

Section 8: The Hypocrites

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 60

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

60. “Verily alms are for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives, and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarer. (This is) a duty ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

The words /sadaqah/ (alms) and /sidq/ (dowry) are derived from the words /sidq/ (truthfulness). Giving alms is a sign of truthfulness in the Faith to Allah, and dowry (or nuptial gift) is a sign of love to the wife.

The Arabic term /faqir/ is derived from /faqr/ (poverty). It is rendered to a person whose indigence is going to crash his bones. The Qur'anic term /miskin/ (indigent) refers to a person who, because of indigency, sits at home, and is called 'a stay-at-home one'.

According to some Islamic narrations, /faqir/ (a poor person) is a needy person who usually does not ask people for help; but a /miskin/ (an indigent one) is a person who, because of intensity of indigency, in general, asks others to give him money.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that if the rich paid their alms tax to the deserving needy persons of the society, there would not exist any poor person.

A tradition cited in Was'il-ush-Shi'ah says:

“Verily Allah has fixed, in the wealth of the rich, some amount for the poor to solve their difficulties. And if

He knew it was not sufficient for them, He would increase it.... And if people paid the poor's rights to them, they could live very well."

The Purpose of 'Alms' Is 'Poor-rates'

Poor-tax is one of the certain necessary duties of the religion of Islam. That is why the Qur'ān in the above verse says that it is 'a duty ordained by Allah'. This phrase means that poor-tax is a certain obligatory commandment of Allah.

So, according to this holy verse, this poor-tax must be spent in the same eight positions which are said in the verse, and in other sites it is not permissible. Full majority of Islamic jurists, of course, believe that poor-rates can be spent for all the eight mentioned instances, and it is not obligatory to divide it among them.

But, from one point of view, spending it in these eight instances depends on the social necessities, and from another point of view, it depends on the attitude of the Islamic government. These eight sites are as follows:

1. The poor;
2. The indigent (the needy);
3. The officials appointed over them;
4. Those whose hearts are to be reconciled;
5. To free the captives;
6. The debtors,
7. For the cause of Allah;
8. and the wayfarer.

The explanation of the first and the second group (the poor and the indigent) has been referred to before. The third group, the officials appointed over them, are all those persons who take trouble for: collecting alms, protecting them, distributing and accounting them. Therefore, their wage is paid from alms-tax itself.

The fourth group are those people who are not eager to embrace Islam. Then, by spending a portion of alm-tax, their hearts can be absorbed.

The payment of alms-tax for absorbing the hearts is not in the sense of their embracing Islam for money, but it is for creating a preparation in them that they obtain some understanding, and then they may have Faith.

The fifth aspect is to spend it in the way of freeing the captives and striving against the act of enslavement.

The sixth aspect of spending alms-tax is for the debtors. There are some debtors who have innocently contracted some debts, like those who have lost all their properties in a fire accident, in a flood, and in other natural events. Such persons are counted in this item.

Imam Sādiq (as) said:

“Any believer or Muslim who dies and leaves a debt, which is not based on corruption and immoderation, it is upon Imam to pay that debt.”

The seventh site is for the cause of Allah which encompasses any godly efforts of the faithful, such as: religious preachings, Holy Struggle, services of comfort of life, and solving the difficulties of the Muslims.

The eighth aspect is the wayfarer. A wayfarer is a person who is rich in his own town but, in the course of travel, accidentally, he has no money and is helpless.

The Effects of Poor-tax in the Society

1. Poor-tax is a factor of wealth adjustment.
2. Poor-tax is a practical thank for the things that Allah has given to that person.
3. Poor-tax decreases the class divisions of the society, and wipes out the rancor between the poor and the rich.
4. Poor-tax survives the spirit of generosity and grace in man, and decreases mammonism and material dependence in him.
5. Poor-tax is a support for social securing of the deprived. It tells the poor not to be worried, and advises the bankrupt to try again. It says to the traveler not to be afraid of the lack of money in the way. It tells the employed that his share is preserved. It gives promise of freedom to the captives. It furnishes the field of godly services, and attracts the hearts of others to Islam.
6. But, multiplication of wealth causes some ungodly things, such as: negligence from the remembrance of Allah, exploitation from people, hard-heartedness, disobedience, and revelry, the remedy of which is poor-tax.
7. Besides wiping deprivation, poor-tax has some more merits. It increases attraction to Islam, or, at least, it causes persons not to cooperate with the enemies of Islam.
8. Some ordinary people believe that Islam has limited the increase of wealth and income for Muslims, while from the point of Islam's view, human beings must be relatively free so that they enjoy the nature by effort and origination faculty and they develop. But paying tax is also necessary.
9. From the arrangement and order of the sites of spending alms tax, and that the poor and indigents are

mentioned prior to other aspects; perhaps, it can be said that wiping poverty from the society is in precedence.

