# 148158 - Concealing righteous deeds, and rejoicing in people’s praise for them

## the question

There is a matter that is worrying me: sometimes I think that people will praise me if I tell them about some of my righteous deeds, by way of showing gratitude to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Should I tell them about it, and will there be any blame on me if I am one of those who rejoice in their praise of me? How can we reconcile between the religious texts which urge us to conceal righteous deeds, and the concept of speaking of Allah’s blessings, one of the most important of which is the blessing of righteous deeds?

## Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Speaking of the blessings of Allah, may He be exalted, is one of the things that prompt one to be grateful for them, and is part of the Muslim’s acknowledging the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and as for the blessing of your Lord, proclaim it”

[ad-Duha 93:11].

As-Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This includes both religious and worldly blessings. “Proclaim it” means praising Allah for it, and mentioning it in specific terms if there is an interest to be served by doing so, otherwise one may speak of Allah’s favour in general terms, for speaking of the favour of Allah prompts one to give

thanks for it, and creates love of Allah in the recipient of the favour, for hearts are inclined to love the one who shows kindness. End quote.

Tafseer as-Sa'di (p. 928).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words "but if you conceal them [your charitable expenditures] and give them to the poor, it is better for you" [al-Baqarah 2:271] indicate that giving charity secretly is better than doing so openly, because it is further removed from showing off, unless doing it openly will serve a clear interest, such as causing people to follow one's example. In that case, it is better in that regard. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The one who reads Qur'an out loud is like one who gives charity openly, and the one who reads Qur'an quietly is like one gives charity discreetly."

The basic principle is that being discreet is preferable, because of this verse… End quote.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (1/701).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The one who tells people about his righteous deeds is one of two things:

1. His motive is to praise himself by way of self-admiration and to show how much he is doing for his Lord. This is a serious matter, which could lead to the invalidation of his good deeds, and rendering them null and void. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has forbidden His slaves to praise themselves, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him" [an-Najm 53:32].

2. His motive is to speak of the favours of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and his aim in speaking about himself is to use that as a means of prompting his peers and other people to follow his example. This is a praiseworthy aim, because Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "and as for the blessing of your Lord, proclaim it". And the Prophet

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam will have the reward of doing so and the reward of everyone who acts upon it, until the Day of Resurrection.”

End quote from Noor ‘ala ad-Darb (12/30).

At-Teebi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There are reports that speak of the virtue of the one who reads Qur’an out loud, and other reports that speak of the virtue of doing so quietly. In order to reconcile between them, we may note that reading it quietly is better for the one who fears showing off, and reading it out loud is better for the one who is not afraid of showing off, on condition that he does not disturb other people, whether they are praying, sleeping and so on. That is because the benefit of reading out loud may reach others, such as those who listen, learn or contemplate the meaning, or because it may be like a symbol of Islam, and because it helps the reciter to focus and reflect upon the meaning, and it dispels sleepiness and motivates others to worship. If anyone has such purposes in mind, then reading out loud is better.

End quote from Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi (8/191)

Based on that:

Speaking about the favours of Allah may be done by way of attributing the blessings to Allah, may He be exalted, and acknowledging His favours to His slave, affirming that He is most generous and most kind; or it may be done so that others may follow his example in doing good, and so that he may have his reward and the reward of those who follow his example. All of that is encouraged and prescribed in Islam.

But if it is done by way of praising oneself, attributing the blessing to oneself, showing off and being held in high esteem because of one’s righteous deeds, and the like, then this is something blameworthy and evil.

Secondly:

If a person speaks of Allah's favour to him in the manner prescribed, and people praise him for it and he appreciates their praise, but his intention is never to show off and make people aware of his righteous deeds, then this is like a reward that is hastened for the believer.

What is meant by hastening the reward for the believer is that the believer does righteous deeds, intending it for the sake of Allah, and people find out about him doing it without him intending that it be made known or intending to show off to people, then they praise him and speak well of him, and he appreciates that.

Muslim (2642) narrated that Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It was said to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): What do you think of a man who does a good deed and the people praise him for it? He said: "That is part of the reward that is hastened for the believer in this world."

For more information on types of showing off in worship, please see the answer to question no. 9359.

See also the answer to question no. 6356

And Allah knows best.