

'Abdullāh ibn Mu'āwiyah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 **Whoever does three things will experience the taste of faith.**
- 2 **To worship God alone [believing] that there is no deity other than God;**
- 3 **To give the zakat due on his property willingly and cheerfully, as it becomes due every year;**
- 4 **Not to give [in zakat] an old animal, or one with scabies, or a sickly one, or a small unwanted one;**
- 5 **But choose from among the average of your property. God has neither required you to give the best, nor told you to choose the worst.⁽¹⁾**

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1582.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Truly righteous is he who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets; and gives his money, much as he may cherish it, to his kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, a stranded wayfarer, beggars, and for the freeing of slaves.﴾ (2: 177)
- ﴿Believers, spend on others out of the good things you have earned, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth. Do not choose for your spending the inferior things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain. Know that God is free of all want, ever to be praised.﴾ (2: 267)
- ﴿You will never attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you dearly cherish.﴾ (3: 92)
- ﴿For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners should be associated with Him, but He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with God has indeed gone far astray.﴾ (4: 116)
- ﴿What prevents their offerings from being accepted from them is that they have disbelieved in God and His Messenger, and they only come to prayer with reluctance, and never donate anything [for a righteous cause] without being resentful.﴾ (9: 54)

The Narrator

'Abdullāh ibn Mu'āwiyah al-Ghādirī belonged to the tribe of Ghāqirat Qays and was a companion of the Prophet. He narrated only one hadith, which is the one we are discussing. Jubayr ibn Nufayl narrated from him. He stopped for some time in Homs and lived in Syria.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions some matters that tell of a person's faith. These are believing in God's oneness, paying one's due zakat willingly, seeking God's pleasure and choosing what is of average quality from his property. If he has animals, then he should not give in zakat those that are ill, old or have clear defects.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that whoever attends properly to three types of worship will have found faith, tasted it, and got it established in his heart. The Prophet uses the 'sense of taste' while referring to an abstract thing that cannot be eaten. The simile is used here because both give man a sense of enjoyment.

The Quran uses the same style, citing the sense of taste with punishment and suffering, as in God saying: 'Those who disbelieve in Our revelations We shall, in time, cause them to endure fire: every time their skins are burnt off, We shall replace them with new skins, so that they may taste suffering [in full]. God is indeed almighty, wise'. (4: 56) The Prophet also uses it in the hadith 'Whoever accepts God as his Lord, Islam as his faith and Muhammad as [God's] Messenger experiences the taste of faith'.⁽¹⁾

The taste of faith a servant of God experiences is the endurance of hardship to please God, accepting His will and decree, preferring the life to come to the life of this world and being happy with all this.



The first of these things is belief in God's oneness, translated into the worship of God alone associating no partners with Him. Worship includes everything God loves, whether verbal or practical, open or done in private, such as love, hope, fear, supplication, appeal for assistance, offerings and pledges, and seeking God's pleasure through voluntary worship and recommended good deeds. None of any of this should be addressed to anyone other than God.

This is inherent in the messages of all prophets and messengers. God says: 'Before your time We never sent a messenger without having revealed to him that there is no deity other than Me. Therefore, you shall worship Me alone'. (21: 25) Therefore, God warns whoever turns their backs on belief in God's oneness that all their good actions will avail them nothing and that they will remain in Hell forever, regardless of their status in this life. God says to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): 'It has been revealed to you, and to those before you, that if you ever associate partners with God, all your works shall certainly come to nothing, and you shall certainly be among the lost. You shall worship God alone, and be one of those who give thanks [to Him]'. (39: 65-66)



The second quality is that one pays the zakat due on his property willingly, feeling happy and cheerful at this, as it becomes due year after year.

Zakat is mentioned in particular because people love money and property. They want to keep all of it for themselves. When a person gives it generously, in full obedience of God, his action testifies that he is a true believer. It is hypocrites who donate unwillingly and begrudgingly. God says: 'What prevents their offerings from being accepted from them is that they have disbelieved in God and His Messenger, and they only come to prayer with reluctance, and never donate anything [for a righteous cause] without being resentful'. (9: 54)

