

Food Security under the Islamic Khilafah

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(Translated)

Introduction: Origin of the term, Food Security

Food is considered as one of the basic needs of human beings that ensures energy to undertake the burdens of life and sustain life. Food is one of the causes of the conflicts between states, with many wars and conflicts arising due to it. Every human needs a certain amount of food every day to provide sustenance for living. Whoever is able to secure provision of food, security and health, it is as if they possessed the world and all that is in it, which is affirmed by the hadith of Rasool (saw), **من أصبح منكم آمناً في سربه، معافى في جسده، عنده قوت، فكأنما حيزت له الدنيا** **“Whosoever finds the day feeling secured in his family, healthy in his body and possessing provision for his day, it is as though he possessed the whole world.”** (Tirmidhi)

Food security is subject to the ability of the state to attain agricultural production to the level of sufficiency, or excess, to the requirement of its citizens, so that the state is not dependent upon food imported from other states. This is because the inability of the state to provide food for its citizens will lead the state to be dependent on other states, allowing them to control its administration.

Western thinkers at the beginning of the twentieth century observed the rise of population to billions, leading some of them to forecast that the world will be unable to provide for the growing numbers. In 1968, the well-known biologist, Paul Ehrlich, wrote in his famous book 'The Population Bomb', that, “The battle to feed all of humanity is over... In the 1970's the world will undergo famines—hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death.” He erred in his forecast. However, the problem now is providing food to the world today whilst it is under the control of the capitalist system. This is in addition to the difficulty of food provision under situations of wars and natural disasters, such as drought, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and epidemics. It is a particular challenge in the so-called Third World countries, over which the major capitalist states are competing with each other. Despite the abundant resources of the Third World, its resources are a burden because of the treachery of its rulers and the competition of the major powers over them. **As a consequence of the capitalist civilization that controls the world today, the issue of food security has arisen.**

What does Food Security mean? And what is the Islamic view point?

The danger of not providing sustenance for living to people, under normal circumstances, is obvious. Today, the situation could not be worse than it is. The greedy capitalist civilization controls the world such that the strong eats the food of the weak, thereby producing problems and circumstances that create famine and poverty. This is in addition to the sanctions upon some countries and the instigation of wars in others. As a result, several countries have been struck by food and water shortages. Several countries have handed over resources to others for the sake of providing a loaf of bread. The situation is dangerous and alarm bells warn of greater hazards. Hence, the issue of food security has arisen. Food security is the capacity of a state to provide the basic needs of food and water to its citizens, both in normal and unusual circumstances, such as wars, sanctions and drought.

Islam denies the prediction of a global food crisis. Allah (swt) clarified that He (swt) apportioned sustenance for all life. Allah (swt) said, **وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رُوسِي مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَرَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا** **“And He placed on the earth firmly set mountains over its surface, and He blessed it and apportioned therein its [creatures'] sustenance in four days**

without distinction - for [the information] of those who ask.” (Surah Fussilat: 10). Hence, food is available and what is needed is the stimulation of its production and its equal distribution. As for saying that population growth, scarcity of water and scarcity of agricultural lands are the reasons for the death of people through hunger, it has no basis. Famine has occurred in low population regions and has not occurred in high population regions. China has not suffered with food crisis, whilst it has more than one billion people to feed, whereas, in African countries, small populations living on river banks face perpetual famine.

Although the world population has doubled since the First World War until now, food production has increased three times over the same period, which is a source of reassurance. Some scholars say that the Planet Earth can feed 47 billion people, with the exceptionally plentiful standards of America, and 157 billion people, with the nutritional standards of Japan. Yet, other scholars say that agricultural lands, if utilized better, could feed a population ten times greater than the current seven billion population of the world to a high level of consumption. Some other scholars went far beyond all the above mentioned estimates by estimating that the Planet Earth can feed 132,000 billion people, which is an enormous figure, almost as if it were fantasy. This is based on the estimation of the untapped potential of nature, of which man has not exploited but 1%, despite the great leaps of the scientific revolution in the twentieth century.

