

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 177)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, eminent jurist and statesman, Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 177]

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for [freeing] the necks [of slaves]; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and the patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous. (176)” [Surah Al Baqarah 2: 177]

Allah (swt) clarifies in these Ayaat the following:

After Allah (swt) mentioned in the previous verse, the differing of the People of the Book in terms of their Iman (إيمان Belief) in some of the Book and Kufr (كفر Disbelief) in some, and Iman in some of the Revealed Books of Allah (swt) and Disbelief in some of them, wherein everyone of them decided what he wants according to his desires, Allah (swt) mentioned another difference of theirs which is their dispute over the precedence of the Qiblah to which they face. The Christians say it is their Qiblah and the Jews say that it is their Qiblah. In this verse, Allah (swt) says that ‘Birr’ (Righteousness) - a collective name for all types of good and obedience - is not in the Direction - the Qiblah - to which you turn your faces to, but Righteousness is in Iman, good action and sincere obedience of Allah (swt).

Righteousness is that you believe in Allah (swt), the Last Day, the Angels, the Books and the Prophets with firm Iman, without misgiving or doubt. Righteousness is that you give Sadaqah (صدقة Preferable Charity) to those in need and contact the kindred [family]. Righteousness is that you establish prayer and pay Zakah and fulfill what Allah (swt) has covenanted in all kinds of Khair. Righteous is that you be among those who are patient and truthful in all circumstances and situations: in poverty and hardship, disease and pain and in Jihad upon meeting the enemies (in adversity).

This is the Righteousness which ascribes its people with truth and piety ﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾ “Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous,” amongst which are the following:

1. Islam is two matters:

a. Iman; which is required for at-Tasdeeq al-Jaazim (التصديق الجازم Decisive Belief) in, i.e. it is the Islamic Aqeedah (عقيدة Doctrine) – Iman is in Allah (swt), His Angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day and the Good and Evil within Qadr (قدر Destiny), as narrated in the Hadith of Umar (ra) about the questioning of RasulAllah (saaw) by Jibril - as clarified in the initial verses of Surah al-Baqarah.

b. The Ahkaam Shariah (أحكام شرعية Legal Rulings); which are related to the performance of Practical and Verbal Actions and Provisions, in accordance with Legal Rulings.

Thus, the affair of the Muslim is only established properly with these two matters together - by Iman and Righteous Actions - as is stated in many verses ﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ﴾ “Those who believe from amongst you and undertake Righteous Deeds” i.e. Iman in the Islamic Doctrine and adherence to the Legal Rulings.

2 – Allah (swt) mentioned ﴿وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ﴾ “and gives wealth, in spite of love for it.” i.e. he takes out wealth and gives charity from it, whilst the wealth is beloved to him and he covets it, and this is the peak of charity as mentioned in the Hadith, «أفضل الصدقة أن تصدق وأنت صحيح شحيح تأمل الغنى وتخشى» “The best Charity is that you should give charity (in a state when you are) healthy and

close-fisted, one haunted by the fear of poverty, hoping to become rich (charity in such a state of health and mind is the best)” [Bukhari and Muslim].

Allah (swt) gave preference, ﴿ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ﴾ **“to kindred”** because Charity upon them is from Fadl (فضل Virtue) as stated in the Hadith, «الصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى الْمُسْكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ وَعَلَى ذَوِي الرَّحِمِ اثْنَتَانِ» **“Giving charity to a poor person is charity, and (giving) to a relative is two things, charity and upholding the ties of kinship” [Nisa’i].**

Then Allah (swt) mentioned the people of need:

- ﴿وَالْيَتَامَىٰ﴾ **“and the orphans”** i.e. the orphan is the one whose father died during his childhood, i.e., before he reached puberty.
- ﴿وَالْمَسْكِينِ﴾ **“and the needy”** i.e. those who have no wealth or not enough wealth for their basic needs - food, clothing and shelter.
- ﴿وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ﴾ **“the traveler”** i.e. any remote traveler who does not have enough money for his basic needs in his travel. He is called ﴿ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ﴾ **“son of the path”** metaphorically, as if he is a son of the road, due to his attachment to it in respect to his stopping and moving, for the sake of his travel.
- ﴿وَالسَّائِلِينَ﴾ **“those who ask”** i.e. those who ask people for fulfilling their need.
- ﴿وَفِي الرِّقَابِ﴾ **“for the necks”** i.e. in their liberation from slavery, “for” is used for the purpose of circumstantially signifying the immersion into what befell upon their necks, i.e. to exclusively liberate their necks, without spending for other needs. So it is spent to liberate them, as if it is (inside) their necks, and not for the previous categories and it is not for them to spend upon their various other needs.

3. Allah has mentioned Sadaqah (صدقة Preferable Charity) before He (swt) mentioned Zakah (الزكاة) even though the Obligation of Zakah is takes precedes in terms of performance. However, this Taqdeem (تقديم Sending Forward) of Sadaqah is for the sake of highlighting its virtue, so that it is not forgotten by Muslims such that they feel sufficed with the Fard of Zakah alone. So some of the Muslims direct attention only to not neglecting that which is Obligated through the fear of punishment. They do not pay attention to that which leads to Qurbah (قربى Closeness) to Allah (swt) other than that which is Obligated upon them. So this Taqdeem is to draw attention of the Believers to the fact that what is Obligated is insufficient. So, instead they will add that which pleases Allah (swt) from the Nawafil (نوافل Preferable). So, the Muslims add Sadaqah to the Zakah and in this is a great reward, particularly for the Muslim that gives Sadaqah from the wealth that he loves and fears poverty through spending of it i.e. he gives Sadaqah as Nafilah (نافلة Preferred) whilst he is in need of it. So it is such that, through spending, he would be within the confines poverty, rather than the case wherein if he were to spend from it, he would remain within the confines of being wealthy. Yet, despite that, he gives Sadaqah, when it is not obliged upon him. In such a case, he is of a great degree of righteousness and piety.

It is not to be understood from this Taqdeem in the Ayaah that Sadaqah is better than Zakah. Instead, the verse is a text in the matter of the performance of Zakah and Sadaqah. Allah (swt) brought Sadaqah forwards for encouragement towards it, and for Dalaalah (دلالة Evidencing) upon the Muslim Nafseeyah (نفسية Disposition), which spends more from its wealth, that it loves, than what is Obligated, even though it is in a state of fearing poverty through such spending.

4. ﴿وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ﴾ **“and the patient in poverty and hardship and during battle.”** It is in the *Mawqa’* (موقع Grammatical State) of Khabar Lakin (لكن Predicate of But), i.e. it is in the *Marfooa* (مرفوع Nominative (Indicative) Case) like that which preceded it ﴿وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا﴾ **“[those who] fulfill their promise when they promise.”** However, here it is in the *Mansoob* (منسوب Accusative (Subjunctive) Case) of *Ikhtisaas* (اختصاص Specification) of الصَّابِرِينَ **“the patient.”** It means that it is the Specification of the patient within the above-mentioned ranks of intensity in great degrees of praise before Allah. Allah (swt) said, ﴿إِنَّمَا يُوفَى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾ **“Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.” [Surah Az-Zumar 39:10]**

In the language of the Arabs, if there is amendment of the Nominative to the Accusative in such subjects, it becomes the Accusative of Specification and here there is Specification for praise and high rank.