

THE EFFECTS OF BEGGING ON HUMAN CHARACTER AND ITS REMEDY IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

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Allah Almighty has made man the noblest of creatures and gave him the most important and high status among all creatures. He has given honor and respect to mankind. Gaining wealth through begging, requesting from others, and wandering from door to door for money and food is damaging to human dignity. The article tries to present the detail of guidance received from the Qur'an and Hadith.

Keywords: *Begging; Disgrace; Human; Hadith; Islam; Qur'an; Self-respect.*

Introduction

Economics and Society have a close relationship with human life. Where Islam has given the right to protection of life, property and respect, it has recognized the right to obtain a legitimate source of livelihood for the sake of a peaceful life. Without economic freedom, social and political freedom is impossible. Without economic justice, there is no possibility of peace and tranquility. Allah Almighty has created man and not left him helpless in this world, but also provided the needful things for all the creatures. He has also given them the ability to use them. Now it is the duty of man to be truly blessed with these blessings and facilities, whether he strives for the blessings of life in any way and by hard work to obtain lawful sustenance or earns his livelihood by adopting wrong and illegitimate

means. Begging is one of the worst, most shameful and ugly means of subsistence. Exploring the trends of begging, exposing the real truth, conveying the rights of the deserving, eradicating the evil of begging in Islamic society and creating a good Islamic society, identifying the real beneficiaries of charity today are among important needs of the era. There is an important need of the era. The article in hands deals with the above mentioned problems.

Literal meaning of Begging

It is said that He had so much (wealth) that he could not support his family (Ibn Manzoor, J, 2012) It means a weak beggar who is deprived of means of livelihood for some reason and who asks for goods from others. According to Imam Shafi'i, a *Faqeer* is one who has nothing and a *Miskeen* is one who has a little wealth to support his family, while according to Imam Abu Hanifa, the opposite is true. (Ibn Manzoor, J, 2012) Begging, is an undesirable act in any society of the world. It is a source of living for those who beg and a disgrace for the society. It is the root of nearly every other social evil as well. It leads to physical deterioration, mental incompetency, Preventable disease and starvation and wrecks lives by facing them into crime, mental abnormalities, family mal-adjustments and social irregularities”.

Terminological meaning

“Faqeer”The masculine noun is a dervish who keeps food for his children for at least one day and at most two or four days, as opposed to a poor person who has nothing, is extremely needy and helpless. (Syed Ahmad, Maulvi, 1977)

According to the Writers of Urdu Daaira e Maarif Islamia in Islam those who trust in God and do not ask for anything from others were called “Faqeer” but ever since the beggars adopted this name, its meaning has changed and now the “Faqeer” is not looked upon favorably in the society. (Danish Gah Punjab, 1978)

“Begging (Nature), Individuals may gain all or part of their living by begging whether from door to door on in public place. In some cases, attempts to increase such income may be made by deforming or mutilating the body. This may be done deliberately by the beggar or may be done by an adult, possibly the parent, dependent on the begging of children. (Saur, K. G. 1991)

(Incidence) Begging occurs frequently, particularly in developing countries, where unemployment and shortage of food are problems. (Claim) Beggars are evidence that either, society has failed, beggars confront individuals with this failure. Moreover “begging” is too much related to vagrancy and crime as Reckless, says that: Vagrancy and begging are criminal practices; and Vagrancy and begging as associated with each other are violational behaviours (such as alcoholism, drug addition, prostitution, desertion, petty crimes against property and so forth). (Walter C, 1995)

Impacts of begging on human character

Begging reflects many and multi-dimensional negative effects on human character. Some important and widely spread impacts are mentioned below.

Negation of self-sufficiency:

Self-sufficiency is an important attribute of human character, which is why the Almighty has endowed man with abilities, knowledge and authority over other creatures. He has also arranged for divine knowledge for his further training. The son of Adam gradually turned towards himself. He grows up and at one point he starts doing everything on his own. It is a sign of his authority, knowledge and ability that he can tear the chest of the mountains, turn the direction of the rivers, dig the bottom of the earth and occupies the minerals. He can tear the chest of the space and float there. But on the other hand, he who makes begging his way instead of working becomes a burden to the society.

If a person is physically weak or infirm in any way or he does not reach the point where he can support himself in the pursuit of the necessities of life, then Allah Almighty has given his responsibility to his brothers. He has the right to convey his rights without hurting his self-righteousness. The Almighty has said:

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ. لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

And those within whose wealth is a known right. For the petitioner and the deprived (Al-Qur’ān: LXX:24)

Death of honor and dignity

Self-respect is a lofty habit in the presence of which man neither bows down before a man like himself, nor lowers himself from his rank. He repeatedly asks Allah for his necessities. He never spreads his hands in front of any creature for any important or unimportant demand.

يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعَرَّفُهُمْ بِيَمَانِهِمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ
"النَّاسَ الْخَائِفَا"

[Charity is] for the poor who have been restricted for the cause of Allah, unable to move about in the land. An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. (Al-Qur'ān: II:273)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Those who make begging a profession, on the Day of Resurrection they will be in a state where there will be no flesh on their faces.”
(Bukhari, M, 2004)

Oppression of one's self

Just as Allah Almighty has bestowed upon man the rights of other people, so he has bestowed upon him the rights of his body and soul. Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said to a Companion who intended to fast every day:

و لِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقٌّ

“And your soul is right over you.”(Bukhari, M, 2004)

The right of the body is to use it only as long as it can work. When it feels really tired, it should rest for a while. The body also has the right to be provided with a diet that maintains its immunity. Too much food is cruel to the body. A food that makes you sick is also not right. It is also an injustice to the body to suffer from illness after eating and to spend on medicines. The greatest right of the body is to be provided with halal food and halal clothing.

The one who begs, in fact, oppresses himself by throwing himself into the pit of humiliation. Whenever a person does something that has

fallen from the human position, he pushes the nafs from his higher position to the lower position.

Humiliation and disgrace

A person who earns a living by begging from the people instead of earning it, earns permanent humiliation and disgrace for himself. It is narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“If the begger knows what is in it for him (i.e. humiliation), he should never beg.” (Bukhari, M, 2004)

It is narrated on the authority of Samrah ibn Jundab that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), said:

Of course, begging is to scratch the face by which a person injures his face, so whoever wants to keep it on his face and whoever wants to leave it, except to begging from the ruler or in a matter where he has no choice but to do so. “(Abu Dawood, S, 2016)

Livelihood breaks

Allah Almighty has endowed every human being with different powers and abilities for earning a living. This is the essence of his humanity in life. A person who begs suffocates all his energies and abilities with his own hands. And the higher the number of beggars, the more the economy will sink in this society. This creates inequality and tension in the economy.

Islam has urged every healthy and wealthy person to strive for his own livelihood instead of receiving his share (Zakat and Sadaqat) from the wealth of others. When any force is used, it will progress. And if a force is suspended, it will eventually disappear. The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said:

“لا تحل الصدقة لغني و لا لذي مر قسوي”

“He is not entitled to Zakat if he is wealthy and able to earn due to his health.” (Abu Dawood, S, 2016)

Loss of thinking power

The beggar is not only free from the worries of earning a living, but his thinking is also weakened. After the habit of begging, he does not care which job will be suitable for his future needs. There is no worry of fulfillment. Such a person neither uses his mental abilities positively nor does any constructive work for his family and society with his hands and arms. The more beggars there are in a society, the more poor the society. It is necessary for the survival and development of the society that begging should be stopped completely.

Disadvantages of permanent poverty

The beggar becomes accustomed to begging for food by escaping from hard work, so he does not have the confidence and belief that Allah Almighty can provide him with sustenance even through hard work. Eventually, he sets up a permanent camp for the needy.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“لا يفتح عبد باب مسئله الا فتح الله عليه باب فقر”

“Whoever opens the door to begging, Allah will open the door of poverty for him.”(Ibn Hanbal, A, 2009)

He (ﷺ) also said:

“Whoever is afflicted with poverty and expresses it before the people, his famine will not end, and whoever expresses it before Allah, Allah will provide for him sooner or later.” (Abu Dawood, S, 2016)

Torture of immorality

In the eyes of the beggar, there is no place for any moral value. The virtues of morality only take root in the heart in which there is modesty, honor and faith. The beggar lies, deceits, hypocrites, flatters all the time. It spreads and tries, so all kinds of vices cling to it. Beggars cause infectious diseases like impatience, irritability, overreacting to spread in the society.

Deterioration of health:

People save their self-respect by giving dirty, defective, unclean, rotten and stale things to the beggars. Consumption of such food destroys their health. The germs of permanent diseases hollow out their body. It is *harām* like interest and who eats such *harām* food their faces hang down. According to the command of the Prophet (ﷺ), to beg is to peel one's face with one's hands.

