

Concept of Good Deed from Quran and Narrations Point of View

Monagheb. M, Mirdamadi. M, Tahmasbi, Z

MSc, Quran and Narrations Sciences, Robat Karim IA University Lecturer

Received: April 20, 2015

Accepted: June 15, 2015

ABSTRACT

In Quran, combination of good deed is used in a special expression and is of a specific importance; so that every accepted deed is not considered as good, but it is referred to every action which is supported by God and free from duplicity and narcissism among others. In other words, in Quran, good deed is the external reflection of real faith and is like a tree which is irrigated by faith to God and it will yield benefits such as being freed from sins, make human happy and pure life in this world and other one. It must be noted that in some verses of Quran and narrations, there are various instances of good deed some of which are performing duties, obeying innocents, benefiting parents and assisting others. On the other hand, factors such as atheism, arrogance and obeying temptations are considered as barriers of good deeds.

KEYWORDS: good deed, Quran, narrations

1. INTRODUCTION

Good deed is an action done for the sake of God satisfaction and its deed has no materialistic purpose and award expectation for it and leads to mental development and spiritual revolution in the opposite side.

In religious expression, good deed is an action which introduced as obligatory or recommended. In moral and mystical definition, it is an action by which mystic can achieve esteem position. Therefore, good deed is a qualified action which leads to spiritual development, moral growth and approaching God in every aspect. Hence, in Quran, good deed includes all moral issues, worshipping affairs and all admired actions such as duties, recommended and all admired actions did for sincerity. This paper is organized as follows: part one discusses good deed from Quran's point of view. Part two consequences of good deed are presented and in part 3, its instances in Quran and in part 4, instances in narrations are provided. Part 5 presents effects of good deed and in part 6 its requirements are discussed. Finally, in part 7, barriers of good deed are provided.

Explanation and investigation of good deed from Quran's point of view

Attention of Quran to the issue of good deed and its contribution to growth of a good generation is obvious. This matter has extensive dimensions in Quran some of which are drawn here. Indication of the attention of Quran to this issue is very obvious since good deed is noted 80 times separately and 7 times in combinations. If we intend to define Islam in two main components, good deed will be one of them and another one is faith in God. Therefore, faith and good deed are considered as two wings of flight toward humanity and divine revelation. Good deed is the sign of faith in hearts and the factor of its manifestation in life so that faith without good deed is like a fruitless tree. It must be noted that good deed is not expressed in Quran. However, from consequences noted for it, the concept of good deed can be understood.

As a result, for explaining and investigating this important issue and its pivotal role in life, a research is carried out in six parts in which part one discusses good deed from Quran's point of view. Part two consequences of good deed are presented and in part 3, its instances in Quran and in part 4, instances in narrations are provided. Part 5 presents effects of good deed and in part 6 its requirements are discussed. Finally, in part 7, barriers of good deed are provided.

Good deed in Quran verses

By studying verses corresponding to this issue, it appears that term GOOD is used in its lexical meaning. The evidence for claim are following verses in which confrontation of reform and corruption.

"Those who corrupt in earth and don't reform issues¹." Furthermore, "reform and don't follow the path of corrupters¹".

¹ Shoara, 152

In this topic, by addressing 8 verses, it is attempted to explain Quran vision about good deed. By studying following verses, it seems that in Quran, every admired action is not considered as good deed. Instead, it is defined as an action which is recommended by religious trainings in a specific manner.

1. Those who are faithful and did admired actions; we give no one duties beyond capabilities. They will reside in heaven permanently and rust of enmity will be removed from their hearts and rivers will flow beneath their palaces. They say: god is admired who led us to this position and if there was no guidance and benefit of god, we could not find it. God prophets instructed us to achieving this position. Then, it is announced to them that this is the award of your god deeds².

In this verse, after “those who are faithful and did admired actions”, it is said in a parenthetic sentence which is like a general rule, it is said that “we give no one duties beyond capabilities”. This sentence states that good deed is accompanied with difficulty and calamities. For this reason, god repulsed duties out of human’s capability. Moreover, good deeds are those actions which are requested by god for humans and announced by prophets to humans.

Aforesaid sentence implies that no one must imagine that being classified as faithful and performing good deeds is not accessible by everyone and except some people; no one is able to achieve it since divine duties are according to people capabilities and in this way, way is open for everyone including wise and ignorant and all people are invited to join this group. Of course, everyone is expected based on mental and physical capabilities.

