

## BEGGING IS NOT COMMENDED

God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, declared:

'A giving hand is better than a receiving one.'

Although Islam recommends helping the poor and encourages the wealthy to spend for the poor out of their wealth, it does not commend begging and requires fit and able people to work for their livelihood. It regards working for one's own and one's family's livelihood as of equal value with worship of God.

Once a poor, well-built man came to God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, and said:

— I am a needy, poor man. Please help me with charity.

The Messenger asked the man:

— Do you have anything in your home?

— Yes, I do. I have a long robe which I cover myself with when sleeping. Also, I have a wooden cup for drinking out of.

The Messenger told the man to fetch the robe and the cup. When the man came back with these two things, the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, asked those near him:

— Who would like to buy these things?

One of those present offered one dirham for them, another offered two. The Messenger gave this money to the poor man and said:

— Spend one of these two dirhams to meet your urgent needs, and with the other buy a rope and axe and come straight here.

The man did as the Messenger told him to. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, told him:

— Go and cut some of the dried branches of the date-palms outside Madina. Take them to the market and sell them. Continue doing this for fifteen days and come here again.

The man who had thought himself unable to do anything for his livelihood left the city and cut dried branches off the date-palms that had no owners. At the end of

the fifteenth day a well-dressed man came to God's Messenger. The Messenger asked him:

— How are you?

The man replied:

- Praise be to God, O Messenger of God! I have earned ten dirhams. With some of that money I bought back the things I had sold and met the needs of my family. As for the remnant, I bought this garment that you see.

The Messenger responded:

— It is much more esteemed for one to earn one's livelihood by carrying wood on one's back than by begging.

Once a villager came to Madina. The Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, used to shake hands with his Companions. The villager avoided shaking hands with the Messenger in order not to hurt him with his calloused hands. However, God's noble Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, held the villager's hands with love and compassion and told him:

— These hands are so blessed that both God and His Messenger love them. God will not burn these hands.