

# Miserliness

## Cooperation and Assistance

Naturally every man has special talents and we need the cooperation of others in order to perfect and make our talents productive. Cooperation is an effective element in the process, advancement and success of both the individual and his society.

Allah created man as a social being; therefore it is in man's nature to participate with the children of his kind in the task of solving the problems of life.

Both natural events and desire create a number of problems for man; hence subjecting him to various types of difficulties where he is in constant need of help from others. In light of this natural law, people's duties are not limited to any one individual but are spread to different social classes. Aiding an individual, no matter how small and minor the task may be it is very advantageous to the development of society and fulfills one of its needs.

Since social states are manifested in members of the society from many points, we may compare the social structure to the human body. For just as the human body consists of various members that are naturally related to each other and on which the survival of man relies, society also consists of different parts which make it whole.

Thus, each member of a society should know his vital basic duties and perform them to the best of his ability so that society can flourish. The members should explore all their material and spiritual talents, and exploit them for the sake of his society, all the time remembering to keep in the framework of abilities and social rule.

Nevertheless, collective tranquility and security for the society, and overcoming difficulties can be achieved only if a sense of cooperation prevails over people's relations with each other. Life is sweeter, actions are fruitful, and the wagon of society advances on the path of excellence, only with cooperation.

## Miserliness Annihilates Affections

There are certain feelings which originate deep in the hearts of men, the fruits of these feelings being invaluable; these are the roots of man's cooperation. These feelings which are manifested in helping needy individuals, are among the special spiritual and excellent traits of man. These are feelings that make man react when he sees pain or suffering that the another experiences; inspiring him to offer all types of sacrifices and overlooking personal wants for the sake of reducing the pain of others. Man does this without expecting any reward.

Dr. Carl said:

“Advancement in any field needs a certain degree of sacrifice, greatness, and sincerely; purity of the soul can be achieved only by sacrificing material gains and fame for the sake of one's country or a greater goal.

“Self-sacrifice is the habit of those who understand the beauty of righteousness and truly believe in Allah. These are the people who sacrifice their souls in order to implement justice, love and harmony all over the world.

“Reason alone does not lead man to perfection. Love and affection are also important factors in this field. This is true because the soul excels through feelings more than it does through reason and reflection.

“Everyone can advance on this path passing the clouds into peak of light and reach the truth.”

There is a characteristic that may destroy the roots of affection, which can conceal itself in man's subconscious. It known as miserliness. Miserliness paves the way for man's nature to abandon his good morals.

Miserliness is an evil characteristic that is always associated with the breach of all moral and spiritual commitments. It subjects man to humiliation and public resentment, in addition to leading the miser to narrow mindedness.

As a result of miserliness and selfishness, the misers' minds are centered around materialism and wealth. They are, therefore, deprived of the freedom of thought and subsequently from the facts of life and spiritual and moral values. The miser ignores the fact that wealth is a method of securing material need in life. After securing the basic necessities of life in comfort, harmony or in treating anxieties and psychological pains, there is not a role for wealth.

Fear of imaginative poverty is an illness that affects the minds of the miser. For this reason a miser person can never rid himself of worry and depression. Despite the wealth a miser may have, he is deprived of comfort and ease.

According to a British scholar:

“Some people hope for wealth as if there is nothing else worth hoping for. There are even some people who deprive themselves of knowledge and sleep because their primary goal is to acquire wealth. Individuals like this deprive themselves of the truth for they imagine wealth to be a goal and not a means.

“Wealth is like a bridge that rescues us from destruction. How wrong are those who spend their lives strengthening the bridge itself while ignoring its purpose. We should not give ourselves up for the sake of money, instead we should give up money for our sake... Many people spend their whole lives searching for money and by the time they find it they need another life to spend it...but the days they long for shall never come.

There seems to be direct relationship between wealth and miserliness. Most wealthy people are misers. A survey would reveal that helping the poor is usually done by the middle-class and not the rich.

The miser rich, who fall victim to the frustration and anger of the poor, are the subject of some social corruption. The pressure which is put on the poor, and the subsequent psychological complication which befall them are factors in spreading corruption and disarray. No one denies the devastating role which this problem has in causing crimes and dissension.

There are many wealthy people who abandon the borders of humanity as a result of their intense inclination towards acquiring wealth to the point that they add to their oppression the act of depriving the poor of their rights. Such oppressors have certainly lost the human light in them. On the other hand, we have generosity, a factor of human integrity. It is a manifestation of the originality of human feelings and a sign of stable thinking. Generosity is also the best trait among all authentic characteristics.

