

Charity and Sacrifice Stressed in Holy Qur'an

Introduction:

In exemplifying charity and sacrifice, the Holy Qur'an draws a parable of the mustard seed, which when grown multiplies in grains several fold. This parable further relates that outcome to the divine blessings that Almighty God gives to those people, who sacrifice purely for charity and without reproach or injury: then Almighty God rewards them at His will. Almighty God makes clear in the Holy Qur'an that charity must be voluntary and honest but not as show to others. Charity with hypocrisy has no worth with Almighty God. People must remember that Almighty God is ever-watching and aware of each person's intentions at all times. The Holy Qur'an clarifies that Almighty God had also developed a system of charity and sacrifice amongst the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The Israelites were administered a system of poor-rate collection for the purpose of assisting those other Israelites, who were in need. Almighty God makes very clear in several parts of the Holy Qur'an that He is non-material, superlatively Spiritual and immeasurably Self-Sufficient and does not need charity Himself. However, mankind must help one another and Almighty God will reward those helpers to charity. In Islam, giving out for charity should only be for useful things, which the giver personally values and not what the giver considers as worthless things. The Holy Qur'an makes clear that contributions for charity and sacrifice must be directed to the poor and those who are appointed to administer the poor-rate collection as prescribed. The Holy Qur'an reminds mankind at large that those who pay and do acts of charity and make sacrifices, then their reward is guaranteed with Almighty God. These have been expanded below in discussions.

Discussion:

- 1) Charity (*Zakat*)¹ is foundationally the 3rd of the 5 pillars of Islam. Whilst charity and sacrifice are two distinct words and may also be used separately in their contextual usages, the fact remains that both are interrelated and may be used together in delivery of expressed messages.

¹ The five pillars of Islam, with the first three as compulsory and the other two, which are circumstantially optional, are as follows:

- 1) The Declaration of Faith (*Shahada*) - Trusting and understanding the words of the *Shahada*. "*There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the Final Messenger.*"
- 2) Prayer (*Salah*) - Praying five times a day, kneeling and making obeisance towards Mecca (in Saudi Arabia). There are specific ritualistic movements and prayers that are said as prescribed.
- 3) Charity or alms-giving (*Zakat*) - Each year a Muslim should give money to charity (Usually 2.5% or 1/40th of their savings). If a person does not have much money, they can do other things instead, such as material donations of food, clothes, farm animals or farm produce.
- 4) Fasting during the month of Ramadan (*Sawm*) for those who are in good health.
- 5) A pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*) - Muslims should go to Mecca on a pilgrimage. They should do this at least once in their lives. A person does not have to make this pilgrimage if they cannot afford to, or they are medically or physically unable to (*Though they can get someone else to go on their behalf*).

The Holy Qur'an remains as the final holy scripture of cumulative and superlative ideals since the creation of humanity², in bridging across the spiritual relationships, between Almighty God and the best of His creatures: the widespread humanity. In exploring the Holy Qur'an, it is cumulative in the appreciative sense that the Holy Qur'an is greatly enriched with verses in every Chapter, which induce to the readers, the appreciative contrast between the incomparable Greatness of Almighty God and the basic simplicity and ultimate vulnerability of humanity³. Accordingly, the Holy Qur'an is also superlative in its literal sense that the Holy Qur'an is absolutely as incomparably the greatest scripture in its structural designs, contextual references and as the fundamental handbook for the general wellbeing and expected excellences of humanity. Whilst the Holy Qur'an has so many verses to be quoted from on topics of charity and sacrifice, only a few selected ones have been stated below, with references to their Chapters and verses, and in keeping this discussion (article) manageably short. People within mankind have been amply blessed with material resources and some material wealth, but they must not rest with pride and at same time have the awareness: that there may be some others who are not so blessed! Accordingly, people must help towards catering for the lesser privileged and at all times say appreciative prayers for whatever they already have, and then help those in need, as acts of charity and sacrifice. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ108:1-2** *"Surely We have given you abundance of good. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice."*

- 2) Control and management of charity and sacrifice requires an administrative group within communities, which is skilled at handling on such matters. Those specifically deployed in the administration of charity and sacrifice also need some means of resource dependence for their own survival. The Holy Qur'an is tactfully concise and helpfully allows the administrators of charity and sacrifice to also be recipients of the handouts. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ9:60** *"(The due) charity is only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer it,*

² Scientists, using their methods of radioactive isotopes decay in measuring the age of earth, maintain that earth was created initially as extremely hot magma around 4.9 billion years ago; and after cooling to ambient temperatures to support vegetation and animals, Almighty God created humanity around 300,000 years ago, commencing with Adam and Eve (this is determined from carbon dating study in human bone fossils). According to Holy Qur'an (**HQ70:4**), the expression of "one day" by Almighty God's standard is equivalent to 50,000 years by human measuring standards of 365 days in a year.

