

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > The Perfect Role Model: The Prophet of Islam > Encouraging Industriousness

Encouraging Industriousness

Even though The Most Noble Prophet's generosity would prevent him from depriving a beggar of his charity, he (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) did not like people to beg out of laziness or without good reason. Therefore, in order to discourage laziness, develop manpower and wipe out the inclination to seek help, at certain times he would suggest to beggars that they find work or a profession and seek their daily bread by means of labor. He (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) considered work to be sacred to such an extent that the esteem of one who did not work would be diminished in his eyes:

"When he would look at a man and was pleased with him, he would ask, 'Does he have a profession?' If a negative reply was given, the honor of that man would be diminished in his eyes. He was asked, 'Why so, O Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family)?' He replied, 'The reason is that if a believer does not work, he lives by means of his religion.""1

There are two events that are worthy of mention here:

1. One of the companions of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was short of money. His wife told him, "If only you were to go to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and ask him for help (we would receive financial help)."

So the man went to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) saw him he said, "One who seeks something from us, we will give it to him. But if one shows freedom from want, God will make him free of want."

The man said to himself, "This remark of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was directed towards me." So he returned home and told his wife what had happened.

She said, "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) is human just like the rest of us (he cannot read your mind so his statement was not directed towards you). Go back and tell him about your (financial) situation." The man went back to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) who, upon seeing him, repeated the same sentence. This happened three times. After

the third time, the man borrowed an axe and started gathering firewood. He would then take this firewood to town and sell it. He continued to do so until he gathered enough capital to buy equipment and an animal to help him in transporting the firewood and in time he became very wealthy.

Afterwards, he came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and told him what happened. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, "I told you that if one asks us for something, we will give it to him. But if one shows freedom from want, God will make him free of want."2

2. A man came to the Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and said, "I have not eaten for two days." He told him, "Go to the market and seek your daily bread there." The next day he came to him and said, "O Messenger of God, I went to the market yesterday, but I did not find anything and last night I slept without having eaten."

He (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said again, "Go to the market."

The third time he received the same response, he headed for the market and saw that a caravan had arrived. He helped the people of the caravan to sell their products. In the end, they gave him a share of the profit they had made from the goods they sold. Once again, the man went to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and said, "I did not find anything." He (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, "Yes you did. They gave you a share." The man acknowledged this. "Then why did you lie?" the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) asked. The man said, "You are right but I wanted to find out if you are aware of people's actions. I also wanted to get something from you."

The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, "One who shows freedom from want, God will make him free of want. And one who opens the door of begging for himself, God will open 70 doors of poverty for him that cannot be closed. It is not permissible to give charity to one who is free of need or one who has healthy limbs giving him the strength to remove his state of need. "3

```
1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 103, p. 9.
```

- 2. 'Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 112.
- 3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 115.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/perfect-role-model-prophet-islam-himmat-suhrab-pur/encouraging-industriousness#comment-0