

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

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# **Study 20: Charity — Its recipients**

- The circle of those towards whom an act of charity may be done is as wide as can be imagined. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:
  - “Whatever you feed yourself with is a charity, and whatever you feed your children with is a charity, and whatever you feed your wife with is a charity, and whatever you feed your servant with is a charity.” (*Musnad Ahmad*)
  - “Whoever tills a field and birds and beasts eat of it, it is a charity.” (*Musnad Ahmad*)

- “Whenever a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is a charity from him.” (Bukhari, hadith 2320)
- The Quran also speaks of extending charity to all people including believers and unbelievers:

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ<sup>ط</sup> وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا نَنْفُسُكُمْ<sup>ط</sup>  
وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ<sup>ط</sup> ...

*“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. ...” — 2:272*

- A few verses earlier the Quran had declared: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256). This verse further shows that Muslims cannot use compulsion to bring others to guidance.
- Reports relating to this verse show that it means that a Muslim must also extend his charity to the poor among sinners, non-Muslims and even opponents of Islam.
- The words “their guidance is not your duty” convey that if someone is refusing to follow the true guidance, a Muslim should not behave as if it is his duty or responsibility to bring him to guidance.

- Instead of thinking about that, a Muslim's duty is to be charitable towards all who need help, regardless of who they are.
- In a hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ told the story of a man who went out, on three occasions, to give charity to a person at random. Every time he gave it to someone, people later said that he had unknowingly given it to a person of bad character and reputation and had wasted his money. But every time the man thanked Allah that he had given it to such a person!
- Someone then told him how even those persons, who were bad and seemingly undeserving, might have benefitted from his charity in a good way (Bukhari, hadith 1421).

- The Quran also mentions the duty of charity towards animals. It says about the people who did good in this life that:

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾

“And in their wealth was a due share for the beggar  
and for one who is *deprived*.” — 51:19

- The word here for ‘deprived’ is *maḥrūm* which applies both to a *poor man who does not beg* and to *dumb animals* as they are deprived of speaking.
- Charity towards animals obviously does not mean giving them money, but spending money on their welfare.

- Charity, in the specific sense of giving away one's wealth, is of two kinds: voluntary and obligatory.
- Voluntary charity is generally mentioned in the Holy Quran as *infāq* or *iḥsān* or *ṣadaqah*. The Quran is full of injunctions on this subject, and almost every page of it draws attention to the service of humanity as the goal of one's life.
- This subject is specially dealt with in verses 261 to 273 of chapter 2.
- First, those verses mention the reward of charity:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ  
فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾

“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.” — 2:261

(Note: The “ear” here means the grain-bearing tip part of a cereal plant.)

- This indicates that the wealth of the whole nation or community grows if its members give in charity for the welfare of the poor and for national causes.

- For example, you invest in the poor and deprived people to improve their education and health, and the result is that the well-being and prosperity of the community as a whole increases much more in proportion to what you gave.
- The next verses emphasise that a charitable deed must be done as a duty which a human being owes to another. It must not convey any idea whatsoever of the superiority of the giver or the inferiority of the receiver.
- The Quran says about this very strictly:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَىٰ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ ...

“Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, their reward is with their Lord. ...”

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذَىٰ ...

“A kind word with forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury. ...”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ  
كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ...

“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. ...”

— 2:262–264

- According to the last quotation given above, a person who gives in charity *only to be seen by others*, and for show purposes, is like one who does not believe even in the very basic teachings of Islam, of belief in God and the Last Day.

*END OF STUDY 20*