Earnings from begging is like adultery:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
“Only three types of men are allowed to begging:

1. The person who is in debt is allowed to beg as much as he needs.
2. The person who is starving and the neighbors also, admit it.
3. The narrator did not mention the name of the third person. However, if anyone begs except these reasons, consider Qabisa as if he is eating the earnings of adultery. (Abu Dawood, S, 2016)

Prevention of begging in the light of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth

Just as wealth is essential for the necessities of life, it is necessary to adopt the preferred and best means of obtaining them. Some sources of earning wealth are legitimate and popular and some are undesirable and rejected such as theft, robbery, deception, forgery and begging. The society considers them as despicable and shameful deeds and the whole of humanity is affected by them. The law and standard prescribed by Islamic Shari'ah for halal and *harām*, permissible and unlawful is explicitly described from divine revelation and instructions of the Prophet (ﷺ). There are clear teachings and rules of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth for obtaining halal sustenance and avoiding *harām*. Hardly any religion has paid as much attention to halal earning as Islam has given to it.

Acquisition of wealth in a vicious and illegitimate way (such as begging) is prohibited and invalidated by the Shari'ah. Acquisition of illicit sources of wealth is also forbidden for the sake of social rights and public welfare. In Islam, there are clear and unequivocal standards of halal and *harām*, in the light of which the schedule of living in a society is set. By following the same order and prevailing principles, it is possible

to achieve worldly prosperity and ultimate success by moving towards welfare, security and betterment in the society. Begging is an ugly act which The Creator of the universe and his last messenger (ﷺ) strongly disliked it. It has been condemned in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān.

One of the virtues of the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) is that he made man acquainted with his place and status in the universe. Human being is the super creation of Universe. So it is disgrace of a man on the basis of such virtues and perfections that he spreads his hand in front of a man like himself to fulfill his needs. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) removed this evil from humanity. He has solved all the psychological confusions of human beings which are the motivators of this burning passion of humanity.

Condemnation of questioning

In the verse of Holy Qur'ān, its condemnation is expressed in these words.

“لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِخَافًا”

They beg not importunately (Al-Qur'ān:273)

This (wrapping) is said when the seeker has Humility in asking a question. That is, they used to ask people to do anything with or without humility. Because Allah Almighty has described it as (*Ta'afuf*). And that they are known by their foreheads (signs). If they asked, their attribute (*Ta'afuf*). They would not have been described, nor would they have been identified by evidence or symbol, but their condition would have been very clear. (Tabri, Abu Jafar, M)

Imam Tabari, in his commentary on the above verse, has stated that it is not permissible to beg from the people by weeping and clinging to them. On the contrary, in present times the beggars are begging in such a way that Allah's refuge! It becomes extremely difficult to get rid of them.

Mahmoud Alusi Baghdadi writes in his commentary on this verse this means that the begger clings to the person in charge until he gives it to him. (Aloosi, S)

The commentary on the above verse in Tafseer Ibn Katheer is as follows:

They do not burden the people with what they do not need. (Ibn Kathir, 1972)

Hazrat Awf bin Malik Ashja'i narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) took allegiance from us that you worship Allah and do not associate anyone with Him, and perform the five daily prayers and obey Allah and he (ﷺ) said one thing whispering and do not beg people for anything. Hazrat Awf says that I saw some of the companions of this group who pledged allegiance

يسقط سوط احدهم فما يسال احد ان ينالهاياه
(Muslim bin Hajjaj, 2014)

“Even if their whip had fallen, they would not have asked anyone to lift it.”

Explaining the awful effects of begging, the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated that beauty and light disappear from the face of the begger. (Muslim Bin Hajjaj, 2014)

After these warnings, a person can observe hunger. He cannot even imagine begging in front of anyone.

Order to act and strive to earn

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not like idleness and laziness. The Holy Qur'an describes the believer's engagement in good deeds. Hamid-ud-Din Farahi has described the righteous deeds in these words:

“Which can lead to life and development for man and through which man can reach the highest stages of development which are inherent in his nature.” (Islahi, Ameen A)

The Holy Qur'an mentions earning for *halāl* sustenance as follows:

واخرون يضربون في الارض يبتغون من فضل الله و اخرون
”يقاتلون في سبيل الله“

Others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah's bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's cause (Al-Qur'an: LXXIII:20)

This shows that the struggle for *halāl* sustenance in Islam is so great and high that it was counted along with the *Mujahideen*. There

are about 320 verses in the Holy Qur'ān which mention the importance of action, the engagement of the doer and the rights and obligations of the rewarder. This determines the place and status of action in Islam. (Karam Shah, M)

Explaining verse 37 of Surah An-Noor, Mufti Muhammad Shafi'i wrote about the economic style of the Companions:

This verse also shows that the Companions were mostly traders or industrialists. (Shafi, M)

Imam Bukhari has narrated various traditions related to Haddad (carpenter), tailor, weaver, (cloth weaver), carpenter, and (goldsmith) which attracts man towards earning. The affiliation of different professions (bazaz, qafal, jasas, qattan, etc.) with the names of the Imams also shows what a comprehensive concept of righteous deeds these great scholars of knowledge and action presented to the people.