10. The existence of the law of alms tax in Islam does not mean that Islam wishes to have always some poor Muslims who take poor-tax and some rich ones to pay it; but it is a way by which an outward real problem of the society can be solved.

Sometimes, the rich also face with some afflicting events such as: theft of property, fire accident, traffic accident, war, and captivity. Therefore, in an Islamic system, there should exist a financial source for social security.

11. The ordinance of alms-tax was revealed in Mecca, but because of scarcity of the Muslims and the money of alms-tax, people paid it themselves.

But, later, after the formation of an Islamic government in Medina, the idea of taking alms-tax from people with the purpose of paying to the treasury of the Muslims, and its centrality by the Islamic ruler, came into being. One of its evidences in the Qur'ān is recited:

“Take alms out of their property...” (Surah At-Tawbah, No. 9, verse 103)

12. It is not necessary that the alms-tax be divided equally among all the eight aspects, but it can be divided under the control of the Islamic judge and as much as it is needed and according to the necessity of the circumstances.

13. The person who does not pay alms-tax and is in the opposition of the Islamic government thereby, can be fought against.

14. It is unlawful (harām) for a sayyid (a descendant of the Prophet) to take alms-tax, save that the giver and the taker of it are both sayyed.

15. The condition of consuming alms-tax in the way of Allah is not only being in the state of poverty, but wherever it helps the sovereignty of Islam it can be spent.

16. Alms-tax can be spent for the rescue of the society from the vice of the vicious persons. This meaning concerns to the phrase: ***“...and those whose hearts are to be reconciled...”*** mentioned in the verse.

17. If a blood-money is proved upon a person and he is not able to pay it, the case is included in the phrase:

“and the debtors...”

18. Maybe, the phrase: ***“...and to free the captives...”*** encompasses the usage of alms-tax for emancipation of prisoners or supplying their expenses.

19. In the Qur'ān, the concept of 'alms-tax' has often accompanied with 'prayer'; and according to the Islamic literature, the condition of prayer to be accepted is the payment of alms-tax. This status denotes to the relation of the connection with Allah and the connection with people.

However, none of the obligations of the religion has occurred in the Qur'ān so close to 'prayer' that alms-tax has. As for the evidence, some verses are mentioned in the following:

- A) ***“And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakāt), and bow down in prayer with those who bow down (in congregation),” (Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 43).***
- B) ***“And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates...”(Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 110).***
- C) ***“Verily, verily your guardian (waliyy) is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who establish the prayer and pay the poor-rate while bowing down (in prayer).” (Surah Al-Mā'idah, No. 5, verse 55).***
- The consensus of the commentators of both great sects of Islam have cited that the objective meaning of this verse is Ali-ibn-Abiṭālib, Ali (as) as its occasion of revelation denotes, too. 1
- D) ***“...and Allah said: ‘Verily I am with you, if you keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and believe in My messengers and assist them...” (Surah Al-Mā'idah, No. 5, verse 12).***
- E) ***“...But if they repent and perform the prayer and pay the poor-rate, then leave their way free to them...”(Surah At-Tawbah, No. 9, verse 5).***
- F) ***“... Therefore, keep up the prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah...” (Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 78).***
- G) ***“...and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the alms, and Us (alone) did they serve.” (Surah Al-'Anbiyā, No. 21, verse 73)***
- H) ***“...and the keeping up of the prayer and the giving of the poor-rate...” (Surah An-Nūr, No. 24, verse 37).***
- I) ***“...and He has enjoined on me the prayer and the poor-rate so long as I live.” (Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 32)***
- J) ***“And he enjoined on his family the prayer and the alms giving...” (Surah Maryam, No. 9, verse 55).***

In addition to the above evidences, there are some more verses in this regard recited in the Qur'ān.

It should also be noted that alms giving has not been enjoined only in Islam, but as it was pointed out in the explanations of the previous verses, it has been ordained in the former religions, too.

The law of poor-rate, which illustrates an outline from the Islamic system, provides the following traces:

Social justice, effacing poverty, providing personels and employees, international popularity, the emancipation of slaves and prisoners, string the powers and faculties, preserving the creed and honour of the Muslims, expansion of social services.

