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## The Interaction Between Spirituality and Economics in the Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S)

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### Article info

### Abstract

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Prevalent economic systems in the world ostensibly pursue the interests of the people; however, in practice, they steer humanity towards a purely materialistic existence. In contrast, the religion of Islam has positioned material aspects alongside, and subordinate to, the primacy of spirituality. This ensures that humanity does not fall behind in the path of attaining perfection and felicity, and can progress in both the spiritual and economic spheres. Spirituality, economics, and the fulfillment of material needs are among the most important subjects in the heavenly teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). In this framework, sincerity in action, self-sacrifice, charity, righteous deeds, observance of piety, and the establishment of justice are presented as causes for the increase of wealth and sustenance. The connection between spirituality and economics is profound and inseparable. On the path to acquiring spirituality, economic activity must be directed towards human development and self-refinement so that one may attain salvation and prosperity. In this research, the author aims to examine spirituality and economics as manifested in the conduct and statements of Imam Reza (peace be upon him). The method of this research is analytical-descriptive. Based on the findings, concepts such as justice, work and effort, providing for family expenses, moderation in livelihood, and on the other hand, observing the rights that God has over people, avoiding extravagance, and giving charity in the way of God are among the matters emphasized by His Holiness (peace be upon him).

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Economics, Imam Reza (A.S.), Lifestyle.

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## **1. Introduction**

The dominant economic systems in the contemporary world, despite their technical and material achievements, are facing profound crises, including class disparity, environmental destruction, and a lack of meaning and ethical direction. By reducing human beings to materialistic and profit-seeking entities, these systems have separated the economy from its primary goal, which is the realization of a dignified life, and have marginalized spirituality. In contrast to this paradigm, Islam, by presenting an integrated image of the human being, considers economy and spirituality to be two intertwined and aligned dimensions of human life. In this context, the conduct and statements of the Infallible Imams (A.S.) serve as the most concrete model for implementing this integrated perspective. Imam Reza (A.S.) lived during a period when rational discourse was at its peak, and he demonstrated the capability of religion to address all human needs, including economics. This research examines the model of the interaction between spirituality and economics in the conduct and statements of His Holiness, in order to provide a response to the theoretical and practical impasses of conventional economics.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The general objective of this research is to explain the model of the interaction between spirituality and economics in the theoretical and practical conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) and to extract the components of a “spiritual economic system.” The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

1. Investigating the fundamental concepts of “spirituality” and “economics” from the perspective of Imam Reza (A.S.).
2. Explaining the dialectical and inseparable relationship between spirituality and economics in the Razavi intellectual framework.
3. Identifying and analyzing the most important spiritual components affecting economic conduct (such as God-wariness, patience, moderation, and charity).
4. Extracting economic principles from the practical conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) (such as striving for livelihood, avoiding extravagance, and justice).
5. Providing a practical framework for designing economic policies and behaviors at the micro and macro levels based on the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.).

## **3. Methodology**

This research has been conducted using an analytical-descriptive method within the framework of an interpretive paradigm. The data collection method was library and

documentary research, using primary narrative sources including ‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, Fiḥ al-Riḍā, al-Kāfī, Wasā’il al-Shī‘a, and Biḥār al-Anwār. The data analysis method was qualitative content analysis with an inductive approach, through which key concepts in the three areas of spirituality, economics, and the relationship between the two were identified, extracted, and categorized using the “thematic analysis” method. By combining “historical description” and “philosophical analysis,” this research has both outlined the practical conduct of the Imam and investigated the theoretical foundations of this relationship. Finally, through “practical inference,” applicable models have been extracted from the findings.

#### **4. Findings**

The findings of this research, extracted by citing authoritative texts, indicate the following:

- 1) Explanation of Fundamental Concepts: From the perspective of Imam Reza (A.S.), “spirituality” is a transformative matter within the context of life, based on connection with God and manifested in virtues such as God-wariness, sincerity, and justice. “Economics” is also defined as “moderation and middle-ground” and the wise management of divine blessings for the realization of human dignity and proximity to God.
- 2) The Dialectic of Spirituality and Economics: These two have an inseparable and mutually reinforcing relationship. Spirituality gives direction, motivation, and ethical enforcement to economic activities, and a successful economy provides the necessary platform and resources for spiritual growth.
- 3) Spiritual Components Affecting the Economy: Components such as God-wariness (as a self-control mechanism against corruption), patience (a factor of resilience in economic crises), moderation (an operational principle for sustainable resource management), avoidance of extravagance (the basis of an ecological economy), and charity and almsgiving (a spontaneous mechanism for wealth distribution and social investment) were identified as the key factors.
- 4) Economic Principles in the Razavi Conduct: Imam Reza (A.S.) considered work and striving to provide for one’s family as equivalent to jihad, elevating it from the level of a material necessity to the realm of worship. He placed special emphasis on avoiding poverty (as a violation of human dignity), preserving one’s honor through lawful earnings, and realizing justice (as the basis of economic governance).
- 5) The Model of Spiritual Economy: Based on the findings, a model is presented in

which material and spiritual motives (such as seeking divine reward and proximity to God) are interwoven, ethics function to reduce transaction costs and increase trust, and wealth distribution takes place in the form of social responsibility and systemic solidarity.

## **5. Conclusion**

The teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) present a novel and comprehensive model of a “spiritual economy” in which economy and spirituality exist in a relationship of symbiosis and mutual interaction. In this model, economic activity is a means for spiritual transcendence and the realization of the “ideal life,” and spirituality gives direction, an ethical framework, and a motive beyond material profit to the economy. Concepts such as justice, God-wariness, moderation, and charity are the connecting links between these two realms. This integrated perspective provides a fundamental response to the crises of meaning, justice, and sustainability in contemporary materialistic economies.

### **Practical Applications**

- At the micro level: Directing consumption, investment, and career choices based on criteria of lawfulness, moderation, and social responsibility.
- At the meso level: Designing ethics-oriented business models, observing the rights of stakeholders, and avoiding environmentally destructive activities.
- At the macro level: Inspiring policymakers in formulating economic policies where spiritual and ethical indicators (such as poverty reduction, strengthening social capital, environmental preservation) are considered alongside material indicators.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

- Field research to measure the impact of operationalizing components of the spiritual economy (such as God-wariness and charity) on economic indicators like poverty and welfare.
- A comparative study of the Razavi economic model with other Islamic and non-Islamic economic schools, particularly the design and development of quantitative models and metrics for measuring “blessing” and qualitative efficiency in the economy.
- Investigating the role of social institutions (such as endowments) in realizing a spiritual economy based on the conduct and teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.).

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Economics, Imam Reza (A.S.), Lifestyle