Another confirmation for this claim is the verse “admiration is for god who led us for this and we were unable for it and god sent prophets in a right manner:.. Term “this” is demonstrative which probably implies to guiding believers to good deeds and even if it implies to heaven, guidance to it is carried out through performing good deeds announced by divine instruction to believers. Therefore, it can be understood from this verse that good deeds are those actions which are made necessary for human by god which is according to their capabilities.

2. “we created human with the best form and then, we returned it to lowest levels, except those who believed in god and did good deeds who will be awarded endlessly. Then, what is the reason for your refusal of god?”³ From this verse, it seems that since faith and good deeds prevents fall of human to lowest levels, there remains no reason for refusal of religion. Therefore, good deeds are a set of instructions which are announced by prophets to mankind. If “al” in “al-ddin” refers to materiality which seems to be so, it is found out that good deeds are present in all religions and are no exclusive for Islam.
3. “they shout in hell: thou god get us out of fire so that we can perform good deeds. It is said: weren’t you given life and didn’t warner come for you? So, taste the torment and there is no assistant for you but oppressors”⁴. In this verse, a relationship is observed between prophets as god warner and good deeds. Now that prophets introduced good deeds to you and warned you about its abandonment consequences, why you didn’t use life and didn’t perform good deeds? Since hell residents are not believers of prophets and their instructions in life and are not committed to following religious commands, they hope that they can return and perform good deeds according to instructions of god prophets.
4. In many verses, a relationship is observed between refusal of god verses, faith and good deeds. For instance “those who rejected our verses and turned against them, doors of sky will not be opened for them and those who are faithful and did admired actions; we give no one duties beyond capabilities”⁵.
5. “those who believed and did good deeds, will be happy in a great garden, but those who rejected our verses and doomsday will be invited for hell torment”⁶. From this conflict, it is concluded that faithful people which intended to confirm god verses, showed this confirmation by their actions and act according to the instructions to which truth they believe.
6. “tell: thou scripture owners, you are on nothing unless you act according to bible an Torah and what is descended from god to you. Those who believed, Jewish and Christian people who believed in god and doomsday and did good deeds no fear is for them and they won’t be sad”⁷.

In this verse, obeying scriptures such as Torah, Bible and Quran is requested when good deed is requested. In relationship of these parts, it can be inferred that by performing these instructions included in scriptures,

¹ Aeraf, 142

² Aeraf, 42, 43

³ Tin, 4-7

⁴ Fater, 37

⁵ Aeraf, 40-42

⁶ Rome, 15

⁷ Maeda, 67, 69

obeying scripture will be possible. When someone is gotten by death, he says: thou god return me so that I can perform whatever I left. This is what they say and limbo is beyond them till the day of doomsday¹.

The implication which must be taken into consideration is “whatever I left”. It refers to properties left by dead people, while in a wider extent, it refers to good deeds. Now, the meaning of the verse will be “thou god, return me so that I can perform good deeds”².

In a narration by Imam Sadegh, this verse is attributed to someone who hopes to return to the world so that he can pay his unpaid zakat³. This verse refers to determination of a certain instance for a general concept. This concept is the divine duty which is explained in sharia. This meaning is understood by refining the term “whatever I left”, since its leaving it true when duties are assigned to someone and he refused to do them.

7. “those who corrupted fire is their residence and whenever they tried to get out of it and they are told taste the torment and it is your residence”⁴.

Confrontation of good and bad deeds can explain the meaning of good deeds. Since corruption means getting out of divine duties and responsibilities, and someone who is not committed to sharia is called corrupter⁵, it will be evident that good deed performers are those who are committed to sharia. Therefore, good deeds must be in accordance with sharia instructions which are considered as duty within religion.

8. “and turn your face toward stable religion before a nonreversible day comes classifying people into groups and someone who is atheist, it will be harmful for him and someone who did good, it will be prepared for himself”⁶. It is inferred from this verse that someone who intends to turn face toward religion, must perform good deeds. Obviously, turning face toward religion is substantiated by good deeds.

In Persian language, good deed is called Nik and Quran put it against abuse and confirmed it by interpreting it as good deed. For example, in verse 49, Fosselat Surah and verse 15, Jathia Surah, he says: someone who did good deeds did it for his benefit and someone who did bad, did it for his harm. Not only in these two verses, good deed is against bad deed, but in Nesa Surah, verses 123-124, Aneam Surah, verse 54 and Jathia, verse 21, such confrontation is addressed and no doubt remains for someone that good deed is an action which is against bad one.

