

Laws of Consumption - An Economic Construal

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Abstract

Consumption is one of the important variables of macro economics. It is that part of income of a house hold which is not saved. It plays a vital role in the economy; this is the reason that, Quran has given special emphasis on it and gives some basic laws in this regard. Quran has warned the human being that your consumption is under observation of God and on the Day of Judgment questions will be asked about that. Moreover it is also ordered that, do not waste your wealth in any way and consume it in the optimum manner. In addition gratitude of wealth is also compulsory. The way of gratitude is the obedience of laws of God.

Keywords: Quran; Verses, Consumption, Wastage; Obedience.

1. Introduction

Consumption is one of the basic determinants of level of national income. This term may be defined as the total expenditure in an economy on goods and services which are used up in a specified time period, generally a year, or it is the actual physical process of using goods and services. Consumption is the focus of all human economic activities, without it no meaning is left in the life of human being. Since it is the most important part of human life hence Quran has given basic rules and regulations in this regard to guide the human being, so that they can properly utilized their wealth and will not be included in those people who will be in deficit on the Day of Judgment. For this purpose different guiding principles of Quran are highlighted in the following sections of this paper.

2. Consumption of Human Being is Under Observation

According to the teachings of Quran mankind is not completely free to do any activity, but each and every activity of all men & women is under observation, particularly the consumption of wealth. This fact is clear from the following verses of Quran:

And he saith: I have destroyed wast wealth. Thinketh he that none beholdeth him? Did We not assign unto him two eyes. And a tongue and two lips. (Chapter 90, Verses 6-9).

These verses cover all the aspects of consumption. Point of consideration is that, in the first verse it is said that a man stated that he has lost or destroyed a big quantity of assets. In the other wards point is raised about the decision making ability of man. As an ordinary practice man first takes a decision about his wealth and then act accordingly. In any case power of decision is in the hands of man, he can make right or wrong decisions about his wealth. Hence he is personally liable for all of his decisions, and will be responsible for that on the Day of Judgement. Hence questions will be asked about all of his decisions particularly those decisions which are related to wealth. In the second verse another question is asked, is man assumes that, no one has seen him? Definitely it is not so, each and every action of all human being is under observation particularly their decisions about wealth.

This fact is further explained with third & fourth verses, in which two questions are asked from human being. First question is, 'did God not give him two eyes'? And the second is, 'did God not give him tongue'. It means process of consumption is consisting of two steps; first step is decision making and second consumption of things.

The basic message of these verses is that, man has to be conscious about his decisions particularly regarding the consumption, and just eat and drink those things which are beneficial for him, and should avoid those things which are harmful to him. In this regard following three instructions are quite important.

2.1 Only permitted things can be eaten

First and the basic order is that, human being can eat and drink only those things which are not prohibited by Quran. This order is given at least in there verses of Quran e.g.

Eat of that which Allah hath provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah in Whom ye believe. (Chapter 5, Verse 88)

At another place this order is given in the following words:

O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that we have provided for you. And be grateful to Allah if it is Him ye worship. (Chapter 2, Verse 172).

In the above two verses this order is given to Muslims only but in the following verse its scope is spread to all human being.

O ye people! eat of what is on earth, lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan he is an open enemy for you (Chapter 2, verse 168)

In the other words mankind as a whole is restricted to take just those items which are not prohibited and good.

2.2. To Avoid Misuse and Destruction

Regarding the principles of consumption another important order is given to Muslims as well as the whole mankind is, to avoid misuse and destruction of all of items, including food items. Quran has used two terms in this context first *Israf* (misuse of any item) and *Tabzeer* (complete destruction of any item). A brief introduction of these two terms is as follows:

2.2.1. The term *Israf* (Misuse of Any Item)

In Arabic language the word *Israf* is used for highhandedness, exceed the limits, to cross the limit for any particular matter, use of any item in a wasteful manner, to put any item at a wrong place. Particularly from consumption point of view it has the meaning of prodigality, but this term can be restricted just to wastage of consumable items, misuse of resources, energy, capability and time etc (Perwaiz 1987)a.

Quran has strictly ordered to avoid misuse of any item, anywhere and anytime. Different Quranic verses can be quoted in this regard, e.g.

And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Satan; and Satan is to his lord (Himself) ungrateful. (Chapter 17, Verses 26-27).

At another place this order is given to whole mankind in the following words:

O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer; eat and drink; but waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters. (Chapter 7, Verse 31).

According to the rules of God the persons who do not follow these instructions their end result is nothing except destruction. This rule is given in the following words:

Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute. (Chapter 17, Verse 29).

2.2.2 The term *Tabzeer* (Destruction of Any Item)

Second Quranic term in this regard is *Tabzeer*. It has the meaning of dispersed, destruction, waste etc. (Nadvi 1998). It means when any item is used in such a way that user has wasted it, or it may be destructed then it will be termed as *tabzeer*. Quran has used this term in different verses, and gives the order to mankind to use all things in a senseable way, as it is mentioned in the verses quoted above.

3. Gratitude of God's Blessings is Compulsory

It is another important Quranic principle related to consumption, which claims that gratitude of each and every blessings of God is must, and in case of deviation its punishment is very harsh. Different examples in Quran are given of those people at individual level as well as nations who did not obliged different blessings of God and due to that, got a very harsh punishment.

In order to understand Quranic teachings in this regard it is necessary to understand Quranic term *Shukar* (gratitude / thanks). In Arabic Language it is used in the meaning of fulfillment and to describe, large quantity, significant and to present etc. Gratitude from human being means obedience of laws of God and expression of obligation, and its meaning from God's point of view will be give the full reward or more reward of human efforts. (Parwaiz 1987) b.

According to this law, when God gives any blessing to any individual or a nation, then it is compulsory that they have to obliged it and follow the laws of God. If that particular person or nation does not do the same, then it is the law of God that particular blessing will be snatched and also a severe punishment will be given to them (Aziz 2006). This fact may be proved from different Quranic Verses e.g. Chapter 28, Verse 82), (Chapter 18, Verses 42-43) etc.

Conclusion

Since consumption is a very important part of human activities, hence Quran has given comprehensive guidelines in this regard. As a first principle it is warned to the human being that, all of their actions including their consumption is under observation, hence be careful about the decisions which are related to consumption and consumed only, those items which are permitted by God, with that their use should be in optimum manner. The last principle is that, gratitude of God's each & every blessing is must in the manner which is described in

Quran i.e. in the form of obedience of laws of God.

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