

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَيْضًا أَنَّ أَنَسًا مِنْ
أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ: ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الدُّثُورِ
بِالْأَجُورِ يُصَلُّونَ كَمَا نُصَلِّي وَيَصُومُونَ كَمَا نَصُومُ
وَيَتَصَدَّقُونَ بِفُضُولِ أَمْوَالِهِمْ. قَالَ: أَوْلَيْسَ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ مَا تَصَدَّقُونَ إِنَّ بِكُلِّ تَسْبِيحَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلِّ تَكْبِيرَةٍ
صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلِّ تَحْمِيدَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلِّ تَهْلِيلَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَأَمْرٍ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ وَنَهْيٍ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ وَفِي بُضْعٍ
أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ. قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ: أَيَّتِي أَحَدُنَا شَهَوْتُهُ
وَيَكُونُ لَهُ فِيهَا أَجْرٌ، قَالَ: أَرَيْتُمْ لَوْ وَضَعَهَا فِي حَرَامٍ
أَكَانَ عَلَيْهِ وَزْرٌ فَكَذَلِكَ إِذَا وَضَعَهَا فِي الْحَلَالِ كَانَ لَهُ
أَجْرٌ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Dharr, (رضي الله عنه), reported that some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, (ﷺ), said to him: "O Messenger of Allah, the rich have taken away all the rewards. They observe the prayer as we do, and they keep the fasts as we do, and they give sadaqah (charity) from their surplus riches." Upon this he (the Prophet) said: "Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) by following which you can also do sadaqah? Verily in every tasbih (i.e. saying Subhanallah) there is a sadaqah, every takbir (i.e. saying Allahu Akbar) is a sadaqah, every tahmid (i.e. saying Alhamdulillah) is a sadaqah, every tahlil (i.e. saying Lailaha illallah) is a sadaqah, enjoining of good is a sadaqah, forbidding of evil is a sadaqah, and having sexual intercourse with your wife is a sadaqah. They (the Companions) said: "O Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us?" He said: "Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward." [Muslim]

Background

In another hadith recorded by both Muslim and Al-Bukhari, it is mentioned that the questioners were the poor of the Muhajruun or immigrants from Makkah. Ibn Rajab says that this hadith shows that those poor people thought that giving sadaqah (charity) can only be done through money, something which they could not afford. The Prophet, (ﷺ), told them that all good deeds are considered as charitable acts.

There are other versions this hadith of Abu Dharr as well as some other hadiths which show similar meanings. One of them is in Sahih Muslim which says that: "Every good act is an act of charity". In another version the hadith, it says: "Your smile to your brother is a charitable act. Ordering good is a charitable act. Forbidding evil is a charitable act. Helping a man who has bad eyesight to see things is a charitable act. Removing a stone, rubbish or bones is a charitable act. Emptying your cup in the cup of your brother is a charitable act."

Also in the Sahihain (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) it is mentioned that "A man spending money upon his wife is charity". In another hadith in the Sahihain it is mentioned that "No Muslim plants a plant or soils a seed and has it eaten by a bird, animal or human except that it will be a charitable act for him".

Lessons

According to Ibn Rajab, the hadith proves that the Companions of the Prophet, (ﷺ), were so eager to do good acts and charitable deeds. They had very strong desires to do al-khayr and charity in order to please Allah subhana wa ta'ala. They were sad when they could not afford to donate their money to charity especially as it was being done by some other people. They had a strong desire to spend they wealth and to do good deeds when they saw some members among the Companions doing it. They wanted to be like them in terms of rewards and tawab. They were able to do salah, fasting and other ibadah but one thing they could not do was giving money or sadaqah because they did not have any. But they were told to do more dhikr which is equal to giving money or charity in terms of rewards.

We can see here how the Companions were so keen to do all forms and acts of ibadah in order to please Allah subhana wa ta'ala. This should be the case with every Muslim. We should be eager to do every good deed which pleases Allah. At least we should have the will and desire to do it even if we cannot do it.

Ibn Rajab states that the Islamic concept of charity in its broad sense can be divided into two types: -

1. The acts of goodness and kindness one can have towards other humans. Ibn Rajab gave some examples such as education and teaching people, teaching the Qur'an, removing anything that harms people in their paths, and also doing whatever that contributes to the well-being of the Muslim community. This also includes making du'a (prayer) and istighfar (forgiveness) for the other Muslims.
2. Keeping any harmful action away from others. This means that we must not perform a harmful act towards other people if it does not benefit them. It is the minimum thing that one can afford to do to benefit others.

Charitable acts are rewarded even without niyah or intentions. This can be understood from the first impression or the general observable meaning of the text of the hadith. But it seems that Ibn Rajab is not happy with this interpretation. He says that a charitable act, according to many scholars, is conditional to a good intention. That is we must do it for the sake of Allah only and to seek His Pleasure. According to Ibn Rajab, this view is supported by two evidences:

1. In another version of the hadith good intention was mentioned and hence it applies to the other places where good intention was not mentioned.
2. In Surah al-Nisa Ayah 114, Allah says: "There is no good in most of their secret talks except one who exhorts to a good deed of charity or goodness or conciliation between people. To him who does this seeking the pleasure of Allah, We shall soon give him a reward of high value." Ibn Rajab says that in this verse it is mentioned that the reward is conditional to a good intention only.