Poor-rate and Traditions

1. The Prophet (S) said:

*“No group of people restrain(ed) the poor-rate but Allah restrains the rain from them.”*²

2. The Prophet (S) said:

*“Whoever spends in charity (the poor-rate), there will be (appointed) for him from the bliss of the Heaven as much as the Mount of Uhud for every coin (he has given).”*³

3. Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

*“Protect your properties by almsgiving.”*⁴

4. Imam Sadiq (as) narrating from his ancestors, said that the Holy Prophet (S) had said:

*“The most generous (person among people) is the one who pays the poor-rate of his wealth; and the most niggardly (person among people) is the one who is stingy to what Allah has enjoyed on him.”*⁵

5. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“If people pay the poor-rate of their properties, there will remain no poor, needy Muslim.”*⁶

6. The Holy Prophet (S) said:

*“If you desire that Allah increases your wealth, then do pay its poor-rate.”*⁷

7. Imam Baqir (as) said:

*“The poor-rate increases in the sustenance.”*⁸

8. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“When the poor-rate is restrained, the earth withholds its bounties.”*⁹

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 61

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أذنٌ قُلْ أذنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةً لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

61. “And there are among them those who hurt the Prophet and say: ‘He is an ear!’ Say: ‘An ear that is good for you; he believes in Allah, and believes the believers, and he is a mercy to those of you who believe. And those who hurt the messenger of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them’.”

Some of the hypocrites said that the Prophet (S) was a simple and whimsical person, and he accepts whatever everybody says. Then, the Messenger of Allah (S) became inconvenient of them. At that time this verse was revealed and answered them. It says:

“And there are among them those who hurt the Prophet and say: ‘He is an ear!’...”

In fact, they demonstrated one of the advantages of the Prophet (S) in the form of his disadvantage, the existence of which is necessary in a leader.

That is why the Qur’ān, immediately after that, adds this idea in the verse implying that if the Prophet, as you imagine, is an ear and listens to your statements and accepts your excuse; it is useful for you. It says:

“...say: ‘An ear that is good for you...’”

It is benefitable for you because, in this way, he protects your credit, and he does not waste your personality, and he does not hurt your feelings. Through this way, he employs his effort so that he preserves your affection, concord, and unity. But, if he uncovered the curtains and publicly disgraced the liars, there would arise a lot of troubles for you.

Then, in order that the criticizers do not misuse this statement and do not take it as a document, the verse continues implying that the Prophet (S) believes in Allah and his commandments, hearkens to the words of the true believers, and accepts them, and observes them. The verse adds:

“...he believes in Allah and believes the believers...”

That is, the Prophet (S), in fact, has two stages of treatment. One stage is conservation of the outward and hindering from betraying secrets, and the other is the stage of action. In the first stage, he listens to the statements of people, and, apparently, he does not reject them.

But, when the time of action comes forth, his attention is only to the commandments of Allah and to the suggestions which are uttered by the true believers. Thus, a leader, who tries to find the truth, should treat like that; and supplying the interests of a society is not possible save through this way. Hence, the

Qurʾān, immediately after that, states:

“...and he is a mercy to those of you who believe...”

The only thing that should be added here is that those who hurt the Prophet (S) with such words, and find faults from him, should not think that they will be left without punishment. So, at the end of the verse, it says:

“...And those who hurt the messenger of Allah, there is a painful punishment for them’.”

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 62

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

62. *“They swear to you by Allah, to please you; but Allah and His Messenger have a greater right that they should please Him if they are believers.”*

A hypocrite always lives in fear and terror. He tries to attract the attention of others by oaths and affectation. For this reason, not every oath should be accepted, since sometimes the holy things are misused by some impious persons. The verse says:

“They swear to you by Allah, to please you...”

Allah’s pleasure is the main principal for a believer, not the consent of common people. The pleasure of the Messenger (S) is the same as the pleasure of Allah. The verse continues saying:

“...but Allah and His Messenger have a greater right that they should please Him if they are believers.”

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 63

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنْ يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ

63. *“Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger verily for him is the fire of Hell to abide therein? That is the great abasement.”*

The Qurʾānic phrase /yuhādillāh/ (whoever opposes Allah) / means the limitation of the Power of Allah,

as if Allah is limited in His deed of wrath unto them, though they considered that Allah's hands are closed. The verse says:

“Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah...”

Fakhr-i-Rāzi believes that this word is derived from the Arabic term /hadid/ with the sense of ‘obstinacy’. He has cited that the Arabic term /muhaddah/ means either ‘to violate the law of Allah’, or ‘to think oneself on one side and Allah on another side’.

Therefore, opposing the Islamic leader is an opposition against Allah; and the fruit of obstinacy before Allah is the eternal Hell. The verse says:

“...whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger verily for him is the fire of Hell to abide therein? That is the great abasement.”

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 64

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهِزُّوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مَا تَحْذَرُونَ

64. “The hypocrites fear lest a ‘Surah’ should be sent down against them apprising them of what is in their hearts. Say: ‘Mock on! Verily Allah will expose what you fear of’ ”

It has been said in the occasion of the revelation of this verse that a group of hypocrites made decision to startle the Prophet's camel in a neck of land when he was returning from the Battle of Tabūk, in a way that the Prophet (S) would be killed.

