

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَجَّيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَانِكُمْ
صَدَقَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرٌ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ

رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

Al-Mujadilah (The Disputation) 58:12

O You Who Believe!

- When you consult the Messenger in private.
- Spend something in charity before your private consultation.
- That will be best for you.
- And most conducive to purity (of conduct).
- But if you find not (the wherewithal).
- Allah is Oft- Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Commentary

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

God says, " O you who believe! When you (wish to) consult in private with the messenger, then you offer something in charity before your consultation," and then He says, " That is better for you and purer."

The reason for this explanation is given as in the words of Surah Baqarah 184, " And that you fast. It is better for you if only you know.' There is no doubt that it is one of the causes of purity in man and is better for their soul and hearts. The reason may be that the rich among the people used to whisper too much in the Messenger's ears and by this they wanted to depict their closeness to him and to show that they are truly the reliable companions. The poorer believers used to feel sad about this monopoly of theirs. This is the reason why it was ordered that they should give something in charity each time they wanted to whisper something to the Messenger. This also urges people to kindness to others and enhances the love of mankind. It removes anger and cruelty.

The word "Zalik" draws attention to the address of the Messenger classifying the two kinds of believer. It also teaches the believer to be courteous. The charity refers to the private consultation each one of them purported to have with the Messenger.

God says, " *But if you find not the means for it, the God is oft forgiving Most Merciful.*"

If you have nothing to give then it is not compulsory for you to do so and you are free to consult him. God is Most Merciful and very forgiving. This verse is speaking of removing the compulsion from the weaker section of the people while it makes charity compulsory for the affluent people. "Spend something" is only for the rich.

God says, " *Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation?*"

This verse has nullified the order given in the previous verse about giving charity. The companions of the Messenger and the believers have been censured because they stopped consulting the Messenger for the fear that they would have to spend money. Only Hazrat Ali used to consult him and pay the levy required in the ten times that he did so and this is when this verse was revealed to cancel the first order.

The Arabic word " Ashfaq" means fear, so it means, " Are you afraid to spend in charity for the consultations?" and it implies that they feared poverty if they had to spend. Some have said that it means all kinds of charity because no one is afraid of giving just one kind of charity and doing this once does not result in poverty. It can only be so if the consultation is regular and the amount given is considerable.

God says, " *Since you did not do it, and God turned to you (with mercy), then keep up the regular prayers, pay Zakat and obey God and His Messenger.*"

If you cannot perform the task assigned to you and God has been merciful upon you then you should be steadfast in establishing the daily prayers and giving Zakat . The words " God has forgiven you" means that you should have been punished for not fulfilling your duty of giving charity but that God has forgiven you. The words " establish prayer" " and if you do it not " clearly signifies the cancellation of the previous order.

The book then says, " Obey God and obey His Messenger" and this is a general order concerning all duties and hardships and then " God is aware of all that you do" reinforces this order because mankind is always under God's watch.

A Discussion of Hadith

Majmaul has recorded the hadith that explain the words, " And God will exalt those of you who believe and those of you have been granted knowledge.". One hadith says, the Messenger said,

The Alim (learned man) man's stature is greater than that of the martyr, and the Martyr is more exalted than the worshipper, the prophet is higher in prominence than the Alim. The Qur'an is greater than all other revelations and God is greater than all the creations. Just as God's greatness is proven over all the creations the Alim's status is above all the people as they are of a lower degree.

Jabir bin Abdullah has narrated about it.

Compiler's word

This part of the hadith is not devoid of anything for the words " The lower ones" revert to the people according to their status, higher or average. When the Alim's is greater than all the other people and since the Prophet is also greater than all other people then it means that the Alim may be great than the Prophet but this word "A'dna" may be in the sense of closest and the closest to the Prophet. Now we know that the Prophet has a greater stature than the Alim then it will mean that the stature of the Alim is great for being closest to God.

Ibn Rahwia, Ibn Abi Sheba, Abd bin Hameed, Ibn Manzar, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduia and Hakim have quoted Hazrat Ali who said,

There is a verse in the Book of God which no one has put into practice before and no one will do it after me and that is the verse "Najwa" that says, *O you who believe! When you (want to) consult the Messenger in private spend something in charity before your private consultation.* I had only one Dinar with me so I sold it for ten Dirhams and so whenever I consulted with the Messenger I gave one Dirham. This verse was later made void and no could put into practice. It was then that the verse, *Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation (with him)?* was revealed.

It is recorded in Tafsir Qummi through Abu Baseer that when Imam Muhammad Baqir was asked about the verse " When you want to consult the Messenger in private," the Imam said Hazrat Ali gave charity when he consulted the Messenger and then God cancelled this order by the verse, "Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation (with him)?"

The Compiler's word

The Sunni and Shia books have recorded various hadith on the same issue.

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

In the presence of the Holy Prophet all instructions or consultations were open and free, but there were many men among his companions who could only be satisfied by a private interview in order to display their false dignity, or out of selfishness wanted to monopolise his time, or were not willing to disclose their secrets to their brethren. In order to discourage such weaknesses it was therefore decided that they should spend something in charity for the good of their poorer brothers before availing the facility of private consultation.

The word sadqah makes it clear that neither the Holy Prophet nor the Ahl ul Bayt could be benefited as it is forbidden to them.

Al Muttaqi in Kanz al Ummal and Mulla Ali Qari in Surah Mishqat narrate the slanders with which the hypocrites tried to defame the Holy Prophet. Mulla Muinuddin in the commentary of this verse has mentioned the names of some prominent companions in the list of hypocrites.

Abdullah bin Umar said that his father, Umar bin Khattab, used to say that he coveted for the three distinctions which only Ali had:

- (i) his marriage with Fatimah;
- (ii) the standard of Islam given to him on the day of Khaybar;
- (iii) the sadqah given by him alone in compliance with this verse.

Aqa Mahdi Puya says:

Since none save Ali paid the sadqah, this ordinance was abrogated by verse 13, because the divine plan to test and distinguish the true servants of Allah was fulfilled. It was only Ali who, like always, readily complied with Allah's command. All others drew back from carrying out this order due to niggardliness and fear of loss.

It is clear from the subsequent verses that the tone of the abrogating verse is reproachful.

Some partisan commentators try to change the past tense into present tense in verse 13 in order to save their heroes. The verse clearly reproaches the companions by saying: "You did not do it."