose main business is *riba* (like a conventional bank) or gambling (like a casino). Similarly, it is not allowed to trade in stocks of such companies.

2. Prostitution is *haram*. Likewise, Islam does not permit sexually provocative dancing or erotic activities, such as suggestive or obscene songs, or writing or producing sexually provocative material. Working in a night club or dance hall is prohibited. Selling and making musical instruments is also not allowed.
3. It is *haram* to do business in swine, idols, statues, or anything of this sort whose consumption and use Islam has prohibited. Islam prohibits the acquisition of statues and even more strongly the making of them.
4. Manufacturing intoxicants and drugs. Islam prohibits any participation in the promotion of alcoholic beverages, whether it be in their manufacture, distribution, or consumption, and that anyone who participates in any of these is cursed by the Messenger of Allah. Working in a bar, liquor shop, or a company that makes alcoholic beverages is also not allowed.
5. Any service rendered in support of injustice or in promoting what is *haram* is forbidden. It is not permissible for a Muslim to be an officer or soldier in an army which is openly fighting against Muslims, nor to work in a corporation or factory which manufactures arms to be used against Muslims, nor in an organization which is hostile to Islam and fights its adherents.

If you have a special situation and need clarification on what to do, please consult with a reputable Islamic scholar.

Footnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*

[2] *Tirmidhi*

[3] *Tirmidhi*

[4] *Saheeh Muslim*

[5] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Nasai*

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