**Ramadan Classes**

**Class 4**

**Book of Charity - Chapter six**

Greet your class. Ramadan Mubarak! I hope fasting is going well for those of you who are fasting today ☺

Briefly introduce the book (also show the book cover) and the topic of discussion…

Imam Ghazali was a scholar who wrote books, which explain to us the deeper meaning behind our Islamic practices.

Today we are here to discover something **new** about a practice that you may already know about which is one of the five pillars of Faith.

Just as a reminder, what are the pillars of faith? Bearing witness, Prayer, Fasting, Zakat and performing Hajj.

Today we are going to learn about, Zakat.

**What is the meaning of zakat?**

(Shaykh Hamza yusuf’s explanation on page 10)

So what do you do when you have more *material* blessings than you need, like money or clothes or food? You should help others who, like you, also have more blessings than they can count but who don’t have enough material blessings, like that extra money you have. Allah (swt) asks us to give only two and a half percent of our assets (the extra money that we have had for an entire year…) Percent means out of a hundred, so that means that of every £100 you have left over for a year, you have to only give £2.50 in zakat to those in need. It is not a lot of money, but when lots of people give a small amount, it grows into a great amount and becomes more than enough. In fact, if everyone paid zakat, there would be no one in need of material blessings, such as food, clothing and shelter, in the whole world!

**Chapter six**

**The Story of the King and His Servants and The Fifth Inner Meaning and Duty**

Read the story on page 53 – 58

*Summary below:*

A great, magnificent King was loved by everyone in his kingdom, because he was kind and generous. He had constant concern and care for his subjects.

He loaned and entrusted his faithful servants and helpers with all kinds of goods. He expected they would increase them through hard work and give some away to those in need.

Abdullah was one of those helpers. One day the king asked Abdullah to deliver a share of the wealth to a needy family.

Abdullah did so, but instead of giving the credit for this generosity to the king – he took the credit for himself!

He was rude and arrogant. He said, “From the wealth I have earned I am giving you the annual charity that I give to the poor.” He also held the wealth up high so the family felt humiliated in having to reach up high to receive it.

He made the poor family feel that hey owed Abdullah something for giving them the charity.

**Moral lesson:**

*The king is really a symbol for God (swt) AL MALIK, as everything really belongs to Him and is only on loan to us in this world. Many people are like Abdullah, because they forget that what they have is only a trust (amana) from God. They become greedy and arrogant. Allah (swt) has asked us to give zakat to those in need and to be generous with our wealth, but many people don’t want to share!*

From the story we also learn how wrong it is to make the person receiving the charity feel low. It is best to give it anonymously, as taking credit can take away its value. It tarnishes our golden hearts instead of polishing them.

The story continues…

The following day the king sent another helper called Abdal Haqq. (Haqq mans ‘truth’) to deliver some gold coins to a poor widow.

Abdal Haqq was born an orphan and raised by a wealthy family.

When the poor widow opened the door, Abdal Haqq greeted her warmly and with great respect. He said “The peace of God be upon you my dear lady and loving mother of such a fine family. I have come on behalf of the king, who is aware of all your needs. He has trusted me to deliver these gold coins to help you with your honourable desire to send your children to school. I *beg you* to please accept this gift.”

Abdal Haqq joyfully presented the coins, piled on his open palms. The widow reached down from above and gently lifted up the king’s gift, placing the coins in a green bag.

Abdal Haqq exclaimed what an honour and a favour it was for him, that she accepted his offering, which he delivered on behalf of the King. By accepting, she made it possible for him to fulfill his sacred duty.

“I am the one receiving the benefit. Each of us has been given special skills when we come into the world, which are meant to be ways of serving others. But it is very difficult if we are born or become rich.

Wealth can hurt our chances of going to the next world. For many people it is hard to give money away, and they actually do look down on the poor and see them as less, or inferior. Both of these problems come from a terrible ignorance – a serious misunderstanding.”

**Why you should *feel grateful and not feel superior* to the one who is taking your charity:**

* **The poor person is giving you the opportunity to fulfill your sacred duty and is helping to purify you of greed.**
* **You gain so much reward for what you give.** Imam al-Ghazali says that a person who hates to give one dollar, even though he knows he will get a thousand is insane.
* **You will get paradise in exchange for your charity.**
* **Poverty is superior to wealth.** The Prophet (saw) said that even the righteous people among the rich will enter Heaven 50 years later than the poor.
* **Having wealth is a dangerous burden.** The Prophet (saw) saidas he sat in the shade of the Ka’ba, ‘By the Lord of the Ka’ba, they are the losers!’ When Abu Dharr asked who the losers were, he answered: All those who have wealth in abundance except those who say, ‘Here…here…here…’(as they give to those) in front of them, behind them, to their right and to their left… And few are they, indeed.’
* **The toil of the poor is what makes people rich.**

**What should your attitude be when you offer charity?**

* **Do good deeds with the right intention.** To give from what is on loan to you from Allah (swt) as a sacred duty.
* **Give with humble reverence.** If you are in the habit of thinking that you are the one who is giving and then reminding people of the good you do, this is coming from the state of your heart. This low condition branches out to your tongue and your other organs and affects what you say and do.
* **Offer charity, don’t give.**Abdal Haqq offered the coins on upturned palms so he was like a beggar in need. The widow took the money from above, as though she was giving the gift – *which she was*

The hadith says that the upper hand (the one receiving) is better than the lower hand (the one offering).

* **Don’t ruin your charity by reminders of his charity or by insult.** (5th inner duty).
* **Smile.** Even smiling is considered a charity.