The Messenger of Allah was informed of their evil decision by means of revelation. ‘Ammār and Khuthayfah were guarding from forward and backward. When they (the Prophet (S) and the strivers) reached the neck of land, the hypocrites attacked them.

The Prophet (S) recognized them and told their names to Khuthayfah. He asked the Prophet (S) why he did not order that they should be killed, and the Messenger of Allah answered:

“I do not want that others say when Muhammad became powerful he killed the Muslims.”

At the absence of the Prophet (S), the hypocrite mockingly said that he wanted to occupy the castles of Syria. The revelation was sent down denoting that they might mock whatever much they desired, and Allah would make manifest their plans. The verse says:

“The hypocrites fear lest a ‘Surah’ should be sent down against them apprising them of what is in their hearts...”

The Qur’ānic term /sūrah/ means the totality of the Divine verses. In technical terminology, this term has been applied for the whole 114 Suras of the Qur’ān.

The hypocrites were constantly in scare because of manifestation of their own real feature and their deviations. They had understood that the Messenger of Allah (S) was aware of their affairs by means of revelation, yet they mocked him.

But the way of treatment of Allah, and His promise upon the hypocrites, is that He divulges their secrets. So, you should not be worried of their stings. The help of Allah is always with you. The verse continues saying:

“...Say: ‘Mock on! Verily Allah will expose what you fear of’

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 65

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَءَايَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

65. “And if you question them (regarding their mockery), they will certainly say: ‘We were only discoursing and sporting.’ Say: “Were you mocking Allah, His signs, and His Messenger?”

The Arabic term /xaud/ means ‘to step in mud’, but it is used in the Qur’ān with the meaning of ‘starting some indecent actions.’

This verse, again, concerns the Battle of Tabūk when the hypocrites intended to kill the Prophet (S) in his return from that battle. One of those hypocrites had said what they would do if their plot was divulged. Another of them said that they could pretend it was a jesting. Their statement was a clumsy excuse.¹⁰

Now, the question is whether it is possible to joke anything, even Allah, the Prophet, and the verses of the Qur’ān.

Was the subject of startling the Prophet’s camel and his fall from that dangerous neck of land something that could be covered under the mask of jesting?

The verse says:

“And if you question them (regarding their mockery), they will certainly say: ‘We were only discoursing and sporting.’ Say: ‘Were you mocking Allah, His signs, and His Messenger?’

Surah At-Tawbah – Verse 66

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنَّ نَعْفَ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبُ طَائِفَةً بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
مُجْرِمِينَ

66. “Do not make excuses. You have disbelieved after your believing. If We forgive a party of you (because of repentance), We will chastise (another) party for that they have been sinners.”

Every time that the plot of the hypocrites was divulged and their secrets were manifested for the Muslims, they offered some excuses, including the very excuse mentioned in this verse. They said they did not intend seriously, but it was only an amusement and a play. The Qur’ān does not accept their excuse, and says:

“Do not make excuses. You have disbelieved after your believing...”

That is, after the expression of Faith, which was not true of course, they did some actions by which their apparent belief became invalid and their infidelity was made manifest to the Muslims.

In the continuation of the verse, the Qur’ān says:

“...If We forgive a party of you (because of repentance), We will chastise (another) party for that they have been sinners.”

The purpose of the verse is that those members of the hypocrites who repent and really return toward Islam, will be forgiven; but those hypocrites who remain in their own disbelief and hypocrisy will be punished.

Besides the chastisement of the Hereafter, this punishment occurred in this very life upon them. The Prophet (S) disgraced that party of the hypocrites who resisted on their hypocrisy. The example of it was the Mosque of Dir‘ār, the charges of which were openly criticized.

1. Tafsir-ul-Bahr-ul-Muhit, vol. 3, p. 513; Tafsir-i-Fath-ul-Qadir, vol. 2, p. 53; Ehqāq-ul-Haqq, vol. 2, p. 400; and Kanz-ul-Umm, vol. 6, p. 391.

2. Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, p.9

3. Roudat-ul-Wa‘izin, p.418

4. Tuhaf-ul-Uqūl, p. 113; and Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol.93, p. 13

5. Bihār-ul-ʿAnwār, vol.93, p.11
6. Al-Imam-as-Sādiq (as), Asad Heydar, vol.4, p.360
7. Bihār-ul-ʿAnwār, vol.93, p.23
8. Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol.75, p.83
9. Al-Muhajjat-ul-Bayḍī, vol.2, p.66
10. Majmaʿ-ul-Bayḍīn, the commentary.

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