

Concept of Khair'at in the Shariah

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The Institution of Khair'at has been ordained by Allah as a blessing for the prosperous class to serve the poor and needy in any manner, be it is moral, financial or social. The concept of Khair'at needs clarification and volumes can be written on this subject. In short, the meaning of Khair'at is 'Good deed'. A kind word with mercy is superior to charity with string attached, injured feelings. Khair'at as termed in the Qur'an is wrongly misinterpreted in South East Asia, under Hindu influence, and people treat it as the Hindu practice of "Da'an". Qur'an has frequently repeated about helping the underprivileged, and also educated us that our help should be only for the sake of Allah. Qur'an has warned the Ummah that when charity is done, it must not be followed up with reminders of their kindness or with class degradation, since this act voids their charity. Qur'an says:

"O you who believe! Do not render your charity worthless by reproach [of your generosity] and injury, like he who spends his wealth to be seen by people, and does not believe in Allah, and the Last Day." [1]

Guidance of Amir al Muminin Ali in this regard is a shimmering example for everyone:

Iza Jadatit Duniya Alayka Fajudbiha;

Alan Na'asi Turran Innaha Tataqal'labu

(When wealth of the world come towards you; then spend it fully [upon deserving], because it always moves around [it doesn't remain forever in hands, except for divine order])

Fa'lal Jawd Yufniha Iz-Hiya Aqbalat;

Walal Bukhlu Yubqiha Iz-Hiya Tazhabu [2]

(When wealth will start to come towards you then generosity can't eliminate it; and when it would leave [you] then [your] miserly attitude can't hold it).

Famous pupil of Syedna al Moayyad al Shirazi, Hujjat of Khurasan & Badakhshan, Syedna Abu Moinuddin Nasir Khusraw who later on elevated to the exalted position of his mentor after his (Syedna al Moayyad) demise, explained the role of this world as per the famous Hadith in a poetic manner elegantly as follow:

Baz'ar Tu Ast Ein Bitalab Har Chi Bibayadat;

Bi Tushai Maraw B'az Tehi Khana ze Baz'ar

(Similarity of this world is a market of Akhirah, whatever you need for eternal life buy it from here; and don't return towards your final resting place Akhirah, with empty hands)

Afterwards he warned people in following words:

Zeera Ki Babaz'ar Ne Yabi Rah Azin Pas;

Angah Ki Bim'ar Bimani u Be Tim'ar [3]

(When the limit of this worldly life expires and doors are closed for you to visit this world; [means after death] that time your condition will be like a sick who needs an attendant for looking after him, your good deeds would help you)

Let us renew the Sunnah of Khair'at and offer Gifts (as per the needs) with respect to the less fortunate people around us and who do not extend their hands before anyone except Allah. Instead of celebrating Eid lavishly, we should earmark a percentage of our Eid budget to make this occasion more joyous for the less fortunate class. Let us not forget the orphan and the widows, where a little help with a smile may bring multiple joys in their life. These gestures of help will Insha-Allah benefit the needy and deserving who need our support. Do this act from your own hand, as its reward is higher than others.

The help have been specially provided in the following sectors:

- 1. Orphan & Widow*
- 2. Education and Health*
- 3. Elderly Care Sponsorship*
- 4. Economic Upliftment*

There are various ways in which financial help can be given without offending the dignity and self respect of the receivers. Educate the children of the poor by paying them school fees directly to the school, college or university. To guide someone, facilitate and counseling regarding any matter related to education is also a kind of Khair'at, only Shait'an can instigate not to do. Feed the needy by offering them their monthly ration. Cure the less fortunate ones by paying their hospital and medical bills directly to the hospital or the drug store. Upliftment of the poor and needy should be the aim of the well-to-do class. Their reward for these good acts is many folds, as promised by Allah. It is noteworthy to follow the manner of charity taught by Ahl al Bait. There were several families in Madinah who received help from Imam Sajjad, Ali ibn Husain Zain al Abidin, yet they were not aware where the help was coming from. When Imam Sajjad departed, that source of help also disappeared. [4]

Imam Sajjad, Ali Zain ul Abidin looked after and administrated hundreds of houses of the poor and hunger stricken. Daily a number of goats were slaughtered in his house and he distributed all the meat among the afflicted. He dressed the poor and paid their debts and loans. He himself took very simple meals and put on plain ordinary dresses.

Through active contribution, from all corners generously, the goal can be achieved and as a result in society the number of educated and healthy people will increase, and the result of this uplifting process will be visible in our surrounding. Your help will have a significant impact on the lives of those living in poverty and destitution, and it should be done by your own hands, which confirms that it reaches in deserving hands correctly.

It is a heinous sin, according to the Qur'an and Ahadith, not to help the less fortunate class. Ahadith warns that the one who does not help the needy from his/her wealth is not a Muslim. How can then one improve its destiny? The sin is even worse when the significance of the

Khair'at is repealed and considered an out dated practice of no use, and an insult to the divine purpose of helping the poor. These people must consider the following Hadith:

"There is no day in which the slaves of Allah arise except that two Malaek descend, one saying, "O Allah, replace the charity for the one who spends!" whilst the other says, "O Allah, destroy the wealth of the one who holds back (from giving in charity)" [5]

A maid used to work in somebody's house. The owner of the house had invited some guests and shortly after the guests had left, the maid collected all the remaining food and gave it as charity in her mother's name. The next day the maid was visited by her sister who informed her that she had dreamt that their deceased mother had informed her that the food her sister had sent had reached her, but she had asked that the next time she should send proper charity and not the remains of some meals. Following narration has been transmitted from Imam Jafar Assadiq with Nabavi authentication:

"Once Nabi Essa (A.S) was passing through a grave whose occupant was being tortured. After some time, Nabi Essa (A.S) passed that grave again and saw that the torture had stopped. He questioned Allah the reason; through Wahi he was informed that the deceased's son had given charity therefore the torture had stopped". [6]

Abi Abdillah Imam Jafar Assadiq says:

"Three things help a man after his death, and these are following:

- 1). A charity given by him,*
- 2). A good habit he taught others*
- 2). A good offspring he leaves behind, who offer Doa of Rehmat and Maghfirat for him". [7]*

It is advised to spend some amount of Khair'at on each sacred occasion and nights on behalf of beloved deceased, so Allah grants them reward. This is such a gift, which they deserve due to their kind relation and affection with you.

We conclude our discussion on the following beautiful couplets of Hikmah (divine wisdom), written by the 'Ruby of Badakhshan', 'Hujjat of Khurasan', Syedna Abu Moinuddin Nasir Khusraw:

Garat Bi pursad Zekarda H'at, Khudawand

Ruzi Qiyamat Chi Guyish Be Sari Pul

(If Creator will question you about your deeds on the day of Qiyamah, on the bridge, what will you reply?)

Daftar Pur Kun Zu Fe'li Nik Ki Yak Chand;

Bulbula Kardi Tahi be Ghulghuli Bulbul

(Fully load your record with good deeds; for a long time you have been drinking and making merry of this material world, it is high time that you start filling your pitcher with noble performance for the hereafter)

To know human psychology properly, he (the Dai) knew well that people do not like suggestions so he questioned:

Chunki Malamat Hami Zepand Fizayadat;

Hich Na Gardad Malul Maghzi Tu Az Mul [8]

(You feel ashamed to hear to Nasaih [advise] but you don't feel ashamed due to the use of disgusting products, like Alcoholic drinks).

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