In these verses, good and bad deeds are interpreted as “Saleh and Soo”, however, terms “Hasanat and Sayyeat” are used other verses and says: “good deeds eliminate the consequences of bad ones and this is a reminder for reminders.”⁷

2. Roots of good deeds

Quran notes in many cases that good deed is accompanied with faith in god and something which is useful for their faith, thereby introduced roots of the fruitful tree. In introducing roots and origins of good deed, used following sentences and says:

- a. Someone who believes in god and other world and perform good deeds will achieve award and benefit.⁸
- b. Someone who repents, believes and perform good deeds, is hopefully one of prosperers.⁹
- c. What word is better than someone’s saying that invites to god and performs good deeds?¹⁰
- d. Someone who hopes for god visit must perform good deeds.¹¹
- e. Atheism is harmful for someone and someone who performs good deeds, will store it for himself.¹²

In any case, Quran talks about good deed and by irony, addresses belief in god and reminds that good deed is acceptable only when action tree is irrigated by clear water of belief in god not dirty waters such as narcissism, duplicity, pretention, gracing and attracting people opinion in certain instances. Only in two verses good deed is addressed solely individually by faith. He says: someone who is atheist, it will be harmful for him and someone who did good, it will be prepared for himself.¹³

¹ Momenoun, 100

² Nemoun Commentary, vol. 14, p. 313

³ Tousi, vol. 4, p. 111

⁴ Sejdeh, 20

⁵ Mofradat, Ragheb, p. 382

⁶ Rome, 43

⁷ Hood, 114

⁸ Baghara, 62

⁹ Ghesas, 67

¹⁰ Fosselat, 33

¹¹ Kahf, 110

¹² Rome, 44

¹³ Fosselat, 46, Jathia, 15

Exclusive attribution of good deed to faith is not for saying that in its acceptance, belief in god is condition, but the purpose is that good and bad deeds are written for someone's account and said nothing about roots of good deed and its origins, and how and in what conditions, good deeds are accepted. However, why good deed is originated from belief in god without which it is not valuable for god?

In this regard, two implications can be noted.

NOTE 1: the purpose of good deed is to improve spirituality and human soul development and it is achieved when action is free from any opportunism and selfishness, god love and tendency toward making him satisfied must be motivation of human so that humanity and sensuality is eliminated and love of absolute perfection occupies the soul of human and perfection becomes substantiated.

However, if the doer is not free from such motivations, selfishness is addressed and it replaces everything and such human with such spirit will be worse than devil and will be the origin of every evil and intrigue.

NOTE 2: a good deed which is did in the name of belief in god, not only causes development of soul of the doer, but it is the reason of the action itself, since someone who does something for god knowing that god is aware from his internal and external status and man tries for the sake of awards, instead of affection, he attempts to consolidate the action, while if the only motivation is opportunism and pretention, he will suffice by affection and will go through until he can achieve materialistic goals and after that, he abandons any type of admired action.

During life, an issue is so tangible and obvious for everyone: every charity institution established by faithful people will be more strengthened, fruitful and benefiting continuously. In turn, every seemingly good action did by hypocritical and opportunistic people will turn into destruction and eventually finished up and there is no reason but the spiritual motivation which is effective in initiation and continuing affairs, while in second type, duplicity and trade is a weak support whose range will be limited to duplicity in which human power and capacity will be absent after achieving goal. In summary, every motivation will shape action like itself and represents itself through them.

NOTE 3: race is not important. Undoubtedly, there are differences between men and women in creation and no one can dispute such differences. However, in Islam's opinion, these are not the reason for difference in front of god. For closeness and proximity of people, there is only one criterion; belief in god and good deeds and for clarifying this fact, Quran clearly rejects any difference and states that: everyone who performs good deeds, we will give him/her pure life and they will be awarded for best of their actions¹.

Hence, acceptance of good deed without any condition and constraint, including age, race, sex and social position and all the people are the same in this regard.

Everyone who performs good deeds from faithful people is among those who enter heaven and they will be benefited countless².

Quran not only explains this fact in these two verses, but also emphasized on it in Nesa Surah, verse 124 and Kahf Surah, verse 30.

Instances of good deed in Quran

From studying verses, it would be concluded that instead of using direct explanation of keywords, Quran makes the audit close to its meaning through expressing instances. Its clear example is piety for which leads someone by citing instances for piety and personal characteristics of pious person, familiarizes the audit with this keyword³. Following this method will help clarification of the issue of Quran concepts.

