

# Blessings of Financial Sacrifice

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## 1. Instinct and quest of human beings to be “good”

All human being have an instinctive desire to be good. Not only we would like to be good persons but we would like it acknowledged by others. This leaves the issue of the definition of a good person. For centuries human have been debating over this. Some feel that as long as you do not hurt anyone, do not steal anything or harm anyone, you are a good person. Some others describe the goodness in religious terms or philosophical terms and set the bar very high.

Various religions also have come up with different definitions. In the religious terminology the term ‘righteous’ is used interchangeably with a ‘good’ person. The Holy Quran also describes who can claim to be a good person. I will give you one quotation that summarizes the qualities of a good person. It should, however, be noted that at all the places where the Holy Quran has given a description of a good or a righteous person, it always includes the quality of financial sacrifice for the sake of God. In chapter 2 verse 178, Allah says;

**[2:178] It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for ransoming the captives; and who observes Prayer and pays the Zakat; and those who fulfill their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and the steadfast in time of war; it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are the God-fearing.**

The financial sacrifice that Allah has described here specifically requires spending for the love of God for His creatures. The intention of spending is specified so it rules out any spending that one may do for the sake of getting favors, political gains or other ulterior motives.

The next question that the Holy Quran describes is in relation to how much should be spent in the way of Allah. How would we know that whatever amount we spend for the love of God qualifies to make us a good or righteous person? Allah says in the Holy Quran Chapter 3 verse 93:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ط

**[3:93] Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love; and whatever you spend, Allah surely knows it well.**

According to this verse, without spending in the cause of God, we cannot claim ourselves to be a good person, no matter how many other qualities we may have. This quality has been described as the essential part of a good person. If a person worships God by saying his prayers, fasts in the month of Ramadhan according to God's commandments and does not harm anyone and is polite and nice to anyone, but does not spend in the way of Allah, he cannot be considered a good person in the eyes of Allah. If you have a structure that has walls, floor, windows and doors but has no roof, it cannot be called a house because it is lacking an essential part of what makes a structure a house. It may look like one and have most of its qualities but it will never be considered a house.

The next question that arises after reading this particular verse is: how do we know if what we spend is from "that which we love"? One may have a savings account, a checking account, cash in his pocket or other property but one does not designate that a particular account he loves and the other he does not.

The simple way to determine would be to see what happens when something or someone that we love departs from us. If it is something we love, it hurts us when it departs. The intensity of our love for that person or thing dictates how hurtful we feel upon losing it. So when we spend the money in the way of Allah and the hurt it causes shows that we gave something that we loved. If we give a small amount and it has no effect on our feeling and makes no difference to us in our way of living, then it is not from what we love.

## **2. How the wealth should be spent**

We have restrictions placed upon us how to spend our wealth. Government, for example, puts restriction on our spending through taxation. As long as we pay our tax obligations, it gives us the freedom of spending our money the way we choose to do it. There are ways that it tries to entice us in certain direction but those choices are still at our discretion.

There are conflicts between individual desires and goals of the society. There is pressure on an individual to sacrifice the individual desires over the betterment of the society we live in.

The religion of Islam does not just charge us a tax and leave the rest to us without guiding us. Allah has dictated in the Holy Quran how we should and how we should not spend our money.

When we go to the grocery store, Allah has told us not spend our money on alcohol and pork for example. We are also told not to waste our money in gambling. On the other hand we are told to spend on our family, help the needy, the poor and spend for the betterment of the society in general.

One of the reasons that we don't want to spend or give in the way of Allah is that we would like to leave our property to our heirs. We would like to provide our children protection and make their lives easier and provide for them for their future.

Allah says in the Holy Quran in discussing the inheritance rules:

أَبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا

***“Your fathers and your children, you know not which of them is nearest to you in benefit.” (4:12)***

What this verse tells us is that there is no guarantee and assurance that your offspring would be to your benefit. There is no assurance that they would spend your wealth the way you intended it.

Because of my profession, I come across many rich people and get to know their personal lives. There was a person who would be considered a rich man from all standards, owner of a business, having property and a healthy income stream. He was having lot of problems with one of his sons. He would have to leave meetings and be embarrassed because he would have to go to the police station when his son would be arrested. One day I asked him why is he having so many problems with his son. He told me that his son is young and has too much money. He is driving expensive cars and wasting money on alcohol, drug etc and just gets in trouble. So I asked him why you let him have all this money. He said, “I don't. The money he got was given to him through a trust that his grandfather set up.” It is called a generation skipping trust. The father cannot touch the money and goes directly to the grandchildren when they reach 18 years of age.