³ Humans are born to die: the gap between birth date and death date are the periods of compliance testing as material evidence base, of peoples' deeds and misdeeds, in the ultimate outcomes of all the human beings on the great Day of Judgement: Almighty God will be the sole Judge. There is no appeal.

and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth), and (to free) the captives, and those in debt, and in the way of Allah and for the traveller — an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is Knowing, Wise.”

- 3) The lapsed gaps between dates of births and dates of deaths of people are the periods of performance compliance testing, and people must give priority and they must definitely manifest charity and sacrifice before they themselves succumb to their own deaths. These are special opportunities in life to carry out and experience charity and sacrifice without making a show to others. These acts of voluntary charity and sacrifice will help in Almighty God reducing some of the accumulated evil deeds of people, which they may have built up during their material life in this material world. Almighty God gives His firmest of assurances that He will pay them back in full and those experiencing their acts of charity and sacrifice will not be ignored and will not remain unrewarded. Sometimes people may not recourse to begging but nevertheless, they are also in dire need as recipients of charity and sacrifice. The Holy Qur’an stipulates that if it is known that people are in dire need but not openly begging, they must still be assisted with charity and sacrifice nevertheless, without making public. This is stated in the Holy Qur’an at **HQ2:271-273** *“If you manifest charity, how excellent it is! And if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is good for you. And it will do away with some of your evil deeds; and Allah is Aware of what you do. Their guidance is not your duty, but Allah guides whom He pleases. And whatever good thing you spend, it is to your good. And you do not spend but to seek Allah’s pleasure. And whatever good thing you spend, it will be paid back to you in full, and you will not be wronged. (Charity is) for the poor who are confined in the way of Allah, they cannot go about in the land; the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of (their) abstaining (from begging). You can recognize them by their mark — they do not beg of people demandingly. And whatever good thing you spend, surely Allah is Knower of it.”*
- 4) In all communities and in all countries, all people are not equal in terms of their material wealth and material resources. Therefore, it becomes necessary for community leaders to carry out periodic census amongst the communities, identifying those who are in dire need of assistance, although they may not be outwardly showing their plight. The official Governments’ census will identify those in their communities, who are below the economic thresholds. This is stated in the Holy Qur’an at **HQ5:12** *“And certainly Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel,*

and We raised up among them twelve chieftains⁴. And Allah said: Surely I am with you. If you keep up prayer and give the due charity and believe in My messengers and assist them and offer to Allah a goodly gift, I will certainly cover your evil deeds, and make you enter Gardens in which rivers flow. But whoever among you disbelieves after that, he indeed strays from the right way.”

- 5) The Holy Qur’an makes an excellent ordinance insofar as spending for charity and sacrifice matter. The ordinance compels Muslims to make proportionate adjustments of expenditure to parents, siblings, close relatives, orphans and those in dire need. In other words, spend wisely, save for oneself and do not become poverty stricken by spending all material wealth and resources simply for sake of charity and sacrifice. This is stated in the Holy Qur’an at **HQ2:215** *“They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the traveller. And whatever good you do, Allah surely is Knower of it.”*

- 6) The Holy Qur’an as an Ordinance from Almighty God, requires people to earn wealth through honest hard work. It is from these earnings that a person as a donor, is required to contribute towards those who are in dire need of assistance, be they financial or material assistances. The donor is restrained from boasting or making public the assistance given to those who were in need. The recipient of the donation should not feel humbled and dependent on the donor. Charity and sacrifice made with the specific intention of receiving publicity, is deemed worthless by the Holy Qur’an. Sometimes kind words of comfort to the aggrieved person, such as words of forgiveness, also suffices as acts of charity and sacrifice. Charity and sacrifice can be circumstantial to the need of the recipients. Almighty God will reward the donors in His own immaculate ways. This is stated in the Holy Qur’an at **HQ2:261-265** *“The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (further) for whom He pleases. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. Those who spend their wealth in the*

