

Al- Imam Muhammad Bin Hassan Al- Syaibani and his work; Al- Kasb

Imam Muhammad Bin Hassan Al Shaybani was one of the two prominent students of Imam Abu Hanifah. The other famous student of Imam Abu Hanifah was Imam Abu Yusuf, the author of a well-known book titled Al- Kharaj. Imam Al Shaybani was also a disciple of Imam Malik Bin Anas. He was born in the 131th of the Hijri year and passed away in the 189th of the Hijri year. He was a great Shariah scholar and was a teacher to many other prominent scholars such as Imam Al- Syafie, Abu Hafs, Al- Bukhari and Al- Kabir. His contribution to the development of sciences of *fiqh* was described by Imam Al- Haskafi in his book Ad- Dur Al- Mukhtar in which he mentioned that *“The discipline of fiqh was cultivated by Abdullah bin Mas’ud (ra), watered by ‘Alqamah, harvested by Ibrahim Al- Nakha’ie and collected by Hammad. Then Abu Hanifah transformed it to be flour, Abu Yusuf kneaded it and Muhammad bin Hassan turned it to bread which is then eaten by all of the human beings”*.

The term Al- Kasb comprises of every form of job, including trade, manufacturing, livestock and craft businesses in order to earn a living. This area was discussed for the very first time by Imam Muhammad bin Hassan in this special book and subsequently Imam Abu Abdullah Ahmad Ibn Harb Al- Naisaburi (deceased on the 234 H) also wrote on the very same topic in his book *“Al- Takassub”*. The later scholars then elaborated on the topic related to earnings, dedicating specific books or specific chapters within their works such as what had been done by Imam Abu Hamid Al- Ghazali in his book *“Ihya’ Ulumuddin”* in the chapter of *“Adab Al-Kasb wa Al-Ma’isyah”*

According to Imam Sarkhasi, the book Al- Kasb was written in the realm of the topics of Zuhud/ *Tasawuf*. This is because when Imam Muhammad bin Hassan was asked upon the completion of writings of various books, whether he had written anything on Zuhud (at that time, the discipline of *Tasawuf* was also known as the discipline of Zuhud or Riqaq), he replied that he had written that (the topic of Zuhud) in the chapter of Trading. Syeikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah was of the opinion that Imam Muhammad had subtly indicated through his reply that a person can only be doing good deeds if the way he earns is conducted in a proper manner. Not long after that, Imam Muhammad wrote a special book on Zuhud and Wara’ which comprises around 1,000 topics but he passed away before having the chance to complete it. He only managed to complete the first few topics and that formed the Al-Kasb book.

Among the main topics which were discussed in Al- Kasb were the responsibility of earning for every Muslim; efforts do not negate the concept of *tawakkal*; the types of earnings and the differences of jobs and its preferential rankings; *infaq* (spending) and the parameters of wastage as well as being extravagant in one’s spending; and the advantages of mutual help as well as its proper timing. Additionally, some interesting issues were discussed by Imam Muhammad bin Hassan such as whether being in poverty is better than being rich, is being thankful for one’s wealth better than being patient with one’s state of poverty and the obligation of seeking knowledge regardless of how busy one is. Imam Muhammad bin Hassan did not only address the rulings of one’s spending, he was also one of the earliest Muslim scholars who wrote on the monetary economy in the chapter of *“Wealth in Islam: from the perspective of earnings, savings and spending”* in his book Al- Kasb. He also scrutinized the market trend as narrated by Al- Hassan bin Syahrab : *“I saw Muhammad bin Hassan meeting with the clothes*

dryers and asking them about their businesses and financial interactions amongst them”. That is how concerned Imam Muhammad bin Hassan was with the market mechanism and trend, such that he had a direct relationship with the traders to acquire in-depth understanding and grasp the technical issues in *muamalat* during his time.

In Al- Kasb, Imam Muhammad bin Hassan not only managed to succeed in deep elaboration of the main economic activities such as jobs, spending and other related activities but he also successfully managed to explain those activities from a jurist’s perspective while including morals in his explanation. Overall, this book can be regarded as one of the earliest books of utmost importance to the discussion of the Islamic economy. In 2011, the book Al-Kasb was translated by Dr. Adi Setia to English and was published by IBFIM (Islamic Banking & Finance Institute Malaysia).