I was thinking that when his grandfather set up the trust, his thought process would have been that he is taking care of the needs of his grandchildren so they would be able to get their education and live happy and comfortable lives. He did not know that the document he was signing could be the death warrant for his grandson. It was only three or four years later that the boy could not handle the wealth he inherited and committed suicide.

The Holy Quran has given us a way to guarantee the protection of the well being of our children.

In the Holy Quran, in Surah Kahf, Allah has related a story of a prophet (Hazrat Khizr) who was set to go to travel upon His command. Prophet Moses asked him if he could join him on this journey. He agreed on one condition that whatever he does, Moses would not question him otherwise he would not be able to accompany him anymore.

At one place, they arrived at a village and asked for food. It was a custom in those days for the villagers to provide food to the travelers moving through the village since there were no hotels and restaurants. The people in that village were rude and would not give them food. There they came across a wall that was about to fall down. The

prophet told Moses that they need to fix the wall so it is stabilized again. They proceeded to do that. Once again Moses questioned him and said why did we have to do it especially when the people did not even offer food and at least he could have charged them labor for fixing the wall.

At this point he explained to Moses why he had done different things on his journey. For this particular instance he explained that he was commanded to fix the wall by Allah because it belongs to two orphans and their father had left them inheritance which is buried under the wall. It needed to be protected until they were old enough to take control of it otherwise the villagers would have snatched it away. And then he gave the reason why Allah commanded him to do that for these particular boys. He said:

كَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا

...”*their father had been a righteous man*” (18:83)

The verse does not say anything about these boys whether they were also righteous or not. It only had to do with their father who was a good man and Allah guarantees the protection of children of the good and righteous persons.

In this regard, there is a saying of Prophet David recorded in the Book of Talmud. He said, “I used to be young but now I am an old man, but I have never seen the children of a good (Saleh) person to go hungry”

### 3. Promise of Allah for returns

Allah has promised returns of 7 times and 70 times to the people who spend in the way of God. It must be noted that 7 or 70 is used in the Holy Quran just as we use 10 or 100 times. These are not absolute values but indicate multiple returns. Allah in fact has returned the sacrifices hundreds of thousands of times in short periods of time.

Allah also has pointed out another fact that related to the returns. The level of sacrifice is directly related to the level of righteousness and certainty that Allah’s promise is true. Allah says in Surah Al Hadid (57:11) that the sacrifice of the people spending in the way of Allah and sacrificing before the victory cannot be equal to the ones spending after the victory. The companions of the Holy Prophet who believed in Allah and His prophet without any visible signs of success or victory gave sacrifices that are in the eyes of Allah much greater than the ones who were spending after the victory of Mecca.

We are in living in the times when Islam is in dire need and people who sacrifice now without seeing any obvious signs of the eventual spiritual victory of Islam would certainly be regarded with much more regard than the people who come after us and would see the victory.

### 4. Examples of financial sacrifice among companions of Holy Prophet

There are examples in the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who acted and provided the financial sacrifices. We all know about the sacrifice of Hazrat Abu Bakr who brought all his belongings for the sake of Allah. Hazrat Omar who offered half of everything he had at the disposal of the Holy Prophet.

Hazrat Abu Talha Ansari was a wealthy companion and owned many date orchards around Medina. One of his orchards was named Buhaira and was very close to the Prophet's Mosque. It was his best orchard because it produced the best dates and its well had crisp and delicious water. Holy Prophet would go there often and drink from the well, rest there and try its dates. When the verse was revealed: ***Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love,*** He came to the Holy prophet Muhammad and said, "O prophet of Allah, according to this verse, we must give what we love the most. My most loved possession as you know is the orchard Buhaira and I would like to give it away for the sake of Allah and hope that Allah would grant me a place in paradise." Holy Prophet was so pleased to hear that because it was the true spirit of the verse. I believe that it was the best business deal he ever made in his life.

The Holy Prophet directed him to give it away to some of his relatives who were not as well off. So he gave it to his cousins from his father's side. (From Bokhari Kitabut Tafseer)

## 5. Companions of Promised Messiah

We have similar examples in our Jamaat among the companions of the Promised Messiah also. Hazrat Hakim Nooruddin Khalifatul Mesih I who provided everything at the disposal of the Promised Messiah. The words of the Promised Messiah about him reflect the superiority of the righteousness and complete submission to any request that was made of him.

On a personal note, I can provide the example of my grandfather Mian Imamuddin and his two brothers as well.

These days there is much interest about reality shows on TV. The fact is that we have reality shows in our families going on for the last hundred years with amazing scenes. We just need to look at our forefathers, how they sacrificed and how Allah has returned according to his promises thousand of times even millions of times. And that is only in two generations.

