

Best Charity: Donating Water

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Imām Al-Bukhārī (رحمه الله) has narrated a hadīth on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) said, “A person, whilst on a journey, experienced extreme thirst. [Along the way, he came across a well so] he climbed down this well and drank from it. He then climbed out of the well and saw a dog panting and licking the moist soil due to [extreme] thirst. This person said [to himself], ‘Indeed this dog has faced the same dilemma [of thirst] that I faced.’ [So he climbed down the well again and] filled his leather sock with water. He then climbed out whilst holding his sock with his teeth and quenched the thirst of the dog. Allah Most High appreciated his deed and forgave his sins. The Sahābah (رضي الله عنهم) asked, ‘Is there reward for us in [being kind to] animals?’ Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) replied, ‘There is reward in [being kind to] every living creature’.”

Many lessons can be derived from this hadīth, but I wish to draw your attention to a specific lesson, that of providing water for the creation of Allah Most High. It is evident that the deed that attracted the Mercy of Allah Most High was quenching the thirst of a dog.

Water – A Gift from Allah

Water is an essential need of a human; a person can survive weeks without food, but only days without water. The body’s function is dependent on water and all its essential organs need a constant supply. As the body cannot make its own water, a person needs to supply the body with water. This important need of humans is provided by Allah Most High himself in the form of rain, streams, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans. Allah Most High states:

“...and We have sent down pure water from the sky.” (25:48)

“And We caused the earth to burst with springs...” (54:12)

Water – A Medium to Gain Great Reward

Due to its importance and necessity, Allah Most High has also promised great reward for those who provide water to the creation of Allah Most High. In the above ḥadīth, we already learnt that it attracts the forgiveness of Allah Most High. Many other ahādīth also mention further benefits:

- Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) has stated, “There is no sadaqah more rewarding than [providing] water.” (Al-Bayhaqī)
- Upon being asked regarding the most virtuous form of sadaqah, Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) replied, “[Providing] water.” (Abū Dāwūd)
- Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) stated, “Whichever Muslim quenches the thirst of another Muslim, Allah will grant him drink from Ar-Rahīq Al-Makhtūm.” (Abū Dāwūd)

Water – A Means of Continuous Reward

Sadaqah is of two types:

1. Sadaqah: where the reward is confined to the action and the reward is a single entry. For example, when someone feeds another person, a one-off reward is written for him; and
2. As-Sadaqah Al-Jāriyah: when the reward is continuous. In fact, it also continues after one's demise. For example, authoring a book from which people benefit; for as long as people benefit from this knowledge, the author will continue to reap its reward.

After one's demise, the avenues to gain further reward by any action inevitably cease.

But a deceased person has two possibilities of earning reward:

1. Īsāl-uth-Thawāb: someone performing a good deed and sending him its reward; children doing hajj umrah for deceased parents.
2. As-Sadaqah Al-Jāriyah: as explained above, a deed he carried out during his lifetime which is still generating reward for him.

Nabī (ﷺ) said,

When a person dies, [reward for] his deeds are cut off from him except three [types]: [reward for] As-Sadaqah Al-Jāriyah, knowledge from which benefit is derived [by others]; and righteous children who pray for him. (Muslim)

There are many forms of As-Sadaqah Al-Jāriyah a person can carry out. In one narration Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) listed seven and from amongst them he mentioned, “....a stream which he causes to flow....” (In modern words which means arranging a hand pump etc). (Ibn Mājah)

In another narration we find that Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) also advised providing water as a form of Īsāl-uth-Thawāb. After the demise of his mother, Sayyidunā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubādah (رضي الله عنه) asked Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) which sadaqah would be most meritorious and rewarding. Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) replied, “Providing water.” Sayyidunā Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) then got a well dug and dedicated its reward for his mother. (Abū Dāwūd)