Generosity enjoys a very high place among all traits. Hatim Tai's name still shines throughout the centuries because of his well-known generosity.

It is evident that generosity can only be praiseworthy, if nearness to Allah is sought in reducing the suffering of the poor as its only aim. Bragging and fame should not play a role in generosity.

## **A Glance at Leaders' Views on Miserliness**

Islam has stressed all aspects of human society. It recommends sacrifices and abundant giving so as to strengthen the ties of love and mercy between the rich and poor. Islam also greatly resents miserliness and immorality.

Islam deepens the roots of love in the Islamic society by implementing human feelings and the sense of cooperation between Muslims. It prohibits the rich Muslims from being indifferent to the condition of the poor, it also prohibits stinginess which prevents Muslims from paying the dues which Islam levied on

them for the deprived Muslims.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“Islam does not resent a thing more than miserliness.”[1](#)

Miserliness is an evil trait which deprives the individual of happiness and tranquility and leaves him in pain. The Messenger of Allah (S) also said:

“The least harmonious among people are the misers.”[2](#)

A Western scholar is known to have said:

“He who lacks love and seeks it (even subconsciously) always blames himself and is never satisfied with it: for this reason most of us lust the lives of others and are greatly envious of them. This feeling is not limited to the poor toward the rich: envy affects all of us for there is an element in everyone’s life that they feel weak in, for instance, a man who has a wife, children, and a good position feels greedy over those who are deprived of such things.

Individuals like this consider their clothes, for example, as evidence of their superiority, or a man may see another man who is dressed better and thinks that the well dressed man is happier than he for if he wasn’t happier he would not have better clothes...”[3](#)

The Messenger of Allah (S) besought Allah to have mercy on those who do not love wealth for its self but spend their surplus (wealth) on the deprived. He said:

“May Allah have mercy on he who restrains the unnecessary word and who spends the surplus of his belongings.”[4](#)

The Prophet (S) also said:

“Avoid stinginess for stinginess caused those who proceeded you to perish and lead them to shed their blood and violate their sanctities.”[5](#)

Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

“I am amazed at the miserable misers, for they cause the poverty from which they run to come faster, and miss the wealth which they sought. In this life they live the life of the poor and will be judged in the hereafter the judgment of the rich.”[6](#)

A British scholar stated:

“Some people appear rich but are actually poor. They possess money but cannot even spend it on themselves. Their wealth becomes like a chain of gold tied around their neck from which they gain

nothing save pain and torture. Here money becomes an affliction and wealth a disaster.” [7](#).

Even the children of the misers complain about their fathers. This fact is clarified by Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) who said: “A man’s generosity makes his foes love him, and his miserliness makes his children hate him.” [8](#)

He also said:

“Greed and stinginess are built on doubt and lack of confidence” [9](#)

Dr. Farmer is known to have said:

“The traits generosity and self-confidence which arise from harmony and trusting yourself and others, when found together in an individual, perfect social manners and allow perfect enjoyment of social life. The opposite is also true for when these traits are lacking, integrity of social manners is impossible, hence, an individual is unable to enjoy a social life.” [10](#)

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) explains the value of generosity by saying:

“The generous and the well-mannered are always under the protection of Allah. Allah does not abandon them but leads them to Paradise. Allah, Glory be to Him, did not send a prophet or a successor save a generous one; nor was there a righteous man who was not generous. Up to the day that he died, my Father commanded me to be generous.” [11](#)

Once when Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) was fighting in a battle, the man that he was fighting asked him for his sword. Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) handed his sword to him which amazed the man. Imam Ali (a.s.) then stated that the miser are in urgent need of ideological guidance and if they are deprived of that guidance will remain in the trap of materialism, deprivation and misery.

[1](#). Nahj al-Fasahah p. 549

[2](#). Nahj al-Fasahah p.81

[3](#). Ravankavi

[4](#). Nahj al-Fasahah p.81

[5](#). Nahj al-Fasahah p.8

[6](#). Ghurar al-Hikam p. 497

[7](#). Dar Aghushe Khush Bakhti

[8](#). Ghurar al-Hikam , p. 368

[9](#). Ghurar al-Hikam p. 488

[10](#). Raz Khushbakhti.

[11](#). Furu al-Kafi v.4, p. 38

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