

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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CHARITY

After disease, one of the great hazards to humankind is "poverty." Since time immemorial, poverty has been widespread in the world. The Quran takes an all-inclusive look at poverty and has recommended several ways to lessen its suffering and grief in society. Whenever possible, we are encouraged to do actions for the pleasure of God and charity is stressed as a virtue. There are two types of giving – one is Zakat and the other is charity. Zakat is obligatory and at a specified rate of 2.5 % whereas general charity has a wider connotation. Charity includes any aid from the privileged to the less fortunate.

We are urged to spend in the way of God from whatever He has bequeathed to us. [2:2-3] *This scripture is infallible; a beacon for the righteous; who believe in the unseen, observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and from our provisions to them, they give to charity.*

Thus, the righteous are those who spend from what God has showered on them: [57:7] *Believe in **GOD** and His messenger, and give from what He has bestowed upon you. Those among you who believe and give (to charity) have*

deserved a great recompense.

[57:11] *Who would like to loan **GOD** a loan of righteousness, to have it multiplied for him manifold, and end up with a generous recompense?*

God thus offers us an inducement and motivates us to do charity.

In "Western Society" the State is often responsible for community welfare whereas the Quran makes both the State and the individual jointly responsible. An ideal society would be a place a bit like where Adam and Eve once lived [20:118-119] *"You are guaranteed never to hunger therein, nor go unsheltered. Nor will you thirst therein, nor suffer from any heat."*

It is not just food, but a far broader concept including health, sanitation, education, security, justice, etc. A righteous government would have unity, sympathy and trust between them & society. [22:41] *They are those who, if we appointed them as rulers on earth, they would establish the Contact Prayers (Salat) and the obligatory charity (Zakat), and would advocate righteousness and forbid evil. **GOD** is the ultimate ruler.*

Society would do its best, leaving no

room to pass the buck.

The Quran has specified the appropriate recipients of charity. [2:215] *They ask you about giving: say, "The charity you give shall go to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien." Any good you do, **GOD** is fully aware thereof.*

The reason for generosity is clear. The good is for God, who sees every deed.

[2:177] *Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in **GOD**, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.*

[2:273] *Charity shall go to the poor who are suffering in the cause of **GOD**, and*

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cannot emigrate. The unaware may think that they are rich, due to their dignity. But you can recognize them by certain signs; they never beg from the people persistently. Whatever charity you give, **GOD** is fully aware thereof.

God does not say that the people you help must be on the right path; the "traveling alien" may not necessarily be a "Submitter." The poor have a right to a share in the wealth of the rich and we have to support them and look after their basic requirements. It is for the benefit of our own souls that we give. [51:19] *A portion of their money was set aside for the beggar and the needy.*

We will be accountable to God whether we fulfilled our responsibilities.

Some people may wonder why God would place an obligation on us to meet some of the basic needs of those who cannot do so (36:47). After all, He is the Provider. The reason is God is testing us, to see our behavior under all conditions—will we take the opportunity to grow our souls and be part of God's mercy (7:156)? [2:155] *We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast.*

He is giving us yet another chance to redeem ourselves.

Even more than power, humans love their wealth. [100:8] *He loves material things excessively.*

Wealth is usually earned by hard work and intense dedication. So if we part with even a small portion of this, it would mirror our strong faith in God. Why? Because we realize what we have is given by the Grace of God and what we spend is a command of God and we get the resultant Mercy.

God is pleased with those who spend happily in His cause. [3:17] *They are steadfast, truthful, submitting, charitable, and meditators at dawn.* [30:39] *The usury that is practiced to increase some people's wealth, does not*

*gain anything at **GOD**. But if you give to charity, seeking **GOD**'s pleasure, these are the ones who receive their reward manifold.*

Instead of depleting one's resources, charity brings prosperity and happiness and freedom from apprehension and anxiety. [2:274] *Those who give to charity night and day, secretly and publicly, receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.* [3:92] *You cannot attain righteousness until you give to charity from the possessions you love. Whatever you give to charity, **GOD** is fully aware thereof.*

This means we have to give from what we value.

Charity can be given directly to the needy or may be dispensed through a system set up for this purpose. The Quran makes a provision for the workers responsible for collection and administration of such funds. [9:60] *Charities shall go to the poor, the needy, the workers who collect them, the new converts, to free the slaves, to those burdened by sudden expenses, in the cause of **GOD**, and to the traveling alien. Such is **GOD**'s commandment. **GOD** is Omniscient, Most Wise.*

Charity eliminates hoarding, which is condemned in the Quran. [102:1-2] *You remain preoccupied with hoarding. Until you go to the graves.*

Charity can help remove the envy of the poor and instead cultivate a feeling of fellowship from the recipients. Also, you will see a diminished rate of crime originating in poverty and hunger.