⁴ The ancient rabbinical Jewish scriptures are also reflected in the Old Testament, especially in the Bible in the book of Numbers at 1:5-16 and also at 1:44. These refer to a census being taken of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, after one month progress in leaving Egypt, whilst still around the riverbanks of the Nile. Over 600,000 men were classified as being over 20 years of age and fit for military service, in future defence of the Twelve Tribes. The census also identified those Israelites who were well endowed and those who were poor but were not outwardly displaying their being poor. The total numbers of Israelites, which left Egypt in the great Exodus were in excess of 3.5 million people (this is by process of extrapolation averaged), across all segments of age groups and genders.

way of Allah, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, their reward is with their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. A kind word with forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing. O you who believe, do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen by people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. So his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock with earth upon it, then heavy rain falls upon it, so it leaves it bare! They are not able to gain anything of what they earn. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people. And the parable of those who spend their wealth to seek Allah's pleasure and for the strengthening of their souls is as the parable of a garden on elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls, so it brings forth its fruit twofold; but if heavy rain does not fall on it, light rain (is sufficient). And Allah is Seer of what you do."

- 7) Muslims are required to physically perform all prayers with totally dedicated attention and focus to Almighty God only. Whilst in prayer mode, Muslims must at all times be mindful of their obligatory services to charity and sacrifice, which must be in its broadness and to include all those in circumstantial needs. At the same time, whilst at prayer, Muslims must not be distracted by the conspiracies of the devil but at same time heed to the inspirations of the guardian angels. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ2:177** *"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is the one who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the traveller and to those who ask and to set slaves free and keeps up prayer and gives the due charity; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict. These are they who are truthful; and these are they who keep their duty."*
- 8) Charity and sacrifice is not only for those outside of the family home but includes making secured measures, such as making of a Will for the spouse and children. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ2:280-282** *"It is prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives, to make a bequest in a kindly manner; it is incumbent upon the dutiful. Then whoever changes it after he has heard it, the sin of it is only upon those who change it. Surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing. But if one fears a wrong or a sinful course on the part*

of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame on him. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

- 9) Out of the five essential pillars of Islam, charity and sacrifice is rated at third place, as compulsory for all Muslims. Simply being a Muslim person by name only, is insufficient and a Muslim must believe and practise at least the first three compulsory pillars, as principles and which is charity and sacrifice. Even before the declaration of Islam as a revealed and fully completed religion⁵, charity and sacrifice were preached and practised by the previous prophets. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ4:162** *"But the firm in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayer and give the due charity and the believers in Allah and the Last Day — these it is to whom We shall give a mighty reward."*

Conclusions:

- a) **The Holy States that Almighty God rewards the donors of charity and sacrifice several times over, in exchange for their deeds, provided those actions were genuinely honest from the heart and not for show to others.**
- b) **Charity is the 3rd of 5 pillars of the key principles of practising Islam by Muslims.**
- c) **The Holy Qur'an stipulates: Those having sufficient to their need must be charitable.**
- d) **Charity with hypocrisy has no worth with Almighty God.**
- e) **Persons dedicated in distribution of charity and sacrifice are also eligible to charity.**
- f) **The Holy Qur'an stipulates: All communities must administer a system of charity.**
- g) **Administering a system of charity and sacrifice has been with all past prophets.**
- h) **The rewards for charity and sacrifice shall be assessed by Almighty God on Last Day.**
- i) **Heads of families must do a witnessed Will of their wealth and properties for their dependents, so that those dependents do not succumb to poverty and begging.**

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⁵ One of the very powerfully convincing verses in the Holy Qur'an, amongst so many other verses, as stated at **HQ5:3** encapsulates vitally important features, which prominently set aside a Muslim from other Faiths, and seals off perfection of Islam as a revealed religion. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ5:3** *"Forbidden to you is what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal), and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall, and that killed by goring with the horn, and what wild beasts have eaten — except what you slaughter; and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols), and (it is forbidden) that you seek to divide by arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so do not fear them, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion. But whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."* This verse is vitally important and reigns as totally unequalled in any other scripture before revelation of the Holy Qur'an.