How Islam treats Food Scarcity, if it exists:

Providing food is a great responsibility and the Imam, the Khalifah (Caliph), is responsible for his charge. Amongst his responsibilities is the provision of sustenance to the people so that they do not starve in origin. He must ensure that the markets remain full of food so that prices are stabilized, whilst ending the hegemony of monopolists in general, and, particularly, that of the global monopoly undertaken by a handful of capitalists. Within the responsibility, is the provision by the Imam during the days of wars, drought and catastrophic disasters. This is when the both cultivation and the possibility of transportation of goods are reduced. Saving life is obligatory and so providing food is obligatory according to the Shariah Principle, which states that, **“Whatsoever a Wajib (Obligation) cannot be completed without, is in itself Wajib.”** ما لا يتم الواجب إلا به فهو واجب

Islam has given importance to agriculture for it comprises the principle food backbone. Agriculture is also a primary source of the economy along with manufacturing, trade and labor. This is because agriculture alone can provide food to all the citizens of the state. Land is the basis of agriculture and is considered as a part of nature’s composition, just as the growing of hair and teeth are a part of the natural composition of human-beings. Hence, the agricultural land is just a part of nature’s vegetation, even if no-one were to cultivate it. Muslim countries are full of the best kinds of agricultural resources, which can achieve self-sufficiency in food, not only for its own citizens, but they have the potential to provide the rest of the world with food resources.

Let us now look at the Arab region which is an important part of the Muslim world. It is a focus here due to the availability of statistics and figures regarding it, not through discrimination against other countries. There is also goodness, resources and wealth found in other Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan and Uzbekistan amongst others. So, the Arab region is presented ere by means of example alone.

Considering the Arab world, it is that part of the earth where around 323 million people live in an area of around 14 million square kilometers. It has reached a crisis in food self-sufficiency, such that it must import from major foreign powers to the point that the food gap has reached 21 billion dollars in 2006, and is still increasing, according to the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development. This will keep the region under the control of the kafir states and it is political suicide to render strength to the control of the enemy.

The main reason for the absence of food self-sufficiency in the states of the Arab region is not because of the scarcity of resources and wealth, which include, arable land, waters,

manpower and financial resources. The main reason is the dependency of these states for each and everything upon the major Kafir states, consequential to the absence of the Islamic States and the absence of the Khalifah (Caliph) of the Muslims. It is upon the Khalifah (Caliphate) to take care of us, provide us security in all the aspects of life, declare disassociation from the major Kafir states and affirm loyalty to Allah (swt) alone.

Our upcoming Khalifah (Caliph), with the permission of Allah, will take crucial decisions to achieve the security of its citizens, including food security, such that the disbelievers will not be given any way over the believers. The Khalifah will end their control over the capability of the current Muslim world in its policies and administration as occurring now. This control represents the greatest danger to the security of the Muslims and their entity.

1. Arable land

Arable land is considered as an essential component for food security that can be relied upon to achieve food self-sufficiency. Islam promotes agriculture and gives importance to arable lands. Hence, the agricultural policies in Islam are based on one important basis, which is increasing agriculture production. It is achieved in two ways, which are:

a) Increasing land production - this can be attained by the utilization of chemicals, provision of modern techniques for farmers, seed care provision and improvement and provision of necessary funds by the state to the financially weak, as a grant not as a debt, for buying necessary equipment, seeds and chemicals to increase the production, as well as enhancing the facilities that help increasing the production.

b) Expansion to increase land for cultivation - This can be achieved by encouraging the revival of the barren land and fencing it as RasulAllah (saw) said, *من أحيا أرضًا ميتة فهي له* “**Whoever revives a barren land, then it belongs to him**” (reported by Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Ahmed and Malik in various narrations). The State shall endeavor to provide land to those who are capable of farming from those who do not own land or possess little. The state shall forcibly take the land from the one who neglects it for three consecutive years.

