When I asked Rāfi‘ ibn Khadīj about leasing land in return for gold and silver, he replied: There is no harm in it

Hanzhalah ibn Qays reported: When I asked Rāfi‘ ibn Khadīj about leasing land in return for gold and silver, he replied: "There is no harm in it. At the time of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) the people used to lease lands in return for the yield of what grows on the banks of large rivers and beginnings of water streams or the yield of certain parts of the land. Some of the harvest would be affected with blight and some would remain safe. This was the only system the people had for renting lands, and, thus, he forbade it. If the rent is something known and guaranteed, there is no harm in it."

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

Rāfi‘ ibn Khadīj mentioned that his family owned the largest farms and orchards in Madīnah. They used to lease land according to a practice that was common during the pre-Islamic era. They would give out the land to be cultivated in return for the harvest of one side of the land, while the cultivator gets that harvest of the other side. Perhaps one side would yield fruit, while the other would not. They might also allocate the best harvest for the landowner, such as the yield that grows on the banks of rivers and streams. The yield of those parts might be destroyed and the rest would remain safe, or vice versa. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) forbade them from this practice because of the uncertainty, ignorance, and injustice it involves. The compensation must be known and specified; and there must be equality in the sharing of profit and loss. If the transaction is entered into for part of the land produce, it will be a sort of partnership in which profits and losses should be equally shared and according to a specific percentage such as one fourth or one half of the produce. If the transaction is made in return for a compensation, this will be a sort of lease in which the compensation must be known. In this case, it does not matter if the compensation takes the form of gold, silver, food produced from the land, food of the same type, or food of a different type. This is because it is either a land lease, letting orchards on special terms, or sharecropping, which are permissible pursuant to this Hadīth, which states: "If the rent is something known and guaranteed, there is no harm in it."

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