34655 - If I am given a gift should I give something similar back to the giver?

the question

One of the customs among the people in my village is to give gifts and money on special occasions, and the recipient of the gifts is expected to respond in kind when other people have special occasions too.
What is the ruling if a special occasion arises and a person does not have anything; does he have to give them a gift?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is mustahabb [preferable] for the one who is given a gift to respond by giving something similar or better, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever does you a favour, then respond in kind, and if you cannot find anything to give him, then make du’aa’ for him (and keep doing so) until you think that you have done enough.” Narrated by Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa’i. But the people of the village should not oblige a poor person to give them gifts like those that they gave to him, rather what is prescribed in sharee’ah is for the Muslim to give a gift and not expect something back in return, rather he should hope for the reward from Allaah. Whoever is given something is not obliged to give something back to the giver, but if he does give him something, that is preferable.

And Allaah is the Source of strength.