In Asr Surah, two instances of good deed are noted; recommending right and patience. Since "Alsalehat" in plural form represents generality, it includes all good deeds. Citing two instances for good deed after it in literal expression is a special citation after general one and it is used when narrator intends a special case⁴.

In Baghara Surah, he says: "those who believed and did good deeds, they will reside in heaven permanently"⁵.

In this verse, some of the instances of good deeds are presented including: worshipping god, benefiting parents, family, orphans and poor people, speaking well with people, saying prayers, and paying zakat. In verse, "pay zakat from whatever is given to you before being gotten by death and you say what if I was far from death so that I can be one of righteous people"⁶. Almsgiving is an instance of good deeds and one of the signs of righteous people.

In verse "those who believed and did good deeds, said prayer and paid zakat will be awarded by god and they have not to fear and be sad"⁷.

¹ Nahl, 97

² Ghafer, 40

³ Baghara, 177

⁴ Almizan, vol. 30, p. 610

⁵ Baghara, 82

⁶ Monafeghoun, 100

⁷ Tobe, 120

According to referral of saying prayer and paying zakat with “Al” means generality from which importance and honor of the instances of good deeds.

In verse “people of Medina and Bedouins must not ignore prophet commands or express something contrary to his desire so that they suffer from no thirst or hunger and take no step to make atheists angry and perform stealth against them except that they will be awarded for it and good won’t waste the award of no one”.

In this verse, Jihad and suffering its difficulties are noted as clear instances of good deed.

In various verses such as Ankabut Surah, verse 7 and Ahghaf Surah, verse 15, benefiting parents is noted as instances of good deed. Moreover, in Nesa, verse 57, trusteeship and obeying god and prophet are expressed among instances of good deed. Amity of prophet family is another instance which is cited in Shora Surah, verse 23.

Instances of good deed in narrations

Most of the narrative commentaries for instances of good deeds are cited for remaining deeds (Baghiat-al-salehat) in Kahf Surah, verse 46 and Maryam Surah, verse 76. For interpreting verse “except those who believed and did good deeds...”¹, Imam Sadegh says: it means assistance and helping religious brothers.²

It is narrated from him: good deed is to reject leadership of others together with the leadership and Muhammed’s family³. In addition, it is narrated that: remaining deeds are waking up for worship during night and praying during dawn⁴.

In a narration from Ibn Abbas, it is said that he considers good deeds as performing duties⁵.

Maaz Ibn Jebel considers good deeds as an action which is accompanied with knowledge, purpose, patience and sincerity and Sahl Ibn Abdullah Murad believes that good deed is an action in accordance with tradition.⁶

Neishabouri explains good deeds as follows: human perfection depends on two matters: 1. Understanding right since it is stable and 2. Understanding goodness for doing it, the former is theoretical wisdom which was requested by Ibrahim from god: “thou god, give me wisdom”⁷ and the latter is called practical wisdom which is saving tool requested by Ibrahim “join me to good people”⁸.

In explaining this issue, it must be noted that sentence “join me to good people” means get me to the level of such people. Regarding the issue that who are good people, reason of descending the verse must be studied. This corresponds to Ibrahim when asked god “thou god give ...” and god selected him and said to him: “obey my command and purify your religion”⁹ by monotheism and good deed and become surrendered to whatever is governing for you”. And Ibrahim said: “thou god, I became surrendered and purified my religion for you so that you order whatever you desire about me”¹⁰.

In explaining wisdom, various opinions are given; i.e. wisdom means knowledge or a strong jurisdictional sentence and governing people and judging them and the position of prophecy among others; the most appropriate and comprehensive of which is complete mission and intrinsic order¹¹. Yosef asked god: “get my soul while I’m Muslim and join me to good people”. That is, dying with Islam and joining good people requested by his ancestor Ibrahim. God accepted their request and narrates it as the last story of the life of him by which his life ended¹².

Requirements of good deed

According to great deal of benefits of good deed, in this section, requirements of success in doing good deeds and barriers in its way will be discussed.

We mean by requirements all issues underlying the good deed. Obviously, more preparation for such deed will lead to more possibility for its substantiation. In this regard, the most important requirements of good deed according to verses of Quran will be addressed.