Imam Sha'rani writes:

“How good it would be for a tailor to glorify his needle and his saw” (Al Qarzavi, Y)

In the light of above mentioned references we can conclude that under the guise of separating religion from the world, the totally rejection of the world is extremely condemnable. On the contrary, earning halal food through hard work was considered as worship. Islam has removed the obstacles that prevent a person from seeking halal sustenance, but he did not like to spread the word of begging by bargaining for honor and dignity. It is also important to clarify in the present context that there are two kinds of action and effort, and both teachings are proven by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Handicrafts, trade and industry

Holly Prophet (ﷺ) presented the example of a glorious Prophet David (A.S) and clarified the importance and greatness of manual labour in the social life.

ما اكل احد طعاما قط خيرا من ان ياكل من عمل يده و ان نبي الله داود عليه السلام كان ياكل من عمل يده

(Muslim Bin Hajaj, 2014)

“No one has ever eaten better than he who eats with his own hands. Indeed, the Prophet David (A.S) used to eat with his own hands.”

Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail Bukhari, while establishing the title of the chapter of this narration, also proved his natural intelligence. The chapter itself clarifies the teachings of the Prophet in this regard. He suggests the title is named:

“كسب الرجل وعمله بيده”

Mental and intellectual Work

This is the second kind of action and effort. The Qur’ān also repeatedly invites us to think and understand.

Explaining the importance of thoughtful action and its place in Islam, Obaidullah Fahd wrote:

“The rational thinking in Islam is treated as one of the religious obligations of Muslim Ummah, while the intellectual activities are considered as their unavoidable duties” (Ubaidullad F)

Steps to Psychological Elimination

Holy prophet (ﷺ) was aware of the psychological flaws and shortcomings of man. Because Man is naturally desirous of dignity and status in society. That is why he resorted to this aspect to curb begging. In one sentence, Sahib Jawamai‘ Al-Kalam (ﷺ) condemned begging and also instructed the method of protection of honor and dignity. Abdullah bin Umar (R.A) narrates Once the Prophet (ﷺ) was preaching charity on the pulpit and advising not to ask questions. At that time he said:

“اليد العليا خير من اليد السفلى، واليد العليا المنفقة والسفلى السائلة”

(Bukhari, M, 2004)\

“The upper hand is better than the lower hand, and the upper hand belongs to the one who spends, and the lower hand belongs to the one who asks.”

The idea of kinship

At the societal level, it is clear from the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) made it obligatory for people of high status to start the obligatory and supererogatory almsgiving with their nearly relatives so that they do not remain needy. The title of a chapter of Sahih Muslim is:

فضل النفقة و الصدقة على الاقربين و الزوج و الاولاد و الوالدين و لو
كانو مشركين

The virtue of spending on relatives, husband, children and parents, even if they are polytheists. It is clear from this chapter that the reward for spending on those in need is double, one for building relationship and the other for charity. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) advised Talha (R.A) to divide the garden among his relatives instead of others, so he divided it among his relatives and cousins. (Bukhari, M, 2004)

Conclusion

Today's tragedy is that the rich are trying to become the richest, the system of zakat prescribed by the Shari'ah to meet the needs of the poor is not being implemented in its true sense, due to which there is an imbalance of wealth, On the other hand, those who have been blessed with good physical health by Allah Almighty are seen to be neglecting the earning of halal sustenance.

Nowadays the profession of begging has taken a very disgusting form. Many healthy and wealthy people go around begging for money. This habit is also very prevalent in children. You have to deal with people everywhere who have made this disgusting work a source of livelihood. A study of the Holy Qur'an reveals in clear words that Islam has issued instructions regarding both the seeker and the responsible person. There is a wide field of incentives for a person who spent his wealth for the sake of Allah but at the same time there are clear instructions about condemning the beggars. On the one hand, Islamic teachings are that people are encouraged to earn a living, on the other hand, Muslims are also encouraged to keep an eye on the poor, the needy and the destitute and Spend their extra wealth on the poor. So we must apply the golden principles of Islam to solve this important problem of our society.

Recommendations

- It is major responsibility of Government to take step for the eradication of begging.
- People should also help the needy persons so they have no need of begging.
- Beggars should be educated in the light of Islamic Teachings.

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