

Towards the end of Surah Al-Baqarah, after you get all the resources from the curriculum, which is this surah, you need to prove what you learnt. The sadaqah is evidence of your taqwa and belief. The stronger your faith, the more defined is your path, until you reach the peak, the Face of Allah. The journey of the **نَفَقَة** begins very vast, and then becomes more and more specific, giving you the best options.

People are different in spending according to their motives and goals. Not everyone can spend for the Face of Allah. This is a Divine manhaj, guidance only for the muttaqeen. The higher the target, the more Allah will choose who is worthy to work for His Face. Allah develops your inner heart before you spend in charity. It is not about what you give, but the quality of your heart. Allah guides whoever He wills. Whatever you spend is for your own benefit, and you will be recompensed. All this is to qualify your intention, making to of a high standard. You must give with a good heart.

Now we come to another level, the quality of the people who qualify to receive your sadaqah. There are so many that you can help, so Allah mentions the best ones, those whom no one will consider helping.

The beggar insists that you help him, he will never be satisfied. He will make himself such a nuisance that people will give him just to get rid of him, they won't give with a good heart. The beggars will use the names of Allah to force you to give them money. This is so wrong, because the person they are asking for money will be compelled to give.

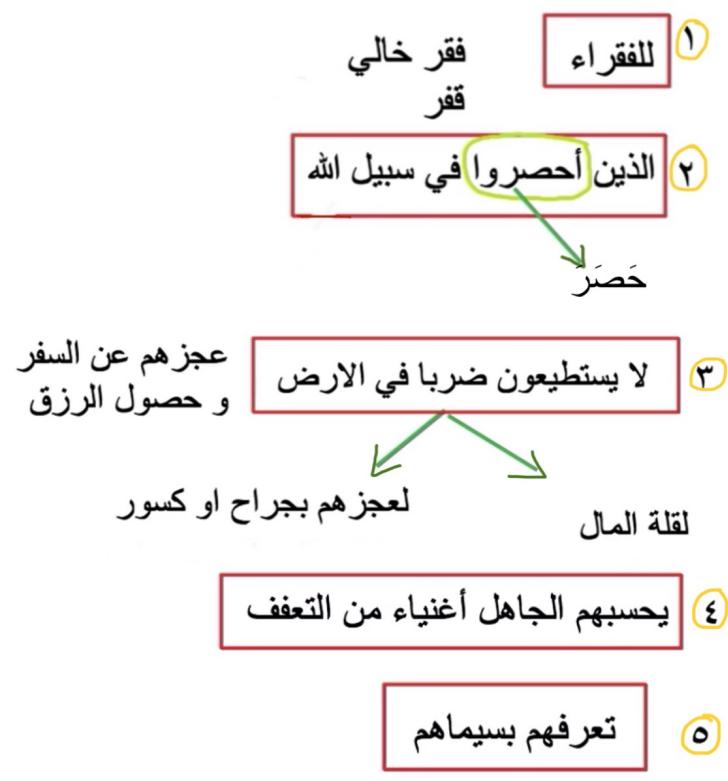
Another group of people who are needy, but they will never show their need, or ask anyone for help. You have to delve deep to find their needs. They are more worthy to receive your halal money. You have to be observant and choose carefully whom you want to give your sadaqah to. There are 6 descriptions of this group of people in the ayah. Each description is an elimination and restriction, leading you, at the end, to the person, who ticks all the boxes.

1 The poor. The word فقراء is derived from the verb فقر, empty. Another word which is similar in construction is فقر, which means an empty land. The فقير is empty-handed, he has nothing. Poverty is a big trial, so we must ask Allah for refuge from it. At the same time, we are فقير to Allah.

2 They are restricted on the way to Allah. Some decree came, and they are surrounded by it, prevented by the Qadr. They face some hardship. He can't leave even if he wants to. Also when you are seeking knowledge, you are restricted, as if on duty.

للْفَقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِعُونَ ضَرِبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعْفُفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلَحَافًا وَمَا تَنْفَقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

[Charity is] for the poor who have been restricted for the cause of Allah , unable to move about in the land. An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. They do not ask people persistently [or at all]. And whatever you spend of good - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it
2:273



A person may be scheduled to travel for his livelihood, but at the last moment, his parent fall ill, so he cannot travel, and loses his investment. So these poor are the ones who are doing something for the sake of Allah, which stops them from earning a living, such as da'wah, or jihad, or even itikaf.

We think to be restricted is bad, but they are doing it for Allah, so it is an honour and a privilege for them. What they are doing is far more important and dominating than earning money. You have the money, so you search for these kind of people. You need to survey and research their circumstances to find them.

3 They are trapped, whether because they don't have money, or because of an injury, sickness or disability, an incapability, or a lack of education. They want to earn a living, but they are prevented from it.

The incapability can be physical or financial. Laziness is also a disability, and we ask Allah to protect us from it. To detect this needs investigation. Someone who has the means, a sound mind and body, but doesn't work because of laziness, doesn't qualify for your sadaqah. The sadaqah will not be halal for them.

4 These needy people will be viewed by ignorant people as if they are rich. This needs not only observation, but in depth investigation. The ignorant people will miss so many signs, while those with knowledge will pick these hints. Knowledge of Allah and the Qura'an elevates the person, and he begins to see things in a different light. This knowledge changes you, making you understand the reality of people. It gives a different dimension to your understanding, making it deeper, so that you see beyond the surface of matters. This is wisdom. This is why the angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge. Their sins are forgiven, and their names are mentioned on the seventh heaven. Knowledge develops and enriches the person.

The جاہل may be a master in the knowledge of dunya, but he doesn't know Allah, or the Qura'an. It is not enough to know only dunya matters. It is obligatory to gain knowledge of Allah. Knowing your Creator will make your life happy. Make this a priority. If you don't know Allah, you are جاہل, ignorant. Ignorance is darkness, and knowledge is light.

The ignorant will only see the surface of matters. This group of needy people don't show their need, so the ignorant person will see only this. The knowledgeable person, on the other hand, will pick up the telltale signs of their needs.

5 The one with knowledge will recognize them, because they are more observant. They will have signs which the person with foresight will recognize. This is not any seventh sense, but the wisdom that Allah bestows upon them. The believer has this foresight according to their belief.

The beggar will wear torn clothes, and beg on the streets, but in reality he may be very rich. People may give him money out of pity, or to get rid of their own guilt, but maybe not for Allah.

6 They don't ask people for help. They are very discreet. They don't wrap the person with their asking and insistence. The beggars can be like a blanket, clinging to you, pressurizing you to give them money, and this is very irritating. Allah is the only One who can tolerate your persistence, and He loves it when you insist in du'a.

After all these filters, you may find one person who has all these qualities. If you want to give your sadaqah to someone so worthy, ask Allah to show you, and create the means for it. This will enrich you. If you can't find this person, don't worry, give whatever you can, and Allah will reward and recompense you. Allah gives you this option in order to not make it difficult upon you.