For example, RasulAllah (saw) granted a vast land from between the sea and rock formations to Bilal-Al-Muzni. There are other examples from the Seerah of RasulAllah (saw) and from the Khulafa’a after him of that. Hence, agricultural production can be increased with these two methods.

The increase must be in four matters:

1. Increasing the production of food material in order to feed citizens in abundance and secure them from the threat of starvation, ample for any emergency.

2. Increasing the production of necessary materials for clothing like cotton, silk and wool. These are the indispensable basic needs.

3. Increasing the production of materials that have markets outside the state, whether it is food like grains or textile raw material, like cotton and silk.

4. Working to remove the obstacles for important materials to facilitate their abundance and bring them to the state as Umar ibn Khattab (ra) did as narrated by Abu Ubaid “Umar used to impose half-tithe on oil or wheat brought in by the Nabatean traders in order to encourage imports into Madinah, and he used to impose the full tithe on textiles.”

According to a report by Aljazeera on 23-4-2014, the Arab region has agricultural lands with an area of 197 million hectares and currently only 80 million hectares are cultivated i.e., almost 40%. 23% is from the seasonal crop production and 4.9% is from the sustained crop. Agricultural workers account for 23% of the total labor force in the Arab region. The number is constantly decreasing due to their migration from the countryside to the city. Arab region has seas and oceans that provide them with food security from seafood that they need.

Agriculture needs land for cultivation. There are also other resources that must be made available for agriculture to increase its production.

2. Water Resources

Water is one of the basic elements of life as affirmed by the saying of Allah (swt) **وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ** “**And we made from water every living things.**” [Surah Al-Anbiya:30]. RasulAllah (saaw) said, **الناس شركاء في ثلاث: الماء والكلا والنار** “**People are partners in three things: Water, pasture land and Fire.**” Indeed, water is definitely related to food security. So whenever there is water security, there will be food security as cultivation is not possible except with water. Hence, water is one of the reasons for the instigation of wars and conflicts between states. By the grace of Allah (swt), the Muslim World is surrounded by large water resources and it oversees the most important sea transit points. Our Islamic World is surrounded by many seas and oceans which are considered unlimited waters. Our lands also have many of the world’s famous rivers, such as the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates amongst others. These alone provide more than 150 billion cubic meters of water, in addition to an estimated 7734 billion cubic meters of underground water.

There are many water resources that can provide enough for the world’s entire population. With the abundance of these water resources, arable lands can be cultivated, whilst other available lands in the Muslim World can be reclaimed and revived to make them suitable for cultivation. Despite the presence of abundant water in the Muslim World, it is upon the state to educate the citizens on the use of water, preventing waste and losses, establish necessary dams and artesian wells and all that which is indispensable for water management.

3. Manpower

The process of reclaiming, cultivating and rehabilitating the land does not just need the water alone, it also needs the human effort i.e., it needs farmers to carry out these tasks, along with these abundant resources. In the Arab region, there are more than 48 million persons who work in the field of agriculture. In addition to that, poverty can be eliminated by the state through utilization of the poor who are able to work and granting them barren land in order to revive and cultivate it.

4. Financial resources

Cultivation of the lands and its reclaiming and revival need large funding. These funds are available abundantly in the Islamic world. The first of the resources is petroleum. For example, it was published in Al-Waie Magazine Issue 233 that, “it was mentioned in the documentary film Fahrenheit 9-11 that America has benefited of 86 trillion dollars from the oil of Saudi Arabia alone, which means if we divide this amount to over the Muslims in the world, each Muslim, whether young, old, male or female, would get a share of approximately 66,000 dollars. These are funds benefited by America at the expense of the Islamic Ummah.” In addition to the energy and mineral resources, there are many resources that we have. Moreover, we can also utilize the important strategic transit points that are present in our lands.

