

# Outracing Death towards Good



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There are so many charitable deeds that a person can do before death overtakes him.

In the chapter of "Hastening to Do Good Deeds" in *Riyad-us-Salihin*, Imam an-Nawawi quoted from the Quran, "So hasten towards all that is good." (Al-Quran Surah al-Baqarah: 148)

Also, "And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for *Jannah* (Paradise) as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-*Muttaqun* (the pious)." (surah al-Imran: 133)

The Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessing be upon him (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said in a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah, "Be prompt in doing good deeds (before you are overtaken) by turbulence which would be like a part of the dark night. A man would be a believer in the morning and turn to disbelief in the evening, or he would be a believer in the evening and turn disbeliever in the morning, and would sell his Faith for worldly goods." (*Sahih Muslim*)

The Day of Resurrection will be preceded by a long chain of calamities. When these calamities occur, religion and faith will lose their value in people.

There will be a race for wealth, so much so that people would not hesitate to compromise their religion and faith to acquire wealth. People will rapidly change their faces.

This is what is actually happening. There really is no reason for any

*Mu'min* (believers) to delay in performing noble deeds.

## Urgency

The Messenger of Allah taught Muslims about the urgency of charity or *Sadaqah*.

'Uqbah bin Al-Harith said, "Once I performed the 'Asr prayer in Madinah behind the Messenger of Allah. He got up quickly after finishing the prayer with *Taslim*, and stepping over the people, went to one of the rooms of his wives. The people were startled at his haste, and when he came out and saw their astonishment at his urgency he said, 'I recalled that there was left with me some gold which was meant for charity; I did not like to keep it any longer, so I gave orders that it should be distributed.'" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah said, "I had left some gold for *Sadaqah* in the house, and did not wish to keep it overnight."

Indeed, according to Imam an-Nawawi, when one keeps such things that are

meant for *Sadaqah* his attention diverted from Allah the Exalted towards those things. Of course it is undesirable to jump over the necks of other people in ordinary circumstances, but it is permissible when special conditions warrant it. Apparently, the remaining wealth to be distributed for charity is amongst such conditions.

Why? Because one does not know when one will die and when the door to good deeds and divine rewards will be closed.

Jabir reported, "A man said to the Prophet during the battle of Uhud: 'Tell me, O Messenger of Allah, where I shall be if I am killed.' The Prophet replied that he would be in *Jannah*. Right there and then, the man threw away some dates which he had for eating in his hand – as if he could not wait long enough to finish them

– and went into the battle and fought until he was killed." (*Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*)

## Stingy

A big defeat is recorded for those who only start acting charitable on the verge of death. He is alive yet, but he is facing death. At that time, his charity will have lost much of its value.

Abu Hurairah said that once a man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, which charity is the most rewardable?"

The Prophet then replied, "That you should give charity (in a state when you are) healthy and stingy and fear poverty, hoping to become rich (charity in such a state of health and mind is the best).

"And you must not defer (charity to such a length) that you are about to die and would be saying, 'This is for so-and-so, and this for so-and-so.' Lo!

It has already come into (the possession of) so-and-so." (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*)

I n d e e d .  
C h a r i t y i n  
t h e r e a l  
s e n s e i s  
t h a t

**Allah's Messenger said,**  
"Hasten to do good deeds before you are overtaken by one of the seven afflictions. Are you waiting for such poverty which will make you unmindful of devotion, or prosperity which will make you corrupt, or disease as will disable you, or such senility as will make you mentally unstable, or sudden death, or Ad-Dajjal who is the worst expected absent, or the Hour, and the Hour will be most grievous and most bitter?"

(*Sahih At-Tirmizi*)

which a person gives when he is healthy. If a person gives charity when he is facing death, it does not have much value before Allah.

In his commentary of the *hadith*, Imam an-Nawawi said "Moreover, in that condition he cannot give more than one-third of his property in charity because then it becomes the property of his successors, which cannot be spent even in the way of Allah.

For this reason Allah has prescribed a limit in this respect, according to which if a person going through a mortal disease wants to give his property in charity or donate it for some charitable purpose, he cannot spend more than one-third of it on this account.

This injunction is an inducement for people to hurry in doing good deeds, especially in the matter of alms and charity. In fact, he should do it without delay."

## Seven Afflictions

But death is only one of the seven afflictions that may prevent Muslims from doing good and earn the reward.

The Messenger of Allah said, "Hasten to do good deeds before you are overtaken by one of the seven afflictions. Are you waiting for such poverty which will make you unmindful of devotion, or prosperity which will make you corrupt, or disease as will disable you, or such senility as will make you mentally unstable, or sudden death, or Ad-Dajjal who is the worst expected absent, or the Hour, and the Hour will be most grievous and most bitter?" (At-Tirmizi)