In giving Charity, we have to be humble and not act as if we were doing the receiver a favour. Also, it should not be followed by insult or reproach to the recipient. We cannot boast that we gave the charity. The Quran warns against this attitude.

[2:262-4] *Those who spend their money in the cause of **GOD**, then do not follow their charity with insult or harm, will*

*receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve. Kind words and compassion are better than a charity that is followed by insult. **GOD** is Rich, Clement. O you who believe, do not nullify your charities by inflicting reproach and insult, like one who spends his money to show off, while disbelieving in **GOD** and the Last Day. His example is like a rock covered with a thin layer of soil; as soon as heavy rain falls, it washes off the soil, leaving it a useless rock. They gain nothing from their efforts. **GOD** does not guide disbelieving people.*

Whatever we give in charity should be what we would accept if it were offered to us. Many people give away only items which they feel are not good enough for themselves. The Quran clarifies this: [2:267] *O you who believe, you shall give to charity from the good things you earn, and from what we have produced for you from the earth. Do not pick out the bad therein to give away, when you yourselves do not accept it unless your eyes are closed. You should know that **GOD** is Rich, Praiseworthy.*

Also, the Quran recommends charity to be given privately, though it could be given publicly too. [2:271] *If you declare your charities, they are still good. But if you keep them anonymous, and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and remits more of your sins. **GOD** is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

This may be to thwart haughtiness on the part of the giver and to avoid discomfort on the part of the receiver. The intention is very important. It has to be heartfelt and not a mere act of convenience or to brag about your wealth. It cannot be a bargaining device with God for a desired boon.

The charity giver should seek no reward in this world. [76:9] *"We feed you for the sake of **GOD**; we expect no reward from you, nor thanks.*

[2:272] *You are not responsible for guiding anyone. **GOD** is the only one who*

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guides whoever chooses (to be guided). Any charity you give is for your own good. Any charity you give shall be for the sake of **GOD**. Any charity you give will be repaid to you, without the least injustice.

We have to be charitable in times of abundance and as well as in times of adversity. [3:134] *who give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. **GOD** loves the charitable.*

[2:219] *.... They also ask you what to give to charity: say, "The excess." **GOD** thus clarifies the revelations for you, that you may reflect.*

We spend what is over and above our needs. We cannot be extravagant and make ourselves penniless. We strike a balance between our capacity and others' needs. Moderation is the key in charity, as in all things. [17:29] *You shall not keep your hand stingily tied to your neck, nor shall you foolishly open it up, lest you end up blamed and sorry.*

From all these verses it is evident as to what we should do while performing charity—be selfless, straightforward and kill our ego. Our life on earth is only decided by God. Death can come at any moment and we cannot then beseech for more time. [63:10] *You shall give from our provisions to you before death comes to you, then you say, "My Lord, if only You could delay this for a short while! I would then be charitable and join the righteous!"*

Every opportunity should be used to do righteous works. Give to charity from the bounties that God Himself has granted us.

[57:18] *Surely, the charitable men and women have loaned **GOD** a loan of goodness. They will receive their reward multiplied manifold; they have deserved a generous recompense.*

Alim

Righteous Traits and how to increase them

We know many of the attributes or names of God. There are so many of them mentioned in the Quran—Most Merciful, Most Gracious, the Peace, the King, Forgiver, Bounteous, the Judge, to name a few. Some of these attributes we can never achieve. Only God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. God is the Creator. We invent and manufacture things, but they all come from materials in God's creation and inspiration from God.

But there are some of God's traits that we, as submitters, can strive to attain (at a human level). We can be merciful and kind towards others. We can forgive when we are wronged. We can be generous and helpful when people are in need. A list of other positive human traits includes: courage, conviction, commitment, love, confidence, humor, flexibility, honesty, enthusiasm, appreciation, joyfulness, peacefulness, patience, trust, curiosity, open-mindedness, responsibility, empathy, compassion and kindness.

All of these qualities are attainable, but only with God's help. Everything is in accordance with God's will (2:253). Each of us has different areas that we need to work on. Perhaps it's patience. We can implore God to increase our patience. We can say, "God, I want patience, and I want it now!" Or we can ask God to show us the ways to be more patient, and then appreciate the situations God puts us in where we can work on that patience. We may feel we need to be more honest and truthful. We can say, "Please, God, forgive the lies I'm going to tell today." Or we can implore God to guide us to be more truthful in all our dealings, and then be aware of the times when we tell even a small lie. Ask forgiveness and strive to do better next time.

God is the One who gives us wisdom and knowledge.