Besides the best utilization of agricultural lands, there is the use of modern scientific methods so that the staple agricultural production can be developed, such as wheat, vegetable oils, meat, milk, dairy products, fish and eggs. This nutrition can be stored for long periods, for years, such as storage of wheat as straw or as grains, dried dates, figs, grapes, oils, dried and canned meat, and powdered milk. Storage of food materials is preferred as it has been mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah.

This is with respect to the role of the state in storage. As for the individuals, they are encouraged to store food materials that are preserved for a long time in their homes, such as wheat, oil, dried fruits and milk. Aisha (ra) reported that RasulAllah (saw) said, لَا يَجُوعُ أَهْلُ بَيْتٍ عِنْدَهُمُ التَّمْرُ **“A family which has dates will not be hungry”** (Muslim). RasulAllah (saw) said, يَا عَائِشَةَ بَيْتٌ لَا تَمْرَ فِيهِ جِيَاعٌ أَهْلُهُ أَوْ جَاعَ أَهْلُهُ **“A'isha, a family which has no dates (in their house) its members will be hungry; (or) 'A'isha the family which has no dates its members may be hungry. He said this twice or thrice.”** (Muslim). It was affirmed that Muslims used to reserve the dates during the days of RasulAllah (saw) and the permissibility of selling (urya-Bartering dates) bears witness to this. He (saw) said, كُنْتُ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ لُحُومِ الْأَضْحَايِ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثٍ لِيَتَسِعَ ذُو الطَّوْلِ عَلَى مَنْ لَا طَوْلَ لَهُ فَكُلُوا مَا بَدَأَ لَكُمْ وَأَطْعَمُوا وَأَخْرُوا **“I used to prohibit you from (eating) the meat of Sacrifice beyond three days so that those who have the ability would give to those who do not have it. So (now) eat as you like, feed others, and save from it.”** (Tirmidhi). RasulAllah (saaw) said, رَحِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً اِكْتَسَبَ طَيِّبًا، وَأَنْفَقَ قَصْدًا، وَقَدِمَ فَضْلًا **“May Allah have mercy on a person who earns good and spends willfully and provides bounty on the days of his poorness and need.”**

When storing food materials, certain Shariah regulations must be considered:

1) Storage by the individual must not lead to monopoly of goods, such as withdrawing them from the markets so that the prices in the markets increase. RasulAllah (saw) said, كُلُّ مَنْ دَخَلَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَسْعَارِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ **“Every monopolist is a wrongdoer.”** He (saaw) said, لِيُغْلِيَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَإِنْ حَقَّ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَقْعِدَهُ بَعْظَمُ مِنَ النَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ **“Whosoever was involved in any of the prices of the Muslims, so as to increase it for them, it would be due on Allah to place him in a great fire at the Day of Judgment.”**

2) People should not be in need of what is stored; hence, no food is stored whilst the people are hungry. So the stored food should be in surplus production. Khaitama reported: While we were sitting in the company of 'Abdullah b. 'Umar there came in his steward. He (Ibn 'Umar) said: **“Have you supplied the provision to the slaves?”** He said: No. Upon this he said: Go and give (the provision) to them, for the Messenger of Allah (swt) has said, كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يَحْبِسَ عَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ قَوْتَهُ **“This sin is enough for a man that he withholds the subsistence from one whose master he is.”**

In origin, every Muslim eats little when eating, as the Muslim eats to live and not the other way around. It is reported in Muslim that RasulAllah (saw) said, الْكَافِرُ يَأْكُلُ فِي سَبْعَةِ أَمْعَاءَ، وَالْمُسْلِمُ يَأْكُلُ فِي مَعِي وَاحِدٍ **“A disbeliever eats in seven intestines and a Muslim eats in one intestine”**. The meaning of this hadith is to urge the believers to eat less and explain the character of disbelievers to eat more, just as Allah (swt) described them, وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ **“Those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat”** [Surah Muhammad 47:12]. Abu Hurairah (ra) reported that RasulAllah (saw) said, طَعَامُ الْوَاحِدِ يَكْفِي الْاِثْنَيْنِ، وَطَعَامُ الْاِثْنَيْنِ يَكْفِي الْارْبَعَةَ، وَطَعَامُ الْارْبَعَةِ يَكْفِي الثَّمَانِيَةَ **“The food for one person is sufficient for two, and the food of two persons is sufficient for four persons and the food of four persons is sufficient for eight persons.”** (Agreed upon).

