

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

March 4, 2026

**Dear Esteemed Colleague and Brother,**

Once again, we have reached the blessed month of Ramadan, a time of reflection, balance, and renewal. On this occasion, I would like to extend my sincere greetings to you and convey my best wishes for health, peace, and well-being.

In this year's Ramadan letter, we have chosen **“the pursuit of livelihood (rizq) and lawful (halal) earnings”** as our central theme, with the aim of exploring common ground between the ethical framework that Islamic thought offers for economic life and the objectives of modern competition law. Both perspectives converge on a fundamental principle: *the legitimacy of income depends not merely on outcomes, but on the fairness and integrity of the process through which it is obtained.*

In the Qur'an, rizq (livelihood), while ultimately grounded in divine decree, is not conceived as a blessing to be awaited passively, but rather treated as a dynamic concept intrinsically linked to labor, responsibility, and purposeful effort. This understanding is articulated explicitly in the verse:

*“Man will only receive what he strives for.” (Qur'an, al-Najm 53:39)*

The mechanisms through which the outcome of such effort is realized in social life are elucidated in the following two verses:

*“Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and raised some of them above others in rank, so that some of them may employ others in service. And the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.” (Qur'an, al-Zukhruf 43:32)*

*“And Allah has favored some of you over others in provision. Yet those who have been given more are unwilling to share their provision with those under their authority so as to make them equal therein. Do they then deny the blessing of Allah?” (Qur'an, al-Nahl 16:71)*

While these verses acknowledge differentiation and the division of labor as inherent features of economic life, it implicitly cautions against the distortion of such differentiation into forms of domination, exploitation, or exclusionary arrangements. Because, the monopolization of livelihood opportunities by a narrow group of actors or the unjust appropriation of the fruits of others' labor are fundamentally incompatible with the balance articulated in the verses.

Within Islamic ethics, **lawful (halal) earnings** signify more than mere legal compliance. They rather reflect a mode of gain that does not eliminate alternatives for others, distort competition, or undermine overall social welfare. This ethical dimension is reinforced by the Qur'anic emphasis on balance and proportion:

*“As for the heaven, He raised it high, and set the scales of justice so that you may not transgress the balance. And weigh with justice, and do not fall short in the measure” (Qur’an, al-Raḥmān 55:7–9)*

*“O my people! Give full measure and weigh with justice. Do not devalue people’s goods, nor go about spreading corruption on earth and cause strife. What is left ‘as lawful gain’ by Allah is far better for you if you are truly believers ...” (Qur’an, Hūd 11:85–86)*

While the disruption of balance and measure is explicitly characterized as corruption, when read in an economic context it is also unmistakably associated with phenomena such as the concentration of market power, entry barriers, and the resulting dysfunction of the competitive process. Cartels, collusive practices, and the abuse of dominant position therefore represent not only economic inefficiencies, but also practices that compromise the moral legitimacy of earnings.

Modern competition law emerges precisely at this juncture as an institutional mechanism that reinforces the ethical foundations of the market economy. In Türkiye, **Law No. 4054 on the Protection of Competition** embodies this approach by prohibiting anti-competitive agreements and practices, and by preventing the abuse of market power. Its ultimate objective is to ensure that undertakings generate income not through exclusionary or coercive strategies, but through innovation, efficiency, and value creation for consumers.

From this perspective, competition policies may be understood not merely as technical instruments focused on price and output levels, but as a comprehensive set of regulations aimed at safeguarding the **legitimacy and sustainability of economic gain**. Thereby, the Quranic statement “...so that you neither commit injustice nor suffer injustice” (**Surah Ar-Rahman (55/279)**) finds its proper expression.

Removal of entry barriers, keeping competitive pressure intact, and the prevention of entrenched market power all contribute to a more balanced and inclusive distribution of livelihood opportunities across society.

The following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (*PBUH*) succinctly captures the ethical standard expected in economic activity:

*“The honest and trustworthy merchant is on par with the prophets, the truthful (siddiq), and the martyrs (shaheed).” (T1209 Tirmizî, Büyû’, 4)*

This narration underscores that trade and the pursuit of profit acquire true worth and merit only when grounded in morality and righteousness. Practices that exclude competitors, deprive consumers of choice, or manipulate market conditions ultimately erode this foundation of trust, rendering gains legally possible yet ethically questionable.

In today's economic environment, competition authorities are entrusted with maintaining this delicate balance. In this context, the logic underlying market regulation is not to curb profit margins or instituting a de facto price cap, but to ensure that such profits are generated under **fair competitive conditions**, where opportunities remain accessible and markets open to all. Thus, competition law serves as an institutional safeguard for lawful and legitimate earnings in the true sense of the word.

Dear Colleague,

Ramadan offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the sources, limits, and ethical dimensions of livelihood. I hope that this blessed period will inspire us, both in our personal lives and in our professional responsibilities, to reaffirm our commitment to fair competition, lawful earnings, and a just market order.

On this occasion, I would like to extend my best wishes for a blessed Ramadan, and to convey my sincere congratulations in advance for the upcoming Eid al-Fitr.

Kind Regards,

Ramadan and Eid Mubarak!

**Birol KÜLE**

President

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