'Allāmah Al-'Aynī (رحمه الله) has mentioned a hadīth wherein Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) visited a person who was in his last moments. Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) asked him what he was observing [of the next world]. He explained, “I see two angels distancing themselves from me and two snakes coming closer; and I see evil increasing and goodness weakening.” The person sought help from Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) by requesting him to make du'ā. Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) supplicated, “O Allah! Accept little [he has done] and forgive the large quantity [of evil deeds he has committed].” Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) then asked him what he was seeing now. He replied, “The two angels are coming closer and the two snakes are going away; and I see goodness increasing and evil weakening.” Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) asked him which of his actions he found most rewarding. He said, “Providing water.” ('Umdah-al-Qārī)

Sayyidunā Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrates that Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) said, “On the Day of Judgement, the people going to Jannah will be lined up in rows. A person destined for Jahannam [whilst passing by these rows] will come across a person [to whom he had

provided water in this worldly life]. He will say to him, 'Do you remember that day when you asked for water and I gave you water to drink.' The person will [remember this favour and] intercede for him." (Ibn Mājah)

Warning on Not Sharing Water

It is the sheer Grace of Allah Most High that he has provided this necessity for survival in much abundance and in principle, it is for all people. Therefore, it would be extremely inhuman to deprive someone of water at the time of his need, especially when one has the means to provide it. Consequently, a grave warning has been cited for such wretched people whose hearts do not soften upon seeing others suffering thirst. Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) has stated:

There are three types of people; Allah will neither talk to them, nor look towards them, nor purify them, and for them will be a painful punishment: One who has excess water in the path [along a route] and he prevents a traveller [passing by] from [using] it.... (Al-Bukhārī)

Benefit in this World

Providing water not only benefits a person in the hereafter, but it also has worldly benefits. A person once came to 'Abdullāh ibn Al-Mubārak (رحمه الله) complaining about a wound in a knee which was not healing for the past seven years, despite referring to doctors and treating it with various methods of treatment. 'Abdullāh ibn Al-Mubārak (رحمه الله) advised him to find a place where people are in need of water and provide water by digging a well. The person located a place and dug a well and Allah Most High cured him. (Al-Bayhaqī)

Imām Al-Bayhaqī (رحمه الله) narrates that my teacher Imām Al-Hākim had a wound on his face. Despite many types of treatment, it could not be cured for a period of one year. He requested Abū 'Uthmān Sābūnī (رحمه الله) to make du'ā for him in his weekly majlis on Friday. Abū 'Uthmān (رحمه الله) made du'ā for him. The people who attended earnestly beseeched Allah Most High saying āmīn to the du'ā of the shaykh.

The following Friday, a woman who had attended the previous week, sent a note to Imām Abū 'Uthmān (رحمه الله). In the note she narrated that, after the previous majlis, she went home and earnestly prayed for Imām Al-Hākim (رحمه الله) that night. She mentioned that she saw Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) in her dream as if he was advising her to tell Imām Al-Hākim (رحمه الله) that he should provide water for the Muslims in abundance. When this note reached Imām Al-Hākim (رحمه الله), he ordered a siqāyah [a place where water is provided] to be constructed outside his home. When the construction was completed, it was filled with sweet water. Ice was also placed in it and people began drinking. Not even a week passed and he was cured and his face turned beautiful again. (Al-Bayhaqī)

Providing Water to Others

It is a great Mercy of Allah Most High that we in England do not experience a shortage of water. Clean and abundant water is available at all times. We should be thankful to Allah Most High for this great gift. There are so many people throughout the world who have to travel far distances to bring clean water for their homes. The short supply obliges them to

get every family member to walk the long distance in order to obtain as much water as possible, including young children.

Those of us who are fortunate to have water in abundance and sufficient wealth, should resolve to provide water to the less fortunate ones according to our means. This could be through:

- arranging for wells to be dug;
- providing water pumps;
- providing water coolers; and
- Setting up drinking fountains.
- **Building Dams and Water Reservoirs**

In whatever way possible, we should seek to quench the thirst of people and animals. Providing water to the general public on a hot summer day in this country or elsewhere, will also be a deed that will be greatly recompensed by Allah Most High. Along with that, the wider community will be able to appreciate the beautiful teachings of the savior of humanity, our beloved Nabī (ﷺ), who was sent as mercy for the world.

May Allah Most High grant us the ability to engage in this meritorious act as much as possible, in order to secure His Mercy in this life and in the hereafter. Āmīn.