And there needs to be equal distribution of food, both in quantity and type. Its evidences are:

1) Ahkam that prohibit the circulation of wealth solely amongst the rich. Allah (swt) said, كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دَوْلَةٌ بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ **“So that it will not be circulated among the rich from you”** (Surah Hashr 59:7)

2) Feeding is obligatory on Muslims as RasulAllah (saw) said, مَا آمَنَ بِي مِنْ بَاتٍ شَبِعَانَ وَجَارِهِ **“He would not have believed in me, the one who slept with his stomach full when his neighbor was hungry on his side and he knew that.”** He (saaw) also said, **“In any local community, if there became amongst them a hungry person, Allah's protection will be disassociated from them.”**

As for the states of harm by which the Muslims are afflicted with today, they do not care for the issue of food provision as they do not care about any human values. For example,

Sudan starves its people though the value of milk wasted through spilling on the earth is estimated to be 700 million dollars every year (Aljazeera 16/6/2008). How does Sudan starve, whilst in 1998, it had 35 million cows and 126 million livestock, according to the statistics of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations? Yet, we do not find any impact on the feeding of Sudan's people, nor in the export of meat, milk, dairy products and leather.

The FAO, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, was founded in the year 1945 in Canada and its headquarter is in Italy. Since 1974, for over forty four years, the FAO nominated Sudan along with Canada and Australia as the food baskets of the world, since they each have 200 million acres of the most fertile agricultural land in the world, with enormous water resources including rivers, underground lakes and rains, along with diverse climates. However, due to its poor policies, administration and management, Sudan's food import bill has risen from 72 million dollars in the year 1990, to one billion dollars in recent times. Whilst Canada and Australia have become the largest exporters of wheat, Sudan is the largest importer of wheat, importing 2.2 million tons per year.

In conclusion, we say that those who do not have food will not have determination. Having reviewed the goodness and wealth in the Arab region, without discussing other countries, it is clear to us that the future Islamic State, by the will of Allah (swt), can achieve not just food security for its people, it can become world's influencing agricultural state in international scale. Finally, it is important to note that the agricultural wealth, through which food security is achieved, is inevitably linked to the industrial wealth, which is no less important than agricultural wealth. It is the basis upon which nations depend for their progress and competitiveness. So, the industrial policy in Islam follows one method, which is the manufacturing of civil and military machinery, along with their ample essentials and spare parts. Consequently kufr states will not have an opportunity to control the policies and administrative affairs of the state.

By following these agricultural and industrial policies under the Islamic state, we can achieve food and industrial security. With the lack of opportunity for colonialism and its states to control us, the Islamic state will pursue its second most important task, after the complete implementation of the Ahkam Shariah, which is carrying the Islamic dawah to the world by preparing economically and militarily for that. Consequently, the state will always be in a state of Jihad.

Hence, the solution lies in the implementation of Islam, its return to the arena of life and the appointment of the Khalifah who governs us all by the Shariah of Allah (swt), implements the Ahkam of lands and ensures abundant production for the interests of the Ummah, and increases the Ummah's agricultural, livestock and industrial production in order to be self-sufficient, independent from other countries, whilst providing for the needs of other countries. The declaration of the Khilafah and its continuity alone, with the permission of Allah, will cause the very term 'food crisis' to disappear from vocabulary and the goodness will be spread to the whole world. O Allah! Hasten Your Support and Relief for us.

Source: Al-Waie Magazine, No. 387, Rabii' Al-Akhir 1440 AH - December 2018 CE

<https://www.al-waie.org/archives/article/13694>