Each of the phrases of dhikr Allah such as al-tahmid, al-tahlil, and al-tasbih is a charitable act. This shows us the importance of dhikr Allah. There are general types of dhikr and there are specific types of dhikr. Muslims should remember Allah all the time. The recommended time to do dhikr is during the morning and the evening and after the salawat. Every Muslim should maintain and observe the dhikr in order to become among those who are described as al-dhakhirun.

The acts of pleasing Allah are very wide and affordable to everyone. People differ in their ability, preference, potential, etc. There is room for all where every one has the ability to perform some act of charity. Therefore a Muslim should take this advantage and do good deeds which are more convenient and suitable for him or her. However, we are encouraged to do as much of good deeds and charitable acts as we can.

There is a story that Imam al-Dhahabi related about a dialogue between Ibn al-Juwairiyah and Imam Malik. He said that Ibn al-Juwairiyah wrote a letter to Imam Malik about ibadah and advised him to do more acts of worship. Imam Malik was well known for his lectures in the Masjid al-Nabawi where he used to disseminate ilm (knowledge) and the sunnah of the Prophet, (ﷺ), that he learned. Ibn Juwairiyah was known for his piety and devotions to worship. Imam Malik replied to Ibn al-Juwairiyah's letter saying that Allah has divided the acts of deeds among people as He divided rizq or wealth among them. Some are given talents in knowledge and how to spread it while others are given talents in jihad,

fasting and so on. So what he (Imam Malik) was given is not less than what Ibn al-Juwairiyah have been given and he hoped that both of them are on the right track and do the things that please Allah subhana wa ta'ala.

Also In the stories of the Sahabah we can find that every one was good at doing some specific acts. This means talents are divided among people. Ibn Masud said that fasting the sunnah prevented him from reciting the Qur'an. It made him weak. So he chose the recitation of the Qur'an over the non-obligatory fasting. This is mentioned by al-Shatibi in his al-I'tisam.

So people have choices and preferences in doing acts of ibadah according to their ability and this is acceptable in Islam. Only a few people may have the ability to do many things together. One of them was Abu Bakar al-Siqdiq, (رضي الله عنه). He was given the talents to perform all forms of ibadah and was good at doing them.

Ibn al-Qayyim mentions said that it is recommended to compete towards good deeds as mentioned in the Qur'an. People are allowed to compete for goodness and for the acts of charity in accordance with their talents and ability. There is a story of a man who was in Madinah who usually goes to salah with some money in his pocket. After the salah and on his way back, he would give the money to any needy person that he met. He was well known for doing this kind of charity. Then there is the story of an old man who was over 80 years old who used to do many good activities for the people of the village. He used to walk around the streets of the village and cleaned the roads and streets. Every morning after the Fajar prayers he would go to the school and clean the muddy and dusty road to that school. He was an illiterate man but yet he did a lot of good jobs for the villagers which other people did not bother to do. This is indeed a great deed in the sight of Allah. It is a good opportunity to get the pleasure of Allah. Therefore every Muslim should be doing this kind of action which is actually easy and simple but has great rewards. We cannot do all charitable acts at one time but we have to do whatever we can do. We have to have the intention to do any charitable act. The hadith that says: "Your smile to your brother is a charitable act" is a good example of this type of ibadah. It is common now to see many people who have the habit of smiling at other people. They are in fact good at this kind of charitable act. They are blessed with this behavior. It has a positive influence on other's behavior. When you smile to your brother and say "Assalamu Alaikum" to him, you are in fact making him happy and this act will create a good environment among the Muslim community.

Scholars have emphasised the distinction between "Ghibtah" and "Hasad". Al-Ghibtah means to have the desire to achieve the good qualities that others have. Al-Ghibtah is a positive behavior which motivates you to do good, as good as other people do. For example, when you see a knowledgeable person, you admire and wish to be knowledgeable like him; when you see someone who do a lot of ibadah, you wish to do the same; when you see a rich person who pays charity, you admire him and wish to be like him. So you admire these people for their good actions and hence you wish to be like them. Al-Ghibtah, then, is actually good and desirable. It influences our attitude and behavior in a positive way.

Al-Hasad, on the other hand, means 'envy'. It is a negative behavior which is prohibited and condemned in Islam. The Prophet, (ﷺ), said that al-Hasad demolishes the rewards. It is envy and jealousy that occurs when you see someone who is given some privileges that you do not have. It is Allah who gives His Bounty to anyone He chooses. So we should not feel any objection to Allah's plan. That is why al-Hasad is considered a very bad behavior and a major sin.

We are encouraged to perform the acts of ordering good things and prohibiting evils because when we do it we contribute to the well-being of the society. We do not do it to offend or put down someone. We do it in order to help them. Carrying out this concept will always contribute to the betterment of the

whole society. We have to do it with tolerance and patience so that the other party may accept it. When we do this act with good intentions, the other person sees it positively. He sees it as caring and concern from our side. So most likely, he will accept it. We should not do it in a harsh or aggressive way that it may offend others.

Conclusion

Scholars state that permissible acts can be turned into ibadah. These acts can be rewarded with the condition of having good intentions. So every normal activity that we do in our everyday life can be turned into ibadah and we will be rewarded for doing it with good intentions. For example, when you are driving or putting petrol into your car with the intention of benefiting your family or relatives, you will be rewarded and this act will be considered as ibadah. Also, when you make a telephone call to your family or relatives with good intentions, you will be rewarded for that. Hence, these simple acts of our everyday life can be turned into ibadah and be rewarded. We need to train ourselves with this habit and insha Allah we will get a great reward from Allah.