[2:269] *He bestows wisdom upon whomever He chooses, and whoever*

attains wisdom, has attained a great bounty. Only those who possess intelligence will take heed.

Joseph: [12:22] *When he reached maturity, we endowed him with wisdom and knowledge. We thus reward the righteous.*

[21:74] *As for Lot, we granted him wisdom and knowledge, and we saved him from the community that practiced abominations; they were wicked and evil people.*

Moses: [28:14] *When he reached maturity and strength, we endowed him with wisdom and knowledge. We thus reward the righteous.*

[31:12] *We have endowed Luqmān with wisdom: "You shall be appreciative of **GOD**." Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good. As for those who turn unappreciative, **GOD** is in no need, Praiseworthy.*

Solomon: [38:20] *We strengthened his kingship, and endowed him with wisdom and good logic.*

The Quran is our source for that wisdom. [54:4-5] *Sufficient warnings have been delivered to alert them. Great wisdom; but all the warnings have been in vain.*

God created us with the hearing, eyesight, and brains (16:78, 23:78, 67:23) to interpret the signs all around us and thus attain wisdom and knowledge. [76:2-3] *We created the human from a liquid mixture, from two parents, in order to test him. Thus, we made him a hearer and a seer. We showed him the two paths, then, he is either appreciative, or unappreciative.*

Sometimes it is difficult to understand what attributes God has already provided us with. One thing that can help identify personal attributes is to imagine ourselves without any material possessions: if we lost all that we own, what remains behind defines our attributes. Our character, deeds, and mental outlook form the basis of our attributes and we should strive towards, and ask for God's help ensuring they are righteous.

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So here's a statement for you to put to yourself that is timeless and can help motivate improvement of your attributes. Consider it an ongoing homework assignment that is due before the Day of Judgment, so you better start working on it now.

"At this point in my life, I have had more opportunity than ever to improve and become more ____."

It can be any attribute—righteous, steadfast, appreciative of God and His gifts, patient, generous, honest. What are your attributes in need of more development? And when you look around you, can you see the opportunities to improve in that area? God gives us so many chances day to day for improving our attributes and we shouldn't let opportunity pass us by.

[76:29-31] This is a reminder: whoever wills shall choose the path to his Lord. Whatever you will is in accordance with GOD's will. GOD is Omniscient, Wise. He admits whomever He wills into His mercy. As for the transgressors, He has prepared for them a painful retribution.

* * * * *

[2:148] Each of you chooses the direction to follow; you shall race towards righteousness. ...

[3:17] They are steadfast, truthful, submitting, charitable, and meditators at dawn.

[2:5] These are guided by their Lord; these are the winners.

Letter from a Submitter

May the peace of God be upon you all! It's been nearly three years since I've become a submitter (since I first fasted during Ramadan 2012). I think, and I'm convinced every day more, that this was the best thing that could happen to me. I kind of knew I was a submitter, even if my traditional religion was orthodox Christian, for many reasons: first of all, even when I went to church to pray to God (and erroneously to Jesus) I didn't like to participate, but I preferred to pray, thank and implore God for forgiveness in my own way, not as the traditional practices would be.

Second, I always wanted to know the truth about superstitions: what was the reason of following them and since no one told me anything logical and believable about them, I refused most of the time to believe in them. Other significant things were: being/becoming a volunteer (since I was a student), being empathic with the lives of people poorer and with more difficulties than me, not minding too much about material things like: clothes, trips, having a car etc...

But unfortunately, there were always some things that kept me away (or as is best to admit, I let them influence me) from doing the right thing most of the time. Now, with this blessing in my life, I have changed a lot in my point of view about the real

meaning and purpose of my life in this world. Now my first thing in the morning, last in the evening and persistently/constantly during the day, is thinking about God, praising Him, asking Him for help and forgiveness and thanking Him for His mercy, help and guidance that He's giving me every second I breathe. I know and I'm happy to know that I have to improve every day, to redeem myself, for the mistakes done before and the others that I will do in the present and in the future, God willing. There's a new goal now in my life, the main goal to achieve, the Hereafter and the grace of the Almighty. Now I can feel, see and live more clearly, happier, safer and stronger and I don't have insecurities on what to do and what not to do, what's the right thing to do and what is the wrong one to dismiss. Because now I know for sure that the right thing to do, is always to follow the commandments of God from the Quran and to learn from my mistakes and be every day of my life kinder, more generous and to steadfastly persevere. Thanks God for all! Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe and Creator of everything in the Heavens and earth!

J. P. J.

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*[3:191] They remember **GOD** while standing, sitting, and on their sides, and they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, You did not create all this in vain. Be You glorified. Save us from the retribution of Hell.*