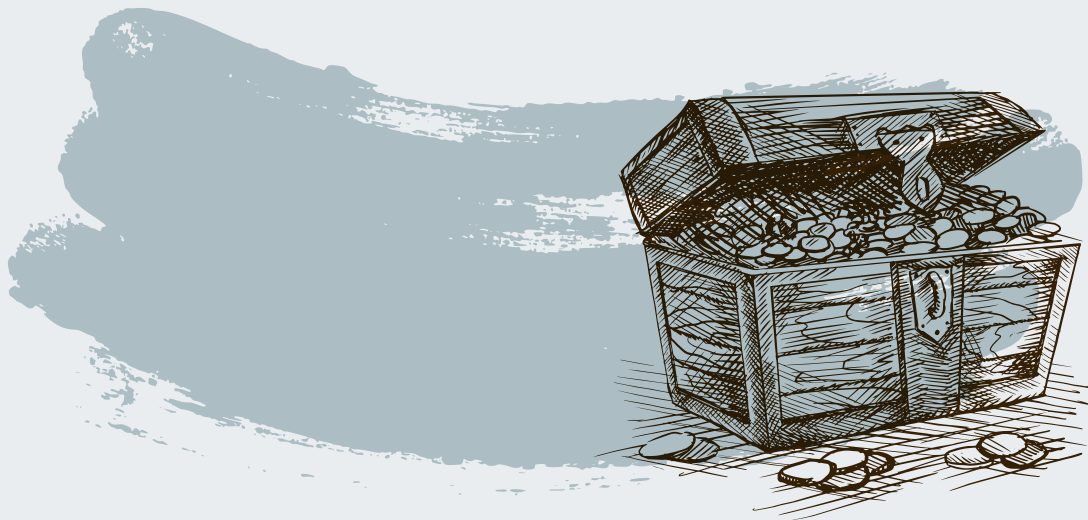
1 Related by Muslim, 34.



The last of these qualities relates to the one before it. It mentions that when a person wants to pay his zakat, he does not look for the worst of his property and select it as his payment. If he owns cattle, he should not choose the one which has grown old and weak, or the one with scabies or that suffers any other illness which makes it unsuitable to eat. Nor does he select one that has any defect that makes people unwilling to take it, such as a lame one or one which is too slim or too young, etc.

This does not mean that a Muslim cattle breeder whose cattle are all sick cannot give his zakat out of his cattle. The hadith only warns those who deliberately select the worst they have and give it away as zakat. This is stated in the following verse: 'Believers, spend on others out of the good things you have earned, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth. Do not choose for your spending the inferior things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain. Know that God is free of all want, ever to be praised'. (2: 267)

A true believer who wants to experience the sweetness of faith is the one who understands the following verse and acts on it: 'You will never attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you dearly cherish'. (3: 92)



The Prophet then explains that what is required in zakat is that a person pays it out of the average of his property. He should neither select the best he has nor the worst. Abu Bakr wrote to Anas ibn Mālik: 'A person should not choose the cattle that has grown too old or the one that has an obvious defect. Nor should he give a male goat unless the zakat collector wants to take it'.⁽¹⁾ When he sent Mu'ādh ibn Jabal to Yemen, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: 'Do not select that of their property which they treasure'.⁽²⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1455.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 1458; Muslim, 19.

Implementation

1

Advocates of Islam and educators should select words and expressions that attract attention and make the audience eager to listen and understand what is being said. The Prophet (peace be upon him) started with a general sentence, referring to three things that ensure that whoever combines them is a perfect believer. Everyone in his audience would be eager to listen and understand each one of the three things, so that he would not miss out on any.

2

The first of these is the main one and the mother of the other two and all else. When a person is a true believer in God's oneness, he will feel relaxed and he will approach his various acts of worship with comfortable willingness. He realizes that what is stored for him with God is better and longer lasting. Therefore, duties and difficulties will be easier to fulfil.

3

One thing that every Muslim can check on with regard to himself is to establish whether he loves zakat and payments of *ṣadaqah*, i.e. voluntary charity. By nature, people love money. Therefore, when a person donates it willingly, this is a clear sign that he is a believer.

4

How can a believer give to a poor person something that he considers foul and discardable? He knows that what he gives away is received by God's hand before the poor person takes it in hand.

5

The early Muslims were keen to give in charity something of the best of their property. Abu Ṭalḥah al-Anṣārī heard the verse which says: 'You will never attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you dearly cherish'. (3: 92) He had a farm called Bayruḥā', and the Prophet used to go there and drink of its well. Abu Ṭalḥah donated the whole farm as a *ṣadaqah*.⁽¹⁾ Al-Rabī' ibn Khuthaym used to love sugar. He used to buy it and give it as *ṣadaqah*, to fulfil what the same Qur'anic verse says.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1461; Muslim, 998.



