

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

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

Produced by:

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Study 21: Charity — How to give

- The first part of verse 2:264 has been quoted at the end of the last study: “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.” The verse continues:

فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا ۗ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٤﴾

“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!” — 2:264

- If a person gives in charity for show, and reminds the recipients of what he has given them (as earlier stated in the first part of 2:264), it does him no good for his spiritual development. His soul is like a rock, on which rainfall does not produce any growth and it only washes it bare, exposing it.
- The next verse continues:

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَشْبِيهًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
 كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ ۗ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ ۗ ط ...

“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). ...” — 2:265

- If the intention of the donor is to give only for the sake of Allah (so that only Allah knows it) and to make himself a better person, then his soul is like a garden in which growth takes place, even with light rain.
- So if only a small amount is given in charity, **but with good intent**, even that amount brings about positive character growth in the donor.

- **Love of God** should be the motive in all charitable deeds, so that the very doing of them fosters the feeling that all mankind is but a single family.
- As the Quran says, righteous is the one who:

... وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ
وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ...

“... 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. ...” — 2:177

- And it also says about the righteous:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لِرِجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿٩﴾

“And they give food, **out of love for Him**, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you, for Allah’s pleasure only — we desire from you neither reward nor thanks.” — 76:8–9

- The words “out of love *for Him*” can also be translated as “despite love (or want) *for it*”. So their meaning in the above two verses becomes:

- “gives away wealth despite (his own) love for it” — 2:177
- “they give food despite (their own) want for it” — 76:8
- Only good things, and wealth earned by lawful and moral means, should be given in charity. In that same set of verses in ch. 2, it goes on to say:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخِيذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغِضُوا فِيهِ ...

“O you who believe, spend out of the good things that you earn and of what We bring forth for you from the earth, and do not aim at the bad to spend from it, while you would not take it yourselves unless you turned a blind eye to it. ...”

— 2:267

- We can certainly give in charity something which is not needed by us, and is surplus to our requirements, instead of throwing it away, and it still benefits the recipient and involves some effort by us.
- What is condemned here is to give something with the arrogant attitude that it is not good enough for us but good enough for the recipient.
- But the real charity, **which benefits the giver spiritually**, is what the giver would have **liked** to keep for himself.

- Charitable deeds may be done openly or secretly. Again, it goes on in chapter 2 to say:

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ^ج وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ^ط
وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ^ط وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧١﴾

“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.” — 2:271

- By the giving of charity *openly* is meant the giving of subscriptions for the advancement of national or public welfare. The rule laid down here instructs us to do public as well as private acts of charity, and it mentions public charity first, as that is of greatest importance.

- In Islam both open and secret charity are equally valuable. By giving openly, a person encourages others to give as well by setting an example. Giving secretly is described here as being “good for you”, i.e. good for your soul because you eliminate all possibility of any motive of giving for show.

END OF STUDY 21