**20 Labour Rights in Islam – Employee Obligations**

Islam is well known as a religion which dignified, honoured, and cared the labours. In the past, labour’s right was disgraced by the practice of slavery, where they were humiliated and violated at the same time. But Islam is different. Islam has a define meaning of labour’s right as a part of society who has to be treated equally.

Islam guarantee the rights of labours by establishing social justice to secure the labour’s family for a decent life when the worker passed away. The value of a labour is raised in Islam from a respectful perspective and involving the view of humanity in it.

The two main guidance for Muslim, Quran and Hadith both confirm about the right of a labour as written below:

**1. The right to get wages**

Wages is and obligation for the employers to their labour, and Islam took a great care for that matters. In Islam, work is one of religious duties must perform by every Muslim to make a living. Working from the morning until evening is another form of good deeds, especially when a head of a family doing labour for the sake of his family, Allah guarantee rewards for him.

For employers who violating the labour’s right of wages deserves Hell fire as reported by Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him): Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, *“Allah decrees the (Hell) Fire and debars paradise for the one who usurps the rights of a believer by taking a false oath.”*

**2. The wages should be paid in the due time**

Islam urge every employer to pay for their labour’s wages when he is return from his work. Paying the wages before the labours coming home is something important from Islamic point of view. As the salary someone receive from his employers will be used to feed his family who have been waiting all day. Imagine if a labour return home from work empty handed, because his employers hasn’t paid him yet.

The rest of the family will be famished, and thus the employers have violated the rights of their labour.

**3. The wages paid should be in fair amount**

Fair doesn’t mean equal. If there are ten employers in a company with the difference in job description, the time he’s been working, and the burden of the work, the amount of wages should be different. The wages paid to the labours has to be equal and fair, due to their capabilities dan talents. Allah (SWT) said, *“and do not deprive people of their due.”* – Al-A`raf (7:85)

The amount of wages should be fair, not exceeding his capabilities or less than it. Allah Almighty has warned employers who paid their employers in no fair amount, *“Woe to those who give less [than due]. Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss.”* Al Mutaffifin (83:1-3)

**4. The wages has to be given on the spot**

Islamic rules has set one of the labour’s right is to receive the wages by the time their work has completed. As narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, *“Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries.”* – Ibn Majah.

Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has declared employers who delayed their labours wages as Allah Almighty’s opponent in the Day of Resurrection.

Narrated by Abu Hurairah, Prophet (SAW) said, *“Allah said, ‘I will be an opponent to three types of people on the Day of Resurrection: One who makes a covenant in My Name, but proves treacherous; one who sells a free person and eats his price; and one who employs a labourer and takes full work from him but does not pay him for his labour.’”* – Bukhari

**5. Choose appropriate works**

Islam significantly raised the dignity of a worker by giving them freedom to choose any work that appropriate for them as an absolute right. Works that the labour was engaged with should bring him goods and a lot of fortune, for both the employers and the employee. This is stressed in both Holy Quran and Hadith. Allah Almighty says,

*“And say, ‘Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers’.”* – At Tawbah (9:105)

Also, Allah command His believer to take the work within his capabilities and not exceed it, because Allah Himself won’t make his worshiper suffering.

*“Abu Hurairah reported Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said, ‘It is essential to feed the slave, clothe him (properly) and not burden him with work which is beyond his power’.”* – Muslim

**6. The right to have rest**

Employers must not overworking their labour with a lot of duties beyond their capabilities. Having some time to rest is the right of a labour. The work that the labours do must not causing damage to his health and life.

*“And I do not wish to put you in difficulty.”* – Al Qasas (28:27)

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, *“Do not charge them with works that they cannot afford.”* – An Nasa’i and Ibn Majah.

To confirm the right of a labour, Abdullah Ibn Umar narrated, *“The Messenger of Allah entered my apartment and said: “I have been told that you stand all night (in prayer) and fast all day.’ I said: ‘Yes (I do).’ He said: ‘Do not do that. Sleep and stand (in prayer); fast and break your fast. For your eyes have a right over you, your body has a right over you, your body has a right over you, your wife has a right over you, your guest has a right over you, and your friend has a right over you.”* – An Nasa’i

**7. Obtaining the rights that determined by the employers**

Under the contractual work, an employer must give proper rights to his labours and not to violating any of them. The violation of labour’s right considered as injustice in Islam. Employer must never devalues the labour’s wages by benefited his severe need at a time. This is strictly prohibited by Islam.

**8. To be fired due to lack of performance**

Given all the privilege involving proper wages and resting time, Islam also asks labour to give their best when it comes to work as a return. Unless the decreasing performance was caused by sickness or old age, the employers have the right to fired their labours when they’re lacking in performance. A labour should benefited the most from his young age to give his best at work.

**9. The labour’s dignity should be preserved**

Labours in Islam is not a submissive of lower class in a society. Rather, they are the equal part of it and should also be treated equally. Thus, employers should protect the dignity if their labours. Labours should not be humiliated and violated like a slave. Labours should be treated as coworker who helps the employer to gain benefits. The Prophet (SAW) himself would eat together with the labours and assist them in work.

**10. Labours should not be abuse**

Islam does not permit employers to practice abusive act towards their labours. If they ever hit labours, they should be responsible for their act.

As reported by Al Ma’rur ibn Suwaid (may Allah be pleased with him), *“I saw Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) wearing a nice gown, and his slave was also wearing one similar to it. I asked him about it, and he said that he had exchanged harsh words with a person during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and put him to shame by making a reference to his mother. That person came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and made mention of that to him. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, “You are a person who has remnants of the ‘Days of Ignorance’ in you. Your slaves are your brothers. Allah has placed them under your authority. He who has his brother under him, should feed him from whatever he eats, and dress him with whatever he wears, and do not burden them (assign burdensome task to them) beyond their capacity; and if you burden them then help them.”*– Bukhari and Muslim

This is confirmed by Aisha who narrated: *“The Messenger of Allah never beat any of his servants, or wives, and his hand never hit anything.”* – Ibn Majah

**More Labour Rights in Islam**

1. Employer must give his labours time to do the religious ritual such as prayer and fasting.
2. Labours have the right to complain when they feel any injustice related to work.
3. Labours have the right for insurance system who will benefit themselves and their family when they deceased.
4. Labours have the right for the kindness from their employer. This kindness includes not to force them beyond their capability to do works.
5. Labours have freedom to form a unions or association to seek justice and escalate their bargaining power within the society.
6. Relationship between labours and employer should be like brotherhood, so both parties could gain the best benefits.
7. Labours should be educated and treated nicely.
8. Labours should not do work which cause any harm physically so they no longer capable to work.
9. Labours should work at the exact amount of time that equals to his wages.
10. Labours could disagree to their employers when they feel injustice in the employer-labour relationship.

So those are the rights of labours in Islam. May Allah bless us with a good behaviour towards our brother and treat labours as one of them.