Promised Messiah announced that the money was needed to finish the construction of the Minaret in Qadian. If one hundred people would give 100 rupees each, that would be enough money to complete the project. He also announced that the names of such person would be carved on the minaret so the coming generations would see their names and pray for them. My grandfather along with his brothers went to the Promised Messiah and said that they could not afford to pay 100 rupees each but they have discussed it and the three brothers and their father combined could come up with the hundred rupees and they requested that it be accepted because they truly want to participate in the project.

Promised Messiah very kindly accepted their offer as an exception and all four names are carved on the minaret. Promised Messiah knew them and he knew with certainty that they do not have 100 rupees each otherwise they would have given it away in the cause of Allah. Promised Messiah at another occasion said about these three brothers that they have brought everything they had for the cause of Allah just like Hazrat Abu Bakr and have fulfilled their obligations of the Bait.

It had nothing to do with how much was given but the spirit in which the desire was there to sacrifice for the cause of Allah. It had nothing to do with the good times or the bad times, recession or inflation. If you look at their generation now, Allah has multiplied those 25 rupees each that they gave millions of times. This is reality TV that no one can match.

## **6. Sacrifice must continue at all times**

The concept of sacrifice that Holy Quran presents is of a continual basis. Prophet Abraham is quoted in the Holy Quran as praying in the words Arina Manasakina, Show us the ways we can sacrifice for you. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Abraham provided the best level of sacrifices in the way of Allah. His request from Allah is to keep him showing how he can continue to sacrifice for Him.

The concept that has been described to us that what we spend in the way of Allah is what we really save because it is recorded in our name and our return is the acceptance and pleasure of Allah on the Day of Judgment.

It is related that the Holy prophet had sacrificed a goat and its meat was being distributed. The Holy Prophet came home in the afternoon and asked his wife Hazrat Ayesha how the distribution was going. She answered that everything is gone and that she was able to save only one leg. The Holy Prophet said, "Ayesha, you should have said that we saved everything except one leg."

The principle that the Holy Prophet so wisely explained is that what we use in this world is consumed and finished but what we gave in the way of Allah is saved in our name for which we will collect the rewards from Allah.

### **Conclusion:**

In the difficult economic times, it is sometimes tempting to forego our responsibilities about spending in the way of Allah. People are afraid and concerned about the future and their financial security.

There are two things that need to be remembered:

1. Allah does not burden a soul more than it can bear to handle. We are not asked to give beyond our capacity at any point. Place after place Allah repeats in the Holy Quran that we should give from what Allah has provided us. It is not the amount but the spirit of trying to please Allah, to spend for the love of Him. Whatever we have as Allah described in the verse I have quoted above, He knows what we are spending and if it is from that which we love then we have fulfilled our responsibility and we certainly would be counted as righteous or a good person in the eyes of Allah.
2. As members of the Ahmadiyya Community, we should know that our protection is under the revelation that was given to the Promised Messiah in the words ***Inni Uhafizu kulla mun fiddar***. We all have seen on TV and newspapers in the last year or so that there was no protection in the retirement accounts and investments that people had gathered for decades. It all came to nothing in a short period of time. As members of this Jamaat, we are provided the protection by Allah. Promised Messiah explained this in the following words:

***“...whoever fully lives up to my teaching, he alone enters that house of mine with reference to which God Almighty has promised. Inni Uhafizu kulla mun fiddar "I shall Myself protect all those who are in this house." It should not, however, be understood here that this Divine protection is extended only to those living within the compass of my house made of mud and bricks: the pledge also encompasses those who follow my teaching to the fullest extent, and who, therefore, can truly be said to be the inmates of my spiritual home.” Kishti Nooh page 1***

In order for us to be counted as a good person in the eyes of Allah, our financial sacrifice must be part of the good acts we perform. We must prepare ourselves when we would be presented to our Lord and whatever actions and deeds we have sent for the Day of Judgment would be accounted for. We need to make sure that what we have sent forth is valuable, to the best of our capacities and is of the highest value. Promised Messiah has brought this to our attention in the following words in Kishti Nooh:

***“Strive therefore to the utmost that not a jot or syllable of the Holy Quran should bear witness against you, and cause you to be apprehended on that account. For, indeed, even a single grain of evil is punishable. The time is very short, the mission of your life not yet fulfilled. Walk with speed, for the evening draws nigh. Whatever you have to put before the Lord, examine it well, and as often as you can, lest some defect remain to cause irreparable loss; or lest you take something with you which in fact should amount to no more than filthy and spurious goods, not worthy to be presented at a royal court.” Kishti Nooh p. 16-17***