God reminisce

From the verse “they shout in hell: thou god get us out of fire so that we can perform good deeds. It is said: weren’t you given life and didn’t warner come for you? So, taste the torment and there is no assistant for you but

¹ Asr, 3

² Bahrani, vol. 5, p. 504

³ Qomi, Commentary, vol. 2, p. 27

⁴ Qotb Ravandi, vol. 1, p. 129

⁵ Tabarsi, vol. 4, p. 48

⁶ Ayyashi, p. 375

⁷ Shoara, 83

⁸ Same

⁹ Baghara, 131

¹⁰ Amali, Commentary, vol. 1, p. 563

¹¹ Yousef, 101

¹² Bayan-al-Saada, vol. 10, p. 547

oppressors”¹, it is found out that reminisce of god and remembering facts will underlie the good deeds as stated clearly in following verse “except those who believed in god and did good deeds who will be awarded endlessly”².

3. Repentance

Repentance which means returning to god is one of the most important preparations of faithful people’s tendency toward good deeds as stated: “except someone who repents, believes and perform good deed so that god convert his sins into good deeds. God is compassionate and merciful.”³ In addition “who repents and does good deeds, has returned to god”⁴.

Patience

Since doing good deeds is accompanied with difficulty and calamity, success in doing good deed requires patience in opposing soul. This issue comes from various verses to some of which are implied. “except those who believed in god and did good deeds who will be awarded endlessly”⁵.

In addition “knowledgeable people said god award is better for those who believe and did good deeds and no one can achieve it except patient people.”⁶

Lawful income

“thou prophet eat from clean gifts and do good deeds”⁷. This verse clearly shows that lawful income helps faithful in doing good deeds.

After discussing requirements of good deed, addressing barriers of good deed is important to finalize discussion, since with confrontation of each of the above issues, their barrier can be understood. Now, we address some of the most important barriers of doing good deeds.

Barriers of doing good deeds

Obeying temptation

“after them, there were successors which wasted the prayer and followed temptations and they will soon find the consequence of their confusion, unless they repent and become faithful and do good deeds. They will enter heaven safely and no oppression will be for them”⁸.

Arrogance

“Those who believed and did good deeds, they will get their awards completely and will be given from god benefaction and those who refused accepting right and arrogated, they will experience painful torment and they will find no assistant against god”⁹.

“And those who believed and did good deeds, god will enter them to his benefaction. This is the evident redemption and those who became atheist are told: didn’t you hear divine verses? You arrogated and were bad-doing people”¹⁰.

Worship pagan

“And those who hope visiting God must do good deeds and take no one instead of god for worship.”¹¹

Worldliness

“your properties and children are not something which lead you toward god, except those who believed and did good deeds. They will have double award for whatever they did. They will be safe in heaven booths”¹².

“those who wanted ”world life, said: what if we got whatever was given to Korah since he has a huge amount of money. Knowledgeable people said: shame on you! God award is better for those who believed and did good deeds”¹³.

Verses 46 of Kahf Surah and 11 of Hood confirm this fact.

Conclusion

¹ Fater, 37

² Shoara, 227

³ Forghan, 70

⁴ Al Emran, 89

⁵ Hood, 89

⁶ Ghesas, 80

⁷ Momenoun, 51

⁸ Maryam, 59, 60

⁹ Nesa, 173

¹⁰ Jathia, 30

¹¹ Kahf, 110

¹² Saba, 37

¹³ Ghesas, 79, 80

Good deed refers to action which is ordered in sharia and is announced by prophets. For this reason, there is a close relationship between it and faith.

Good deed includes all admired actions which includes personal relaxation and commitment to social rights and consolidation of the relationship between god and mankind and is described by two behavioral and bodily basics.

Good deed to faith is like trunk and branch to root each of which affects another and existence of which leads to completion of another and vulnerability of one result in vulnerability of another.

Some of the instances of good deed are introduced some of which are as follows: saying prayer, amity of prophet family, benefiting parents, recommending right, repentance, patience and lawful income. Barriers of good deed include following temptation, arrogance, worship pagan and worldliness.

REFERENCES

1. Bahrani, H., Al-Hoseini, B., reasoning in Quran commentary, Albesa institution, Beirut, 1999
2. Siuti, J., prosed pearl in interpreting the affected, Daralfekr, Beirut, 2000
3. Tabatabaei, M., Almizan in Quran commentary, 5th ed., Qom seminary teacher society pub., 1997
4. Khajeh Nasir-al-ddin Tousi, description of adventures
5. Makarem Shirazi et.al, Nemouneh commentary, 48th ed., Dar-al-maktab-al-eslami, Tehran, 2005
6. Gonabadi, S., commentary of happiness in worshipping levels, scientific institution for journals, 1991
7. Nour-al-Anvar software